



The Girl from His Town
by Mark Van Vorst
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CHAPTER XXV.

Letty Lane Runs Away.

He had not got upstairs to his rooms at the Carlton before a note was handed him from the actress, bidding him to return at once to the Savoy, and Ruggles, his heart hammering like a trip hammer, rushed up to his rooms, made an evening toilet, for



"Why, You Don't Mean to Say That You Thought I Wouldn't Stand by Him?"

it was then half-past seven, threw his cravats and collar all around the place, cursed like a miner as he got into his clothes, and red almost to apoplexy, nervous and full of emotion, he returned to the rooms he had left not three hours before.

The three hours had been busy ones at the actress' apartment. Letty Lane's sitting-room was full of trunks, dressing bags and traveling paraphernalia. She came forward out of what seemed a world of confusion, dressed as though for a journey, even her veil and her gloves denoting her departure. She spoke hurriedly and almost with out politeness.

"I have sent for you to come and see me here. Not a soul in London knows I am going away. There will be a dreadful row at the theater, but that's none of your affairs. Now, I want you to tell me before I go just what you are going to do for Dan."

"Who are you going with?" Ruggles asked shortly, and she flashed at him: "Well, really, I don't think that is any of your business. When you drive a woman as you have driven me, she will go far."

He interrupted her vehemently, not daring to take her hand. "I couldn't do more. I have asked you to marry me. I couldn't do more. I stand by what I have said. Will you?" he stammered.

She knew men. She looked at him keenly. Her veil was lifted above her face and its shadow framed her small pale face on which there were marks of utter disenchantment, of great earnestness. She said languidly: "What I want to know is, what you are going to do for Dan?"

"I told you I would share with him."

"Then he will be nearly as rich?"

"He'll have more than is good for him."

That satisfied her. Then she pursued. "I want you to stand by him. He will need you."

Ruggles lifted the hand he held and kissed it reverently. "I'll do anything you say—anything you say."

Downstairs in the Savoy, as Dan had done countless times, Ruggles waited until he saw her motor car carry her and her small luggage and Higgins away.

In their sitting-room in the Carlton a half-hour later the door was thrown open and Dan Blair came in like a madman. Without preamble he seized Ruggles by the arm.

"Look here," he cried, "what have you been doing? Tell me now, and tell me the truth, or, by God, I don't know what I'll do. You went to the Savoy. You went there twice. Anyhow, where is she?"

Dan, slender as he was beside Ruggles' great frame, shook the elder man as though he had been a terrier. "Speak to me. Where has she gone?"

He stared in the Westerner's face, his eyes bloodshot. "Why in thunder don't you say something?"

And Ruggles prayed for some power to unloose his thickening tongue.

"You say she's gone?" he questioned.

"I say," said the boy, "that you've been meddling in my affairs with the woman I love. I don't know what you have said to her, but it's only your age that keeps me from striking you. Don't you know," he cried, "that you are spoiling my life? Don't you know that?"

again he carried in his hand his valise, which he put down with a bang on the table. More calmly, but still in great anger, he said to his father's friend:

"Now, can you tell me what you've done or not?"

"Dan," said Ruggles with difficulty, "if you will sit down a moment we can—"

The boy laughed in his face. "Sit down!" he cried. "Why, I think you must have lost your reason. I have chartered a motor car out there and the damned thing has burst a tire and they are fixing it up for me. It will be ready in about two minutes and then I am going to follow wherever she has gone. She crossed to Paris, but I can get there before she can even with this damned accident. But, before I go, I want you to tell me what you said."

"Why," said Ruggles quietly, "I told her you were poor, and she turned you down."

His words were faint. "God!" said the boy under his breath. "That's the way you think about truth. Lie to a woman to save my precious soul! But I expect," he said; "you think she is so immoral and so bad that she will hurt me. Well," he said, with great emphasis, "she has never done anything in her life that comes up to what you've done. Never! And nothing has ever hurt me so."

