AIR FORCE-GIRL

By Renee Shann

CHAPTER XI

Jane, a fashion artist, shares an apartment in London with Stella, a free lance journalist. Jane joins the WAAF. The night before entering service she walks through dim streets and collides with a flight lieutenant of the RAF. Stopping to break an engagement with Stella she discovers that the lieutenant, Timothy Poel-Sanders— nicknamed 'Tips' —is Stella's divorced husband. Jane hears that Tips' squadron flies at 10 o'clock and that they are searching for him. She pedals to the home of Mrs. Stanton, where she finds the flier. He leaves at once. Mrs. Stanton accuses Jane of sending Tips to his death Tips misses the flight from which Flight Lieutenant Stanton and Jimmie Stafford fail to return. Later, Stanton returns, as from the dead, and sees Tips kissing his wife at the gate. He threatens to diorce her. Jane meets an admirer, Clive, at the Cafe de Paris, and runs into Tips. After Tips leaves she dances with Clive, who asks her to come to his apartment for a drink. Jane accepts his invitation.

"I've come to ask you to lay off Iris," he said.

Clive's eyes twinkled. "Why not indeed? But there could so easily be something in it if only you were willing. Still, I know when I'm beaten. I'd ask you to marry me if I thought I stood a chance. I've an idea I should be taking you home."

"You're right. I really ought to be going." She rose to her feet and a little involuntary shiver ran through her. "I'm cold and tired," she said wistfully. She pulled her velvet coat around her. She looked around for her evening bag and the abruptly was arrested. At that moment the silence of the apartment was broken by the loud, eerie wail of an air raid warning. She made an effort and managed to speak normally. "A raid?"

"Probably a false alarm."

Now it came again and others could be heard in the distance. There were police whistles in the street below and the sound of hurrying footsteps. "Scared?" asked Clive.

"Not a bit," she said, nor was she, once the first shock of it was over. "You forget I'm a Waaf."

"There's a good shelter in the basement," said Clive reassuringly. "I think I should take you down to it."

They went out into the little hall of the apartment without undue haste and then opened the door leading to the corridor. As they did so the door of the opposite apartment also opened. Two women in dressing gowns emerged, one short and dark, the other one fair and slender. The second one looked at Jane and as their eyes met her expression changed. Her glance flickered to Jane's companion, took in, as it seemed, the implications of the situation with a lightning-like certainty of understanding.

Jane took a tight grip on herself. Iris Stanton! The very last person she could wish to see her emerging from Clive's flat at such an hour!

As she returned her curt nod of recognition her heart sank. She knew quite well what use Iris would make of this unexpected meeting.

Jane said at breakfast the next morning, "I saw your ex-husband last night. I merely ran into him when I was with Clive at the Cafe de Paris. And into the woman in the case just as I was emerging from Clive's quarters when the warning sounded. She was apparently staying in the apartment opposite. We had a little light conversation in the shelter."

"That must have been nice for you. Do you like her?"

"Not a bit, nor she me. Thank goodness that warning was a false one and over quickly. Otherwise we might have scratched each other's eyes out."

Stella reached for the butter and said a trifle wistfully that she wished this wasn't their last breakfast in the apartment.

"So do I. Shall I be able to stay in this new place you're going to?"

"Oh, yes. But it won't be anything like this." Jane looked sympathetically at Stella.

"Poor you!"

Stella smiled. "I'll be all right. I'll get through somehow. I've been hard up before. I remember when I first left Tips . . ." Again there was a reminiscent look in her eyes.

Jane took a chance. She said she had been wanting to ask ever since she had met him. "You never told me what happened to make you go."

Stella stirred her coffee absently. "Didn't I?" Her eyes met Jane's across the table. "D'you want to hear?"

"Not if you don't want to talk about it," said Jane, not altogether truthfully.

Stella made a quick gesture. "Oh, I suppose I may as well. It's was another girl. It was when not a very pleasant story. There were in Cairo. We'd only been married a few months. We squabbled and fought, but then hundreds of married couples do that and weather through. There was never anything really serious —and then this Fay Davies came out to stay with her uncle, who was a diplmatic attache.

"I discovered that they'd been friends for years. She was lovely to look at and was tremendously popular. She had a fiance back one who counted, I realized that in England, but Tips was the the first moment I saw them together."

She paused for a moment and Jane didn't speak. She didn't want to disturb Stella's story.

Now Stella was speaking again, in that hard, dry, expressionless voice, telling her of the gossip on the station. Then there had come a day when Tips and Fay had gone off for an excursion in to the desert. They were to have returned that night, but it wasn't until late the following evening that they had put in an appearance. Both had been quite cool and offhand about what had happened. They'd driven off the beaten track and miles from any where there had been trouble with the car. They'd had to shelter for the night in a Bedouin able to get it repaired. We had an awful row over it. I wouldn't have minded if Tips had only been honest with me, but he would insist there was nothing to it. He just lied shamelessly about the whole thing."

