

Joseph Greer and His Daughter

"HELLO, DAD!"

SYNOPSIS.—Joseph Greer, a black-bearded pirate of fifty, having discovered a process of extracting fiber from flax straw, is made director of a big corporation. For years distrusting men of affairs, Greer has played a lone hand. Now holding what he considers the winning cards, he is willing to submit his wits to wealth. To protect his own interests, Joe has foisted his own secretary, Jennie MacArthur, upon the company. Henry Craven, a bank clerk related to John Williamson, the millionaire backer of Greer's new company, is offered by Williamson the position of treasurer of the new company, with the generally understood purpose of watching Greer. Craven accepts. Joe tells Jennie about his wife, who is about to divorce him, and his nineteen-year-old daughter, Beatrice, whom he has never seen. He is planning to force the daughter into Chicago society. Joe goes to a week-end party at Williamson's house, where he meets Violet, John's wife, and is strongly drawn to her. He fascinates her.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

"When did you know Sorolla?" she asked. Her laugh seemed to be directed at her own astonishment.

"When he was here. I bought a picture of his, one of those seashore things. I'd like you to see it some time. It's better than the one they've got at the Institute. He painted a portrait of me, and then he wouldn't let me have it. Took it back to Spain with him. We got pretty well acquainted. I can talk Spanish, you see, better than English; politer, anyhow."

She digested that in silence until they got to where his car was standing in the drive. Even then she made no move to leave him.

"I'd commandeer you," she said, "and take you over to the Stannards', except that you'd be so bored you'd never forgive me."

He thought it best not to insist that he wouldn't be. He offered the excuse of work to do, and, getting into his car, seated himself at the wheel. "You will come to see the Sorolla some time?" he asked. "Come to dinner, you and your husband?"

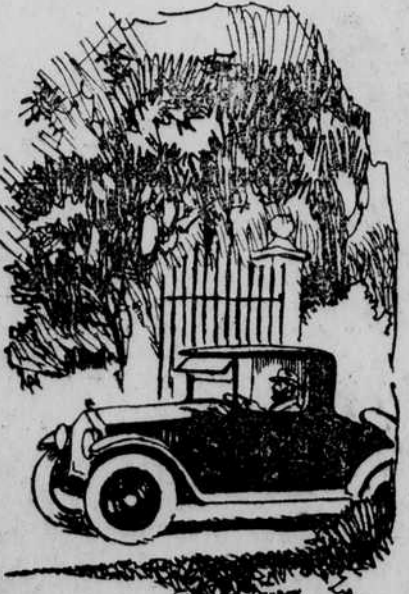
She accepted this invitation a little absently. Then promptly corrected her manner and told him, with polite enthusiasm, she'd love to. Still she lingered for a moment beside his car, her elbows on the door, one foot on the running-board. She asked him suddenly what he was smiling at.

"Speaking of bull-fights reminded me I fought a bull once myself. In the public square at Quito. I jumped over the barrier on a bet a girl had just made with me."

"Oh, go away!" she cried, releasing the car at last and stepping back. "But come again. Soon. And telephone me when you want us for the dinner. John might forget."

Joe had lied to Violet in one minor particular; it hadn't been, directly, her reference to the bull-fights in Madrid that had reminded him of the bull he fought at Quito, but her own attitude, during their moment of parting, while she lingered beside his car. That had brought back the young senora he'd made the bet with. His first serious love-affair had been with her. Eighteen he must have been, or thereabout; she couldn't have been more than a year or two older. And her husband had been much the same sort of staid hidalgo—in Ecuador—as Williamson. There had been, he remembered, about that Castilian girl the same quality of silkiness. And the same cool insolence. She'd regarded him as a barbarian—laughed at his rudimentary Spanish and at his Northern manners. But she'd come to him, just the same. It was queer how vividly he remembered her. He hadn't thought of her in years.

He had driven all the way back to town, at a speed reckless of the prowling



He Drove Back to Town.

ing Sunday motor cop, before it occurred to him that he hadn't told Violet a word about Beatrice—on whose sole account he had accepted John Williamson's invitation in the first place. He didn't go on to admit that, from the moment of Violet's appearance at the traps, he'd forgotten all about his daughter. What he decided was that it was just as well he'd waited until he knew for sure the child was coming.

CHAPTER IV

The Cub.

It was not on the cards that Joe should forget about his daughter for long. It was not until a couple of days had gone by, however, that he heard from the serviceable lawyer in Pasadena. It contained the brief news that his daughter had asked for the entire thousand dollars and that he had given it to her with misgivings, and said that she would probably have arrived in Chicago before his letter.

