

# THERE'S ONLY ONE

By SOPHIE KERR

## CHAPTER XIII—Continued

Then she heard her name called and saw Curt coming down the dunes.

"I woke up and there was all that elegant food spread about, but no sign of you, and then I discovered you running about down here. What do you think you are—a beach bird?"

"Almost. Mother and I practically live down here in the summer. Are you rested?"

"Oh fine! This is a grand cove. Come along, I'll run up and down a couple of times and get the sleep out of my head. Want to race?"

They ran together now all the way to the spur of rock on the other side. Curt kept beside her and though she ran her swiftest, she knew he could easily beat her best speed.

"Golly, what a day!" he said, as they turned, "and after what a night!"

"You and me both! I'd like to run up and down here for an hour!"

"Very fine, but doesn't that elegant oyster stew I saw before the fire need eating? I only had a glass of milk for breakfast."

"We'll go in then," said Rachel, "and lap up the oysters. I'm hungry, too, all I had for breakfast was an orange and two fried eggs and some bacon and rolls and a spot of marmalade and two cups of coffee with three lumps of sugar in each—"

"Lay off, you're making me drool! I never heard of such a breakfast. It's indecent. Where did you get it?"

"I stopped in to see a friend and he was just about to eat—"

"He?"

"Right, it was a he. And though he wasn't terribly glad to see me, he did give me my breakfast. And he didn't say it was indecent to eat so much, as you did, he merely called it disgusting."

"Rachel, I—no, not now."

"What not now?"

"Nothing now that isn't lunch," said Curt firmly. "I observed doughnuts as well as oysters."

"Crullers, not doughnuts, is the right name," said Rachel, as they came up on the terrace. "Look, Curt, do you see what I see—in the next house, two ladies eagerly watching our every move from behind the lace curtains in the first window?"

"They were there when I came out," said Curt. "They're wondering if I mean to do right by you, Nell, or if you're just a brazen hussy."

"We'll keep them guessing. It will brighten up their lives."

The fire was homelike and welcoming. Curt sat on one side of the desk and Rachel on the other while they ate. It was a pleasant meal than the breakfast with Bob that morning, Rachel thought. The two men were a little alike, not in appearance, but in the way they talked. But Curt was steadier, saner.

"What are you thinking about?" he asked.

"Nothing much. I'm so glad I came here."

"Are you glad I came?"

"Yes. I'd have had to borrow money for a ticket back to New York if you hadn't come with Vinco's car."

"I surely do appreciate being liked for myself alone. Rachel, be serious—tell me something. Did you run away here because you felt you must see someone in particular?"

"No. Why?"

"Because Pink said there was a man here who rated very well with you. And she thought perhaps you'd had a message from him, or wanted to see him. Was that it?"

"And what else did Pink tell you?"

"She said this man had asked

you to marry him last summer and you'd turned him down, but that you might have changed your mind. Rachel, please, tell me was that why you came?"

"No, it wasn't. There is a man here. I've known him ever since we were brats, and he did ask me to marry him last summer, quite earnestly, too. I didn't think about him at all when I came. I only thought this was my home and it was very quiet and I wanted to be quiet and sort of pull myself together. That last day at the Caynes was too awful, it shook me up. I don't want to think about it."

"Don't think about it. Come back to this mysterious man. I want to know about him."

"He's not in the least mysterious, his name's Bob Eddis and he runs the library here and he carves wood panels and lives alone in a little

house he fixed up for himself—quite a hermit, according to Mr. Kreef. But he's not a hermit, Curt, he's terribly nice." Describing Bob Eddis put him farther away from her.

"You had breakfast with him?"

"I certainly did and ate everything he had in the house." She began to laugh. "I may as well tell you, he acted rather hot and bothered and I began to think it was too much for his feelings, seeing me so unexpectedly, one whom he had loved and lost—you know! Then I came back here to the house and Mr. Kreef spilled the real truth. Bob's all enamored with the new schoolteacher and she's a blonde and of course he wasn't keen on having her know that strange young women were calling on him for breakfast—you can see what this did to my vanity."

"It must have been a blow. And he must be a crazy fish!"

"Oh well—a blonde! Mr. Kreef says a light blonde."

"Now you may as well know the truth about me, too. When Pink told you about this guy and insinuated that you were dashing off to him, I made up my mind that I'd come after you and if there was a chance in the world I was going to snatch you away from him. That sounds, maybe, as foolish as your blonde story, but it's what happened. I couldn't let another man have you without a battle. And when I came in here today and this funny little old Kreef person was here with you, well, I darned near rolled over laughing at myself. I thought Pink had been making a monkey out of me, that it was all a gag. Anyway, it doesn't matter.