Jane interrupted her quickly, not knowing why she did so, "but suppose he wasn't lying to you?"

Stella looked across the table at her, "Of course he was lying," she said with conviction.

"Tips said he'd never forgive me if I cited Fay in a divorce. So Tips and I had to drag through that sordid business of arranging the divorce. You can't imagine how dreadful that is."

Stella got up from the table and reached for her cigarettes and lit one with fingers that trembled. "Well, that's about all," she finished.

The story of Tips and the girl Fay haunted Jane. It was there at the back of her mind all the time she was helping Stella finish packing. Stella's moving had certainly been enough to depress one. Jane had found it difficult to try to tell the older girl that she was sure she'd be all right. Even if she couldn't get any work in her own line, there must be something she could do. If only instead she'd married Rupert Grant!"

Tips was stopping the car beside Jane and not looking at her at all kindly. She might have been any Waaf walking back from the railway station and not one in whom he had any special interest. "Thank you," said Jane as he opened the door and got in beside him.

They drove along for a few moments in silence. Then Jane said somewhat obviously, "So you got back safely?"

"Yes. And you've got back **safely too," he said equally obviously.** "I hear there was an air-raid warning in town last night

"Yes." She drew a quick breath. "I take it Mrs. Stanton told you she saw me?"

"She did. Funny you should all have met."

"Very funny. Such a pleasant encounter, too! It's a pity you weren't there, too. We should have been quite a jolly little party."

Tips shot her a furious glance from beneath lowered brows. "Isn't two o'clock in the morning an odd time to visit a man in his apartment?"

Jane turned in her seat and glared at him. "How dare you adopt that tone to me? It is no business of yours."

He sent her a quick, almost a furtive glance, and miraculously his expression seemed to change completely. The anger vanished from his eyes.

He slowed the car. She saw him glance up and down the long straight road. There was no one in sight. He stopped the engine and they sat there parked at the side of the road. Then he turned and looked at her. "Were you really enjoying yourself so much darling?" he asked gently.

She gave a little laugh. "Of course I was."

Still his expression didn't change. He caught her hands and held them tightly. "I don't believe you."

She met his eyes unflinchingly "Naturally you don't. That's because you are so conceited. You can't believe that any woman, if you're around, can find any other man attractive. But that's where you're mistaken. Clive and I . . ."

"Go on," he said, his voice now deadly quiet.

"Do I need to?" she asked.

He let go her hands abruptly. "Certainly not," he said coldly. "You've made yourself perfectly clear. I'm sorry I've been such a fool over you. I. Oh, what's the use of talking?. . . ."

"Tips . . " The word was spoken in a whisper because she couldn't keep it back Her hand strayed out to his. But seemingly he didn't hear the whisper, and if he saw the hand he preferred to ignore it. Then he started the engine and with a roar they were on their way once more.

Jane took tight hold of herself. Deep within her bitter tears were flowing more painful tears than any that could have been seen. Now the gates of the airdrome were in sight.

Tips, after dropping Jane and garaging his car, went to his billet. He was furiously angry. Why hadn't Jane given him the chance to say that when he had seen Iris at lunch today he'd had the most infernal row with her because of her attempt to disparage Jane He hadn't had any hesitation then in avowing his belief in Jane's innocence. The upshot of it was that he'd told her he was not in love with her, that he never had been, that — what was more important— he had never said he was, and that it was time they called an end to it. Guy, her husband, was a decent bloke, why couldn't she be satisfied with him?

In the midst of these reflections there was a tap on his door and Guy Stanton walked in.

The moment Tips looked at Guy he realized that the rows of the day hadn't finished. Guy's brows were knit, his lips were set, there was a nasty glitter in his eyes. "I want a word with you," he said.

"Sure," said Tips, and yelled for his batman. When he came he told him to bring drinks. "Sit down," said Tips, waving to the only armchair and seating himself on the camp bed.

Guy waited until the batman had brought the tray and disappeared. He remained silent as Tips poured out two stiff whiskies and sodas and handed one to him. Then he sat down heavily his eyes fixed on Tips. "It's about Iris," he said.

"I guessed it," said Tips, sipping his drink. "Go ahead."

"I've come to ask you to lay off her."

Tips resolved on complete frankness, in fairness to himself and everybody concerned. "I'm glad you've come. There's a good deal that can be cleared up between us," he said.

"In what way?" Guy's glance was wary.