A week went by without news of the girl and then he became worried. At Jennie's suggestion he wired his wife and found that she was equally lacking in knowledge of Beatrice's whereabouts. Two days later a photograph of his daughter arrived and he was astounded at the marvelous resemblance it bore to himself. It did not picture the old-fashioned girl he had imagined, all frills and lace, but a thoroughly sophisticated modern woman—for it was a woman the picture revealed.

Jennie's comment on it was straight out. "You'll find she is a duplicate of yourself. Probably an explorer, like you are. Willing to take a chance on almost anything, just for the excitement."

A few days later Joe gave his party—it turned out to be a supper instead of a dinner. At it Margaret noticed the photograph of Beatrice on her father's dresser—he had given up his room to his feminine guests—and learned for the first time that Joe was married, that his wife was getting a divorce and that he expected his daughter to come on and live with him.

"No telegrams today?" For more than a week it had been Joe's first question of the butler as the man opened the door for him upon his daily return from the office, despite a standing order that any wire that came to the apartment during the day should be telephoned on to wherever he was.

Tonight Anson said, as always, "No telegram, sir," but the inflection of the phrase was different and Joe demanded sharply, "Well, what?"

"The young lady herself has arrived, Miss Greer, sir."

"Arrived? In town? Where is she now?"

"In the library, I believe, sir."

Joe found that he was trembling. The man had taken his hat. There was no reason why he shouldn't go straight into the library, but he hesitated. "When did she come?" he asked.

"Just after noon, sir. Around two o'clock, I think."

"Two o'clock!" Joe echoed. "Why the devil wasn't I told of it?"

"Miss Greer wished me not to disturb you, sir. She said she wished a little time to get settled." He paused, but Joe was speechless, so, after a moment, he went on. "I assisted in unpacking her trunk. She had it sent down to the storeroom about an hour ago." He added, a little anxiously, "She took the blue room. I trust it's all right, sir."

"Of course it's all right," Joe answered curtly. "She's my daughter, you understand? Going to live with me, for the present anyhow. That's all," he concluded. "You can go." He waited where he was until the man had gone through the service-door. Then, after a steady moment, alone, he made his way to the library.

She must have heard him talking to Anson, but she gave no overt sign of being aware of his approach. She sat facing him, one of the evening papers open in both hands so that it hid her like a curtain. It occurred to Joe that one didn't hold a paper quite so rigidly as that when one was reading it.

"Is that you, Beatrice?" he asked. He had halted without coming very close to her.

At his voice she flung the paper aside and sprang to her feet. "Hello, Dad!" she cried. She almost managed the air of one greeting a familiar at the end of a day's separation. Her voice, like Joe's, had a startling resonance and a wide inflectional swing. She added, "I suppose that is you." She had tried, as before, to say it casually, pertly even, but the wire edge in her voice betrayed that she was frightened.

He had expected that. What surprised him was that he was frightened too. Almost for the first time in his life he felt that he had to look his teeth to prevent them from chattering. He turned his look abruptly away from her, but still, as he gazed blankly out the window, he could see the picture of her. She'd come, incredibly, to live with him. She'd unpacked her trunk and sent it down to the storeroom. She'd dressed as a woman dresses when she is securely at home, in the sort of thing they called, he thought, a tea-gown. And white-silk stockings and black-satin slippers, high-heeled with straps. He'd find her like that, every day—unless he frightened her off.

"Yes," he said, "we're here together at last." Then, in order not to stop talking, he went on, "You gave me a great scare. It's two weeks since that lawyer telegraphed you'd left."

"You got my picture, though," she reminded him. "I wrote on it I was coming. I had to go to San Francisco first to get some clothes. Mother never would let me have a thing I was fit to be seen in. I thought I'd better make a good impression, so you wouldn't send me back on the next train." She gave a nervous laugh. "Have I? Do you like me?"

She chaffed him brightly while she served and, in the intervals, made a hearty breakfast of her own. She made light of his concern that she should be up and about so early. She wasn't one of the sort who had to sleep away their days. There was nearly always something better to do than sleep, she thought, and certainly her first breakfast with her father was one of them.

The meal prolonged itself far beyond his usual limit for breakfast, and the morning paper lay unregarded on the floor. At last, however, he rose

By HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER

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Somehow he couldn't look round at her, but he nodded and said, "Yes—I must wish your mother you've come. She's been in a terrible state about you."

She had begun coming toward him, but now she stopped. "I guess you're still mad at me," she remarked, "for having kept you waiting."

At this he turned to her. "I kept you waiting longer than that," he said. "So what forgiving there is you'll have to do."

"Well, then," she answered, "let's kiss and make up. I suppose that's the next thing to do." She uttered that same nervous laugh again as she



They Had the Room to Themselves.

came to meet him, and, when he took her in his hands, he saw that she winced. Her head went back like a frightened animal's.

