

SHINING PALACE

By
CHRISTINE WHITING PARMENTER

Copyright by
Christine Whiting Parmenter
WNU SERVICE

THE STORY

CHAPTER I—James Lambert tries in vain to dissuade his beautiful foster-daughter, Leonora, from marrying Don Mason, young "rolling stone," whom he likes but of whom he disapproves according to his conventional business-man standards. He tells her, "Unless a house is founded upon a rock, it will not survive." Leonora suspects the influence of her half-brother, Ned, always jealous of the girl since the day his father brought her home from the deathbed of her mother, abandoned by her Italian baritone lover. Don arrives in the midst of the argument, and Lambert realizes the frank understanding between the two.

CHAPTER II—Sitting up late into the night, Lambert reviews the whole story of Nora as a child, at boarding school, studying music abroad, meeting Don on the return trip. In the morning he delivers his ultimatum, to give Don a job with Ned for a year's showdown. When Nora suggests the possibility of running away with Don, Lambert threatens disinheritance. Don agrees to the job, but before a month is over, his nerves are jumpy; he cannot sleep at night, he is too tired to go out much with Nora, and admits to her that he feels stifled. Nora soothes him with her music. He falls asleep and his face is more peaceful than it has been in many weeks.

CHAPTER III—Nora grows quieter, and broods over Don, complains to her father of Ned's spying on him, and decides that rather than see Don's spirit broken, she will run away. She urges her father to put an end to the futile experiment. James Lambert is obdurate and angry. Lambert tells her that if Don quits she will quit with him; that he will be through with her. He adds that if she tires of her bargain it will be useless to come to him for help.

CHAPTER IV—With the coming of spring, Don is full of unrest and wanderlust, and takes long walks at night. One evening a poor girl speaks to him, and in his pity for her, he gives her money. A car passes at that moment, flashes headlights and moves on. A terrific heat wave ushers in the summer, and Nora refuses to go to the country with her father. Ned, meanwhile, insinuates to his father about Don's evenings away from Nora, but Lambert refuses to listen. Meanwhile Don broods over the undermining of his morale.

CHAPTER V—At the height of the heat wave, when Don is finding everything insupportable, Ned speaks of having the goods on him, having seen him give a girl money. When Ned scoffs at the true story of the episode, Don knocks him down, and is through. He calls Nora, who insists on running away with him to get married, realizing it is her job to restore Don's faith in himself. Her good-bay to her father is met with complete silence.

CHAPTER VI—Don and Nora go to Maine and settle down in the studio of Carl Venable, a famous artist friend of Don's, whose daughter he saved from drowning. Nora writes her father. There is no answer, except her baggage, containing her entire wardrobe, and \$1,000 hidden in a gold mesh bag.

CHAPTER VII—After a tranquil summer, which partly restores Don's health, Don and Nora accept the Venables' invitation to Capri for the winter. Nora realizes she is to have a baby, but says nothing to change their plans. She is also reluctant to go so far from her father, and writes him of their sailing. At the dock, Nora, feeling that her father is there, waves good-bay.

CHAPTER VIII—Ned, reading of the Masons' sailing, goes to see his father, and has a talk with Martha, the old housekeeper, who bemoans Lambert's stubbornness which is breaking his own heart and Nora's. Ned finds his father in Nora's old room, and when he offers to buy her old bed, Lambert asserts it is not his to sell, but belongs to his daughter. After Ned's departure, Lambert reads Nora's letter again, and wonders if she ever him on the pier.

CHAPTER IX—Nora's first son is born in England, while Don is successfully writing "Letters from Capri" for a London editor, and selling them in America, with Venable's illustrations. Assigned finally to Cape Town, Don comes down with typhoid, followed by the baby, and Mrs. Venable writes of Carl's drowning, leaving his last gift to Nora, a baby-crib.

