

Secretary of Frivolous Affairs

by MAY TUTRELLE

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Illustrations by V.L. BARNES

SYNOPSIS.

Jo Cozman and her sister Louie are left orphans. Their property has been swept away by the death of their father and they are compelled to eke out for some means to earn a living. Louie answers an advertisement of an invalid who wants a companion. She declines the position. Louie advertises for a position as companion, and Mrs. Hazard replies. She offers Louie a position as "secretary of frivolous affairs." Her chief work is to enter Mrs. Hazard's son and daughter in the right matrimonial path. Louie talks baseball to Hap Hazard and also gains the confidence of Laura Hazard. The Duc de Trouville is believed to be interested in Laura. Mrs. Hazard gives a big reception and Louie meets many people high in the social world. Natalie Agazzi, to whom Hap has been paying attention, loses an emerald bracelet during the reception. She declares there is not another like it in the world. It develops that Natalie has lost several pieces of jewelry under similar circumstances. Hap takes Louie to the baseball game. He tells her he is not engaged to Natalie and has been cured of his infatuation. The scene changes to the Hazard country place, where many notables have been invited for the summer. Louie and Laura visit the farm of Winthrop Abbott, an inventor in whom Laura takes considerable interest. Duc de Trouville arrives at the Hazard place. Louie hears Winthrop's boat out late at night. Next morning she announces the robbery of several nearby homes. Natalie accuses Louie of stealing her ruby pendant. Mrs. Hazard assures Louie of her confidence in her. Hap declares he will not admit it as she fears what Mrs. Hazard will say. Louie is excused from dinner on account of a headache. She is exploring her to see him. Winthrop is arrested in the presence of Hap and Louie, charged with robbing General Schuyler's home and shooting the general. A box of jewels is found in Winthrop's safe, among them an emerald bracelet exactly like the one lost by Natalie. Natalie apologizes to Louie for accusing her of the theft. Louie is awakened at midnight and finds Hap in her room. Next morning Hap explains that he was in pursuit of a mysterious woman he had seen in the corridor and who eluded him. Natalie identifies the emerald bracelet found in Winthrop's safe as her own. Louie's sister, Jo, arrives for a week's stay. John Crowninshield pays more attention to Louie. She sees Winthrop cross the lawn in the early morning, shadowed by Thomas. Louie hears a noise in the gallery and goes to investigate. She slips into the card room and stumbles over a bag. She starts to carry it to her room and is surprised by someone in the hall and falls downstairs.

CHAPTER XXII—Continued.

When I remembered again, John was sitting at my desk with the glittering mass spread out before him. Every one had crowded around him, except Hap, who was kneeling beside the couch, holding my hand desperately and listening for the sound of the doctor's car. I remember that it had occurred to me how beautifully the lavender brocade dressing-gown John wore and the soft pink of Jo's kimono harmonized—and lavender and pink usually don't.

"Where did you get them, Louie?" Jo asked. "What happened, dear?"

My head was buzzing; there was a pounding in my ears. Her questions seemed to make a jumble of my thoughts.

"Why, of course, I must tell you." I tried to think clearly. "I found them—found them in the card-room."

"Yes, dear," Jo soothed. "What were you doing in the card-room?"

"I heard a noise in the gallery and wanted to see—see—I found them—found them in the card-room."

Everybody looked so queer! Natalie glanced quickly at Mrs. Hazard—a glance Laura intercepted. I sat up suddenly.

"Surely you don't think I took them!" I fell back against the pillows again with a groan, but it was because little unseen devils tortured me when I moved.

"She must not talk," Laura exclaimed. "Don't question her. It isn't fair. She doesn't know what she is saying. For Heaven's sake, why doesn't the doctor come?"

Jo sat down beside me helplessly. There was nothing anybody could do until the doctor did come.

"I think there's lost here from everybody," John remarked. "It's a jolly mess."

From the mess he separated Dorothy Ambercrombie's green lizard with the ruby eyes, Mrs. Ambercrombie's moonstone set with sixteen large diamonds, and that crazy bow-knot collar of Mrs. Sargent's. Then Natalie pointed out other things she recognized. But there was left a jumble of solitaires, handsome but nondescript; rings and pendants, bracelets and brooches that only their owners could identify.