Instantly he let her go, and stepped back. "We'll let that stand over while you're getting used to me," he told her.

Blood surged up into her face, and it was with a shrug she turned away. "Suit yourself about that," she said.

The paralysis which had been upon him lifted. His thought spoke itself, naturally, in words. "My dear, the only woman who ever kissed me without wanting to was your mother. I'm not going to have that handed on to you. You're going to like me some day, and when you do you'll come and kiss me without having to stiffen your back."

At that she smiled round a little more spontaneously upon him. "I'm going to like it here, all right," she said.

And with this encouragement, partial as it was (for it was, he noted, that she'd prophesied she'd like, rather than him), he took matters into his own hands. Had she said anything to Anson about dinner—about anything she'd specially like? Was she tired after her long journey? If not, what would she say to their dining downtown—at the Blackstone, perhaps? And seeing a show afterward, by way of making it a party?

The party that night was a success. True, he frowned a trifle at the way she dressed. Her San Francisco clothes showed they had been bought by one used to making forty dollars look like four hundred. A trifle bizarre for the fashionable hotel at which they dined and with an impossible hat. Joe ordered two cocktails and suggested that she could sip hers and he would finish it for her. She drank it down instead and it showed a little in her heightened color and a tendency to be on her guard.

It might have been that or the show that followed, a charming little play with a heroine in dotted Swiss, whom Beatrice seemed to resent, that made her fancy her father was in a patronizing mood. Riding home from the theater (he had not suggested contracting the adventure further) she had seemed a trifle frightened at his proximity and it was with evident relief that she took his casual dismissal of her to bed, without any demand for confidences.

At half-past seven the next morning, as he was sitting down to breakfast, she amazed him by coming into the dining-room. She was clad in a loose-sleeved bath-robe, over her nightgown, and her hair, in two thick black braids, hung over her shoulders. Her eyes were bright with youth, and the bloom of sleep lay upon her unpainted skin. Her greeting was a mere playful caress of one hand upon his shoulder. Then she sat down in the armchair opposite his, and made a great play of the domesticities of breakfast; had the coffee-up and all the serving-dishes removed to her side of the table.

She chaffed him brightly while she served and, in the intervals, made a hearty breakfast of her own. She made light of his concern that she should be up and about so early. She wasn't one of the sort who had to sleep away their days. There was nearly always something better to do than sleep, she thought, and certainly her first breakfast with her father was one of them.

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and said he must be off. She rose, too—they had the room to themselves just then—and for a moment she stood before him, breathless and a little flushed. Then she flung her arms around him, tight, and kissed his mouth. He gathered her up in his arms, and tears, utterly unwonted and amazing, filled his eyes.

"It was your beard I was afraid of," she murmured. "But I guess I like it."

He let her go, abruptly, for there was another damned echo in that. It was a thing that had been said to him before.

Then he dashed the unwelcome memory out of his mind. "Look here!" he cried. "How long will it take you to dress? If you'll be quick, I'll wait. Take you downtown with me to the office. I want 'em to see you. Besides, it's the place you'll have to come when you want money."

"I'll fly," she said.

The tears she saw in her father's eyes, when she'd kissed him over their first breakfast, obliterated the fear that she'd be shipped back to Pasadena as unsatisfactory; as his forbearance, the evening before, had made it plain that she wouldn't have to run away from him. They'd "get on" all right. And the menace she found him in, as well as the place he seemed to offer her in it, was far beyond the wildest of her hopes. The "good flat" and the two cars he had mentioned in his letter had suggested no such establishment as this.

Anson—dignified, inscrutable, sophisticated, and, implicitly at least, under her orders—was as incredible as if he'd come out of the movies. And Burns, the chauffeur—her chauffeur, in effect, since her father seemed never to require his services by day—was as good-looking and jolly and serviceable to her caprice as any of the young princes of Hollywood who sometimes disguised themselves in jobs like that, for a lark—or a purpose.

The car she elected to do most of her driving in was not the sumptuous monster in which Joe had taken her down to dinner on that first evening, but a sport model of the same famous make. Her first edict was that she be allowed to learn to drive it. They made daily cruises, she and young Burns, of uncounted miles and unreckoned hours. She even liked the country. The color and freshness and variety of the foliage excited her, accustomed as she was to the palm-topped monotony of southern California.

Most of the time during those first few days she felt like All Baba when he had first said, "Open sesame!" But, again like All Baba, she was to experience no comfortable security in the possession of her treasure-trove. There were enigmas about her father's life she couldn't solve; alarms that kept her constantly on the alert.

