

THERE'S ONLY ONE

By SOPHIE KERR © Sophie Kerr Underwood, WNU Service.

CHAPTER I

"This room might be a man's office, stripped like this," said Anne Vincent from the flat desk where she was ostentatiously busy with a pile of bills and a check-book.

"But think how feminine it is with rugs and the curtains and the cretonne covers and the china dingbats on the mantelshelf," said Rachel; adding, as she stuffed two more packages into the boxed window-seat, "Do you think I've used enough mothballs? Remember how the mice made nests in here last winter!"

Both women had spoken louder than was necessary and there was the tension of a topic avoided in their voices. The living room of the cottage was bare except for the furniture, even the bookshelves had been emptied and the pictures taken down.

Anne twisted about to look at Rachel's packing. "You put in the whole two boxes? That'll surely be enough. It was Mrs. Kreef's fault—the mice, I mean."

"Poisonous woman!" said Rachel and banged down the lid of the window seat. "Every time I see her and that squabby sister of hers walk by I want to rush out and beat them with my tennis racket!" Her work finished, she rose and stretched her tall young slenderness, pulled her white sweater down and adjusted her belt. She watched Anne from the corners of her eyes. At last she went over to the desk and sat on the edge of it. "Aren't you almost done?"

"There are ever so many more." "Are you checking every item?" "Yes, of course. Why don't you take a last swim? Where's Bob? I thought he asked you to go out in his boat?"

Rachel swung her feet obstinately. "You're stalling, mother. You want to get away without telling me a thing. It's no use. Bob's gone out alone and I'm not having a swim. You can just come out of that mess of eggs and potatoes and cords of wood and talk."

"Rachel, I've always told you that when you were twenty-one, if you wanted to hear—or before, if there was good reason—"

"There's plenty good reason. You're going abroad and Great-aunt Helene may hang on to you for

more than six months. You know that." "I've evaded. It's only another year. I'm twenty-one and I'm mature and sensible now as I was then. The way you act is nothing to feel as if there was anything perfectly rotten—"

Anne Vincent's protesting hand stopped her. "Darling, no! Don't say such things. There's nothing rotten or foul or poisonous or any other of your favorite bad adjectives about it—really. Give you my word."

"Then why do you want to hold out on me?"

"Maybe I'm a little jealous."

"Mother, darling lamb, don't be ridiculous. Jealous of what?"

Anne's grasp tightened. "I'm afraid I'm jealous of your interest in your real mother, Rachel. I'd like you not to think of her."

"But I don't think of her as my mother. I don't. She's never thought of me as her child, that's evident enough. She was glad to get rid of me. Wasn't she?"

"I can't answer yes or no; it's not as simple as that." Anne considered the sea a moment longer, wondering, doubting, uncertain. If she could only understand Rachel's urgency! Then she resolved. "I see I'll have to explain things, I don't want you to be getting strange notions. Let's go down to the beach; it's so dreary here with everything packed."

They linked arms as they stepped off the terrace before the low shin-

gle house which had been their home for ten summers. It was the last but one of the straggling village street, there was only the roadway between it and the dunes. The single house beyond theirs was an ugly square high-elbowed thing with stiff shell-bordered walks, and a gypsy kettle, on a tripod painted a flaming red and filled with clashing magenta geraniums, beside the front door. As Anne and Rachel crossed the road this front door opened swiftly and a little anxious man hailed them.

"You be out some time, Mis' Vincent?"

"I don't know exactly, Mr. Kreef," said Anne, "but you can go in and turn on the radio."

"Thank you, ma'am. There's a program offerin' a nice book of photographs and a tube of cold cream I am to get and if there's any new contests I want to try 'em." He explained breathlessly and was inside their house with the last word.

"Couldn't we leave the house open and the electricity on so he can have the radio after we're gone? It's so mean of Mrs. Kreef to lock theirs up except when she wants to hear something herself, I'd like to get round her somehow."

"I suppose we could. He has such fun writing for samples and entering all the contests, it's pathetic."

"Do let's do it, mother."

"All right, my dear, the electricity won't cost much. And if the



"It Must Have Been Tragic."

weather's very cold he can build a fire. I'll give him written permission."

They had reached the beach, a half-circle of sand scooped in between points of rock which went far enough out on each side to break the sweep and drag of the waves. The Vincents' bathing house lay so unobtrusively back among the dunes that this little scallop shell of quiet and peace seemed never to have known man's trespass, yet it had been a favorite haven of rum runners during the latter half of the great prohibition farce. Now those days were over and the village and summer people found the larger beach below the town more convenient for bathing, so this one had come to be Rachel and Anne Vincent's exclusive property, their outdoor living room and extension of summer days.

