

"ROULETTE of LOVE" by —MAY— CHRISTIE

CHAPTER XII

The Stock Exchange firm of Chalaire incorporated was indeed in a bad way. Mrs. Jeremy Chalaire had scarcely been laid away to rest when the blow fell. It seemed that Jeremy Chalaire had headed the pool manipulating the liquor stock which crashed deplorably. Four hundred thousand dollars must be raised at once, to meet the stock deliveries before the closing of the market at three o'clock—otherwise the firm would be suspended from the Exchange!

The banks refused any more loans. Jeremy Chalaire was frantic. His son dashed home to his Park Avenue apartment to take the family jewels and put them up as collateral. The butler informed him that his wife had gone to lunch at a famous speakeasy in the Fifties. The jewels were not in Zita's room. Carter dashed at top speed for already it was almost half past one.

He found Zita in the bar with another woman and two notorious women-chasers. It was with the greatest difficulty that he dragged her away from them, even though he insisted that his news was important. She stared at him coldly, when he told her that she must give up the jewels. Nor would she say anything until he had driven her back to their apartment in his car, when she spherically informed him that the jewels were not there!

"Good Lord! You dared to waste this time! Zita, don't you realize that every second is precious? It's already after two! The Exchange closes at three! And that'll be our finish!"

"I tell you the jewels aren't in this apartment! And even if they were you wouldn't get them, for without them what would be left to me?" she jibbed. "With the firm gone broke, all I'd get out of my marriage would be a handsome penniless husband! No, thanks! I stick to the jewels! They're mine!"

"They're not! You've only got custody of them! My mother didn't leave a will. And even if she had they belong to the family. Where are they, Zita?"

She declined flatly to tell him. For fifteen frantic minutes they argued. Then Carter lost control of himself. He rushed at her, catching her by the throat. He shouted: "You'd see us ruined for a few baubles, you—"

She struggled with him. She was terrified now. She panted: "They're in the bank down-town, in the safe deposit vault! But when he let her go, demanding that she give him the key, she moaned that she had no idea where it was, that he had better go to the bank, himself."

But now it was too late! Carter flung himself frantically into his car, and ignoring lights and possible "tickets," sped down town. But despite his haste, the traffic held him up several times. He was zooming down Fourth Avenue when the big clock that tops City Hall ponderously struck three times!

Eight minutes later he drew up outside the building on Wall Street where Chalaire incorporated had its offices. Directly in front of him at the curb was an ambulance. A little knot of people had col-

lected. Carter leapt from his car. The door-keeper, looking very scared, stopped him as he entered the building.

"Mr. Chalaire, sir... bad news, sir... your father..." the man stammered. He broke off, staring at the ambulance.

"Good, Lord. For him..."

A frightened little office-boy was guarding the door of Jeremy Chalaire's private sanctum. There was a sound of voices inside. Carter thrust his way past the boy.

A white-clad ambulance-attendant and a doctor were stooping over the body, which lay on a leather-covered couch in a corner. Jeremy's secretary, an efficient girl who had been there for years, was sobbing quietly. After the report of the gun, she had been the first to find him slumped on his desk.

Some clerks and customers' men were near the door, inside the room. They made way for the son of their boss.

"Oh, Mr. Carter, I was in the outer room! It was just as the clock struck three on City Hall... the shot came!..."

Carter thrust the girl aside. A blood-soaked bandage was about his father's head. Yet, strangely enough, there was a peaceful look on his face as he lay there in the couch.

"Dad! Good Lord! Oh, why did you do it? Why..." Like a torrent, memory of the long years of his father's kindness and patience with him swept over Carter. As he stooped over that silent figure, tears coursed down his cheeks, and it seemed as though his very heart was wrenched asunder.

The white-coated doctor had his instrument and got up.

"You his son?"

Carter nodded, speechless.

"It's all over. He was dead when we got here."

After the necessary and painful formalities had been gone through Carter returned to his home on Park Avenue.

His father was gone. Wild-eyed, he told himself that his wife, Zita, was the murderer.

"Madam left a note for you, sir," said the butler.

With futile rage in his heart, he read the curt missive. It informed him that his wife was leaving him, as she could not stand such treatment as he had just exposed her to!

He glanced at the clock. It was five. Still time to call the bank and if she had removed the jewels from the safe-deposit vault.

She had. He telephoned Cruiks, the family lawyer, immediately, instructing him to institute proceedings for the recovery of the jewels, then to sell them, and pay the creditors in full.

