

# Heart of Happiness

by PEGGY O'MORE

AP Newsfeatures



with the mesa house as with his own. "You do get into the darrest places," he complained, looking down at Arleta.

### CHAPTER 23

CARO came in and Kelly wheeled Carson into the long dining room and down to his place at the head of a table spread before the fire.

All too soon it was time to leave. Arleta had a moment alone with Mr. Carson. "Wait, girl, Justice has a funny way of waiting. The old mills of the gods grind slow but exceedingly fine."

But when she picked up the pup and started to carry him out Kelly objected. "All right," he roared finally. "Take him. Wake up some morning and watch him die. Martin can look out for the horses, but dogs range free. Can't I get it through your heads that they won't let Little Chips stay on?"

For a moment there was a stunned silence; then Carson broke it with a rumbling chuckle. "Well that's the best news I've heard this evening. Who's afraid she'll learn too much?"

"She thanked him and she thanked Caro.

She found nothing suspicious on the drive home until she drew up before the house. Then she saw every light was on. And even as she wondered at such wanton use of electricity, the front door was thrown wide and Cal Sheridan capped down the stairway.

"Leta," he cried, "oh, thank heavens. Where have you been?" "Flat tire," sprang to Arleta's lips. "But don't you think I've intelligence enough to find my way home?"

"Ordinarily," conceded Sheridan gloomily.

"Ordinarily," flared Arleta, and quickly. "It was so nice of you to let me know you were coming. I enjoyed seeing you in town with a girl who has made an issue of her enmity. I suppose you have a perfectly logical explanation."

"Ah, Leta, what's wrong? We were happy at home. Here—"

"We were happy," she corrected him, "until you came down in the Lane field and met Allene. For some reason you're more willing to listen to her—"

"Suppose I told you I heard something that had nothing to do with Allene?" queried Calvin in a worried tone.

Arleta looked up. She would accept any information, then separate the chaff from any wheat that might be present.

"I was having lunch in the Sapphire Room. At the next table was an old lady, cutest thing I remember me of the song Rudy Vallee used to sing so much. 'Little old lady dressed in gray.'"

Arleta nodded and braced herself.

"Some women came up and began talking in a sympathizing tone and then I heard your name mentioned. Naturally I pricked my ears."

Cal's voice droned on and finally stopped on the phrase "And she said it was a pity any Langtry had been allowed to return to the hill."

"Oh, Cal," she cried in exasperation, "don't you know me well enough to know I couldn't—"

"My Leta couldn't have been so cruel to an old lady, but I don't know this Little Chips Langtry. Well," he asked eventually.

"Cal," she leaned forward, laughing, "for a lad with your war record you're the cutest little old woman I've ever met. And though you said this particular bit of gossip had nothing to do with Allene,

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Sweet, Allene thought it up. What's more, she undoubtedly planted the little old lady dressed in gray, took you to the Sapphire Room—you were having lunch with her, weren't you? and then, timing perfect, staged the play.

"And you, Calvin darling, swallowed it, hook line and sinker, and the sinker's lying heavy. Mrs. Colson—"

"That was her name?" Sheridan sprang at this bit of evidence. "Yet you pretend there was nothing to it?"

Arleta clung to her temper, with clawed hands. "No, I've pretended nothing of the kind. And at the moment I know exactly how my father felt about explanations. Our enemies don't believe them."

"Leta"—Cal was bending over her, "you're engaged to me, remember? You owe me an explanation."

"Ah!" A great sigh came from Arleta. Imagine being engaged to an enemy. Here, Cal, I think it will fit Allene's hand. She's waiting for it, you know."

She placed the shining sapphire in Sheridan's hand, and before he was aware of the significance of the act, had wheeled around the chair and run up to her room.

She had gone to her dressing

At holiday times turkey may mean a big meal, but in radio slang it's a program that has been a complete failure.

room when she heard a car below. Going to the balcony, she saw a disheveled Martin attempting to get into his coat before answering the insistent ring at the bell.

"My-my," murmured Arleta from the balcony. Slowly then she descended the stairs, eyeing the taut frame of Kelly who waited at the novel post.

"I've brought your ring back," he snarled, "now put it on."

Arleta waited thoughtfully. She considered Calvin and then she considered the unreasoning anger of How Kelly. What lay behind it?

"How," she asked gently, "why is it so important that I remain engaged to Calvin Sheridan?"

"Because," he spat, "I don't want another hunting accident." (To be continued)

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