His lips trembled. "I have lost my respect for you, for my father's friend, and as far as she is concerned, I don't care what she marries me for. She has got to marry me, and if she doesn't"—he had no idea, in his passion, what he was saying or how—"why, I think I'll kill you first and then blow my own brains out!" And with these mad words he grabbed up his valise and bolted from the room, and Ruggles could hear his running feet tearing down the corridor.

CHAPTER XXVI.

White and Coral.

Spring in Paris, which comes in a fashion so divine that even the most calloused and indifferent are impressed by its beauty, awakened no answering response in the heart of the young man who, from his hotel window, looked out on the desecrated gardens of the Tuileries—on the distant spires of churches whose names he did not know—on the square block of old palaces. He had missed the boat across the channel taken by Letty Lane, and the delay had made him lose what little trace of her he had. In the early hours of the morning he had flung himself in at the St. James, taken the indifferent room they could give him in the crowded season, and excited as he was he slept and did not waken until noon. Blair thought it would be a matter of a few hours only to find the whereabouts of the celebrated actress, but it was not such an easy job. He had not guessed that she might be traveling incognito, and at none of the hotels could he hear news of her, nor did he pass her in the crowded, noisy, rustling, crying



"Why," said Ruggles quietly, "I Told Her You Were Poor, and She Turned You Down."

ing streets, though he searched motors for her with eager eyes, and haunted restaurants and cafes, and went everywhere that he thought she might be likely to be.

At the end of the third day, unsuccessful and in despair, having hardly slept and scarcely eaten, the unhappy young lover found himself taking a slight luncheon in the little restaurant known as the Perouse down on the Quais. His head on his hand, for the present moment the joy of life gone from him, he looked out through the windows at the Seine, at the bridge and the lines of flowering trees. He was the only occupant of the upper room where, of late, he had ordered his luncheon.

The tide of life rolled slowly in this quieter part of the city, and as Blair sat there under the window there passed a piper playing a shrill, sweet tune. It was so different from any of

the loud metropolitan clamors, with which his ears were full, that he got up, walked to the window and leaned out. It was a pastoral that met his eyes. A man piping, followed by little pattering goats; the primitive, unlooked-for picture caught his tired attention, and, just then, opposite the Quais, two women passed—flower sel-

lers, their baskets bright with crocuses and gillyflowers. The bright picture touched him and something of the spring-like beauty that the day wore and that dwelt in the May light, soothed him as nothing had for many hours.

He paid his bill, took courage, picked up his hat and gloves and stick and walked out briskly, crossing the bridge to the Rue de Rivoli, determined that night should not fall until he found the woman he sought. Nor did it, though the afternoon wore on and Dan, pursuing his old trails, wandered from worldly meeting place to worldly meeting place. Finally, toward six o'clock, he saw the lengthening shadows steal into the woods of the Bois de Boulogne, and in one of the smaller alleys, where the green-trunked trees of the forests were full of purple shadows and yellow sun discs, flickering down, he picked up a small iron chair and sat himself down, with a long sigh, to rest.

While he sat there watching the end of the alley as it gave out into the broader road, a beautiful red motor rolled up to the junction of the two ways and Letty Lane, in a summer frock, got out alone. She had a flowing white veil around her head and a flowing white scarf around her shoulders. As the day on the Thames, she was all in white—like a dove. But this time her costume was made vivid and picturesque by the coral parasol she carried, a pair of coral-colored kid shoes, around her neck and falling on their long chain, she wore his coral beads. He saw that he observed her face before she did him. All this Dan saw before he dashed into the road, came up to her with something like a cry on his lips, bareheaded, for his hat and his stick and his gloves were by his chair in the woods.

Letty Lane's hands went to her heart and her face took on a deadly pallor. She did not seem glad to see him. Out of his passionate description of the hours that he had been through, of how he had looked for her, of what he thought and wanted and felt, the actress made what she could, listening to him as they both stood there under the shadows of the green trees. Scanning her face for some sign that she loved him, for it was all he cared for, Dan saw no such indication there. He finished with:

"You know what Ruggles told you was a lie. Of course, I've got money enough to give you everything you want. He's a lunatic and ought to be shut up."

"It may have been a lie, all right," she said with forced indifference; "I've had time to think it over. You are too young. You don't know what you want." She stopped his protestations: "Well, then, I am too old and I don't want to be tied down."

