

THERE IS TODAY

By JOSEPHINE LAWRENCE

CHAPTER I

Sarah Daffodil liked the couple as soon as she saw them, though she had never considered renting an apartment to young people before. Her other tenants were middle aged or older and dreaded noise. But there was something so oddly settled about this young pair, a certain quiet serenity, a shining confidence that caught her sympathy and for her accentuated their youthful charm.

"We read your advertisement," the girl said, and her voice was lovely, clear as Sarah's cherished crystal ball, but with a golden warmth denied to tinkling glass.

The young fellow felt his responsibility, his dark, steadfast gaze betokened a steady purpose. "It's a three-room, to sublet? We want three rooms by March first. Involuntarily he exchanged a sparkling glance with the girl.

From her desk chair Sarah could see the fireplace and the few pieces of her mother's furniture which transformed the other half into a comfortably practical living room. Built-in bookcases replaced the office cabinets, the clawfoot sofa and armchairs and its treasure-load of old china and glass. Chintz draperies for all the windows and two large oval braided rugs laid on the floor tied the divergent sections into an amazingly harmonious whole.

Tenants sometimes said that Sarah Daffodil possessed two personalities as distinct as the room she loved. Undoubtedly she puzzled this boy and girl who had come in response to her advertisement.

"The rooms are on the top floor," Sarah explained pleasantly.

"But there is a fireplace?" The girl held her tiny knitted pillow in her lap and her gleaming hair, molasses-brown with gold streaks, swirled in a beautiful, long, thick bob to her shoulders. She wore it parted in the center so that two soft rolls like wings framed her small face.

Her eyebrows and her eyes matched her hair perfectly. Sarah Daffodil thought speculatively "There is a fireplace in each of my apartments," she said.

"The boy spoke confidently. 'We'd like to go up and look, if we may. But we ought to ask the rent first.'"

"It's a sublet, you know. The tenants in 3-A were anxious to move to the coast. They were obligated to pay forty-five dollars a month until October, but were willing to dispose of their lease for forty a month."

"Could we go up now—while we're here?" The girl's exquisitely clear voice remained unharmed.

(Sarah Daffodil rose and they stood too, staring a little more intently perhaps than they realized. The woman behind the desk had not appeared unusual in tall, but now that she was standing they could see that she was at least six feet in height. Although she wore gray flannel slacks and a tailored gray and white long-sleeved shirt, she did not create a masculine effect. For one thing she wore her abundant black and silver hair, which waved tightly, coiled softly at the back of her head.

"There's no reason why you shouldn't run up and see the apartment now—her firm, long mouth parted in a smile. "Mrs. Merding will show it to anyone before five o'clock. Tell her I sent you."

"You'll be here when we come down?" They both looked at her as if she were a kindly monument.

"I'll be right here."

The desk phone buzzed and Sarah lifted the handset. "Mrs. Daffodil? This is Mrs. Merding. That couple you sent up are on their way down to your office. They like the rooms a lot."

"Do you think—"

"Well, of course they are terribly young," Mrs. Merding conceded wistfully, "but I never saw anyone so quiet in all my life. You just can't imagine them having large loud parties—I'd take a chance if I were you."

"Before you commit yourselves to leasing, there are some things about the setup here you should know," Sarah drew forward her small card file.

"And some things about us you'll want to know." The boy's dark face glowed with swift light when he smiled.

Sarah Daffodil admitted that the rule worked both ways. "I think I must tell you my other tenants are all well into middle age. You may prefer to be where your immediate neighbors will be more likely to have interests similar to yours."

"No, that doesn't matter. We'll be so busy. Both of us work."

Then there was the yard. Sarah continued levelly. "I'll show it to you before you go. It's large—seventy-five feet wide by one hundred and fifty feet deep."

Experience had taught her, Sarah said, that beyond a certain point community ownership retrogressed. Four sets of tenants could not enjoy the garden as one big family.

"They used to bicker incessantly over their washings and there were times when I could cheerfully have wrapped their sheets around their necks and pinned them all on a good high



"We read your advertisement," the girl said.

line." After several years of complaints and warfare she had developed the present plans.

"Each apartment is entitled to the full use of the garden and lawn for drying and bleaching clothes one day a week. This includes the laundry room and equipment in the basement. Of course if it should happen to rain on Thursday, you'd be out of luck for that week, you have to expect such a performance now and then."

"Why, that's wonderful!" The young people evidently regarded the originator of the program as a genius.

It had worked out fairly well, Sarah admitted modestly, barring an occasional controversy when someone wished to trade his day and could not find one willing to change.

"With the first four days going to the tenants, I'm left with Friday for my own washing. Saturdays I cut the grass and tidy up the garden generally and Sundays are for the community spirit, if it wants to develop. Mostly it's riding out in the country, except for a few hot days in midsummer."

