

STEALTHY TERROR

By JOHN FERGUSON

Perhaps she thought this incoherent and rather wild for there was a trace of anxiety in her glance. I made haste to reassure her by laying my hand on her shoulder across the table and found that this act was rather worse than the word. She withdrew her hand, alarmed.

"Oh, Miss Thompson, I am neither mad nor drunk," I blurted out. "It's just—it's just that I've seen a way by which possibly, mind you I say possibly, not probably, much less certainly, you and I may get out of this hole we're in."

"I am in," she asked. "I am sorry to say it, and sorrier still that it should be through me; but it is true. You cannot stay in this house. It is a marked place now, and your life would not be safe."

"I don't think I could stay on in it after this night alone, but I have friends who will take me in. When you are safely away I'll shut up the house and go to them."

"I'm quite frank. I doubt if you'll be safe in this country for a while."

"Can't we?" I cried—for this was the point at which I aimed to bring her back to the subject of my plan. "You forget that I told you I had an inspiration a while back."

"You know my way out?"

"Tell me what it is," she said simply. "For I see it is something you want me to do."

"Now that was just the mood and the mood in which the girl had to be worked up; she had to be ready to do what I asked, without questioning or suggestions."

"The shops were beginning to open when she left, with instructions to spare no expense in procuring a large strong packing-case, and in getting it sent round to the flat as soon as possible. She had then to find out a firm of carriers who would undertake to call at the address for a heavy packing-case at 10 o'clock exactly."

"From behind the curtains I watched for the arrival of the case, and it came sooner than I expected. By the time it was unpacked, I was waiting for the arrival of the case, and it came sooner than I expected."

"I must," answered Earl determinedly. "I understand the condition of the Durivages perfectly. They are penniless, but I have had some opportunity to receive to at least relieve their necessities."

"The friend said that there was nothing more to be said to his impetuous young cavalier in the way of striving to dissuade him from carrying out his adventurous plan."

"Every time Earl Hommer thought of the fair young girl with whom and her father he had passed a pleasant month abroad, his heart stirred within him. There had been nothing more than friendly relations, but the impression of his life upon him, a thought of how genial and friendly the father and daughter had been to him, of their present distressing condition, of their friendliness and poverty in a foreign land, appealed to the best instincts of his loyal nature."

"They were wealthy people, the Durivages, but Earl as well had an abundance of worldly means. He had a house to attend to, and going abroad just now meant something serious for his interests, but he was willing to make the sacrifice."

"A woman's wit. When Earl reached his office he sat down to think out his plans for an immediate departure. He had to be ready to go at a moment's notice, and he was in a hurry to get ready."

"The case of my exit was almost completed. My thoughts on the way to the station were not unpleasant. I was thinking of how the porter would, as he stood waiting for the lady, be approached by a pleasant-looking gentleman who would explain that the lady was detained unavoidably, and had commissioned him to take possession of the cloakroom ticket. And I saw, too, in my imagination, and had this been a real romance, I should have said I beheld it as a fact, a motor with a large packing case, speeding rapidly from the railway station, while inside the vehicle were two men with evil, gloating faces. I pictured them carrying that case into some horrid habitation of their own where death could be meted out in safety. And I saw their faces when the lid was rent open, and they came on the calm, upturned face of the unexpected occupant."

"There was something in this that satisfied me. They had passed a dead man into my hands, a compromising circumstance, it seemed certain that sooner or later Miss Thompson and I would be incriminated. Well, I had turned what was intended to be an incriminating incursion into a means of escape, and after it had served this purpose had returned it into their eager hands."

"Best of all Miss Thompson did not dream of its being a means of escape. She was waiting for the arrival of the case, and it came sooner than I expected."

THE DAILY NOVELETTE

THE LOST YEARS

By EDNA DEANE MERRIAM

I HAVE sent my soul a thousand times across the ocean in anxious longings for Elsa Durivage," said Earl Hommer. "Something bids me go in person."

"You are mad, Earl—rank, rathar mad! Why, what is she to you, or rather you to her?" cried young Hommer's closest friend, to whom he had shown his heart after a month of secret, silent brooding.

"True, indeed!" sighed Earl sadly. "What am I to her? Nothing, I fear, but I love her. We were good friends after a week's acquaintance abroad. If nothing more, as a true friend, I am anxious for her welfare. When the great European war began she and her folks were stranded in an inland city of the continent. Those who escaped described the sufferings and terror of those not so fortunate as heartrending. I tell you to fully agonizes me to think of Mr. Durivage, an invalid, reduced to beggary, of that beautiful girl—oh! Earl Earl poignantly, choking up with intense emotion. "I can't endure it. I am going to their rescue."

