

A Circle in the Sand

By Kate Jordan

Author of "The Kiss of Gold," "The Other House," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

Seven months had passed between David's marriage in April and the foggy afternoon when he and Olga with some other hundred souls arrived in New York on board the Lusitania.

Dr. Ericsson was at the wharf to meet them. They were to dine that night on a family at the old house in Waverly place.

"Anne can't be with us," said the old man regretfully as the carriage took them up Broadway. "Her old home in the country is without a tenant at present, and she's taking a rest there. She's been working too hard, too steadily, night and day."

"She's a fool," said Olga from her corner, where she sat wrapped in furs to the nose. "She'll be used up in five years."

David felt his heart grow warm at the mention of Anne's name. The old life would be delightful again. He had had many ideas during the long honeymoon and now longed for work, the rush of the Citizen's rooms, where discussions on life's verities stood and fell like a weaver's shuttle. He longed for a sight of Anne at her corner desk with her bent profile or cheek resting in her hand. His marriage should not alter the friendship which had been in its way more satisfying, as it surely was rarer, than love. A comrade of a pretty, clever woman was the best gift a man could have in life. And he knew Anne would be glad to have him back. She had missed him, for she chose few friends, and none had been to her like him.

"Tell me about Anne," he said eagerly, while he gazed with pleasure at the familiar street scenes framed in the carriage windows. "She's well, isn't she?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," said Dr. Ericsson, with a bright smile. "Why shouldn't she be? If, as they say, a woman thrives on admiration, she's had quite enough to turn that dark tressed head of hers. You know about her book."

"No. Is it finished? You don't mean she's had her book published? She did not write that bit of news. I call it a lie."

"Perhaps she doubted its merit, its reception. She doubts no longer. There are plenty of books checked at the public, but seldom one like hers. Everybody is recommending it to everybody else."

"This is great news. Do you hear, Olga?"

But Olga was asleep.

"Morgan did a good thing for himself when he got her for The Planet, didn't he?" asked Dr. Ericsson. "You'll miss her on the Citizen."

"What do you mean?" asked David.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"But you know Anne was no longer with The Citizen?"

"No, I didn't."

"She wrote you ten days—two weeks ago."

"I didn't get the letter, then," he said, and Olga, looking no effort to hide his disappointment.

After learning the particulars he was silent. He could not realize Anne was gone, and with her to a great extent the influence in his life he desired and loved in the purest sense. He longed to see her again that night. There was much he wanted to talk to her about. He wanted her to come down a room and welcome him. He wanted to hear her bright account of the multitude of incidents which had happened during the months he had been away. She had a pretty trick when talking of bringing her first down upon her knee in the most genteel way that had always reminded him of a flower striking its head against a wall—she wanted to make that, and her confidence, and to hear her quick laugh. He had felt a similar but less intricate craving for a chum at school after the division of the holidays.

The feeling strengthened during the night, and long after Olga had gone to her first hand sleep on a bed that David's stable he found himself treading the stairs leading to The Citizen office. It was close upon midnight. He had not been expected until morning, and his coming made a most unusual sight. The building was in the midst of the old life, finding at that unexpected moment a score of questions to decide and the usual turmoil going in the air. He flung himself into the work, his disappointment above him, and forgot in the earnestness of the hour.

But in the early morning, with the wet, first copy of the paper in his hand, he stood before her deserted desk. A sense of loss crept coldly over him. Would he never see her sitting there again?

CHAPTER XV.

The old Temple mansion on lower Fifth avenue seemed to wink surprise from its windows at the changes which had taken place within its walls for months before and weeks after its master's return. Staircases had been reversed, rooms had been rearranged, and the furniture of many generations removed to make room for the treasures Olga had brought with her from Europe.

When completed at Christmas time, it was as beautiful as any house, and genuine antiques could make it.

