

Prologue to Love

By
MARTHA OSTENSO

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CHAPTER VIII—Continued

The conviction had grown gradually upon Bruce that Autumn was leading this free life of hers with some ulterior purpose. He could not think of her running wild from choice. Nor had he ever been able to understand her violent change of manner toward him, unless the Laird himself had brought it about by something he had told her, by some peremptory ban he had placed upon their relationship. Even then he could not credit the change. Autumn was too willful, too independent, to permit even her father to make up her mind for her. Something else, something of which he was in total ignorance, was behind it all. But whatever it was, there was no other course for him except a harsh discipline in forgetting.

An utter loneliness enveloped him now as he ascended the scantily timbered, wild mountain reaches. Over only a short distance toward the north, in the completely still, mysterious folds of the hills, lay the Dean summer range, skirting his own. Across a deep valley, spread over the palely green mountain-side opposite, one of the units of the Laird's flock was dimly discernible. Trained though his eyes were to the ambiguity of vast distances, it was all Bruce could do to distinguish the flock in that brilliant, thin atmosphere. But across the vacancy there came to him, piercingly sweet, the sound of a bell. He knew that bell—there was only one like it anywhere in the Upper Country. It was Autumn Dean's Basque bell. The sound of it had drawn him across the valley on his last trip, nearly a month ago now, and he had spent an hour of the afternoon with the young Irish lad who was one of the Laird's herders. He would never forget the wistful blue eyes of the boy and the eagerness with which he strove to prolong the visit. As the sound of the bell struck across his senses now, Bruce strove grimly to repudiate the significance, to himself, of that sound. It was sheer sentimentality on his own part that the bell seemed to chime Autumn's name. He resolved that on his next trip into the hills he would leave home early enough to turn aside and spend an hour with the young herder. He would do so today but that he had to get back in time for an appointment he had made that night with a buyer in Kamloops.



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It was late that evening when Bruce drew up to the curb and got from his car before a gray, weathered building that had served as a trading post in the old days. The structure housed a billiard parlor now and was known locally as "Sandy's Place." It had become a rendezvous for cattle and sheep men, ranch hands seeking employment, and nondescript transients. But despite the determination of the years to mold it to a less romantic form, there clung about it still some of the pungent, zestful air of times gone by when sourdoughs and chechacos drifted in for a night's lodging and a game of poker. The proprietor was a rugged old Scotchman who had himself been a prospector on Williams Creek.

There were not more than a half dozen idlers in the front room of the place when Bruce entered. He looked them over and sauntered into the back room, pausing in the doorway to glance about for the buyer he had come to see. He discovered his man in a far corner of the smoke-filled room, seated at a poker table with four others. Bruce moved across the room and spoke to him.

The buyer looked up. "Hello, Landor!" he greeted.

Bruce spoke to the other men at the table.

"Buy a stack and sit in, Landor," one of them invited.

"Not tonight," Bruce replied. "I'm going home to bed as soon as I've had a word with Myers, here."

"I'll be with you in a minute," said Myers.

Bruce lighted a cigarette and watched the progress of the play. He was not sure just what had drawn his attention to a conversation at the table behind him, but presently the mention of Jarvis Dean's name caused him to glance around. Curly Belfort, a rancher from the Ashcroft district, was doing the talking while the others listened. Belfort had evidently been drinking. Bruce gave his attention to the game at Myers' table.

The click of the chips and the monotonous sound of voices lay drowsily upon his senses after a day in the mountains.

Belfort's voice thrust itself boisterously upon his consciousness. Bruce could not help hearing the words.

"—and, by God, if there wasn't old Dean's daughter standin' up out o' the haystack, an' stretchin' herself at seven o'clock in the mornin'. An' I says to young Parr, 'Do you think I'm runnin' a country hotel, or somethin'?' Or is this the way they do it in Europe?" I says. But he kept on tinkerin' with his car." Belfort laughed heartily at his own joke. "Some gal the Laird's brat has turned out to be, spendin' the night in a haystack with—"

Bruce had got up abruptly and stepped over beside Belfort, his face

gone suddenly white, his mouth fixed in a slight, contemplative smile as he stood looking down at the rancher.