How near, and yet how infinitely far away that year seemed now! Thus mused Nora as she watched the rising tide encroach, slowly, but surely, on their resting place. What things one lived through and emerged from unbroken! And here they were where they started life together, she and Don, back at "the shack," a very crowded dwelling place, "because," said Don, regarding Carl Venable's last gift to Nora, "because, my dear, with a baby-grand and two grand babies, there's hardly room to come in out of the rain!"

Yet Leonora was so happy at being home again—so lost in ecstasy over the piano, that nothing else seemed of the least consequence. It was a long, long cry from that day six years before when she had regarded mere cobwebs and the lack of running water with such keen

dismay. What inconveniences hadn't she put up with in those six years? Nora smiled at the thought, and observed abruptly:

"What a parlor ornament I once was, Don! Do you remember that until you brought me to the shack I'd never known the want of a kitchen apron?"

Don turned his head, and without disturbing their younger son, who sat astride him, reached out and lifted one of Nora's hands, her right hand. It was the delicately formed, sensitive hand of a musician—long-fingered, slender. Nothing could mar its perfect contour; yet it was also the hard, brown hand of a woman who had labored at tasks that leave their scars. It was a hand that had washed innumerable dishes; scrubbed floors; patched; darned; ironed; but on one finger blazed a thing of undying beauty: a matchless Kimberley diamond, the "good-by present" of a woman in far off Cape Town.

Don kissed the palm of that work-worn hand, and said, addressing his small son: "She's a wonder, isn't she?"

"A perfect winner," agreed the baby; and they both laughed before Don questioned: "Where's brother vanished to?"

Nora glanced down the beach to where a small boy in a scarlet bathing suit was beginning operations on a tunnel that was to reach "Aunt Connie way over in Capri!"

"He's constructing a subway to Italy, I believe. The U. S. A. agrees with the kiddies, doesn't it?" This question, innocent in itself, was, as developed later, merely an opening. "Even this single month has made a difference in them," Nora continued, choosing her words with care. "Jimmy has gained a pound, and Donald, two. I almost dread

Don moved to scan her face for a stealthy moment.

"I've been rather expecting that, my dear," he said.

Nora laughed, touching his hand as if to reassure him.

"Afraid I'll turn domestic?" she queried lightly.

"You are domestic," asserted Don. "That's one of the reasons why I love you. You can create a home in the barest of hotel rooms, darling. Haven't I seen you do it numberless times? Haven't I seen you take a tumble-down villa overlooking the Lake of Como, and with the aid of a couple of Italian blankets and a brass candlestick transform it into such a place of peace and beauty that even Mussolini (if he had the good luck to get inside), would cease to dictate for a moment and let himself relax? If we were to occupy an igloo in the Antarctic, I've no doubt you'd make it so attractive that the penguins would stand 'round begging to come in! You are a wonder, Nora, just as I observed a moment since. Why, I'll wager you could take that weather-beaten old barn back there beyond the dunes and make a home of it!"

"I could!" said Nora. Two words. Two words spoken with such a triumphant ring that in a flash Don comprehended things that had been puzzling him: a recent preoccupation on the part of Nora; a day when he found her staring, dreamy-eyed, at the old barn; a trip to the Port that seemed unnecessary.

He sat up suddenly; deposited his outraged baby on the sand, and exploded with undue violence: "Nora, you can't mean it! You're crazy! That hideous old stable!"

"It's a lovely stable," defended Leonora, "and we can buy it for almost nothing. The owners moved to Portland years ago when the house burned. Don. They're tired of paying taxes and waiting for a summer colony to spring up next door and boom land values. They'll take \$300 for the whole place—an acre facing the broad Atlantic! Imagine that! And the barn's thrown in. They don't consider it worth mentioning."

"It's not," said Don. His face was just a bit forbidding. "And it strikes me, Madam, that you're rather astonishingly well informed."

Nora was forced to laugh at this merited attack.

"I've taken pains to be," she admitted honestly. "Not to deceive you, Don, or to put something over on you in an unguarded moment, but because I had to know just

where we stood. I'm not asking you to settle down forever, dear (How could you earn a living in such a spot?), but I'm homesick for a place to call my own—a refuge in time of need—a nook to hold the lovely things we just can't help collecting—a haven when there's a baby to be born. It's no fun bringing a child into the world during a storm at sea, as—as I did Jimmy."