"Everybody but myself," Natalie said finally. "There's not a single thing there of mine."

Somehow it seemed to me there ought to have been in the bag those things she lost earlier.

"You had a pistol," I said weakly, thinking of it.

"Yes, but no one knew it but you!" said Natalie. And if a good, clear thought had come to me out of my throbbing head I would have seen what everybody saw later.

"The thieves were in the gallery," I tried to tell them. "I heard—I heard a hammer fall. I went to see—suddenly I thought of Winthrop, and I closed my lips tightly for fear I would say I had seen him there on the lawn."

"Yes, dear," Laura soothed. "We'll look. The thieves are gone now, but we have the jewels, so it's all right.

No harm done. John will hold a levee after luncheon and return them."

I suppose it occurred to John what a job that was going to be, especially as he was apt to have a crowd of hysterical women on his hands any minute. He tumbled the jewels back into the bag as Doctor Graham's horn rent the air, and was just about to pull the string securing them.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he exclaimed. "This is my bag!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

A Disappearance.

Dawn found me lying on the couch in my sitting-room, pale and a little sick from the ether, with my right arm nicely boarded up and a bruise on my shoulder about as big as a turkey-platter. Doctor Graham, after mixing me some vile stuff—doctors are brutes about medicine—cheerfully turned to discuss art with Jo, apropos of the search of the gallery for any signs of disturbance. Nothing unusual was found anywhere, except the door at the bottom of the steps leading to the tennis courts was open, and a hammer that was proved did not belong to any one connected with Lone Oak was lying on one of the courts. The thieves had made good their escape during the commotion that followed my plunge down the steps into the wing.

When I awoke from the sleep the doctor prescribed it was noon. The room was fragrant with flowers and there was a huge bunch of pink roses that I knew had not been cut at Lone Oak. Laura was with me, and Celle tearfully hovered in the background. Celle brought my breakfast and Laura explained that Jo had gone, reluctantly, to play golf with John Crowninshield, who decided not to go to town.

"There's a nurse coming," she concluded.

"Nurse!" I exclaimed. "What do I want with a nurse? I'm going downstairs tonight if I can get a sleeve over this arm."

To prove I could get up, I did, but I was rather trembly.

"Louie, it was too funny about that silk stocking and the hot-water bottle," Laura laughed gleefully.

"Has everybody discovered the robbery?" I asked.

"They were up shrieking before ten," she told me. "John had an awful time getting things straight. There are ten solitaires still in doubt. I think Dorothy and Mrs. Sargent will have to toss for them. Funny, isn't it, people don't know their own jewels?"

"Did any one else hear the racket we made last night?"

"No," she replied. "No wonder they must have been an attempt to chloroform her. There was no cloth or anything that has been saturated, but the odor of chloroform was in her room. Thank Heaven, there's no way to implicate Winthrop in this."

Winthrop! I closed my lips tightly



"Has Everybody Discovered the Robbery?" I Asked.

again. No one but I knew he had been there on the lawn; no one but myself was going to know it. But Thomas! The thought startled me! He knew it. But—

Laura finally broke the silence with one of her startling questions:

"Louie, are you going to marry Hap?"

I shook my head decidedly.

"Why not? Won't you tell me? Have you a reason, dear?"

"Yes."

She paled a little, I didn't know why at the time.

"Won't you confide in me?" she pleaded. "And let me help you? I can help you, no matter how difficult it is."

She was very winning and sweet. I intended to tell her jokingly my reason was that her mother really had intended me as a pace-maker for her, and that I'd have to be free to encourage the eligibles until she was quite sure just who she wanted to marry, but I was weak, and the tears

were very near the surface. Two brimmed over and rolled down my cheek. I couldn't joke!

"You love him—don't try to deny it. Why are you giving him up?"