"You've had too much to drink, Curly," Bruce interrupted him.

Belfort's eyes moved in slow insolence up and down Bruce's body. Then his mouth twisted to one side in a drunken leer as he laid his cards down on the table in front of him.

"Who's tellin' me?" he asked.

"I'm telling you," Bruce replied. "Only a drunken swine would talk the way you're talking."

Belfort got to his feet with an oath, but Bruce pushed him back into his chair. Muttering to himself, Belfort sprang up and lifted the chair. Before he could swing it, Bruce's hand had shot out and the man staggered backwards and stumbled to the floor. The other men in the room rushed forward to intervene, old Sandy among them. Before they could prevent it, how-

ever, Belfort was on his feet and was rushing at Bruce.

"Stop this, now!" old Sandy ordered.

But even as he spoke, Bruce struck again and Belfort crumpled to the floor.

Sandy flung his arms desperately about Bruce. "Stop it, lad!" he cried excitedly. "Stop it, or we'll have the law on us!"

Bruce shook him coolly off. "Better not step into this, Sandy," he advised. "Belfort has something to say to me or one of us has to take a licking, law or no law!"

Belfort had pulled himself together with painful difficulty. Bruce strode over to him, but old Sandy stepped between them and faced Belfort.

"Here, now," he demanded, "what's all this about? What's it about, Curly?"

"Ask him," Belfort snarled.

"What's it all about?" Sandy begged of Bruce, maintaining his position stoutly between them.

"Belfort knows," Bruce replied. "He has been talking about a certain young lady whose name—"

"There was another woman with her, damn you!" Belfort screamed, his face livid. "And another man! The car was broke down."

"What you said was a lie, then, wasn't it?" Bruce prompted.

"I told nothing but what I saw with my own eyes," Belfort retorted.

"What you implied was a damn lie!" Bruce challenged, stepping toward him.

Belfort's head began wagging to and fro as he watched Bruce in a sort of stupid fascination. Presently he nodded. "If you want to look at it that way," he admitted. "I was only talkin'."

"Think twice before you talk like that again," Bruce advised him casually, taking a cigarette from his shirt pocket as he spoke.

A half dozen of Belfort's friends had got around him and were urging him toward the door.

"I'll talk to you again," said Belfort, over his shoulder.

"Any time, Curly," Bruce replied, and lit his cigarette.

Sandy scratched his head in relief as Belfort disappeared through the doorway. "Then he shook his head at Bruce. "Yon's a bad actor, lad," he said quietly. "I'd be lookin' out for him if I was you."

"I intend to," said Bruce and turned again to take the seat beside Myers.

CHAPTER IX

The Laird had asked old Hector Cardigan to dinner. It was rarely these days that Hector was invited to dine alone with Jarvis Dean. In the old days he had frequently been a guest at the Castle, but that, as Hector knew, had been Millicent's doing. There had never been anything but the most cordial relationship between the two men, however, but Jarvis had lived too much to

himself during the years since his wife's death.

It was not until they had left the table, however, and had retired to the drawing room that his host gave any inkling of what was on his mind. The Laird had paused in the hallway and asked whether they would go to the library or sit in the drawing room. Hector had not hesitated in making the choice. The library was the one spot in the house that belonged peculiarly to Jarvis Dean. The drawing room, on the other hand, had been Millicent's and held still some lingering aroma of her presence there. Besides, Hector's hand had done its best in making the room what it was.

"Of course," Jarvis said, when Hector had expressed his preference. "I might have known. Go in and sit down. I'll fetch the brandy." And now the two men sat on opposite sides of the empty fireplace, their old-fashioned brandy glasses in their hands, pledging each other's health in stately and ancient fashion. The Laird trimmed and lighted a cigar, turning it round and round in his fingers as he contemplated it pensively. Hector drew a cigarette from his own case and lighting it, extinguished the match and placed it carefully on the tray beside him.

"It isn't often," the Laird began, "that I ask a man to help me consider my private affairs."

