

Did She Win or Lose in Battle for Life and Love?



For the Answer Read

"The Fighting Hope"

Novelized by Virginia Leila Wentz from the Brilliant Play by William J. Hurlbert
A REAL LIFE NOVEL THAT GRIPS AND HOLDS, WHICH WILL APPEAR IN THIS PAPER

The Fighting Hope

Novelized by VIRGINIA LEILA WENTZ
From the Play by WILLIAM J. HURLBERT

PROLOGUE.

A strong man bravely facing the foe who would brand him with disgrace, calmly, silently fighting them to a finish; a convict declaiming his innocences from behind prison walls which enfold him because of his weakness and his wickedness; a beautiful young mother battling for a stainless name for her children and for the fair name of their father—these more interesting themes than what could a novelist devise for a real life romance of today?



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CHAPTER I.

MAN AND WIFE.
ROBERT GRANGER, JR., who had already learned "The Purple Cow," was endeavoring to master another gem from the Burgess Nonsense book. The drawings appealed to him immensely. He sat on the edge of the rug, his back against his father's chair, his legs of six years' growth stretched out, the book open upon his knee. Occasionally he made a dash with his hand at an inquisitive fly.
Across from him on a low rocker, her shining head bent slightly over in the serious operation of sewing a button on a coat, softly hummed his young mother. Presently the boy shuffled along the floor, still keeping the book on his lap, till he got close to her and lodged his chin on her knee.
"See if I don't know it, muddle," said he. And he began:
"The roof it has a lay time
A-lying in the sun;
The walls they have—showed in his mother's cheek."
"To hold him up;
—They do not have much fun."
Finished she gayly. She pushed the boy's hair back from his brow and kissed him. "Now run down into the garden, honey, and play with nurse and Baby Harold. Plenty of sun and fresh air and deep breathing, you know. That's what makes a little fellow into a big, strong man, eh—not too many nonsense verses?"
Robert put his book away reluctantly. "But I love poetry, too, darling." "But I love poetry, too, darling," asserted he, stroking her face prettily, before quitting the room.
"He's his father over and over again

of himself. "You don't look like a fighter, Bob. You look like a man to whom—well, to whom things come."
"Nothing," observed he, with a look of gravity—"nothing comes without hustling and exertion and perspiration, either of brow or spirit."
"In that case," said she, still regarding him reflectively, "I ought to know about this persuasion and the other accompaniments. With two children it's quite time I began to face things." She came nearer and laid her hand on his shoulder. "Things might strike me differently, you see, if I know more. Your odd, puzzling little moods—I could make allowances for them."
He grew confused beneath her caresses.
"My ill temper," he blurted out, "was of course, inexcusable. Still—"
"Oh, nonsense! I don't mind the ill temper in the least. I've heaps of my own to thank it. It's the frankness of the thing, the weakness of the conviction, the way the mood hits me. How would you feel," she added quickly, "if you got some remote hint that your mahogany cabinet was a veneered imitation or if the smallest doubt came to you about the genuineness of your commutation tickets or the soup at Bridget's head if it's not hot and well seasoned. In those cases, you see, I should understand your motives and your modes of action would not be baffling. It's the—illusive, twisted moods, as I say, that confuse me, make me think of bad periods and things."
"Have the bell rang and Bridget ushered in Miss Mary Graham."
"You've just come in the nick of time," said Anna, greeting her guest warmly with a score of engaging prettinesses. "Robert and I were in the thick of a sanguinary encounter."
"Well," returned Miss Graham, smiling. "You do your fighting artistically. I see no signs of vulgar strife."
"We thought," explained Anna, "we'd save our scalps for future use, since Robert expects a guest this afternoon. Now tell me about yourself, dear," added she, as her husband laughingly strolled out upon the porch. "It was most awfully nice to hear you had secured such a fine secretarial position—somewhere up the Hudson, isn't it? Must be nice and cool for this hot weather."
"It's just a bit below Ostling. Those horrid prison walls are the only disturbing feature about the place, and the people are all that one could wish. Mr. Temple—he's just been made president of the Gotham Trust company, and I'm his first home secretary. I believe—although wholly businesslike

of his mother's skirts.
"Best plan would be not to cry at all. Even clean crying makes ugly, red, little noses. Nurse, wash this sorry wee face, please. If Harold's good he shall have strawberries for tea."
"And, Robert," she added, with a whimsical smile, "don't bother about throwing stones at the lady roof. There are some things in life we must learn to take as we find them. The lady roof is one. If you really must give vent to your feelings you can pat the good supporting walls, my little son."
Presently, clean and fresh, the children were brought into the drawing room to greet Miss Graham before she left. As she was reaching down the tree-lined avenue Robert junior stood one arm about his mother's waist and waved to her. Robert senior seized the other rollicking atom and deposited him in Anna's arms. Then he stood back to enjoy the artistic effect.
"Her children suit her to perfection, eh, Brady?" quoth he. "If her children suit her with a woman you may take your oath there's something radically wrong with her."
"Physically or morally?" Brady asked, laughing.
"Both," said Granger. "So far as the female sex is concerned, they are comparable terms. Have a cigar?"
"Since we've become mere pags on which to hang psychological discussions, my boys, we'll return to our native earth," said Anna laughingly.
"Brady watched with singular interest the easy straggling with which she walked off with her sons. Hitherto she had seemed to him altogether fragile, Dresden china-like."
"I saw a look on Mrs. Granger's face awhile ago," he said, half to himself, "a look that surprised me. I believe there are very few things she couldn't do once she set her mind to action."
"An uncomfortable, prickly sensation ran down Robert's back; his smile of satisfaction weakened. Then over their cigars they began to talk of other things. From the open door of the nursery Anna could hear broken fragments coming up:
"Money, the vital fluid, doesn't seem to be flowing so easily through the body of things." "The banks are lending less, securities seem less stable, stocks are down," etc.
That night Granger and Joy were dinner unreservedly, and there was a certain scintillating novelty about his wife's looks that engaged his attention. His after dinner smoke was his favorite one. It seemed vixenish to interfere with it, so Anna waited, playing idly with the almonds and raisins on her plate. Robert, between while, noticed that the almonds were delicate and pretty hands, and that there were only two rings—the wedding ring and the engagement ring. He felt a vague

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