Lucinda read of the tragedy in the newspapers. Also the more or less caustic comments in the social columns about Zita leaving her husband.

Zita had gone to Reno, where one could now get a divorce in six weeks!

Greatly daring, Lucinda penned a kind little note of sympathy to Carter, in the swift passing of his father and mother.

She sat at home every night, praying that by some miracle the bell might ring, and Carter—the

old Carter she had loved so terribly—might be on the doorstep...

But nights were lonely. If Carter had received her note, he gave no sign.

"I say, the bally old blighter is drinking terribly, she was informed by Bertie Spriggs, who had taken to dropping in uninvited at Lucinda's little apartment. "And I can jolly well understand it, too, for his business is gone, his family gone and that rat of a Zita has jolly well left the sinking ship!"

Bertie, who seemed to be everywhere, these days of warm September, had a further blow to unfold. "I say, I just heard the most ghastly bit of news in the Yale Club—from that blighter who dined at the Chalaire's house the night the old lady died—he told me that Carter has been hitting it up terribly in liquor, and now he's in a hospital somewhere or other, stone blind, from some bad booze he picked up!"

Later she was to read that the Chalaire's country house—or rather, the entire contents thereof—were to be sold at auction.

The sale was on a Saturday afternoon. Wanting to take a last look at the room where her love for Carter had its birth, and perhaps planning to purchase some little trifle as a memento of her great romance, Lucinda took a train to Hewlett, and the auction.

Down in her subconscious mind she had the hope HE might be there? No matter what had happened... no matter how he had treated her in the past, or what their misunderstandings might have been... she still loved him.

It was the scent of jasmin in her hair—or perhaps her little stifled sob—that Carter found her in the garden.

They had been standing quite close. She had smiled timidly at him, her heart thundering.

But he had turned his head away, giving her a direct cut...

It was then that Lucinda had given vent to the sound that was like some tiny animal in pain...

"Good Lord! Is it Lucinda?" he had whispered.

The sale was over, the crowd had thinned out. His fine dark eyes looked just the same—but with a terrible shock she realized that Bertie had been right—he was blind. He could not see her!

"For richer, for poorer, for better or worse!" Carter was beside her, and in Lucinda's ears were the grave, sweet words of the marriage ceremony.

There would be no honeymoon, in the travel sense. Carter was an invalid. He had no money now. Their haven would be the little apartment on West 98th Street.

"Rich or poor, blind or seeing, I'll never leave you, Carter!" Lucinda was saying, in a choking voice, tears running down her face as she kissed her husband.

The sale of the Chalaire family jewels... reluctantly wrung from predatory Zita... had even in these hard times realized \$70,000.

There had been much less owing to the creditors than Carter had imagined. After everything was paid, there would be a sum of \$15,000 left for the young couple.

But the best news of all came from the eye specialist! Day by day, Carter had gradually been learning to distinguish objects...

Came the time when he could really see the lovely vision that was his wife, Lucinda, in the blue satin gown and brocade wrap he had given her in the hot-headed days of their courtship.

"We're going to the Ritz to celebrate. We've been married exactly two weeks today," Lucinda told him blithely.

She didn't even have to help him down the stairs and into the taxi. Wonder of wonders! It was Carter who guided her new!

"You look beautiful, Lucinda! You're 'true blue! We'll forget the past! We'll make our own way! We've everything in front of us!"

He grinned at her boyishly, there in the restaurant of the Ritz-Carlton. He ordered everything expensive on the menu, in his old lordly way. That was a sure sign of his physical and spiritual recovery, she told herself.

She smiled at him. "The New Deal?"

He said: "You betcha, Lucinda!" (The End.)

Haywood Well Represented Among Directors Of New W. N. C. Fair

Haywood county has furnished more directors and associate directors of the Western North Carolina Agricultural and Industrial Fair association than any other single county in the entire region and officers of the association said this week that the large number was due to the prominent position occupied by the county in both the agricultural and industrial life of Western North Carolina.

Officials of the association said at headquarters in Hendersonville that indications were that both agricultural and industrial interests in Haywood county would participate actively in the fair and

that both groups already had given the newly created institution strong support.

The fair will be held next month for the first time, opening September 16 and lasting through September 21.

Construction of the fair grounds have been started near Hendersonville and G. R. Lewis, general manager, said it was assured that the work on the ground would be completed prior to the opening date.