"It isn't often you have required the advice of another," Hector encouraged.

Jarvis blew a thick cloud of smoke from his lips and sighed heavily. "That's a polite remark, sir," he said as if he were talking to himself, "but it's a prodigious lie, just the same."

Hector knew his host. To be called a liar by Jarvis Dean was no offense, unless the mood itself were an offensive one.

"I know of no law against a man being polite to his host," Hector countered.

"There ought to be, then," said the Laird. "A man would be better off if he heard the truth now and then, even across his own dinner table."

Hector coughed lightly. "The average man is no better off, sir, no matter where he hears the truth."

Jarvis seemed to consider that matter for a moment, then dusted the gray ash lightly from the end of his cigar. "Have you heard about this fracas in old Sandy's back room a night or two ago?" he asked abruptly.

"I was told about it," Hector admitted cautiously.

"Aye—and the whole country knows about it. It's a dirty business."

"But one over which we have little control, I'm afraid."

Jarvis' look sharpened. "We have something to say on what brought it about," he said. "In my day a young woman's name—if she was a lady—wasn't mentioned in such a place."

"I have no doubt young Landor feels much the same about it—even in these days."

"That's not the point, sir. In my day a young woman gave no reason for having her name bandied about over a poker table."

"The times have changed, it seems," Hector murmured.

"It's our own fault, then. We've let these youngsters get out of hand with their racing about the country in automobiles and their abominable cocktails and the like. Where is it going to stop?"

Hector sighed, half-amused, and yet thoroughly aware of what was troubling the Laird's mind.

"They'll probably all marry and settle down and have children of their own to plague them in their turn," he said lightly.

Jarvis leaned forward in his chair and looked fixedly at his guest. "I want your opinion about that girl of mine," he said frankly. "What's she like?"

Hector smiled. "She's your own daughter, sir," he replied. "You ought to know her better than I."

"I don't. She was never anything but a child to me—until now. Since she came back, she's been a stranger in the house. More than half the time she's not here at all. She'll be back here tonight from the Parr Lodge—not alone, either. I'll warrant—and the place will be like bedlam until she goes again."

Hector got up and tossed his cigarette into the empty maw of the fireplace. He walked to the French windows and looked out upon the garden that glowed palely under summer starlight.

"I have been wondering about the girl," he said at last. "I have talked with her, too. She is not happy."

"Happy?" Jarvis grunted. "What does she want that she cannot have?" But his eyes were half closed in self-concealment.

"She hasn't told me that," Hector replied. "I can only guess, at best."

"What's your guess, then?"

Hector returned to his seat and selected another cigarette. "It is my opinion, Jarvis, that the girl has been in love—ever since she came back here."

The Laird frowned. There was no escaping the meaning of Hector's words. "You mean—this young Landor?"

"Certainly," said Hector.

Jarvis shrugged impatiently. "Puppy-love!" he exclaimed. "She'll get over that—if she isn't already over it."

Hector looked steadily at the Laird for a moment without speaking. "What you see," he said at last, his voice very low, "is probably the process by which she hopes to get over it. And it would not surprise me to learn that she finds it as painful as you do."

"Tommyrot!" the Laird exploded. "You have asked my opinion," Hector said with dignity, "and I am giving it."

"If I thought there was anything to that," the Laird replied, "I'd sell up and get out—and take her with me."

"I know you would," Hector observed, "—and accomplish nothing."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" Hector smiled patiently at the Laird. "You ought to know the breed better than to ask that," he said. "If Millicent's daughter is in love, there's very little that either you or I can do about it, I think."

There followed a long silence at the end of which Jarvis helped himself to another drink and poured one for his guest. They toasted each other as cordially as if there had been no disagreement between them, and then the Laird turned abruptly to talking of things that left no room for difference of opinion.

It was almost midnight when Autumn finally came home, bringing Linda Parr with her to stay for a few days at the Castle. The girls came upon the two old men seated before the fireplace, their brandy glasses in their hands, their eyes grown heavy from sitting up long past their time for bed.