Don looked at her in silence for a moment. When he spoke there was a trace of anger in his voice.

"Are you implying that I don't know it? That I underestimate the horror of that experience—for you, my dear? Do you think I'd have risked waiting so long to sail (even though we thought there was time to spare) if we hadn't been so damnably hard up that I felt I must squeeze every possible shilling out of South Africa? Why, I even considered sending you on earlier, alone, Nora, and was afraid you couldn't stand the trip with the boy to look after! I wonder if you've the least conception of how I felt that night when you woke me to say that things were imminent and I found the ship rocking like a cradle and the only doctor on board too sick with fever to lift his head off the pillow. I—I was sick myself, Nora, sick with fear, I mean, remembering what you went through before. You don't know me if you think I'd let you take a chance like that again. You don't—"

"Oh, come!" broke in Nora, smiling a little. "One would think I'd accused you of neglect! And I didn't need a doctor with that marvelous Norwegian nurse you dug up from



"Let's get back to the barn."

among the passengers and my capable husband, who took her orders like a soldier. It's you who's the wonder of the family, Don. You never let me see that you were nervous—not for a minute. I remember thinking: 'Don wouldn't be so calm if things weren't going right'; but I was frightened just the same, terribly frightened, especially when the storm was at its height and my vivid imagination pictured the ship just ready to go down. And if everything hadn't been normal this time—Well, let's forget that possibility. Let's get back to the barn."

"Pony?" questioned James Lambert Mason with what appeared to his admiring father as rare intelligence.

"You hear that, Nora?" he asked grimly. "Why, even the kiddie understands that a barn's intended to shelter only cattle."

Nora laughed. "Since when have ponies been considered cattle, darling?"

"Oh, you may laugh," said Don, and his wife knew instantly that something hurt him, "but when I remember all you gave up for—me, Nora, the thought of your living in a stable—"

"The Christ Child was born in a stable, Daddy."

They both turned, startled, not having heard the approaching feet of their elder son. He stood behind them, his scarlet bathing suit a patch of gorgeous color against the dunes, his big, brown eyes regarding his parents soberly.

"So He was," said Don, and pulled the scarlet figure down on his knee. Across the child's dark head his eyes met Nora's. This serious

first-born of theirs, whose five short years had been spent almost entirely among elders, possessed an uncanny way of getting at the heart of things. Sometimes it awed them, as it did now.

"Cows?" questioned the baby, and sat down again, this time on Nora.

His mother stooped to caress the soft, fair hair: and Don said gently: "I stand rebuked, Nora. Now I'll be reasonable. What's your idea?"

"This," she told him. "Let's buy that barn, Don, and by degrees (as we have the money), make it into a home. To quote old Tom Littlefield, the carpenter at the Port, it was built at a time when 'folks built honest.' It was built to stand. I'll admit that it's not beautiful. The cupola with its ridiculous colored windows is an eye-sore, of course; but it can be taken down—"

"You mean that darling little house on top of the old barn, Mummy?" Young Donald spoke quickly, in alarm. "I love that cunning little house, Mummy. Daddy and me climbed up there once, didn't we, Daddy? We saw the lighthouse way, way out to sea; and a big steamer! Everything looked so kind of cheerful. Daddy 'splained it was because the windows are such pretty colors. Daddy liked it too, Mummy. Don't you let anybody take it down!"

Said Don, who had the wisdom never to laugh when his small son was serious: "The cupola remains. It can be our watch tower. What, my darling," he asked of Leonora, "is a man's castle without its watch tower?"

For the first time in fifteen minutes Nora drew a breath of sheer relief. Don was won! His imagination had started working, and once that got going there was no stopping him. For six years she had been an uncomplaining nomad. Life, despite its ups and downs, its sometimes terrifying hardships, had been rich, and colorful, and adventurous; but there were times when, womanlike, she had dreamed of possessing a real home, even though she knew (being Don Mason's wife) that they would occupy it only periodically.