When he pressed her to tell him whether or not she had ceased to care for him, she shook her head slowly, marking on the ground fine tracery with the end of her coral parasol. He had been obliged to take her back to the red motor, but before they were in earshot of her servants, he said:

"Now, you know just what you have done to me, you and Ruggles between you. For my father's sake and the thing I believed in I've kept pretty straight as things go." He nodded at her with boyish egotism, throwing all the blame on her. "I want you to understand that from now, right now, I'm going to the dogs just as fast as I can get there, and it won't be a very gratifying result to anybody that ever cared."

She saw the determination on his

fine young face, worn by his sleepless nights, already matured and changed, and she believed him.

"Paris," he nodded toward the gate of the woods which opened upon Paris, "is the place to begin in—right here. A man," he went on, and his lips trembled, "can only feel like this once in his life. You know all the talk there is about young love and first love. Well, that's what I've got for you, and I'm going to turn it now—right now—into what older people warn men from, and do their best to prevent. I have seen enough of Paris," he went on, "these days I have been looking for you, to know where to go and what to do, and I am setting off for it now."

She touched his arm.

"No," she murmured. "No, boy, you are not going to do any such thing!"

This much from her was enough for him. He caught her hand and cried: "Then you marry me. What do we care for anybody else in the world?"

"Go back and get your hat and stick and gloves," she commanded, keeping down the tears.

"No, no, you come with me, Letty; I'm not going to let you run to your motor and escape me again."

"Go; I'll wait here," she promised. "I give you my word."

As he snatched up the inanimate objects from the leaf-strewn ground where he had thrown them in despair, he thought how things can change in a pale face on which there marks of ut a quarter of an hour.

Jubilant to have overcome the fate which had tried to keep her hidden from him in Paris, he could hardly believe his eyes that she was before them again, and, as the motor rolled into the Avenue des Acacias, he asked her the question uppermost in his

mind:

"Are you alone in Paris, Letty?"

"Don't you count?"

"No—no—honestly, you know what I mean."

"You haven't any right to ask me that."

"I have—I have. You gave me a right. You're engaged to me, aren't you? Gosh, you haven't forgotten have you?"

"Don't make me conspicuous in the Bois, Dan," she said; "I only let you come with me because you were so terribly desperate, so ridiculous."

"Are you alone?" he persisted. "Have got to know."

"Higgins is with me."

"Oh, God," he cried wildly, "how can you joke with me? Don't you understand you're breaking my heart?"

But she did not dare to be kind to him, knowing it would unnerve her for the part she had promised to play. He sat gripping his hands tightly together, his lips white. "When leave you now," he said brokenly, "am going to find that devil of a Hungarian and do him up. Then I am going to tackle Ruggles."

"Why, what's poor Mr. Ruggles go to do with it?"

Dan cried scornfully: "For God's sake, don't keep this up! You know the rot he told you? I made him confess. He has had this mania all along about money being a handicap; he was bent on trying this game with some girl to see how it worked." He continued more passionately. "I don't care a rap what you marry me for Letty, or what you have done or been. I think you're perfect and I'll make you the happiest woman in the world."

She said: "Hush, hush. Listen dear; listen, little boy. I am awfully sorry, but it won't do. I never thought it would. You'll get over it all right, though you don't, you can't believe me now. I can't be poor, you know; I really couldn't be poor."

He interrupted roughly: "Who says you'll be? What are you talking about? Why, I'll cover you with jewels, sweetheart, if I have to rip the earth open to get them out."

She understood that Dan believed Ruggles' story to have been a cock and-bull one.

"You talk as though you could buy me, Dan. Wait, listen." She put him back from her. "Now, if you won't be quiet, I'm going to stop my car."

He repeated: "Tell me, are you alone in Paris? Tell me. For three days I have wandered and searched for you everywhere; I have hardly eaten a thing, I don't believe I have slept a wink." And he told her of his weary search.

She listened to him, part of the time her white-gloved hand giving itself up to the boy; part of the time both hands folded together and away from him, her arms crossed on her breast, her small shoes of coral kid tapping the floor of the car. Thus they rolled leisurely along the road by the Bois

"Are you alone in Paris, Letty?"