Since her earliest memory Olga had never been given a penny to spend without the accompaniment of a caution to use it to the best advantage, as there were few to follow. Later her insatiable need of luxuries beyond her reach had been gratified by the mounting up of bills, but the unpleasantness of debt had followed and eaten half the pleasure. As David Temple's wife she found herself for the first time able to command money, and she spent it. Luxuries became needs, fashionable rivalries troubled her, and she lay awake devising competitive extravaganzas. It was her ambition to be not only the beauty of her set, but a famous beauty and the most talked of woman of her time. Celebrated belles of the past had found a place in history either by their splendid gallantries, wit or by the originality of their caprices.

The age she lived in did not view the first with the palliative wink belonging to the days of Charles II and Louis XV, the second was beyond her; but a startling outlay of money by a beauty of good position could create a heroine in this money-worshipping time.

"You are splendid," Smiley Joyce said to her, surveying her with monocular hold up. "You need splendor. You're the very one to set the pace in society. We have no social successes here worth mentioning unless I except myself. But you can become leader and attract rivals. That sort of thing gives verve to society. The day will come when Amer-

he be? He has married the woman he loves and is able to surround her with the luxury she requires to be content. Perhaps he would prefer not to be the husband of a society beauty on whom the lens is always fixed. In fact, I know Olga's display must jar upon him. But he is wise enough to know that no life holds all. If he loves her, the rest is mere detail. If he doesn't—well, I don't know. David is a man to hide well what he wishes to hide and have an inner life without a hint betraying it. They act in society as do all people with a proper idea of form—pay not the slightest attention to each other. Let us hope the tone of David's letter to you was only the result of a passing mood.

And now to talk of yourself. I hope you are keeping well and feel more happy now on that sleepy plantation. I feel so happy when you write with courage. Try not to be homesick. The sketches you sent are beautiful, and you are right to keep up your sketching.

You are unfair to say I don't miss you. I do indeed, and think of you often. Write a happy letter next time. I'll look for it. Tell me more about the business and don't be disappointed if you can't make money as fast as you'd like. You are sure to win if you are patient. With good wishes from my heart,

ANNE.

CHAPTER XVII.

A money panic not wholly unlooked for fell upon the country. Railroads went under, stocks fell, banks failed, and in the depression ruin was written after prominent names. Others, while holding an apparently unchanged position, had lost heavily and expected the worst.

David was one of the latter. By August he found himself but a little way from the edge of disaster. The calamity stunned him. He thought of his uncalculated expenditures, of Olga's insatiable demands. After seven sleepless nights he went to Newport, where, unmindful of the money country house on the sound, Olga had rented a cottage. They had an interview on the top terrace fronting the sea. By this time they had reached the condition of dull domesticity when they saw each other.

"It seems immensely stupid to let your affairs get so muddled," she said, as seldom as possible, and had inter-views. David was tenderly considerate. He went into the most tiresome business details trying to simplify them and make her understand. She scarcely listened. He knew that by the expression of her quiet eyes. He urged the need of economy. She shrugged her shoulders with a tolerant smile, but offered no resistance when he spoke of selling the country house on Long Island and the eccentric stable. Secretly she was tired of them both.

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"You don't understand, Olga. This is no passing breeze. We are in the midst of a storm, and how it will end God alone knows. The Citizen is not the best of investments. I am the heaviest stockholder there, and if the worst comes I can sell my interest."

"But the worst won't come," she said slowly and looked up at him from under her shady hat with an expression not unlike hatred.

"You'd better face what might be now. I hardly know where I stand."

He spoke coldly. He was antagonized by her tranquil selfishness when he remembered his rights of suspense.

"But you'll come out of it all right," she quietly insisted. "Fortunes go up and down. Other men have been in awkward places lots of times, but they have managed to escape unhurt, and you must do the same. Bertie Ogden was telling me only the other day that when things were lively in Wall street and some men failed it was the time for others to seize the opportunity and make money. He said it was like vultures battening on a wounded bird. Suppose you batten a little, David? Or are you too conscientious? I wish I understood business. I'd tell you what to do."

