

# "Spring Flowers"

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it made a perfect background for the two girls in their floating draperies—Peg's flashing dark beauty set off by all white; Adele's blond loveliness heightened by the pale powder blue.

It was no wonder that Barret called out when they were about halfway down:

"Hold the pose, girls! Don't move a finger! As you are for a minute. Hank, aren't they a picture? If I were an artist, I'd want to put them on canvas—just as they stand."

For some reason—probably because Barret was so sincere in his honest admiration—there wasn't the slightest hint of embarrassment in the long, long moment of silence during which all four of them stood still and stared each, except Barret, at his own beloved. Barret seemed to be taking in the details of the whole setting, as well as the lovely central figures, as one might study a marvelous painting.

At last with a sigh, he said: "All right. Come to life, beauties. Your loveliness is graven forever upon my mind and heart."

Peg laughed a little then, and introduced Adele and Barret with the dozen or more stair steps between them. And Adele went slowly down to the foot of the steps, where Barret stood waiting for her. There was no rudeness in his not coming to meet her. Rather was there the joy of the artist soul, that appreciated every graceful move she made toward him. Peg had a queer feeling that if he could have done it, Barret would have walked backwards away from Adele—just to prolong the joy of watching her walk toward him.

Love had mantled her with grace and beauty—already.

With her blue eyes grateful, humble, worshipful, adoring—steadfastly meeting Barret's dark ones, Adele went to him. Trustingly, happily, certain of his love—and her own. Hank gulped nervously as he watched her. Peg's eyes darted watchfully from Adele to Barret, from Barret to Adele—and were satisfied with what they saw. Then she sighed with relief.

If Adele were just clever enough to play the game now—

"What an amazing, sparkling, tingling vitality you have!" were Barret's first words to Adele—as he held her proffered hand in his. "There is something about you as different from other girls—as a Christmas tree is different before and after the electric trimmings are lighted."

"He's right," whispered Hank to Peg. "You lighted up the Christmas tree."

"Ssh!" whispered Peg, who didn't want to miss a word of this. If Adele met this situation all right—

"That's because I've just learned—what turns on the electric trimmings—and the lights are shining in all their pristine newness," Adele told him softly—and Peg breathed again.

"That's a secret you must share with me," Barret told her. "I thought being in love was the only thing that made one sparkle with happiness as you sparkle. Tell me, are you in love?"

"Maybe I'm in love—with love," said Adele, her worshipful eyes never wavering. "Isn't everyone?"

"No, I don't think so," said Barret. "I think very few people are even conscious of the astounding power of love. How many people know that when you're in love, you are a totally different person—everything in you vibrating at a higher tension. Like wires singing—"

"Listen, you two serious thinkers," interrupted Peg. "We're dancing this evening. Let's go. You two can sit 'em all out—if you can hide Adele Barret, and keep her away from the men. And if you CAN do that, you can discuss love to your heart's content."

When the four of them walked into the Country Club ballroom, there was a hush. Barret thought it was a tribute to Adele's beauty. And it was. For a moment, nobody recognized her. And then one girl said to her partner: "Why, it's Adele Raymond! Imagine! I didn't know she was beautiful!"

And after that, Hank didn't have to suggest to the boys that they make Barret fight for his chance to dance with her. Adele didn't get to dance ten steps that night with any one partner before another one cut in.

"What HAVE you done to yourself, Adele? And why didn't you blossom out sooner?"

"Gosh, you're beautiful, Adele!"

And then Barret would cut back in. It was a rule of the crowd that a man couldn't cut in on the fellow who had just cut in on him. Adele had to change partners twice before Barret could claim her again. And so it went every dance. Barret and two others, then Barret again, until he finally grumbled:

"I've fought for the most popular girl before, Adele, and I know the only way to win. Let's go places."

Adele was willing, though this sudden new popularity was heady stuff. She WANTED Barret to have to fight for her. She knew it

would make her that much more desirable in his eyes. And still it hardly seemed fair, for she was suddenly popular because she had suddenly become beautiful. And it was Barret who had made her beautiful.

Out onto the veranda, down the drive, and to his own car Barret led her.

"We'll drive a while," he said, helping her in. And then—suddenly: "What makes you so wonderful, Adele? There's something so magnetic about you that you electrify a whole room when you come into it. It's stronger in you than in any girl I ever met. What is it?"

"Couldn't it be," began Adele hesitatingly, "that sometimes two people are—particularly keenly attuned to each other?"