Mean while they had fun together, the city received them and Rachel who had lived there all her life learned more about it in a month from going about with Curt than she had known in all the time before. As winter melted into the suavities of spring they walked the water front and watched the tugs and the ferries and the liners, sure and intent on their courses as though no other element existed save the water they traveled. They visited the parks and became—distinctly—acquainted with a beautiful black panther for all the world like a proud, sullen tomat. They looked at the sliced and segmented stone battlements of the upper city from the Palisades, at the magic hour when every window is flaming with the reflected sunlight. They went up into high newspaper offices where the presses were pounding the march of the world news. They looked at the lovely classic proportion of City hall, which sits among surrounding skyscrapers like a Colonial gentleman in satin and lace among Brobdignagian steyedores. They ate sukiyaki at a Japanese restaurant, sour milk soup and spiced meat steamed in cabbage leaves at an Armenian's, Parsi curry with pomegranate wine at an East Indian's, pancakes with lingonberries at a Swedish place, bortsch in a famous kosher cafe, Russian blini among the Muscovites, chow mein in Chinatown, fried devil-fish and zucchini in Little Italy.

Smoothly, quietly, the long bright car ran through the long bright quiet street and Rachel leaned to look out at the library.

"Want to stop?" asked Curt.

"Want to tell him good-by?"

"But Rachel shook her head. "No—I did that this morning."

## CHAPTER XIV

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"The next time anybody wants one of my young ladies for any funny stuff, he can go jump in the lake. I've got a lot of good engagements for you, Miss Rachel, and you've got to work hard to make up for lost time. I hope you didn't roughen up your hands being a kitchen maid. Vinco's young ladies must have hands like ladies."

Rachel did not answer that. She had nothing to tell Vinco about Curt. She saw Curt almost every day, but he assumed no possessive airs, made no claim. Gradually and naturally she was learning to know him and about him, filling out his first sketchy picture of his life with his opinions, his beliefs, his plans and all that had formed them. Curt forced nothing, he was casual and easy, but beneath that she knew his love for her was waiting. And until she was ready to answer it or to deny it, he was patient. She could take her own time.

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The gentleman has his hands and I haven't lost you."

"Curt," said Rachel, not quite steadily, "you haven't got me to lose. I like you—a lot—but I don't know you so very well. I won't be rushed, it would be bad for both of us. I'll never again do anything I'm not sure about. The Caynes business taught me that much, forever."

"My darling," said Curt, "I'm going to devote my entire time to making you know me better. I won't hurry you. I won't worry you."

He made no move toward her, he did not even take her hand, and she did not try to answer him. Presently he spoke again: "I think we ought to be on our way. Suppose I go and get the car?"

While he was gone she banked the fire, made the left-over sandwiches and crullers into a package and wiped clean with paper the dishes and spoons they had used. She was waiting with her suitcase when he drove up. Vinco's car was the most sporting ever seen in Rockboro, a bright yellow and as long as a locomotive, and when Rachel came out there was violent agitation behind the Kreef lace curtains. She waved a smiling good-by toward it.

Smoothly, quietly, the long bright car ran through the long bright quiet street and Rachel leaned to look out at the library.

"Want to stop?" asked Curt.

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"But Rachel shook her head. "No—I did that this morning."

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Surviving are four children, two daughters, Mrs. J. M. Fleetwood and Mrs. Mary L. Hayman, both of Bethel; and two sons, J. H. Long and T. A. Long, both of Washington, D. C.; four grandchildren, Misses Frances Gertrude and Katherine Fleetwood, Thomas and Maynard Fleetwood, of Bethel; three brothers, E. S. Long and O. C. Long, of Bethel, and J. J. Long, of Edenton; and two sisters, Mrs. R. S. Pratt and Mrs. W. M. Williams, both of Edenton.

Funeral services for Thomas Jefferson Long, prominent Perquimans County resident, who died at his home at Bethel on Wednesday night, March 16, were held on Friday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock at Bethel Baptist Church, with the Rev. E. L. Wells, pastor of the Edenton Baptist Church and a former pastor at Bethel, officiating, and burial took place in the Long family plot in the Bethel cemetery.

A male quartette composed of W. J. Daniels, George Lassiter, C. H. Wood and C. S. Cozart, all of Edenton, sang two selections.

Active pallbearers were: T. L. Skinner, R. L. Pratt, R. W. Long, Shelton Long, H. J. Long, E. W. J. Long, J. C. Long and O. C. Long, Jr. Honorary pallbearers were: S. P. Matthews, A. F. Proctor, A. D. Thach, S. W. Long and J. C. Hobbs, all members of the Board of Deacons, and Dr. T. P. Brian, J. H. McMullan, D. M. Warren, T. C. Byrum, C. N. Griffin, J. A. Webb, R. D. Dixon, J. E. Winslow, J. K. Jarvis, H. R. Leary, C. E. Kramer, J. A. Bunch, L. S. Byrum, W. J. Yates, J. L. Wiggins and M. L. Bunch.

Mr. Long, who was not only a leader in his own community, but an outstanding citizen of the county, was for many years a member of the Board of County Commissioners of Perquimans County. He also served as a justice of the peace in Bethel Township for a long time.