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## PRUDENCE'S DAUGHTER

By Ethel Hueston

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### SYNOPSIS PART ONE

**CHAPTER I.**—At a merry party in the studio apartment of Carter Blake, in New York, Jerry Harmer, Prudence's daughter, meets Duane Allerton, wealthy idler. He becomes slightly intoxicated, and Jerry, resenting his assumption of familiarity, leaves the party abruptly.

**CHAPTER II.**—The story turns to Jerry's childhood and youth at her home in Des Moines. Only child of a wealthy father, when she is twenty she feels the call of Art, and her parents, with some misgivings, agree to her going to New York to study.

**CHAPTER III.**—In New York Jerry makes her home with a Mrs. Delaney ("Mimi"), an actress, who, with Theresa, a painter, occupies the house. Jerry takes an immediate liking to Theresa, and the two become fast friends.

**CHAPTER IV.**—The friendship between Jerry and Theresa, who is eccentric but talented, grows. Jerry poses for Theresa's masterpiece, "The Ocean Rider." Allerton calls on Jerry. The girl, recalling his conduct at the studio party, refuses to see him.

**CHAPTER V.**—At a hotel dinner Jerry meets Duane and is conscious of his admiration but refuses to change her attitude toward him. Jerry becomes convinced she has not the ability to become an artist and offers her expensive painting equipment to an almost penniless girl student, Greta Val, who cannot understand her generosity. A painful scene results.

**CHAPTER VI.**—Jerry, with Theresa's help, convinces Greta of her good intentions, and the two girls "make up." At a party Jerry again sees Duane, and will not recognize him. Theresa hints that Jerry should go home, and promises her a "present."

(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK)

### CHAPTER VII

#### And Jerry Saw Prudence

Jerry left Almee at the entrance to Reilly's alley, hurriedly let herself into the house, and started up the stairs on a light run. She was impatient to see the present Theresa had left for her. She noticed no unnatural quiet in the house. And yet when she saw Mimi waiting for her at the top of the stairs, a lovely picture in her bright gown with trailing thinned fringes, she felt a sudden chilling of her eagerness.

"Oh, hello," she said. "You started

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me a little. You look like a solemn ghost in silk and fringe."

"Come into my room a while, will you?" Mimi asked, and there was a hollowness in her usually lilting voice. "Everybody's out. You're the first one home. I don't want to be alone."

Jerry, with her usual willingness to please, followed along into her sitting room in the rear of the narrow hall, an effective room, which Theresa found unbearably stuffy, but into which Mimi fitted to nice perfection, all shaded lights, with great bronze burners of pungent incense, oriental hangings, silken cushions.

"Sit here, dearie, in this light, it just suits you," Mimi said absently, from force of habit, tucking a cushion against Jerry's shoulder as she had



"Oh, Hello," She Said. "You Startled Me a Little."

done a hundred times before. "I'm frightfully upset. You don't mind my troubling you, do you? You are so soothing."

"Not a bit. I like it," Jerry spoke with truth. She loved being wanted. "But I hope it isn't a real trouble, just a little attack of mood."

Mimi lit a cigarette and sank among the cushions on the chaise longue, puffing a cloud of smoke about her. With the light on her face, Jerry could see that she was ghastly pale beneath the creamy layers of rouge and powder.

"It's Theresa." Her voice sounded almost irritable.

"She works too hard," Jerry assented. "We must take her in hand, and make her spare herself a little. I wanted her to go to the theater with us, but she would not hear of it."

"In a way I suppose she could hardly go tonight," Mimi spoke apologetically, the tone in which she always tried to excuse Theresa's abruptness. "Don't mind her, Jerry. She doesn't mean to be rude."

"I don't mind her. I think she's wonderful."

Mimi twisted her fingers into a rigid, knotted gnarl.

"She was wonderful, but, but—she killed herself," she said hollowly.

Jerry cried out, struggled to her feet, and then sank back white and horrified among the cushions.

"Mimi—no—oh, don't," she cried. "You—mustn't say such things—you—frighten me."

Mimi inhaled a great gulp of cigarette smoke.

"They have taken her to Mietta's at the corner—you know, the one with flowers in the windows. I'm frightfully upset. It—it makes a wreck of one."

Jerry's hot young blood ran cold, a great blackness yawned before her eyes.

"This terrible woman is making a fool of me," she stammered aloud, incoherently.

"She shot herself. Right in the heart. There is blood all over the floor. She slashed her pictures—every one—with that little bronze dagger I brought her from Rome. Her room is a perfect mess. You—you don't mind my talking about it, do you, Jerry? I can't help it. I'm a wreck."

"N-no, of course not," Jerry stammered. "Of course not." After a moment, when she could speak, she asked in such a soft and pitiful voice: "Why did she, Mimi? She was so clever. Wasn't she happy?"

"I don't know why. Of course she was happy. Everyone said how brilliant she was, what a genius. She had a lover—she gave him up. She said she couldn't serve two masters. She was right. I tried it, and made a muddle of both. She was quite right. She didn't mind much—giving him up. She worshiped her pictures."

Jerry brooded over it bitterly. "I could have loved her much more," she said. "But she never seemed to want—too much."

Beautiful, unfathomable Theresa, what tragedies had underlain that tense alertness! Jerry cried a little. "She might have left the pictures," Mimi chattered nervously, with cold lips. "Some of them were fine. I could have sold them for a great deal of money."

"Mimi, did she owe you money—Theresa?" Jerry's voice was eager. She should love to do that parting kindness to the memory of strange Theresa—to pay her final debts. Mimi stared at her, shook her head.