She stood up and shook out her narrow, lay skirt. He saw she was pale to the lips. After the kiss of greeting she had not touched him or spoken one word of comfort or courage. And he hoped for these things still from her, though since she bore his name she had taken no pains to cheat him.

"One needs money to seize the chance of standing in a fallen man's place," he said, trying to be patient. "What if I have none? If I paid our tremendous debts which a few months ago seemed impossible, I'd have scarcely anything but my interest in the paper left. Do you quite realize now where we stand? Do you know what it costs to live as we've been living? I've been very generous with you, Olga. You can't say I've denied you anything even when I should perhaps."

"Generous?" she said, her eyelids falling insolently. "I don't like that word. It's out of fashion between us hands and wives. When you married me, half of all you had became mine. I spent it as my right. If you'd interfered, you'd soon have understood that I held this view."

She looked frivolous and winsome as she stood in the soft light striking a long stemmed rose against her skirt as she spoke. David felt a mixed sensation of tenderness, pity and amusement seize him at the thought that the right to her husband's name was the only advanced advantage she had been interested enough to attempt to solve. Despite the crisis of the moment and his sore heart, he was disposed to question her further. He leaned forward, letting his elbow rest on his knee, and, seizing the head of the rose she had toyed with her so, said:

"But I don't agree with you," he said quietly.

"Oh, I suppose you'd have doled me out dollars if you dared and made me keep an account," she said. "Perhaps that's your view."

"No. As I said before, although you do not like the word, I am generous. I would give you half my income, or more perhaps, but your right to it I deny."

"I can't argue with you. I only know what I think."

"Can't you tell me why you think that?"

"Well, I married you. I've given up my freedom for you, made your life mine, and I expect everything you possess should be equally mine," she said insolently.

"What do you mean?" asked David, frowning. He could have checked her extravagance, controlled her. He preferred to do nothing, for he knew that in becoming her master her fear of him would have to be the weapon in his hand, her secret hate the result.

His fortune was a splendid one. The actual money spent, great though it was, troubled him little, but Olga's insatiable desire for spending helped to reveal her to him. Her vanity, which she took no pains to hide, was a continual affront.

They never quarreled, seldom disagreed. Olga was affectionate, soft, gentle as of old. No man could be insensible to her charm. But David divided how quickly the amiable smile would have changed to stolid dislike had her whims been interfered with. She went her own way serenely, no soul in her life, none in her kiss, loving nothing in the world save her own white and perfect body.

David was conscious of these truths, yet chose not to see them too clearly. He remained willfully dull sighted. He did not dare to think, decide, accept. Why fight the irremediable? Why plunge his mind in shadows? Why face the fact that in the most serious relation of life he had committed an amazing piece of folly? Rather let him accept Olga as she was, not the woman of his impassioned fancy. Let him demand only what she could give and learn to subdue his hunger for an existence she could not be part of nor understand. Let him refrain from fathoming the muddy shallows of her soul, by degrees need her less and draw around himself the comfort of an irresistible indifference. Better so for the peace of his life.

Sometimes a memory would trouble David Temple and leave his heart sad. He would think of the night he had heard the pale single whisper of the damsel who watched from heaven for her lover, and he would remember how that moment his heart had grown large with joy as he looked at Olga's face. It had really been the stir of the upper waves of passion, and he had fancied the sea depths troubled, but from that moment a ache and rapture he had known that love might be in a life when it staid.

CHAPTER XVI.

MY DEAR DONALD—You want me to tell you just where I am and how I look when I write to you—a habit, by the way, which may make me very conceited.