Yes, she cut the grass herself, she said in answer to the question mirrored in the two pair of dark eyes. She cut the grass, washed windows, did the small repairs and all the carpenter work. "I'm the superintendent and the janitor, the fireman (I have my license) and the handy man. I've always liked to work with my hands, in fact I helped my husband build this house. Mrs. Merding probably told you that I'm the renting agent and landlord, since Mr. Daffodil's death ten years ago."

"She said there isn't anything you can't do." Enormous respect made the girl's face grave.

Sarah laughed and picked up her memorandum pad. "Stuff and nonsense! Now if you really wish to take the apartment—"

Their names, they told her, were Andrew Thane and Candace Moore. They planned to be married early the following week and would like to move in that week-end.

Sarah's pencil wrote the word "Lease," she hesitated. "You're taking over the Merding lease, you know—it runs until October."

Yes, they knew that.

If you care to stay beyond September thirtieth, a new lease will be necessary, of course."

From force of habit she glanced at her desk calendar—Tuesday, February twenty-fifth, nineteenth-century-one. The something that was being knocking at the back door of her mind vague, annoying, because she resented distractions, suddenly found its place. She said quickly, "Aren't you likely to be called?"

Andrew Thane's quiet, dark face did not quicken. "I'm registered."

"But—" Sarah looked from him to the girl. "Aren't you two taking a chance by marrying at this time? Do you mind telling me how old you are?"

He was twenty-three, he told her soberly, his fiancée twenty-one. "We've talked it over carefully and we think we're doing the right thing."

The Merdings were very lucky to be able to sublet so late in the season. The little silver chochet hook in Mrs. Waters' expert lean brown fingers flashed brightly in and out of the intricate meshes that formed in its wake.

Sarah Daffodil had never seen anyone whose crochet work equaled Mrs. Waters' in variety and design. Her closet shelves and chests of drawers were stuffed with boxes in which she had stored bedspreads, table sets, edgings for bed linens and towels, medallions, even several sets of curtains, all exquisitely made never used. "I had just a glimpse of the new tenants—they're awfully young," Emma waters remarked hopefully.

King Waters sat at the knee-hole desk, his back to his wife and to Sarah Daffodil. He was making out the rent check for March. In the hope of gathering a little gossip Emma Waters always managed to arrange so the check must be called for in person.

Over his shoulder King Waters said casually, "That young chap's probably headed straight for the training camp. I'm surprised they married before his number's called. Kids haven't a grain of sense when it comes to realities."

"I suppose they'll be having late parties," his wife sighed. "I know young people—liquor and everything. They're right over our heads too."

"I don't think you'll be troubled by noise overhead," Sarah spoke with authority. Both Mr. and Mrs. Thane go to business.

From the desk Mr. Waters said his voice muffled, his pen scratching. "I suppose she's keeping her job because she expects him to be called for training."

And from the corner Emma Waters sniffed, "I've always said that no woman can do justice to two jobs—one of them has to be neglected. Usually it's the housekeeping."

"Is that a new spread, Mrs. Waters?" It was of course, Sarah recognized the significance of a single crocheted wheel—all the wonderful, elaborate patterns Mrs. Waters turned out in such profusion began with a single crocheted wheel. What on earth could the woman do with another bedspread?

"There!" King Waters swung around and his chair creaked. "About that young fellow up stairs," he said as if the topic had recently been tabled. "A year of training in the Army would be the finest thing that could happen to a young fellow like that. Put him right on his feet."

"Far as I know he's on them now."

The check fluttered feebly in Mr. Waters' blunt-tipped fingers. He chewed on his unlighted cigar with vigor. "Do this present generation good to taste a little Army discipline. Why, I wouldn't take anything for the lessons I learned while I was in the service."

"I could stand it if you were a little less active right now in Post work," Mrs. Waters observed querulously. "Now it's either fiddle and would you believe it, Mrs. Daffodil, they're after me to contribute one of my spreads. They say they can sell a thousand chances on it."

"Well, I suppose it's for the disabled veterans—" Sarah found herself making wild calculations as to the actual number of bedspreads stored in the apartment.

"But it's all handwork. No one knows the amount of effort it is to make a spread, until they've done it themselves."

Something less elaborate might be acceptable. Sarah hinted. "Why don't you give them one of your handsome chair sets?"

"There's a good deal of work on those chair sets. All filed."

The gilt clock atop the radio tinkled eight times. "I must be going—" Sarah rose gratefully. "Thank you, Mr. Waters—as he relinquished the check. "I'll be up in the morning to put the washers on those kitchen faucets."

"Nothing very cheerful to read, eh?" King Waters unabashedly scanned the headlines in the newspaper of the man whose bus seat he shared.

The young fellow looked up courteously. "All war news."