The interests of the fair in Waynesville and Haywood county are being handled by a group of

nine directors and thirty associates. The directors are: Arthur Osborne, of Canton, R. N. Barber, James A. G. Davey, R. L. Boyd and William Medford, Jr., of Waynesville, D. Reeves Noland, of Clyde, member of the state board of agriculture; Glenn Palmer, of Clyde, A. J. McCracken, of near Clyde and R. L. Prevost, Sr., of Hazelwood.

The associate directors are: C. E. Smith, Fred Peden, I. A. McLain, Dr. J. L. Westmoreland, W. F. Hipps, George C. Haynes, Miss Florence Osborne and A. J. Hutchins, of Canton, J. C. Brown, George E. Platt, Jarvis L. Palmer, George A. Brown, Jr., A. Howell, Lenoir Gwyn, Henry Francis, J. C. Lynn, George A. Brown, Mary Margaret Smith, W. G. Byers, Mrs. Edith Alley, Miss Sarah Elmore and Jack

Bride, 68, To Town First

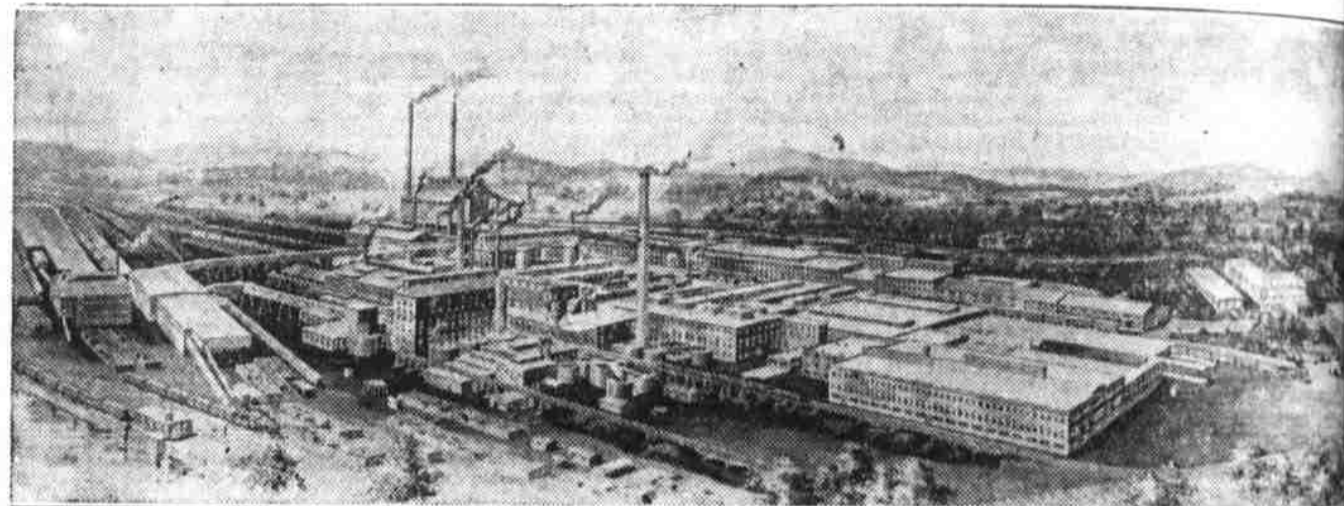
KANSAS CITY—Mrs. Harrington, sixty-eight, the first trip of her life beyond Greater Kansas City Saturday. It'll be her first. She's to marry Edward...

seventy-eight, and home in Campo, Cal.

Messer, all of Waynesville, Fitzgerald, B. F. Nash, O'Brien, Charles McCracken, Haynes, M. E. Rogers, and Riley Palmer, of Canton.

Read The

LABOR DAY



The great satisfaction in life comes from honest toil, a task well done, a duty well performed.

The sentinel on duty to guard civilization and guide it onward and upward to newer comforts and greater joys in living is labor.

The men and women who toil in shop, mill, store, home, woods, and on the farm. Those who work everywhere. We salute them on this day.

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Plan 3-Year Boat Trip Without Cash

LOS ANGELES—Mr. and Mrs. Ray Wood left for El Paso, Texas this week to launch upon the Rio Grande a 16-foot "combination sailboat, canoe and kayak" which they hope to take on a three-year voyage into the Gulf of Mexico, to Florida and up the Atlantic coast.

Said Wood: "We are going to prove it is possible to live off the products of the sea and land. We are taking no money."