"That is impossible," spoke his friend seriously. "You risk your liberty, and tempting it, even your life. How can you hope safely to penetrate to a country at war?"

"I must," answered Earl determinedly. "I understand the condition of the Durivages perfectly. They are penniless, but I have had some opportunity to receive to at least relieve their necessities."

"The friend said that there was nothing more to be said to his impetuous young cavalier in the way of striving to dissuade him from carrying out his adventurous plan."

"Every time Earl Hommer thought of the fair young girl with whom and her father he had passed a pleasant month abroad, his heart stirred within him. There had been nothing more than friendly relations, but the impression of his life upon him, a thought of how genial and friendly the father and daughter had been to him, of their present distressing condition, of their friendliness and poverty in a foreign land, appealed to the best instincts of his loyal nature."

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The letter was a brief, ordinary missive, as if written between acquaintances. It gave an address in the far away, beleaguered city. It told of business there going on as usual, of no particular effect of the war. There was nothing in the letter that would not pass the most strict censorship.

"There was a postscript to the letter and it greatly puzzled Earl. It read: 'The war stamp on this letter is probably quite a curiosity in America. You might seek it out, for they will be scarce after a while, and it is quite a memento to preserve.'"

"Of course, I will save it," murmured the ardent Earl, thinking of the dainty lips that had touched the insensible piece of paper, and he proceeded to follow instructions.

"Why—there is writing under the stamp!" exclaimed Earl, and with trembling eyes he read the words: "We are penniless and starving."

In a flash Earl Hommer read the words. The letter had been written in a noncommittal way that had passed with the censor. Elsa had used the war stamp to conceal a message telling of the real situation in the district from which she wrote.

It required no further thought for Earl to arrive at a speedy decision. The evening train bore him eastward, and two days later he was on the ocean, bound for the continental continent.

Within 200 miles of the city that held his beloved, the progress of the ardent Earl was blocked. He had with him a large amount in ready cash. This had enabled him to proceed thus far without much difficulty. Now a broad stretch of disputed and war-ravaged territory lay between him and his prospective destination.

The opportunity. It was through a little child that a long, anxious waiting was brought to a close. Passing a house wrecked by a shell in the little town where he was staying, Earl heard a faint wailing voice. He investigated to discover a little four-year-old girl lying ten feet down in the dismantled cellar where she had fallen. Her arm was broken, she was well nigh exhausted with cold and starvation. He managed to learn from her where she lived. When he restored her to her frantic parents he found that she had been missing for two days.

The gratitude of the poor parents was genuine. The father chanced to mention that he was one of some fifty wagon men who were to carry some wounded soldiers to the city where the night was to be spent. He had with him the rear with five days' provisions. It did not take Earl long to decide that here was his opportunity to reach his beloved.

He had an understanding with the man. When the caravan set out Earl was comfortably ensconced in a shielded corner of the inclosed wagon.

How his heart beat with suspense and then sorrow as he finally reached his journey's end! The Durivages were sheltered in a poor hotel and had parted with all they possessed to secure the bare necessities of life.

The wagon man was to return to neutral ground with his vehicle, and Earl and the Durivages were smuggled through in his vehicle.

To think of that dreadful past! murmured Elsa, as they set sail from the coast, homeward bound at last. "Oh, what a messenger of joy and hope you have been!"

A messenger of love as well. The moon was smiling down, the stars twinkled, the gentle breeze breathed only of peace. He told her all that was in his heart, and she blessed the lips that spoke those precious words.

Monday's Complete Novelette—"THE YELLOW GOWN."

GETTING BACK ON HIM

Doctor—The man who told you your heart was weak was mad! When was it? Recruit—When I last came up. Doctor—Who was it? Recruit—You!

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"DREAMLAND ADVENTURES"

By DADDY

"THE BEAUTIFUL STRANGER."

A complete new adventure each week, beginning Monday and ending Saturday.

CHAPTER VI The King Wins His Bride (Peggy and the King of the Wild Geese, seeking to save the Beautiful Stranger from the Blue Geese, are captured and threatened with death. Hunters fire upon the flock from behind. The Beautiful Stranger plunges helplessly toward the ground.)

The guns of the Indian hunters banged away viciously at the fleeing Geese. Peggy thought she could hear shots whistle menacingly past her. Yet the King of the Wild Geese dived desperately to catch the Beautiful Stranger. She was fluttering weakly as she tumbled toward the earth and seemed desperately wounded. Then they turned their guns, so, evidently, they were not to be shot at.

As the King's plunge carried him down to the side of the Beautiful Stranger, he seized her apparently helpless wing in his beak and held it out. It caught the air, checking her fall. Aided by the King, she sailed swiftly but safely toward a wooded hill behind the Indian camp where the hunters were shooting.