"Why, Da—we had no idea you'd be waiting for us at this hour!" Autumn exclaimed, after greetings had gone around. "You should have been in bed hours ago."

She laid aside her hat and gloves as she spoke and seated herself in one of the Queen Anne chairs, her feet curled up under her, her elbow resting on the arm of the chair, her chin pressed against her palm. Linda sat near her, comically prim, her hands folded in her lap.

"THIS is a season of elegancies and niceties such as bespeak gracious-lady fashions. One of the surest signs that the luxury note is being sounded is the lavish use designers are making of rich embroidery and other fastidious surface decorations, such as intricate applique design, exquisite beadwork and resplendent sequin embellishment, also (very important is the news) latest costume collections declare the revival of handsome old-fashioned, now new-fashioned, passementerie.

Been treasuring for years a bit of precious passementerie that adorned grandmother's wedding gown, or perhaps her best Sunday-go-to-meeting dress? Now's the big moment to bring it out. If it's just a single ornament, applique it near your heart on your smartest blouse or frock and it will serve as effectively as a jewelry gadget. If it's two motifs of a kind you've hoarded, one atop each sleeve will bring infinite style prestige to your best gown.

Embroidery is wielding its magic in every direction, enhancing with gaily decorated sleeves afternoon gowns of silk crepe, sheer wool or velvet, electrifying the formal evening gown with resplendent glittering note, adding intrigue to sports sweaters with yarn-worked posies, stressing the sumptuous trend in formal evening sweaters (now so stylish) with all sorts of dazzling gadgetry.

Speaking from the accessory standpoint, ornate with embroidery will your gloves and your handbag be this year, your mittens and your scarf, your wide corset-like girdle and even your chapeau will not be immune from the epidemic of embroidery.

The charming gold tissue lame evening gown to the left in the picture will, no doubt, prove one of the loveliest that goes to parties during the winter social season. It subscribes to the embroidery vogue in that the cunning light gray lida cloth jacket that is worn with it is embroidered with sequins and gold cord.

It's a gay and very formal sweater that you see portrayed in the oval inset. The sweater is of sheer knit tuchua wool, tuned to evening formality with embroidery worked

with sparkling gold sequins in a leaf pattern.

A foremost topic in fashion circles is the floor-length evening coats made of handsome wool material. See centered in the group a gorgeous affair styled of red broadcloth enhanced with massive gold applique done in gold kid with embroidered accents.

And now comes the climax of our story—the allover embroidered daytime coat! When Jane Alden, Chicago stylist, flew back from Paris following a week-end to week-end flight she arrived just as you see her pictured to the right in the illustration. Her hurried trip was made to work out special styles with Madame Bruyere of the Maison Bruyere, for use in her talks before the Four-H clubs throughout the United States. She stepped out of the plane wearing a dark green kid hat, in a snail design, with matching kid gaiters, a black dress of the new one-side fringed apron type and an allover-embroidered gray coat by Bruyere. You sense the exquisite detail of the coat at first glance, and you are at once impressed with its quiet elegance. The embroidery reflects consummate art in its refined handling and although it is done in an allover patterning the effect is smartly conservative and practical because of the soft gray coloring of the embroidery that blends into the background in perfect symphony.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

her feet placed very precisely on the floor—the image of discreet propriety.

"The hour is no later for me than it is for you, my girl," Jarvis replied, his voice betraying a little impatience as he spoke.

"But we're used to it, Mr. Dean," Linda offered with a smile.

"So I have been informed," said the Laird. "Are you young ladies aware that your conduct is creating a deal of talk in the district?"

Autumn smiled. "You're not bothering your head, Da, over what the gossips have to say about—"

"I'm bothering my head about you, my girl," he interrupted her. "Do you know that your name was the center of a scandalous brawl in the back room of a dive in Kamloops the other night?"

"We've heard all about it, Da," Autumn replied. "It was simply absurd."

"But piquant," Linda put in.

"Belfort is a beast," Autumn went on.

"A girl with any respect for herself doesn't give a beast any excuse for talking," her father observed.