"I can't let him spoil his life with me," was what I said after all. "I couldn't spoil your chances with His Grace if you decide to want him. His Grace would be terribly shocked—"

"I don't want him," she interrupted. "I love Winthrop and I'm going to marry him—if he ever asks me."

"But I am nobody," I insisted. "I haven't a penny. Marriage—marriage is impossible!"

She looked at me in amazement. "Is that your only reason?" she asked.

"Surely—"

"Is that all? Oh, my poor, deluded little Louie! What difference does a few paltry dollars make? I'm so glad that's the reason, dear; so very, very glad." She came close to me and slipped her arm around my waist.

"Dear, if you had told me something terrible, some awful thing that was keeping you from saying 'yes' to Hap, I would have loved you just the same. Remember that."

It was a shameless statement. I wonder I did not see its significance at the time, but I only realized that her affection was one of the most wonderful things that had ever happened to me.

"You're a queer person," I told her.

"Now, won't you let me say to Hap that he may come up after luncheon?" She tried to keep me from shaking my head. "I'm afraid he will come, even if you don't say so. I've had a terrible time keeping him out while you slept. He went to town for the roses—she pointed to them—and was back in an hour. I don't know how he escaped being arrested for speeding. By the way, the detective is here. He wants to ask you some questions when you are well enough to see him. We've had an exciting morning being questioned. He's rather a nice-looking chap. I think Natalie found her interview with him much more agreeable than she expected. His eyes are blue," she finished irrelevantly.

"Has he talked to Mr. Abbott?"

"Yes. He and John—by the way, his name is Adams—went over to Winthrop's this morning. Winthrop came back with them; he came to play golf. He was unusually cheerful, too. He has finished his novel. I don't think he cares how many emerald bracelets he is accused of stealing, since that is over. And I'm forgetting to tell you that Mrs. Dykeman has dug up a German count. I don't know how he ranks. He's a connoisseur on art, or some kind of a high-brow. She's giving a German musical sale next week. Ich dien! Oh! We had a message from the Schuylers. The general is entirely out of danger."

I lay on the couch for a long time thinking after Laura had gone, and Celle had arranged my hair and tenderly gotten me into a negligee. I tried—tried desperately—to see a way out of all the robberies for Winthrop and I could not do it. Except for the ruby, when Laura had proved that he was at home, and the woman in the corridor, every circumstance pointed to him. What did he actually know of it all? Was he shielding some one? A woman? But that thought was ugly. I had rather believe him a thief!

The door of my sitting-room, leading into the corridor, was standing open, for the day was intensely hot, and I caught the sound of Hap's voice. He was talking to his mother. I listened, not deliberately to what he said, but just to hear his voice; and because there was no one to see, I arose and buried my face in the roses—his roses. It was wrong to listen; I knew it. I could not fall to hear what he said.

At first the full meaning of his words did not strike me, nor even the tone of the argument. I was thinking of other things. Then he spoke my name. He was angry; I listened, amazed.

"I don't care if she is a thief," he said. "I want her, and I'm going to have her. I'd marry her if she is proved a thief a hundred times. And I wouldn't believe her a thief if I saw her stealing!"

His mother's answer I didn't want to hear; an instant later I stood in the doorway across the corridor.

"Don't believe him," I said to his mother. "He isn't going to marry me."

Hap, with an exclamation of concern, threw some pillows into a chair and indicated an intention to carry me to it.

"I'm not an invalid," I insisted. And I walked to the chair. "I've just a silly broken arm, otherwise I am quite fit. Now, tell me why am I a thief again?" I was quite calm about it, but I had to sit down, for my knees were shaky and I was realizing why Laura had said such queer things to me.

Hap made some choky noises like men do when they want to swear; Mrs. Hazard pressed her handkerchief to her lips.

"Just because I found some jewels in the card room, and can't tell you who put them there, or why they were there?" The whole thing suddenly struck me as absurd and amusing. I laughed. "My story isn't plausible?"

Mrs. Hazard began to cry—what a blessing tears are to a woman—and it was so different from her derisive chuckle I could not resist the impulse to go to her and put my only good arm around her fat neck.