"You mean that you are as amazingly drawn to me as I am to you?" asked Barret, incredulity in his tone.

"Why—yes," said Adele simply, her big eyes lifted to his. After all, he loved her. Why coquette about it?

"And I've been mooning around this town, lonely, depressed, when you were here all the time," complained Barret. "Where do you keep yourself? Why haven't I ever

seen you before?"

That was a shock. Like a sudden, cold rain in your face. And then Adele began to reason. Of course! He didn't want her to know so soon about seeing her in the garden and falling in love with her hair. After all, one should make haste slowly—when in love. Its amazing new sweetness lasted longer that way. So she pretended she didn't know he had seen her.

"You've probably seen me," she told him. "I'm Cinderella. I work at the library. I live with my two old maid aunts, and I don't go to many parties."

"But you'll go to all the parties with me—now—won't you?" Barret wanted to know.

"Of course," she said again with

that sweet simplicity. "Any place you want me to go."

"Sweet spirits of nitre!" he murmured. "What did I ever do to deserve this? Adele, you're marvelous. But what will all your boy friends say?"

"Do you care what they say?" she dimpled—as if she had to have a special traffic officer to keep her crowd of beaux in line.

Any girl could have warned her that she was making Barret's conquest too easy. But it was all settled in Adele's mind. Barret loved her, and she loved him. They would probably be married before the summer was over. Why hedge and flirt and pretend to be reluctant? If she did, it would only put off the moment when he would take

her in his arms and tell her in words, himself, that he loved her. And that is the biggest moment in any girl's life. More important, even, than the moment when she meets him at the altar, for marriage is a planned event. A proposal may be hoped for, expected, but it is always life's sweetest surprise.

By and by, Barret stopped the car, and they sat in silence for a while, bathed in moonlight.

"I wonder if I'll look back upon this night some day," mused Barret softly, "and say: 'There is such a thing as love at first sight. I have experienced it.' Do you think so, Adele?"

"I—think—there is," murmured Adele almost inaudibly.

"Such a thing as love at first

## Park Visited By Almost 13,000 In Month Of April

A total of 37,466 persons visited the Great Smoky Mountains National Park during April.

The visitors were from the District of Columbia, Canada, Panama and Chile—seven per cent of the visitors from other than the local North Carolina and Tennessee States in number of visitors.

Tennessee, (2) Illinois, (4) North Carolina, (4) Ohio, (5) (6) New York.

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(To be continued)

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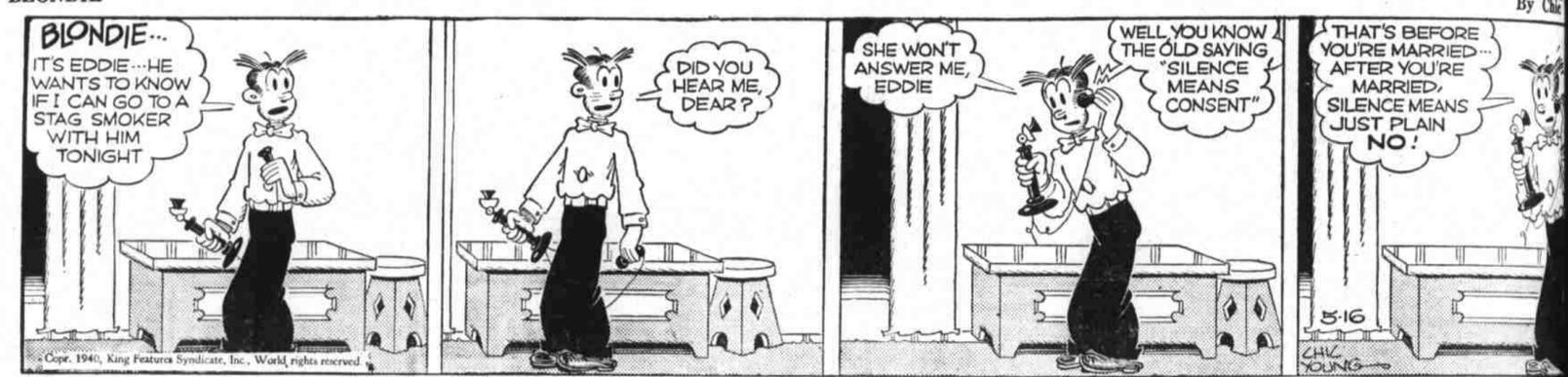
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