They sat down facing the sea, their backs against the length of pale water-washed Norwegian fir which once held the mainsail of a skimming saucy clipper. Anne, uneasy, disturbed, made a most uncharacteristic fuss in settling herself, while Rachel watched her with growing impatience.

"It can't be as dreadful as you're making out," said Rachel at last, half laughing, but with nervous excitement beneath.

Anne pulled her wits together. "It's not dreadful at all, I simply don't know where to start."

"Tell me her name. I don't even know her name. I've always rather hoped it was Rachel, like mine."

"Oh, Rachel, darling, have you been thinking about her so much! Why didn't you tell me? I—" she caught back her emotion, took an easier tone: "Rachel, your mother's name was Elinor, Elinor Malloy. She was only about eighteen when you were born, she wasn't through high school when she was married. And your father's name was Edwin Malloy. They were just a couple of youngsters who ran off and got married without knowing one another, without thinking about it—"

"A sort of joke, I suppose."

"Don't be bitter. They were so young, they had no idea, they didn't realize—but I'll have to go back and begin properly. I never saw your father, but your mother was one of the loveliest, no, she was absolutely the loveliest creature I ever laid my eyes on. She didn't seem quite real, she was so lovely."

"Was she light or dark?"

"Very fair skin, very dark hair, very blue eyes. Everything in her appearance was accented and distinct and yet there was a complete fusion so that her beauty stood clear and perfect. She's only—let's see—she's only thirty-eight years old, Rachel, now, nine years younger than I. And she's still beautiful, but in a different way."

"How do you know? I thought you said you'd only seen her once, years ago."

"Her pictures come out in the newspapers now and then, the society columns—"

"They do! Oh, mother, who is she? Have I seen her pictures?"

"She's Mrs. Peter Holbrook Cayne."

"She's married someone else?"

"Rachel, darling, I want to get through this as quickly as I can and afterward I'll answer your questions. You must try to understand about her. Your grandfather—her father—died and left your grandmother with very little money and this child to take care of and life was very hard—and meager—for both of them. Uncertain, too, insecure. Mrs. Rhodes—"

"But who's Mrs. Rhodes?"

"Your grandmother, Elinor's mother. Did I forget to say her name? I'm mixing this up dreadfully."

"No, no, I've got it straight. My mother was Elinor Rhodes and she married Edwin Malloy."

"Yes, that's right. Mrs. Rhodes did fine sewing and embroidery for her friends to help along, monograms on table linen and that sort of thing, it didn't amount to much and she must have been very anxious about Elinor. There seems to have been no one who took any interest, or perhaps she was proud—and shy. She kept her daughter with her and sent her to school. And one day Elinor came in with Edwin Malloy—he was a young clerk in the corner drugstore—and she had married him. Now remember, Rachel, I'm simply telling you the story I heard. I never met Mrs. Rhodes. Even so, I can understand what a shock this marriage was for her. If she'd had the means she probably would have had it annulled, because Elinor had lied about her age. But she could do nothing, so she took them into their cramped apartment to live with her. And from the first they weren't happy, nothing went right. Your father was apparently just a good-natured, good-looking boy with almost no education and no family, he made very little money, he wasn't ambitious, he wasn't clever. Mrs. Rhodes detested him and kept lamenting the marriage all the time, and there was Elinor herself with her beauty and her youth and her pliable unformed nature—you can see them, can't you?"

"Yes. It must have been tragic. For all of them."

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(TO BE CONTINUED)

ren, Wade, Grant and Pauline and Mrs. Luna Bateman.

Reuben Stallings was a visitor Sunday in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Briggs. William Stallings is spending the week with his aunt, Mrs. Willie Briggs.

Mrs. Homer Darian and son, Frank of Philadelphia, Pa., and Joe Rempson, of Norfolk are visiting Mrs. S. I. Cullipher.

Mr. and Mrs. T. T. Harrell and daughter, Juanita, of near Norfolk, Mr. and Mrs. Carlton Cannon and two children, Cornelia and Mary Annette, of Hertford, visited Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Harrell Sunday afternoon.

Mrs. J. Ed Lane is visiting her daughter, Mrs. Grace White at Manteo. While there she will attend the pageant at Fort Raleigh.