And she said: "Oh, what a bore you are! You're the most obstinate creature. Well, I am alone, but that has nothing to do with you."

A glorious light broke over his face; his relief was tremendous.

"Oh, thank God!" he breathed. "Ponotowsky"—and she said his name with difficulty—"is coming to night from Carlsbad."

The boy threw back his bright head and laughed wildly.

"Curse him! The very name makes me want to commit a crime. He will go over my body to you. You hear me, Letty. I mean what I say."

People had already remarked them as they passed. The actress was too well known to pass unobserved, but she was indifferent to their curiosity or to the existence of anyone but this excited boy.

Blair, who had not opened a paper since he came to Paris, did not know that Letty Lane's flight from London had created a scandal in the theatrical world, that her manager was suing her, and that to be seen with her driving in the Bois was a conspicuous thing indeed. She thought of it, however.

"I am going to tell the man to drive you to the gate on the other side of the park where it's quieter, we won't be stared at, and I want you to leave me and let me go to the Maurice alone. You must, Dan, you must let me go to the hotel alone."

He laughed again in the same strained fashion and forced her hand to remain in his.

"Look here. You don't suppose I am going to let you go like this, now that I have seen you again. You don't suppose I am going to give you up to that infamous scoundrel? You have got to marry me."

Bringing all her strength of character to bear, she exclaimed: "I expect you think you are the only person who has asked me to marry him, Dan. I am going to marry Prince Ponotowsky. He is perfectly crazy about me."

Until that moment she had not made him think that she was indifferent to him, and the idea that such a thing was possible, was too much for his overstrained heart to bear. Dan cried her name in a voice whose appeal was like a hurt creature's, and as the hurt creature in its suffering sometimes springs upon its torturer, he flung his arms around her as she sat in the motor, held her and kissed her, then set her free, and as the motor flew along, tore open the door to spring out or to throw himself out, but clinging to him she prevented his mad act. She stopped the car along the edge of the quiet, wooded alley. Blair saw that he had terrified her. She covered her beating heart with her hands and gasped at him that he was "crazy, crazy," and perhaps a little late his dignity and self-possession returned.

"I am mad," he acknowledged more

calmly, "and I am sorry that I frightened you. But you drive me mad."

Without further word he got out and left her agitated, leaning toward him, and Blair, less pale and thoroughly the man, lifted his hat to her and, with unusual grace, bowed good-night and good-by. Then, rushing as he had come, he walked off down through the alley, his gray figure in his gray clothes disappearing through the vista of meeting trees.

For a moment she stared after him, her eyes fastened on the tall, slender, beautiful young man. Blair's fire and ardor, his fresh youthfulness, his protection and his chivalry, his ardent devotion, touched her profoundly. Tears fell, and one splashed on her white glove. Was he really going to ruin his life? The old ballad, "The Earl of Moray," ran through her head:

"And long may his lady look from the castle wall."

Dan had neither title nor, according to Ruggles, had he any money, and she could marry the prince; but Dan as he walked so fast away, misery snapping at his heels as he went, stamping through the woods, seemed glorious to Letty Lane and the only one she wanted in the world. What if anything should happen to him really? What if he should really start out to do the town according to the fashion of his Anglo-Saxon brothers but more desperately still? She took a card from the case in the corner of the car scribbled a few words, told the man to

drive around the curve and meet the outlet of the path by which Dan had gone. When she saw him within reaching distance she sent the chauffeur across the woods to give Mr Blair her scribbled word and consoled herself with the belief that Dan wouldn't "go to the dogs or throw himself in the river until he had seen her again."

CHAPTER XXVII.

At Maxim's.

The Maurice, Miss Lane gave strict orders to admit only Mr. Blair to her apartments. She described him. No sooner had she drunk her cup of tea, which Higgins gave her, than she began to expect Dan.

He didn't come.