The Indians, seeing the geese fall and thinking they were sure prey, had turned their attention toward the Beautiful Stranger and the King. They were almost in the shelter of the trees. Then they turned their guns, so, evidently, they were not to be shot at.

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"Let's try camouflage," answered Peggy

"They are not here. There's a soldier web across the opening," the Indian said and turned away. Soon all of them were gone.

It was getting dark when the Geese and Peggy crept from the tree. "Why, it looks like night," cried Peggy.

"Yes, the sun is going to take his little nap," replied the King. "We can start back to the feeding grounds of my flock."

"But if it's night I must go to bed," cried Peggy. "Mother would like to see me stay out. I wish I were back."

"Whist-! A dizzy feeling! A little bump! and there was Peggy in her porch swing. The sun was down and it was dark.

"My goodness! we rescued the Beautiful Stranger just in time," she exclaimed as she jumped from the swing and ran into the house to go to bed.

(In next week's story Peggy again meets the Giant of the Woods in a singular adventure, much different from her other encounters with him.)

Alice Kent and the Day's Work

The Story of a Business Girl Who Would Not Fail

By MARTHA KEELER

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MY LOAD did lift when the train, with me on board, pulled out of Lett-bridge, having burned by bridges, the cheering warmth of the conflagration impressed me far more than the cold. With every mile of the journey my spirits rose. I might have been a princess soon to be a queen, setting out upon a triumphal progress to a foreign country whose king awaited her coming with all the pomp of royalty and the impatience of young love.

According to the ticket in my hand my destination was the town of Bellington, but in my heart I felt I was going only to Barbara. Just how I was to reach her was not clear and for the present it would be enough—if nothing more were possible—to breathe the same air she breathed and know some of the same folks. Later on, of course, when I should have a job and some money saved, we would live together and I could again take care of her. To me she was still the baby sister whom I used to dress and undress when, as often happened, mother wasn't able to; the baby sister whose first steps I had guided; the baby sister whose living speech had taught me to talk. From the beginning we were very different; for instance, my coal-black hair was straight as an Indian's, while hers covered her well-formed head with a glory of golden curls; her eyes were deepest blue; her features regular, her coloring ideal.

When we were together out of doors I had always tried to keep her in full sight of passersby, and whenever they seemed to remark about her beauty I was as proud as Punch. What mattered it, I mused as the train sped on toward Bellington, that since mother's death I had been alone, and had known only hardship and tragedy; Barbara would love me by and by as I always had loved her and my life would be like other girls. Yet for fifteen I was overwise and realized that before my dream came true there would be hardships to endure. But even serious fifteen can't see very far ahead, and to my eyes the mountains of difficulty were reduced to molehills by the belief that some day, somehow, with Mrs. Denton to help me, I should soon find work and be reunited with the sister I had worshiped from afar.

The train was late in reaching Bellington, but on arrival I at once inquired the way to Mrs. Denton's home. Her street and number I had learned from the newspaper at grandfather's. It was a long walk up the hill. As the gate clicked behind me my heart sank. All along I had been counting on the cooperation of my mother's friend, but perhaps she would think me a reckless, headstrong girl to defy my grandfather and seek work outside his factory; she

might refuse to have anything to do with me. Slowly I went toward the house and after scooping furtively to wipe the dust from my new shoes, I tiptoed up the steps. There was nobody in sight and the front door was closed. I rang the bell. Its long reverberation seemed a mockery. Finally I rang again; but still there was no response. I went to the side door, but that too was fastened and I noticed now that the window-shades were drawn. Determined to investigate, I started for the barn, where there were signs of life. My heart felt when a man, who said he was the gardener, announced that the family had left home three days before for a European trip. Observing my crestfallen look, he added: "But I could give you their address, miss."

I stood silent, lost in thought. Meanwhile the gardener was fumbling through his pockets and presently held out to me a piece of paper covered with closely written words. "There's such a lot of it, foreign names, all miss, that I ain't got the hang of it. Read it for yourself."

Then I pulled myself together, thanked the gardener and explained that Mrs. Denton's address in Europe was of no use to me. "You say she won't be back till fall?"

"Middle of September, miss," he replied. "This burg is a dead one in the summer time."

SYNOPSIS OF FUTURE CHAPTERS After a long and unavailing search for work that first summer in Bellington—a summer rendered more tedious by the Blake's absence in the Yellowstone—Alice will try canvassing for books, then will follow an experience as a nursemaid; later she will have a chance to visit her sister in her book store. The death of Mrs. Denton in mid-October, while returning home from Europe, will frustrate the girl's hopes, while the discovery that the Blake's, absent at her rooming place, are determined to keep her and Barbara apart, will be almost a crushing blow. Finally in the fall she will find a place