

HEALED *Wings*

If you felt you had nothing to live for,
would you be willing to die for others?

The story of two who learned the way to freedom

by MAE NOBLE RINEMAN



"YOU'VE A PECULIAR FORM OF MENTAL TORTURE FOR YOUR WIFE, BROOKS"



"JUST THE SAME, HONEY,
YOU'RE GOING TO LEARN
TO FLY THE OLD GIRL ALL
BY YOUR LONESOME"

JEAN had never acquired her husband's love for the high air spaces. There was an ever present tight, terrified dread in her heart whenever he stepped into the *Blue Bird*. Always it was with a keen sense of relief that she saw him come down to solid earth again. But if Harry should know of her terror, she felt that he would stop loving her right then. His love would turn to pity, perhaps tinged with contempt; for anyone who did not love to fly, said he, was not quite normal.

He was annoyed when she did not stand outside their bungalow and watch him do daring stunts above the port of which he was so proud. Built on a little island set like an exquisite emerald in the dull waters of Wide River of the Northwest Coast timber country, it served as a school for pilots as well as a regular stopping point for numerous planes. To please her husband, Jean went through the agonizing performance of being in evidence below whenever he stunted. He could not see that her eyes were closed, that sometimes tears streamed down her cheeks.

But Cal Brant knew. One day he said to Harry, "You've a peculiar form of mental torture for your wife, haven't you, Brooks?"

Harry stared at his friend in amazed resentment. "What in thunder do you mean?"

"A devoted wife can hardly watch her husband risking his life, with entire equanimity."

"Brant! Jean's not like that! Why, she's an aviator's wife, and a regular sport. She's ready to solo!" Harry's indignation was sincere. Brant caught a glimpse of Jean's starkly white face at the open door of the hangar; then she fled, and he knew she had heard.

She came in nonchalantly a few moments later, however.

"What do you think of Brant's trying to tell me that you are afraid of your husband's stunting?" Harry asked her. He turned to Brant. "Why, she loves it as I do, don't you, Jean?" His arm went about the girl's slender shoulders in a quick affectionate grip. "You're not afraid, are you?"

Jean forced a convincing laugh. "Afraid? Absurd! Are the birds afraid? Now wash up and come to lunch. It's about time for the passenger-feed, and you'll fare slim if they get here first."

"I'm going to test out the new cabin plane that Brant bought," Harry said after lunch. "You may watch me if you're not afraid," jeering of course at Brant.

He took off in the big new plane. Brant stood in the kitchen door as Jean called to him. In the sunny room, she said: "Brant, I'm sorry! You're a brick, but don't you see? I'd lose Harry in a minute if he knew the truth. I know it's silly to be afraid. Why, look at the hundreds killed in autos, and at the few in comparison who are killed in planes." A terrible whine of speeding wires and groaning motor caused her face to blanch.

A groan burst from Brant's set lips as he leaped through the doorway. Jean followed on unsteady feet. Harry was zooming up from the screaming descent they had heard. He punished the new machine. Sick with fear, Jean leaned against the door, watching.

Brant looked at her, and then swiftly strode