Mrs. J. E. Eaves visited Mrs. Fannie Corpew at Bethel Saturday afternoon.

CHAPANOKE NEWS

Mrs. Lillie Mae Madrid, of Florida has returned to her home after a pleasant visit with her uncle, J. C. White, and Mrs. Lowe.

Mrs. George Alexander and children and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Deal attended the circus in Elizabeth City Wednesday.

Mrs. J. C. Wilson and children, Susie Mae, Calvin, and Curtis, attended the circus Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bray were guests of Mr. and Mrs. George Alexander Sunday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom White and Mrs. H. C. West attended the pageant at Manteo Sunday night.

Mr. and Mrs. Willard Baker of New York, are spending some time with Mr. Baker's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Baker.

Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Alexander, Mrs. Viola Alexander, Susie Fields, Mattie Meade, George Viola James Alexander and Susie Mae Wilson spent Saturday at Nags Head.

Mrs. J. C. Wilson, Misses Ruth Roberts and Louise Wilson were in Elizabeth City Friday afternoon. Crawford Wilson was a Hertford visitor on Tuesday.

The public is cordially invited to attend the revival services at Oak Grove this week. Afternoon at 3 o'clock and 7:45 in the evening.

J. C. Wilson was in Elizabeth City Monday on business. Miss Janet Quincey has returned from a visit with relatives in Norfolk, Va.

Mrs. Kate Jackson has returned after a visit with her daughter in Elizabeth City.

Mr. and Mrs. John Asbell were visitors in Hertford Tuesday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. John Symons and Mrs. W. H. Elliott spent Sunday at Nags Head.

Those attending the "Lost Colony" at Roanoke Island from here Sunday were Tim Trueblood, Bill Trueblood, Mr. and Mrs. Emmitt Stallings and Miss Waverley D'Orsey.

Mrs. John Asbell, Mrs. P. L. Griffin, and Mrs. Irma D'Orsey were in Hertford Saturday night.

WHITESTON NEWS

Mr. and Mrs. Vann Spivey, of Hickory, Va., are guests of Mrs. Spivey's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ulysses Winslow.

Emmett Winslow and two friends from Washington, D. C., spent part of last week with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ulysses Winslow.

Mrs. Jesse Osborne and her son, Jesse, Jr., of Greensboro, are visiting her mother, Mrs. Henry E. Winslow.

Allen White, of Philadelphia, Pa., accompanied by Marvin Lindley and three other friends, arrived Tuesday of last week for several weeks' visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest White. Mr. White and his guests left Tuesday of this week for Snow Camp, where they will visit Mr. Lindley's parents for several days.

Mr. and Mrs. John T. Lane and J. L. Lane left Tuesday morning for Philadelphia, Pa., to attend the World Conference being held there at this time. They expect to be gone several days, and will visit a brother, R. A. Lane, in Wilmington, Del., before returning home.

Mrs. Paul R. Fisher and two sons, of Doylestown, Pa., are visiting relatives here and in Elizabeth City for several weeks.

Elsbury Lane and Russell Baker spent Sunday afternoon at Nags Head and attended the pageant at Fort Raleigh Sunday night.

Miss Eleanor Winslow returned to her home near Cross Roads Monday, after a week's visit with her cousin, Miss Winnie Winslow.

Miss Alma Winslow, from near Cross Roads, Karie Lee Belch and Austin Smith, from near Greenville, visited Misses Winnie and Eleanor Winslow Saturday evening.

Burnette Winslow and Miriam Lane, of Hertford, spent the weekend here with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Winslow and Mr. and J. T. Lane, respectively.

Mr. and Mrs. Asa Winslow and son, Donald, of Norfolk, Va., were recent visitors of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie E. Winslow.

Mr. and Mrs. Milton Cullipher, of Merry Hill, were week-end guests of Mrs. Cullipher's parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. N. Riddick.

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PENDER ROAD NEWS

Mrs. T. M. Farmer has returned home from Norfolk, where she visited her sons, Alec and Thomas M. Farmer.

Mrs. V. L. Proctor and daughter, Mary, returned Tuesday from a visit to Mrs. W. W. Hanbury, in Norfolk.

The Christian Roanoke Union met at Cofjock Christian Church the fifth Sunday in August. Those from

Bethlehem Christian Church attending were Mr. and Mrs. E. Y. Berry and two sons, Edgar Young and Dan,

Mrs. B. A. Berry, Mr. and Mrs. John Corpew and son, William, Mr. and Mrs. George Bateman and child-

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