"Of course not. She owed nobody anything. We took this house together, but she has always borne the expense of it, from the very first."

"Um, she would," whispered Jerry, disappointed that she was denied that final happiness, but understanding Theresa with the cold but kindly hand. "Oh, that is why she said good-by, and kissed me," Jerry whispered. "That's why she said she would—give me a present—"

Mimi caught upon the words hopefully. "A present! Theresa said it? Come, quickly."

They ran feverishly down the hall to Jerry's room and reached for the button, Mimi's hand ahead of Jerry's, flooding the room with light. They saw it instantly, standing out vivid and bright in the small room, propped upon the piano against the wall, Theresa's parting gift to the one who had most desired her—the "Ocean Rider," a tumult of green and white.

Jerry stood before it, sobbing piteously, twisting her hands together. "Oh, Theresa, how could you?" she wept. And then, remembering Mimi, she tried to stifle her emotion, to be quiet, self-possessed. "She—she wasn't unhappy about it," she stammered weakly. "She was quite gay. She laughed at me and kissed me—" Her voice broke on the pitiful words. "Perhaps—she is really getting—rested, as she said."

"Come on back," said Mimi. "It makes me nervous. I never liked that picture. There is something so—defiant—about it."

They sat down opposite each other, stiffly, Jerry in the great chair, Mimi lighting another cigarette as she lay tense and rigid on the chaise longue. Looking at her suddenly Jerry realized that the painted woman in the trailing silken gown was broken-hearted, suffering things indescribable that her very thoughts were bleeding.

"Mimi, you loved Theresa, didn't you?"

That curious, clinging friendship between the young girl with her terrific energy, and the frivolous, light-hearted woman was the greatest mystery Jerry had touched upon in the great city.

Mimi smoked passionately, twisting the cigarette between her lips. Suddenly she tossed it into the fireplace, lit another. Her fingers were blue.

"You didn't know that I am Theresa's mother, did you, Jerry? I don't suppose she told you."

"That was more than Jerry could bear. She broke into high, hysterical laughter.

"Mimi! Don't!

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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MRS JANIE KIRKLAND  
Sept. 1st, 1925. Administratrix.  
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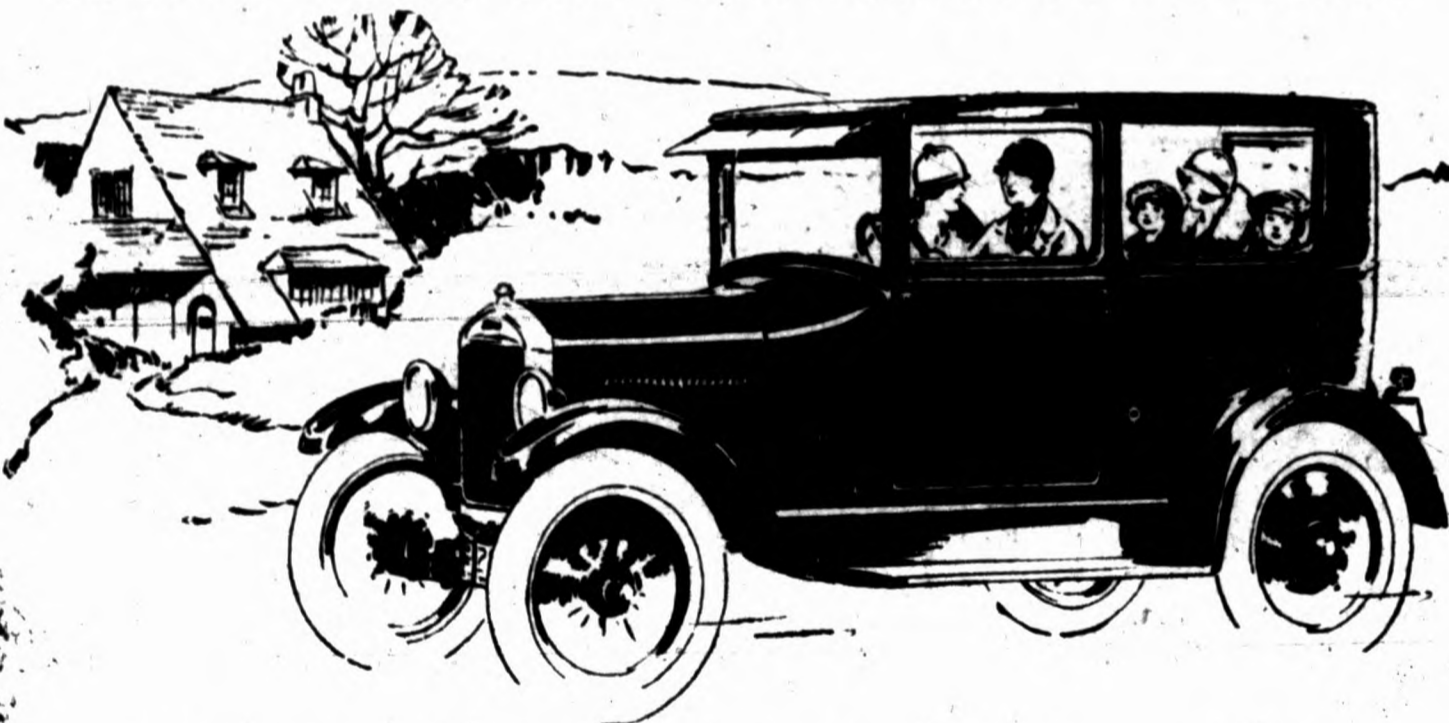
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