

"THE GOOD BAD GIRL"

—BY—
WINIFRED VAN DUZEN

Chapter 26

There was a day in April when grotesque fever images scurried away and disappeared behind an ivory tinted wall.

Sweetness hung where they had been. By a tremendous effort Mimi moved her head. She saw a sheet of roses on a table by the bedstead foot. The roses were deep red.

Instantly a starched cap was nodding above her. The nurse said, "Well, that's fine. Well, dear me, that's fine! He'll be delighted sure enough."

With another effort that spread a cold band of moisture across her forehead, Mimi whispered, "What's happened to me? Whose place is this? Merle?"

"Well, don't talk now, dearie. You've been ill. Well, go back to sleep now—"

She was already drowsing when she heard the nurse at the telephone "conscientious now—well, you'll come right away—"

When she awakened again she felt stronger, less as if she were in a dream. Someone was sitting beside her, pressing her hand.

"Perry? Why Perry?"

He held her hand to his lips; she saw that he could not speak.

"Dear Perry! She said I'd been ill. I feel so weak—heavy—"

"Dear Mimi—Mimi! God! I'll never forgive myself! If you'd let me know—just a word. You—I love you more than anything in the world—and you like that. While I had so much. Your foolish pride!"

"It was my fault. I was hurt—your letter hurt—and I didn't stand by. I'll make up to you, though. Ah, forgive, darling—"

She laid her fingers against his cheek, held them over his eyes. They were wet. That Perry should mind!

"No Mimi—oh my Lord, don't do that! You're never going to cry again!" He took hold of her arms, soothing her as if she had been a baby.

"This is your apartment, Perry. How did I get here. I don't remember—has it been long—"

"Oh weeks and weeks, sweetheart. You came—I don't know how. They saw you sitting in the Park all that afternoon. It's your apartment now. Anything I can give you—everything is your. Lovely little kid!"

"There must have been doctors and the nurse—I can't repay you. Oh, what am I going to do? Things all went wrong—"

"You'll repay me by not worrying. Better have a little nap now—"

She learned from the nurse that Perry had moved out late night she came there. The place had been turned into a small hospital and there'd been a famous specialist each day for a time. Everything had been done for her; no expense spared. Perry was a real friend, the nurse declared.

When he came the next day it was to say good-bye. He was going to Bermuda and later would spend some time, months probably, in California.

The nurse was to remain with Mimi; she would look after the house later on, see that his "lovely little kid" got well. She was to take her time recovering.

"My roadster is in a garage around the corner," he said. "You're to use it when you feel strong enough to drive. A run up into the country every day—I've left directions."

"And don't be offended, sweetheart. You'll need things. I've opened charge accounts for you. I want you to have the best."

"Oh, Perry!"

"Just to please me. It isn't much for you to do—just have pretty things. I love you, Mimi!"

She was too languid to move about, too listless to try to think things out in the days after he left. She sat in the window all day, grateful for the warm sunlight that set her hair a-flame, contented to drift along on the tide of fortune.

Sitting thus, with the nurse dusting brie-a-brac, pushing up satin pillows, putting to rights the colorful luxury around her, Mimi saw her life in New York as a series of crazy pictures.

It was as if everything had happened to someone else; as if she had read of it in a book. Sometimes she thought of Merle. But he, too, was one of the pictures, only more poignant than the rest.

When Perry was beginning to seem vague and dreamlike, the collie came. A superb creature, pure white, with a silver plate on his collar, engraved with the name, "Luck." Mimi put her arms around him and he thrust a cold muzzle into her neck.

That afternoon she said she would walk out into Washington Square. The nurse set about making elaborate preparations for the venture. A nap, an alcohol rub, quantities of hot chicken broth.

Then she brought out a fur wrap, a garment of soft golden pelts beau-

tifully matched, with deep collar and cuffs. It was like the coat Mimi had seen in a Fifth Avenue window one night and coveted, contrasting it with her thread-bare ulster.

"But I can't wear anything so gorgeous," she protested.

"Well indeed you can! Mr. Willy brought it here himself. He said it suited you, and so it does. Well, put it on now, dearie."

So Mimi again sat on the park bench where she had shivered through an outcast afternoon. But now she warmed by precious furs, and a white collie romped at her feet.

Chapter 27

Spring came slowly to New York that year. There would be a few days of warm sunshine and then a period of January-like cold, with lowering skies and bitter winds.

And Mimi's spirits, like the strength returning slowly to her body, rose and fell with the mercury.

On bright days she wrapped herself in the fur coat and put on a party little hat—copper tinted to blend with her hair—and strolled on the avenue with Luck stepping at her side.

She was one of hundreds of women in fur coats who spent their afternoons leading dogs up and down the Avenue. They were all of a stamp. But some—those who moved with rather forced straightness—were too massaged, too carefully coiffed, too sleekly groomed, too patently gasping at impatient youth. And these had a certain look in their eyes.

Mimi came to call it, to herself, the "waiting look."

Occasionally she stopped in some exotic little tea room and ordered food which she left untouched.

These were the days when thoughts whirled round and round in her head; thoughts never to be caught and forced into orderly procession.

One thing—one set of words—kept recurring. Night and day they beat at her ears, flashed as if on a printed page before her eyes.

"Destiny is drawing close. He will come back and I must listen to him then. I must accept him. It was what

he had in his mind. He was kind and I must repay."