"Yep. Most of it sounds pretty familiar to me. I was in the last fracas. Don't suppose you know anything about that?"

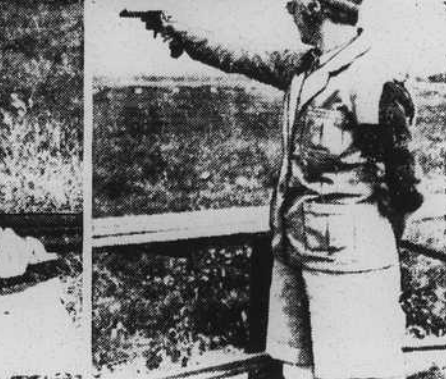
The dark quiet young man said composedly. "Only what I've heard." He dexterously folded his paper to bring the sports page uppermost.

(TO BE CONTINUED)
BUY WAR BONDS

THE HOUSE OF HAZARDS



"Pistol Shootin' Mamas" Take a Bead On Hitler



ALTHOUGH their duties in the army do not call for the use of firearms, there are many good shots among the women who have joined the services in both United States and Canada.

Here we see members of the Canadian Women's Army Corps who are practicing against the day when they may be called upon to defend themselves in some theatre of war.

Organized in September, 1941, more than 10,500 Canadian girls have enlisted, tierce releasing over

8,000 men within the army organization. By 1942 Canada expects to have 25,000 women enrolled in the CWAC.

The youngest women's service organized to relieve men to more active duties, the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, had attested 3,104 officers and ratings, and called up 2,296 by June 26, 1943, a year after its establishment. By the end of June of this year over 12,300 women had enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division.



NEW YORK, N. Y.—Now we propagandize the Germans on the actual battlefield; that is really the title of what is about to follow.

You know, of course, about our radio newscasts beamed by short wave to all of Europe and South America. You've heard too about Russian propaganda technique by radio and leaflet, on the Russo-German front. Also England has used these techniques since the war began. But did you know that the U. S. had its potent, front-line leaflet propaganda? Leaflets cleverly designed to undermine German morale and persuade soldiers to surrender.

Before me, as I write, I have torn, battered pieces of our U.S. leaflets—sent from an actual battlefield fairly recently. Even a hasty translation will give you a thrill over our use of word warfare.

You will see that the examples used (only 2 at this writing) are little masterpieces of suggestion as to why German soldiers should see that the "game is up" why desertion from the German ranks will mean relief from the terrible strain of fighting on the side that is losing the war on every front.

The translations are made by two Austrian friends who give the spirit rather than the exact letter. Perhaps more precise (though not more accurate) renderings may be possible in the minds of readers who know German.

"Merkblatt," for example, has no exact counterpart in English, combining suggestion with an air of authority.

Now for the U. S. propaganda leaflets. Following the German in brackets, is the English translation:

MERKBLATT (Note-folder) (The Idea is: Please take note)

1. Wenn Du Dich einem allierten Verposten ergibtst, hast Du nichts zu befürchten. (If you surrender to an allied outpost, do not be apprehensive.)
2. Du brauchst keinen Passierschein und kein Lösungswort. (You do not need a pass and a password.)
3. Dass Du Dich ergeben hast, wird kein Mensch erfahren. (That you have surrendered not a soul will be told.)
4. Du wirst bei uns gut behandelt. Du bekommst das gleiche Essen wie unsere Soldaten. Du wirst sofort aus dem Kampfgebiet gebracht. Du hast Ruhe und kannst Dich ausschlafen. (You will be well treated by us. You get the same food as our soldiers. You will be taken immediately out of the battle area. You can rest and make up for want of sleep.)
5. Mach Kriegsende—sobald es möglich ist—kommst Du nach Hause. (After the war, as soon as possible, you will get back home.)

Es gibt kein Zurück mehr! (In front of us the foe, Behind us the sea, There is no going back.)

And on the opposite side of this little leaflet—

Euer Verstand sagt: (Your reason tells you)

Hinter dem feind: das sammel-lager. (Behind the foe the collecting camp.) (Meaning, for prisoners)

Hinter dem sammel-lager: Das gefangen-lager in England or Amerika. (Behind the collecting camp: the prison camp in England or America.)

Hinter dem gefangen-lager: Die Heimat! (Behind the prison camp: the homeland.)

Es gibt ein Zurück! (There



IS a come-back.) If you study the foregoing examples of our leaflets, it becomes plain that the U. S. has the "know-how" of psychological warfare. All through these words German war-weariness and the longing for home is played up. The messages carry powerful suggestion and subtly sap the will to continue fighting—and losing.

CARD EXPERT EXPOSES CROOKED GAMBLERS

Another in the exciting series titled "They Never Give the Sucker a Break." Read about a famous detective's adventures with card sharks in the Orient who trim the gullible looking for easy money. One of many features in the October 24th issue of

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