Well, then, it is a wet Sunday, but soft and hazy as wet June days are. The windows are open and the big tree outside drips a burden of rain tears. The sky is all mist, with the blue only a little way beyond. I have had a lazy morning and now after a cold plunge and a cup of tea am sitting in a white morning gown and my hair hangs down my back in a long plait. Are these details satisfactory? I have a big bunch of roses in the copper bowl you gave me, and the bell of the French church is calling the people to worship. Oh, it's good to be at peace every evening! Hours like this are the heaven of my week. Woman is a luxurious animal, and when she spends six days with discipline and routine as I do she is very apt to go to pieces on the seventh. Behold me, then, today degenerate, not going to church, not improving my mind, not in a stiff collar and guileless of a hairpin.

The new Placet gets on famously. I have a little room and a big desk all to myself. Proofreaders and other "confer" with me. Think of it! I feel like a personage. Donald, but I think my expression is not changed in consequence. I go to the office every day and leave at about 8. Generally I write on my new book until dinner. Of course I go out a good deal and have met lots of people who simply suggest "copy" with every turn of the head, created for no other purpose, I'm sure, than to have me write about them. Yes, I am still a student of life. Will you never stop teasing me about the phone? How often I think of the queer sights we saw together when you were directing my instruction. Didn't we enjoy them, Donald—that old Russian exile—I can hear his violin now—the first time I saw The Citizen's presses going like mad, the nook in the degenerate back street where we had tea and speculated about Paris?

You see what your command to talk about myself has done. I have talked of nothing else. Did you get the papers I sent about the dinner and cotillon at Olga's? I can't tell you how beautiful she looked. Why, by the way, do you think David isn't happy? Why shouldn't

"But in becoming my wife do you make me your debtor?"

"Well, something of that sort."

"My dear Olga"—and David looked at her with wise and tender eyes—"you are not the first woman who has made that mistake. Just consider the matter from a reasonable point of view."

She looked out at sea, her face expressing rebellion and unhappiness.

"Marriage should be a bond bringing as much happiness to a woman as to a man. I asked you to marry me because I loved you. I supposed you came to me as gladly for the same reason. Had I thought otherwise nothing under heaven would have made me accept you as my wife. I didn't want a sacrifice, I didn't want to buy you, and if either of these things has happened I may count myself a wretched man. Therefore at the beginning we stood equal in love. Loving each other, we married. We were extravagant upon? Perhaps because you were so beautiful, and you are right to keep up your sketching."

You are unfair to say I don't miss you. I do indeed, and think of you often. Write a happy letter next time. I'll look for it. Tell me more about the business and don't be disappointed if you can't make money as fast as you'd like. You are sure to win if you are patient. With good wishes from my heart,

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"Well, I married you. I've given up my freedom for you, made your life mine, and I expect everything you possess should be equally mine," she said insolently.

"Save me, David! Promise you will!" easy life and not the gall of poverty again. I'm not a great woman, nor a particularly good woman, but I think if I were robbed of this life"—and she looked into the rich, dim rooms—"I might be a hard, bad woman. Save me from that in saving yourself!" And she clung to him. "Save me, David! Promise you will!"

"I promise," he said in a tone which set her apart from him.

As he crossed the terrace to the open window he trod on the floor lying between them.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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A. P. FITCH, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW.

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Creditors' Notice.

Estate of Columbus White, deceased.

Notice is hereby given that letters testamentary on the estate of Columbus White, deceased, were granted to the undersigned, on the 21st day of December, 1908, by the Superior Court of Thurston county, State of Washington.

All persons having claims against said estate, are required to exhibit them, with the necessary vouchers, to me for allowance, at 115 West Fourth street, in the city of Olympia, that being the place for transaction of the business of said estate, within twelve months after the date of this notice, or they shall be forever barred.

This 30th day of December, 1908.

H. H. McLEROY, Executor of the estate of Columbus White, deceased. Date of first publication, Dec. 30, 1908.

Press Clippings Bureau. SPOKANE, WASH.

READS all Northwestern Newspapers for Advertisers, Lecturers, State and National Committees, Financiers and Business Men. References: Official National and Territorial National Jan. 15, 1899.