It occurred to her that she might dodge the issue; run away, even drop out of it all. Those little white tablets the nurse doled out so charitably, an extra little white tablet—oh what use? Something beyond her control drove her. That something would send Perry back, and she would accept him.

A woman rushed up to her on the street one day and kissed her with gurgles of enthusiasm. It took her a moment to recognize Nita.

"Why you clever little kid! So you put it over—at last! Gosh, you look spiffy!"

"Put over what, Nita? What are you talking about?"

"That's all right, dear. We're all in the same boat. Things get around. Folks chatter. But say, didn't I tell you Perry was a good number?"

Mimi understood then. Already they were saying—but what difference did it make? A little sooner or later—

She asked Nita about herself.

"Got the grandest little snuggery you ever laid eyes on," confided Nita. "Not quite so much coin as Bill slung around but enough. And believe me I've got better sense these days. Salted something away, you bet. For instance—"

She loosened her collar and displayed a string of pearls. "Set Jimmy back something but I should care!"

After than an intimacy was struck up, luck a daisical on the part of Mimi. Nita was exuberant enough, however.

They walked together afternoons, leading Luck, and mornings when Nita was not engaged with various beauty doctors, lounged among Perry's satin pillows. Nita smoked incessantly and Mimi gradually took on the habit. She hated the taste of tobacco and the smoke burned her eyes. But she constantly fought a gnawing restlessness and lighting cigarettes was something to do.

They wandered up to Broadway one afternoon, crossed Forty-second street,

and dropped into one of the smart restaurants where a tea dance was in progress. The music and lights and general air of careless gaiety took Mimi out of herself, cheered her astonishingly.

"Oh, I love it, Nita!" she cried. "We must come often. I've been too long by myself. Tomorrow I'll go shopping; get something pretty to wear."

"Just like that, eh?" grinned Nita. "I told you Perry was regular. Take my advice, dear; salt it away. A string of pearls or a diamond or two. Specially at the start when they're loose as feathers."

Mimi felt red creeping up her throat. After all, this was tinsel gaiety. It tarnished quickly. There were new lines in Nita's face and her chin was beginning to sag. That look, the "waiting look" soon would be in her eyes.

"She is on the down grade," Mimi thought. "Only a few years and on the down grade. Am I going to be like that?"

Nevertheless even tinsel gaiety

seemed better than blankness. "The thing the moment sends—" So Mimi visited the Avenue shops and ordered with a prodigious hand.

There were simple and staggeringly expensive little afternoon frocks, leaf green and red gold; evening gowns of satin crepe and chiffon; slippers with flashing buckles; small, pert hats; a silk wrap trimmed with chinchilla.

"Charge them, Ma'm'selle?" murmured the saleswoman, pencil above her pad.

"Oh yes, please I—I'm Mimi Marsh."

"Yes, Ma'm'selle."

Mimi heard her speaking to someone—the manager probably—behind a partition.

He said, "It's all right. Miss Marsh is a model. Perry pays her bills." A rustling followed. It might have been smothered laughter.

To Be Continued.

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Says James B. Duke Saw Far Into Future

Wanted To Make Piedmont Greatest Industrial Center In World

Charlotte, May 22.—Through the mind of James B. Duke as he built industry after industry in Piedmont Carolina was running the visions of what he intended to do with the funds created by these industries declared W. S. Lee, vice-president of the Southern Power company and for 20 years an intimate associate of Mr. Duke in an address Thursday before the Kiwanis Club. "He always told us," said Mr. Lee, "that he never intended taking a penny of the income of the power companies. Gentlemen he never did. Up until this year the Duke Power company, which is the holding company for the power groups, had never paid a dividend. Instead the earnings have been turned back into creating more industries. Now funds

from all these holdings will go to provide hospitalization equipment for the Carolinas.

"It was Mr. Duke's ambition to make Piedmont Carolina the greatest industrial center of the world. Toward that end he gave his energies without sparing and without gain to himself. In the end he turned these industries to the use of the social body.

"Mr. Duke discussed the disposal of his fortune with us, his business associates, for ten years before the creation of the Duke Endowment. Every detail received his attention. He studied the situation and knew exactly how he wanted the fund allocated."

Religion, war and politics unite people, but few ties compare with that between fellow chicken fanciers.

Never puncture the ego of a man who works for you.—You can't travel far on a flat.

The making of a great nation requires either great resources or complete obedience.

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The only way to determine whether you need ESSO is to test it in your own car. Use the gasoline in your tank down to the last gallon or so. Then fill up with ESSO. Test your car in traffic and note the pick-up. Test it on the hills—preferably on some hill where you already know how the car has performed with gasoline. This will give you a direct comparison. Then after a few days decide whether you want to buy ESSO regularly or stick to "Standard" Gasoline.

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YOUR SUPPORT WILL BE APPRECIATED.

CASH FOR POULTRY

The Bureau of Markets, Raleigh, Announces the loading of a Car of Poultry at the Seaboard Depot, Shelby,

THURSDAY, MAY 27TH

The following CASH prices to be paid:

Heavy Hens	25c lb.
Leghorn Hens	23c lb.
Colored Broilers	35c lb.
Leghorn Broilers	30c lb.
Cocks	12c lb.

Remember the date: Thursday, May 27th, at the Seaboard Depot, Shelby.