"Please don't cry," I begged. "I can't see that it's worth one little tear I'm not going to let him marry

me, so sure of that; and the other only concerns myself."

"My dear child," she sobbed. "I feel responsible for everything. I told your sister I would take care of you."

"You distinctly said you would not be responsible for any lacerated affections, and you certainly can't help it if I'm a thief. I tried to get him on the right track, but—"

"Right track!" she sobbed.

"Right track?" Hap echoed.

And, notwithstanding the gravity of the situation and the tears running down her fat cheeks, Mrs. Hazard chuckled. She dabbed at her eyes.

"I said, too, you might pick a plum from the social pudding, and I had no objection. If the plum happens to be my own son it's my own fault."

"What are you two talking about?" Hap demanded. "I love her, and I'm going to marry her whether she's a thief or not."

"All right, take her," Mrs. Hazard replied, giving me a gentle push, and Hap gazed at her with that comically surprised expression. "Just be sure to pour the coffee for him every morning at breakfast, my very dear little girl, and you have my blessing. It just occurs to me that I've never yet made a mistake in estimating a person, and I'm not going to begin now."

"But gracious me!" I exclaimed, as Hap swept me to my feet and shamelessly kissed me, "I'm accused of stealing!"

"We'll have to prove you innocent!" Her tone was final. "I must have my judgment vindicated."

"But—"

"The bag was my brother's," she



"Don't Believe Him. He isn't Going to Marry Me."

interrupted belligerently. "It occurs to me that he needs to do some explaining."

"Surely you don't think—?"

"I don't think anything, after the way I've just made of myself trying to do the thinking. If he thinks wrong, I'll discharge him. Why isn't your story true? You heard a noise in the gallery; you're a brave girl and you went to see what it was. I would have been crazy with curiosity myself. If you don't know why a thief put down a bag of jewels on the floor of the card-room and left it there for you to find, why you can't help it. Natalie having a pistol and you knowing it is just a coincidence. The thieves didn't get to her, that's all. The door of the back stairs was open and a hammer doesn't belong. It's quite plain that the thieves came from outside, since I've had the common sense to think of it."

But I saw how unreasonable my story was as she repeated it. The absurdity of my being in the card-room when I had said the noise was in the gallery, the absolutely ridiculous idea that a thief had put down a bag of loot on the floor of the card-room for me to pick up, and yet that's what he did—it was all a child's what he did—it was all a child's Winthrop. And I couldn't speak of Winthrop, nor of Thomas without mentioning Winthrop, and Winthrop had enough to do to explain the emerald bracelet.

"There won't be any further trouble," she went on. "Every jewel has been taken to a bank until somebody has been proven guilty. Now let the detective solve it. And he may just as well prove Winthrop innocent while he's at it. Winthrop is a farmer, not a thief." She dismissed the subject with an airy motion of her fat hand. "Since you've got Hap on the right track—"

"What's this right track thing?" Hap demanded.

"A scheme, a put-up job, to make you notice me," I replied. "But I had to do it; it was a part of my job." I suddenly covered my face with my hands.

"I guess you're satisfied then," Hap grinned. "And now you refuse to marry me after deliberately—"

"You surely don't believe I intended—"

"I don't know what you intended, but I know what's going to be." Hap put his arm about me in that masterful Hazard way.

The Hazards are a stubborn lot, and when they want a thing they get it. When I went back to my room, carefully shutting the door in Hap's face, the mystery was still a mystery. I couldn't see but that I had a badly damaged reputation, and I had promised Hap, with his mother's consent, to let him share it.

That night the mystery, instead of clearing, deepened. Jo disappeared! And not only that, but she had been taken away—forcibly abducted! Adams, the detective who was there to protect us, was found bound and

gagged at the foot of the stairs leading to the tennis courts.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Search.

We knew Jo had been taken away by force because a woman does not, of her own free will, go out dressed only in a silk petticoat, a flimsy dressing-gown, and a pair of thin bedroom slippers, even if the weather is warm. Adams, the detective, whom John found tied up hard and fast, told us the little he knew of what had happened, when he could talk—poor fellow! And although I tried not to get shakily and faint, I threw myself across the pillow where Jo's dear old dark head had rested, and came very near doing both. I tried to tell myself that she was all right, that we should find her soon, alive! I didn't believe it. I could only see that whoever took her away did so for a purpose, that they would kill her, or perhaps—had!

