

# Love-in-a-Mist

By Fanny Heaslip Lea

(Continued from Page One)

he was now rushing, himself. His sense of humor was early as that second day, ceased to function. He was happier than he had ever been before in his life, imprisoned in a stuffy Pullman swaying slowly through an arid landscape. What Amelie had seen in him, that first poignant moment, he had also seen in her.

Only, he had a right to see anything he wanted. She hadn't. There was no female Arthur in his life. Amelie, by adroit leads, had discovered that, early on the second day. He liked women, but he hadn't had time for them, too busy pursuing success, which it appeared he had just about captured.

In spite of which she didn't tell him. She couldn't bear to. There was like a girl in a dream. It wasn't only his outright physical charm, although that was potent enough, to a beauty-loving woman like Amelie. It was the way in which their souls kept step! Something in her was conscious of wings those long hours they talked together while the train rattled and clacked through a sun-baked world. It was exactly as if he had put out a hand to her and she had suddenly found that the feel of that hand was the feel of life—at the peak of the world.

She said to herself that she would tell him about Arthur the second evening, but she didn't. As before, they sat out on the observation platform and watched the little lights go by, of small, scattered towns—watched the stars, when they could see them, and each other's eyes when they couldn't. Amelie didn't even try to dream of Arthur that second night.

And the third day came the desert. Women in the Pullman sat with the necks of their blouses pulled open over panting, sweating throats. Children whimpered and complained unceasingly. Men left off their coats and pulled up their collars as well as they could. The porter shone like greased ebony when he could be found at all. In at every crevice of door and window issued a sickening heat and with it a fine gray gleaming dust—the desert—miles of gleaming, pallid, barrenness—not a cloud in the brassy sky—not a shadow on the sand—not a wing in the air—nothing but the breath of a fevered hell forever shimmering up into nothingness.

It was in the desert that Amelie chose to tell Arthur—rather, the truth hurt its way out. Don Reynard was so heart-breakingly careful of her. She, who had no right to his car—no honest right. He lowered shades and lifted windows and adjusted cushions. His thought of the drinks for her; made a fan of a magazine cover; talked lovely lazy nonsense to make her forget that ugly searing furnace outside the car.

He must have suffered from the evil heat himself, but he never said so. His every thought was her, her lying against the hot green plush of the car seat, her small face pale and tired, with the dark hair damp against her temples.

"You've never asked me," she told him suddenly about 2 in the afternoon, when the furnace was at its worst, "why I'm going out to Riverside."

Then she lay back and looked at him hopelessly, gripping her hands together tight in her lap. The cloth of her skirt was hot to her fingers. "No," said Don Reynard, smiling. "Just the fact that you were going was good enough for me." But he saw that she wanted to be asked, "Why are you going out to Riverside, then?"

"To meet—to meet a man and marry him," said Amelie. Brutally done. But she couldn't be sure of herself on a longer explanation. He looked at her and laughed—saw in the same breath that she meant it, and continued to look with something in his eyes that hurt her heart.

"He didn't ask for any more. He sat turning the silly fan he had made for her about and about, and presently he didn't even look at her. Down at his brown fingers instead, with a sort of dangerous quietude. A child down the car from them wailed steadily. Across the aisle a woman was peeling a banana. It gave off a heavy, distasteful sweetness. The air from the desert came in through the wire screen in the window and lay on Amelie's throat and face like hot, sick hands.

"I wish," said Don Reynard in a low voice, a trifle hoarse, as if Harlequin had lingered overlong in the dew of the garden, "that you had told me that before."

"So do I," said Amelie miserably. Then indeed he looked at her and she looked back at him. In which moment they had no words and needed none.

the train together; they had been aware for two days of a certain amount of commotion among their trainmates, but Amelie was past caring.

"I want a machine," she said, standing on the platform at San Bernardino with her new bags at her feet.

"I don't care over you, if you don't mind," Don Reynard suggested coolly. "You didn't expect him to meet you here?"

"No, at that time," said Amelie doggedly. They sat side by side in a rather dimly lit car and drove over excellent roads, with hardly a word between them.

Once Don Reynard asked carefully, "What shall you do if he isn't there when you arrive?"

"He will be there," said Amelie. She managed a faint smile. She felt like a dead leaf driven by the wind, whirled and whirled, with no will of its own for resistance. "He'll be there," she repeated.

But he wasn't. In four strange days, that was the strangest thing of all. There wasn't even a letter or a telegram. Amelie turned away from the desk of the inn, her dark eyes wide and startled, a chill starting at her finger tip.

"How funny!" she said childishly to Don Reynard, waiting a little at one side to register. "He hasn't come—how funny!"

Don Reynard came forward quietly. He had an air of authority that answered for the complete naturalness of the situation and silenced a faint question in the eyes of the clerk holding a pen in one hand, a blotter in the other.

"Probably delayed unexpectedly—a washout or something. Why don't you just register and have your things sent up," he suggested. "There is sure to be word tomorrow. Most likely he'll be here himself before you get down to breakfast."

Amelie registered obediently. Don Reynard wrote his name at a discreet distance below hers upon the page.

"Miss Lawrence?" said the clerk tentatively.

"Miss Lawrence?" said Don Reynard distinctly, "is expecting to meet here a gentleman who is on his way up from Mexico. Will you be good enough to see that she gets any letters or telegrams, at once?"