And her dream was to come true! Nora laughed, a laugh so joyous and unguarded that Don realized for the first time, perhaps, how courageously his wife had relinquished her own dreams that his might be fulfilled. The knowledge brought him a sense of his own unworthiness. He said, voice husky:

"I'm a moron, Nora—a dumbbell—a complete washout. I hadn't an idea that you were missing—anything. With me, you know, home is simply 'where the heart is.' I ought to have understood that a woman feels differently—needs some place to call her own. Why didn't you tell me? I'm only a blundering man, darling, but I love you and I haven't meant to be self-centered. Of course we'll buy that barn if it's what you want and there's sufficient cash on hand to pay for it! Come on, kiddies! Let's take a look at our future home. Your mamma is more than a wonder, Jimmy. She's something that's utterly impossible to describe, and we don't deserve her. Watch out, Nora! Here's the big wave you prophesied a while ago!"

Don's warning came too late. There was a rush—a scramble—a wail of anguish from James Lambert Mason. Safe on the dunes the baby pointed seaward to where his small, red shoe: a tiny, fearless craft amid the breakers, was setting sail across the broad Atlantic.

(Continued Next Week)

FOR SALE!

Several lots on Arrendall Avenue. See D. D. CHAMBLEE

FRESH BARBECUE

Strickland's Place — Rosenberg In Sandwiches or Bulk. Delivered in Zebulon Any Time. Guaranteed or Money Back.

O. E. STRICKLAND.

666 checks
COLDS
and
FEVER
first day
Headache 30 minutes
Liquid, Tablets, Salve, Nose Drops
Try "Rub-My-Tism"-World's Best
Liniment

Poetry Contest

The poems given below were written by Wakelon pupils and were submitted as entries in the contest sponsored by the Woman's Club.

A SNOW

One day when we were playing,
A playing in the yard,
A crowd of merry boys were we,
Playing prisoner and guard.
When all at once we saw snow flakes,
Floating down from above,
White and downy snow flakes,
White as the breast of the dove,
In we went, into the house to put
on our boots and gloves,
So that we could play in the snow,
That was white as the breast of a dove.

By BILL BELL

AUTUMN.

Of all the seasons of the year;
I like the autumn best.
For it gives most all the trees
A golden yellow dress.

The Pine is very different
Most every time it will seem
For every time you see her;
She'll still be wearing green.

Then old cold-hearted Winter
Comes along and takes
Every different colored dress;
That Autumn ever makes.

By MARSHALL KEITH

SANITARY HANDLING LESSENS MILK LOSS

North Carolina dairymen lose thousands of dollars each summer as a result of not handling their milk properly.

John A. Arey, extension dairyman at State College, says that because milk is so easily contaminated, every person connected with its handling should be clean in his methods. When drawn from healthy cows, few bacteria may be found in it.

Milk souring is caused by bacteria changing milk sugar into lactic acid. It is impossible to remove these bacteria by straining, as many people think.

Milk receives most of its contamination from the body of the cow during milking. Therefore, it is essential that all parts of the animal's body be kept clean and well-groomed.

Then, too, the milker's hands may be a source of contamination, so they should be clean and dry during the milking process.

Small top pails have proven effective in cutting down the number of bacteria that enter while the cow is being milked. Dairymen should recognize this type of container as one of the easiest and cheapest means at his disposal for producing good milk.

All containers used in handling milk should be of metal with all corners and seams completely filled with solder. To clean these containers thoroughly they should first be rinsed in lukewarm water, then scrubbed with a brush in water of the same temperature as that in the rinsing process to which a good alkali washing powder has been added. After washing, sterilize with steam and store in a clean dry place.

Milk should be cooled immediately after the milking process and held at a temperature of below 60 degrees F.

When cotton and tobacco farmers voted in favor of marketing quotas, they voted against big surpluses and possibly ruinously low prices.

Patronize Our Advertisers.