It was the culmination of an awful day. After what I had gone through morning and afternoon, I could not go down to dinner. The doctor said "No," with that capital N, and I hated him. And I was exasperated with Jo, who, after playing golf with John all morning, played golf with him all afternoon—or said she did—and sat outside on the terrace all evening, also with John, where the sound of their voices floated up to me, punctuated occasionally with laughter from both of them. He never in his life did such a thing as sit on the terrace all evening with a woman! I could not catch a word of what they were saying. I was sure he was making love to her.

I could not complain of being neglected, for the doctor had ordered Jo down-stairs and told me to go to sleep, adding that my temperature was up and my heart queer. Cele put me to bed, but when Jo came finally I was sitting up, crying softly and scratching the palm of my hand.

Poor old Jo! She patted me to sleep, but it was a restless, fitful sleep, and at two o'clock I changed to the couch in the sitting-room because I imagined the salty breeze that came in through the open windows would soothe me. I must have slept soundly after that. I did not hear Jo when she awoke; I did not know what had become of her.

When I could compose my thoughts I remembered to search for the pistol which Natalie had returned the day before. It was gone, but I could gain no satisfaction from that because, evidently, Jo had not used the pistol and the reason of that was quite clear to me: they had disarmed her.

Adams said there were three men. He had heard sounds but couldn't locate them until he came into the upper hallway, when he heard the door at the foot of the stairs leading to the tennis courts slam. He had a flashlight and he said he wasn't many seconds getting to the bottom of those stairs. When he opened the door some one struck him a terrific blow on the head, and when he regained consciousness he was bound securely, hand and foot, and gagged. He had not recognized any of the men—it was still dark—nor were their voices familiar to him.

They had gone toward the ninth hole and they were carrying some one. He knew that the person was a woman. That was all. What had happened before he heard the sounds he didn't know. His wrists were badly cut and bleeding where he had struggled to release himself; he had dragged himself to the door and banged on it, but no one had heard him.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Whale's Song.

Whales are rarely thought of as vocalists, yet according to Miss A. D. Cameron in "The New North," they really have a distinctive song of their own.

A certain Captain Kelly was the first to notice that whales sing. One Sunday, while officers from three whaling ships were "gamming" over their afternoon walrus meat, Kelly started up with "I hear a bowhead!" There was much chaffing about "Kelly's band," but Kelly weighed anchor, and went to find the band-wagon. Every sail followed his, with the result that three whales were bagged.

Among bowheads, this singsong is a call that the leader of the school, as he forces a passage through Bering sea, makes in order to notify those that follow that the straits are clear of ice.

Walrus and seals and all true mammals that have lungs and live in the water have a bark that sounds strange enough as it comes up from hidden depths. Every lookout from the mast-head notices that, when one whale is struck, the whole school is "galled" or stampeded at the very impact of the harpoon; they have heard the death song.

The sound that the bowhead makes is like the long-drawn-out "hoo-hoo-oo-oo!" of the hoot-owl. A whaler says that the cry begins on F, and may rise to A, B, or even C before slipping back to F again. He assures us that with the humpback the tone is much finer, and sounds across the water like the note from the E string of a violin.

Her Mission.

"Girl scouts must learn how to wash a baby, bake a loaf of bread, build a coal fire and darn a sock, to say nothing of being able to find their way about in woods and cure snake bites," said the parent. "Don't you want to become a girl scout, dear?"

"No, mamma," replied the young girl; "I won't need to know how to do those things when I grow up. I'm going to be a suffragette."

WORTH GIVING A TRIAL

SOME APPROVED METHODS OF COOKING VEGETABLES.

"Carrots Poulette" a New Way of Serving an Old Favorite—Stuffed Cabbage Makes Rich Dish—Recipe for Mushroom Pie.