Her dinner, without much appetite she ate alone in her salon; saw a doctor and made him prescribe something for the cough that racked her chest; looked out to the warm, bright gardens of the Tuileries fading into the pallid loveliness of sunset, indifferent to everything in the world—except Dan Blair. She believed she would soon be indifferent to him, too; then everything would be done with. Now she wondered had he really gone—had he done what he threatened? Why didn't he come? At twelve o'clock that night as she lay among the cushions of her sofa, dozing, the door of her parlor was pushed in. She sprang up with a cry of delight; but when Ponotowsky came up to her she exclaimed: "Oh, you!" and the languor and boredom with which she said his name made the prince laugh shortly.

"Yes, I. Who did you think it was?" Cynically and rather cruelly he looked down at Letty Lane and admired the picture she made; small, exquisite, her blond head against the dark velvet of the lounge, her gray eyes intensified by the fatigue under them.

"Just got in from Carlsbad; came directly here. How-de-do? You look, you know—" he scrutinized her through his single eye-glass—"most frightfully seedy."

"Oh, I'm all right." She left the sofa, for she wanted to prevent his nearer approach. "I have you had any supper? I'll call Higgins."

"No, no, sit down, please, will you? I want to know why you sent to Carlsbad for me? Have you come to your senses?"

He was as mad about the beautiful creature as a man of his temperament could be. Exhausted by excess and bored with life, she charmed and amused him, and in order to have her with him always, to be master of her caprices, he was willing to make any sacrifice.

"Have you sent off that imbecile boy?" And at her look he stopped and shrugged. "You need a rest, my child," he murmured practically, "you're neurotic and very ill. I've wired to have the yacht at Cherbourg—it'll reach there by noon tomorrow."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Mrs. R. Brant, 1115 Paden Street, Parkersburg, W. Va., had an attack of lumbago which left her bad kidney trouble, and she suffered much severe pain and backache. Then she heard of Foley Kidney Pills and says: "After taking them a short time the pain left my back and I am again able to do my own household work. Foley Kidney pills helped me wonderfully."

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REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS.

Deeds Left at County Clerks' Office During Past Two Weeks.

Mrs. Maggie A. Drake to H. N. Forester, lot on Church street, \$4,250.

Master to E. W. A. Bultman, 12 1-2 acres in Providence township, \$500.

Henry J. McLaurin to Mary M. Ryan, tract of land on Camden-Charleston public road, \$5.00 and other consideration.

Selena B. Walker to Perry Moses, Jr., et. al, lot on Main street north of China's Drug Store, \$16,000.

Davis D. Moise to J. E. King, lot on Hampton avenue, \$2,704.

Elizabeth M. McLaurin to Mary M. Ryan and Margaret A. Shaw, two tracts in county, known as "Minnie Hill Plantation" and "Carter's Old Field," \$5 and other consideration.

John A. Lewis to J. L. McCallum, lot on Church street, \$325.

W. H. Cook to Daisy E. Smith, 27 6-10 acres in Providence township, \$579.60.

E. M. Hall to T. P. Lynam, lot on Calhoun street, \$825.

C. H. Deal to F. B. Creech and A. A. Howell, lot on Broad street, \$5.

McCallum Realty Company to R. Alford Burgess, lot on Sumter street, \$75.

O. J. C. Rose to Frank McLaughlin, 30 acres of Manchester land, \$90.

O. J. C. Rose to Joseph Gary, 34 1-2 acres in Manchester township, \$172.50.

I. C. Triplett to Lizzie I. Walker, three lots in "Blandland," \$375.

Master to Davis D. Moise, lot on Hampton avenue, \$2,500.

Kathyrne R. Jenkins to B. F. Estridge, lot and building on Oakland avenue, \$3,000.

John R. Ligon to Joseph J. Burgess, lot north of city, \$200.

Master to R. I. Manning, three lots in city, \$100.

Master to Martha Gaillard, 5 3-4 acres near Brogdon, \$230.

Master to Executors of Marion Moise, lot on Harris street, \$25.

McCallum Realty Company to Felix Stiede and Richard Stelzner, lot on Hampton avenue, \$1,600.

S. M. Pierson to McCallum Realty Company, lot on Hampton avenue, \$1,000.

Felix Stiede and Richard Stelzner to J. L. Mc