She'd stumbled upon the first of these the morning Joe took her to the office. He'd introduced her round promiscuously, during the ostensible process of showing her over the place, to all sorts of people—draftsmen, clerks, stenographers—usually in a perfectly one-sided manner: "This is my daughter, Beatrice"; of course, it didn't matter to her who they were.

But to this procedure there had been striking exception. On leading her up to one young woman—a creature with some pretense to looks and a lot of red hair; probably some sort of head stenographer since she seemed to have an office of her own—her father had said, "Beatrice, this is Jennie MacArthur." He'd said it, too, on a different note, significantly somehow, and the significance seemed to be that here was somebody who, for an unguessed reason, did matter. He added, as if to put it beyond doubt, "I want you two to get acquainted."

Beatrice, startled and feeling herself flushed, managed a rather cavalier nod and an abbreviated "How do you do"; and then, though she hadn't meant to, extended her hand.

The woman didn't act snubbed at all, though the intention, Beatrice thought, had been plain enough. Her look was penetrating and deliberate. "We're very glad you've come," she said. Then, turning to him—her employer, "Congratulations!" She didn't merely say it, either; she put something into it, some special meaning.

There'd been conversation—disjointed, rather at random—after this; questions about the sort of trip she'd had across the continent; a brief account of what they'd done the night before.

At last she said, amazingly, "There's nothing much here this morning, Joe. Why don't you take the day off?"

Though he vetoed the suggestion, brusquely—there was something he particularly wanted to get at—he didn't seem to feel that there'd been anything officious about it. And the "Joe" neither of them seemed to have been conscious of at all. Evidently it was what she called him.

She thought her father acted, now, as if he'd still like to stay longer, but was conscious of being turned out. He said, "Well, we won't bother you any more, now, but—"

Later, casually, in the course of a driving lesson, she put a question or two to Burns. Who was the good-looking woman in the office with red hair?

Miss MacArthur? Oh, yes, he knew her. Very pleasant she was, and smart, too, he guessed. He understood she was secretary of the company. She lived up in Edgewater. He'd

driven her home once or twice when her own car had been out of commission.

She had a car, then, Beatrice commented.

He qualified this. It was a flivver coupe.

"Home from where?" Beatrice asked. "Does she ever come to our house?"

"I couldn't say as to that," he answered, and it struck her that his manner was a little artificially discreet. Not even the thrill of learning to run the big car could drive the problem out of her mind.

But it was pretty well supplanted, a few days later, by another, more serious. Her father, as they were leaving the breakfast-table, said to Anson, "Mr. Craven and his sister are dining with us tonight. No one else."

She perceived, from the moment of real attention he gave the butler's question as to what wine they should have, that the dinner wasn't quite the casual thing his offhand announcement of it was meant to make it appear. (Wine hadn't been an item at their dinners, nor even, since that first night at the Blackstone, cocktails. Her father helped himself to whisky out of a carafe, but never offered any to her.) She asked, when he was on the point of going off without telling her, who the Cravens were.

"Why, you met Henry that day at the office," he said. "He's treasurer of the company."

"Was he the smallest man with eyeglasses?" she asked. And, at his nod, "Is he a particular friend of yours?"

There was something she took as not quite serious about his answer. "Sure he is. Henry and I have cotopped up in great style." He hesitated, then went on, more soberly, "His sister Margaret's a mighty fine woman. You want to make a good impression on her." At the door he turned back to say, "Better wear your little blue dress, I guess. More the thing for a small family dinner than the red one."

She was in two minds, during the day, whether she wouldn't defy him here, by way of establishing a principle she was in danger of allowing to lapse. But a misgiving, picked up she knew not where, about that rose-colored costume, which had looked so desirably smart in the Market street shop, led her to follow her father's suggestion. For a few minutes after their guests arrived she was glad she had done so. She sniffed danger in the wind, and until it had passed she didn't want her hands tied by a quarrel, no matter how trivial, with her father.

She couldn't have said just what it was that made her uneasy, but her pitiless young eyes saw, beneath Margaret's surface suavity, something

haggard. It betrayed itself in the corners of her eyelids and in the tightness of her throat-muscles. It could be heard, sometimes, in the wire edge of a word—addressed, usually, to her brother, or when, with what was meant to sound like pure good humor, she told stories at his expense. She was old and tired and, for some reason only to be guessed, not far from desperate.

But, all the more for that, she was formidable. Over the cocktails in the drawing-room she had addressed her host as Joe, but without—quite—Jennie MacArthur's unconsciousness. A gleam in his eye told the girl, too, that he had noted it, with interest and perhaps with pleasure. So it must have been the first time. The woman hadn't done it idly; nothing she did was idle.

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