Carrots Poulette—Wash and scrape the required number of carrots, place them in a bowl of boiling water to scald. Take them out, drain, slice and put them into a saucepan of boiling water with a little butter in it and boil until done and quite tender. Put a little flour and butter into a frying pan, cook for a few minutes, sprinkle in salt and pepper to taste, and add a little lemon juice, the yolks of two eggs and some rich stock. Place the carrots in this and toss over a fire so as to cook without boiling. Turn the whole on to a warmed dish and serve at once.

Stuffed Cabbage—Procure a large head of cabbage, boil it, but remove from the fire before it is quite done, carefully take out the middle and fill the cavity with a mixture of a tablespoonful of minced suet, two tablespoonfuls of chopped bacon or ham, a like amount of other cold meat, one raw egg, the grated rind of a lemon, a little grated nutmeg, and pepper and salt to taste. Milk may be used instead of the eggs if desired. Tie up with a string and place in the oven to bake for twenty minutes. Place on a warm dish and pour rich brown gravy around, but not over the cabbage. While baking the cabbage should be frequently basted with dripping or butter, and must not be allowed to burn or become brown.

Mushroom Pie—Peel and cut in quarters the mushrooms, also about the equal in bulk of potatoes. Butter a pie dish, put in a layer of potatoes, then a layer of mushrooms, another of potatoes, and so on till all are used, seasoning each layer with salt, pepper and butter. Cover the pie with a crust and bake in a moderate oven. Put the trimmings of the mushrooms in a small quantity of gravy and boil for several minutes, then strain the liquid and season with salt and pepper.

When the pie is cooked make a small incision in the top and pour in the gravy. Serve very hot.

Baked Onions—Put six large onions into a saucepan with water, or with milk and water in equal proportions; add salt and pepper, and boil till tender. When done they can be easily mashed; work them up with butter into a paste, cover with bread crumbs and bake in a moderate oven. If preferred, the onions may be boiled whole, put into a baking dish, covered with butter and bread crumbs, and then baked.

Prunes in Jelly.

This is a new and appetizing way of serving the old standby—stewed prunes, and as it is sometimes impossible even in summer to secure fresh fruit, the housekeeper will appreciate this recipe. Wash and soak the prunes for several hours. When very soft pour off the water in which they have soaked, and stone the prunes, then return to the water and simmer slowly for an hour. Sweeten to taste and flavor the juice with a little lemon juice. Then add two tablespoonfuls of gelatin which has previously been dissolved and pour into a wet mold. Set on ice until serving time, then slip from the mold and serve with cream.

Veal Jelly Mold.

Boil a knuckle of veal until it is very tender, season with a tablespoonful of onion juice, salt, pepper and a little celery salt. Cut the meat from the bone, chop it fine, return the bones to the liquor and boil until reduced to half a pint. Wet a mold and place boiled chopped meat in layers with hard boiled eggs. Fill the mold with the liquor and set away to chill. When set it may be sliced and served with salad.

Care of Knives.

When washing knives never put the handles in water, as this will loosen the blades and discolor the handles. Instead always keep a jug or vessel for this purpose filled with soda water, and as soon as possible after the knives have been used stick the blades in, leaving the handles on the outside. The stain and rust are quickly removed by the soda water.

How to Clean Cretonne.

Here is a discovery which has been of great help when washing tapestry and cretonne: Cut up a cake of soap into shreds, allowing four ounces of soap to each quart of water, and boil to a jelly. Have ready two tubs of fairly hot water and add enough soap to make a good lather. Then wash article quickly, first in one tub, then in the other. When this is finished, rinse well in salt water and dry at once. Starch in a thin boiled starch, roff tightly in a clean cloth and iron with a hot iron.

Save the Starch.

After using a bowl of starch do not throw away what remains, but leave it to settle. Then pour off the clear water and dry what remains in a cool oven. This starch will be in a firm cake, which can be put away for use another day, when it will be found to be as good as ever.

To Keep Tins From Rusting.

After having washed and dried the tins place them near the fire for a little while as this prevents any chance of their rusting.