Tips put down his glass carefully on the table. He linked his strong hands and leaned forward. "Listen to me, old chap," he said gravely. "You're intending to divorce Iris. You're sure of your ground. You'll be doing yourself a great injustice if you follow it up. If you know when to believe a man, you'll believe me now."

Tips shook his head. "No," he shot at him.

"Iris is in love with you," Guy said. "She thinks she is. Iris is a person who loves gayety, change She wants excitement. I see no earthly reason why she shouldn't have them with you. Don't bust up your marriage through revenge or spite or because you feel that you're not wanted. Who's to say in these uncertain times what will be the outcome of the new start?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

SUCCESSFUL PARENTHOOD

By MRS. CATHERINE CONRAD EDWARDS
Associate Editor, Parents' Magazine

LET YOUTH FIND OWN HOBBIES

A certain father thought he was taking an interest in his son activities by hiring someone to help the boy with his projects. When digging a cave held the lure of adventure, a laborer appeared with a pick and shovel to do the heavy work. Of course, a deeper and roomier cave resulted but what became of that little-boy urge to burrow in the ground? Certainly it wasn't satisfied by watching a man dig a hole — a man who didn't for a minute believe in buried treasure or of suddenly coming upon China!

Then there are parents who go to the opposite extreme and keep a child constantly on his toes trying to be a man like father with equal enthusiasm for the same sports and hobbies. Of course the youngster tries and it must be very flattering to father. But the boy isn't a little man —he is a child and his childhood years are meant for the development of the individual's own personality, not for slavishly copying even a very fine model. Moreover in childhood he should try out a series of hobbies instead of taking over Dad's intact.

Not long ago I was asked to be a judge at a hobby fair. There were some truly extraordinary exhibits showing imagination, originality, fine craftsmanship and devotion. But I believe I was the most impressed by the work of a teen-age boy who had made a collection of prints of good paintings which he had cut from magazines. These were mounted in beautifully kept albums. Thinking that here must be a future painter I asked him if he was studying. "No," he said, "I found out I was just no good at painting so I decided to express my interest by collecting copies of pictures I liked so I could look at them whenever I wanted to." It seemed to me that this was a hobby in its purest form— it wasn't prompted by acquisitiveness, by rivalry with other boys, or even in order to excel though these are three perfectly good motives for starting a hobby. It was instead an expression of a natural interest which was bound to lead to a richer growth of this boy's mind. As much as I admired this boy and his work my hat really went off to his parents. They had let him follow his own inclination without belittling it. And somehow they had helped him make the transition from hoping to be a painter to enthusiasm for collecting and appreciating other's work.

If each child is to go his own way in finding an outlet for his leisure what, then, should companionship between fathers and sons include, what are these shared interests one hears so highly recommended? The fundamental thing which companionship implies is feeling at home with an other person. Now a child striving to keep up with a grown person or an adult trying to immerse himself in juvenile interests is not really being himself. Sharing an interest means just that. You can share an interest by showing pleasure in another's accomplishments, by being a good audience on occasion, by lending encouragement and by expressing approval of a boy's enthusiasms even though they are entirely unlike your own. Of course we're not discouraging those father - son, mother - daughter friendships which spring from like minds as well as family affection. As a rule, however, it is best to leave your children free to discover the hobbies which will bring them greatest pleasure.

In addition, for a well-balanced hobby life I should suggest that every family try to find an interest they can have in common such as a family orchestra or reading aloud books they'll all enjoy, or entertaining servicemen at Sunday dinner.

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REV. ROBERT H. HARPER

Jesus and the Ten Commandments.

Lesson for October 3: Matthew 5:17-20; 19:16-22; John 5:39, 40

Golden Text: Matthew 5:17.

During the last quarter we have as our study the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus—today we consider the attitude of Jesus toward the Commandments. They are the expression of God's will for man's conduct and the basis of all morality. And Jesus said he came to establish them, and He warned men against breaking the least of them.

But we also learn of the failure of men when they try to keep the Commandments in their own strength. The Scribes and Pharisees failed while they waxed great in their pride of supposiny they were keeping the Commandments. The young ruler failed to keep them, though he claimed he had. Lacking one thing, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions, and there is no evidence that he ever returned, inquiring the way of life. He refused to keep the commandment to love in which Jesus summed all the law.

We find, then, that Jesus fulfills the Commandments as he gives men who trust in him, the power to attain unto righteousness. As believers enter through their faith into a religion as close as that between the vine and the branches, they are able with their Lord to do th Father's will.

And Jesus bids men search the Scriptures testify of him. And may we find in the Word of God the sure revelation of his Son, who comes to enable men to be what they ought to be, for then they will do whatsoever he commands them.

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