"Why, it's Mr. Reynard, isn't it?" said the clerk suddenly, with a suggestion of relief. "How do you do, sir? You've been here before, haven't you?"

ribbon of sound. It was full of unassuaged desire and mournful ecstasy of longing.

Don Reynard told her, "La Gordinna—the Swallow." He put his hand over hers lightly for a moment, but his touch burned.

"I wouldn't give tonight for the rest of my life," he said. "This place and that song, and you. Life's not so uneven, after all."

A girl in a white dress and a little yellow jacket like a torador's brought them their dinner. Amelie scarcely knew what she ate. The intimacy of that little table, with its red roses and flickering candle light, was too poignantly unreal.

Above the coffee cups at last Don Reynard leaned over to force her look with his own. He had been gay and impersonal and charming in the past. Now, all at once, he was quiet and terribly in earnest.

"Amelie," he said, "tell me about him. I find I've got to know, after all. How did it happen? How long ago was it? Tell me everything."

"So Amelie told him everything, at last, beginning and ending with the hotel locus."

Don Reynard was quiet\* than ever when she had done. His look of the Hidalgo deepened. Harlequin, out of the garden for good.

"Two years ago," he commented briefly. "Do you know how you've changed?"

"I've tried to tell him," said Amelie. She added stubbornly, "I still love him, of course."

"Of course," said Don Reynard, politely. And he added: "It's the sort of thing one's supposed to pursue one's self about—no bludge oblige!"

"What do you mean?" asked Amelie, beginning to tremble.

"Why, I mean," he said hotly, "that you don't love him now in the least—that your sense of honor is driving you."

"How do you know?" "Don't ask me that! You don't really want me to tell you."

within her whimpered and fought to get away. She met him in spite of that, smiling, one chilly little hand.

"So we were married and I brought her up as far as Los Angeles, left her there at a hotel," Arthur was saying, "and came on here to see you. I wired Beethoven, trying to stop you, but you had left. I can never tell you Amelie, how—"

"It's frightfully embarrassing to have you apologize so much," said Amelie coldly. "I think you had better go back to her at once. Tell her I sent you. That I hope you will both be happy—that everything is all ways for the best in this best of all worlds, and so on."

"It's noble of you, Amelie," said Arthur, reviving a little. After all, he had found Juanita's adoration rather thrilling. "What—what shall you do?"

"For this I shall go into the movies," said Amelie a trifle maliciously, "first giving my story to all the pink newspaper in Los Angeles. Juanita would be talked about then, wouldn't she?"

She had a hard time getting rid of him after that. But she saw him again at last, past the desk, out through the wide doorway of the inn, into the night, on his way to Juanita, who would, now, never again be talked about.

Guard yourself and others against influenza. Avoid crowds. Sleep with your bedroom window open. At the first sign of a cold, fever, sore throat, or that grip feeling consult your doctor.

But, above all, try to keep your nose and throat protected day and night by an antiseptic cream. Flu germs are literally breathed into your nose or throat.

For this purpose get from your druggist a bottle of Ely's Cream Balm. Insert a little into the nostrils and draw it through all of the air passages so it reaches the throat.

This is as often as may be required to keep nose and throat anti-Septic. Do it the last thing at night and first thing in the morning until the flu epidemic has passed.

Head colds and catarrh yield like magic to this antiseptic, healing cream that soothes swollen, inflamed membranes of nose and throat. Your clogged nostrils open right up and you breathe freely. Don't stay stuffed up and miserable.

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We are a nation of meat eaters and our blood is filled with uric acid. Says a well-known authority, who warns us to be constantly on guard against kidney trouble.

The kidneys do their utmost to free the blood of this irritating acid, but become weak from the overwork; they get sluggish; the eliminative tissues clog and thus the waste is retained in the blood to poison the entire system.

felt suddenly tired and grown old. But Juanita would be shiny and fat at 40. The thought was warming.

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It was not until he had definitely gone that Amelie looked across the room, the long, pleasant low-ceilinged room, and saw Don Reynard, sitting with an idle pen in his hands at one of the writing desks. Apparently he had written all his letters or had not been able to write them a long time, then got up and started across to her.

Amelie met him near the desk. "He's gone!" said Don Reynard briefly. "Where?"

"He's married," said Amelie quite simply. "I'm jotted. She's waiting for him at a hotel in Los Angeles. Like some ridiculous movie, isn't it? I do seem to have wasted a noble frame of mind on him."

Don Reynard turned on her with an imperceptible possessive touch, once more in the direction of the patio.

"There won't be a soul out there, now," he said. "Come and tell me everything. Are you sure you aren't traveling incognito, with a camera man in your pocket? This begins to sound rather like it. But once they were out of the light, shadowed by a jutting wall, he caught her recklessly close, stooped his dark

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head till Amelie shut her eyes with a little sobbing sigh of surprise.

"Kiss me," he whispered, "huckleberry and hidalgo, together. 'Till we spend our honeymoon here at the inn or is there another place you'd like better? Kiss me again."

Love-in-a-Mist. It goes as well by another name. You may find the seed in small dusty packets, sometimes, in small dusty flower shops, labeled quaintly—Devil in a Bush!

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