Autumn checked her rising anger. "There were four of us in the party—Lin and I, and Florian and a friend of his," she explained. "We were coming home along the highway from Ashcroft. We got started later than we had intended and when we got as far as Belfort's ranch the car broke down. While the boys worked on the car, Lin and I went to sleep in a haystack close to the road. Belfort towed us to a garage about seven o'clock in the morning."

"Or we should have been there still," Linda added.

"And that's all there is to the story," Autumn concluded.

"I accept your account on its merits," Jarvis Dean said, "but it explains nothing. The whole escapade was a scandal and an outrage, whether Belfort had anything to do with it or not. There'll be no repetition of the like, my girl, if you are to remain in my house!"

Hector Cardigan remained silent, but every now and then a profound sigh escaped him which was to Autumn singularly audible above the deep and vehement tones of her father's voice.

"Certainly," said Hector.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Lavish Embroidery Bespeaks Fashion Trend to Elegance

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



with sparkling gold sequins in a leaf pattern.

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Prompt Shipments Since 1893
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HOMEWORK
MAKE MONEY at home writing Greeting
Cards, Verses, Christmas, Valentine, etc.
50c a line. List Guaranteed Markets. In-
structions, 50c. C. Mills, Stanley, Wis.

QUICK QUOTES
A LAW OF LIFE

"IT is a law of life that evil days be-
gin for any people when more de-
pendence is placed upon legislative
novelties than upon old-fashioned
virtues."—Justice George W. Macey,
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets made of
May Apple are effective in removing
accumulated body waste.—Adv.

Man Proposes
Man proposes, but God disposes.
—Thomas a Kempis.

Constipation Relief
That Also
Pepsin-izes Stomach

When constipation brings on acid indig-
estion, bloating, dizzy spells, gas, coated
tongue, sour taste, and bad breath, your
stomach is probably loaded up with cer-
tain undigested food and your bowels don't
move. So you need both Pepsin to help
break up fast that rich undigested food in
your stomach, and Laxative Senna to pull
the trigger on those lazy bowels. So be
sure your laxative also contains Pepsin.
Take Dr. Caldwell's Laxative, because its
Syrup Pepsin helps you gain that won-
derful stomach-relief, while the Laxative
Senna moves your bowels. Tests prove the
power of Pepsin to dissolve those lumps of
undigested protein food which may linger
in your stomach, to cause belching, gastric
acidity and nausea. This is how pepsin-
izing your stomach helps relieve it of such
distress. At the same time this medicine
wakes up lazy nerves and muscles in your
bowels to relieve your constipation. So see
how much better you feel by taking the
laxative that also puts Pepsin to work on
that stomach discomfort, too. Even fin-
icky children love to taste this pleasant
family laxative. Buy Dr. Caldwell's Lax-
ative—Senna with Syrup Pepsin at your
druggist today!

Quick to Speak
The rushing flow of speech and
their own eloquence is fatal to
many.—Juvenal.

DELICIOUS POP CORN BALLS
FAMOUS RECIPE ON EVERY TIN
JOLLY TIME
POP CORN POP
GUARANTEED TO BE
AT YOUR
DRUGGIST

All for Fame
The desire for fame is the last
desire that is laid aside even by
the wise.—Tacitus.

NO APPETITE?
Kansas City, Mo.—
Mrs. Irene Trussell,
1710 Walnut, says: "I
would get acid indig-
estion, hardly felt like eat-
ing at all, and was los-
ing weight. Everything
seemed to upset me so.
I used Dr. Pierce's Gold-
en Medical Discovery
and my appetite im-
proved. I became much
stronger and I really
felt just fine." Ask your druggist today for
Golden Medical Discovery, liquid or tablets.

Good Counsel
For arms of little avail
abroad, unless there is good coun-
sel at home.—Cicero.

666 relieves
misery of
Colds
LIQUID-TABLETS
SALVE-NOSE DROPS
fast!

Hurting Ourselves
To be angry is to revenge the
faults of others upon ourselves.
—Pope.

Watch Your Kidneys!
Help Them Cleanse the Blood
of Harmful Body Waste

Your kidneys are constantly filtering
waste matter from the blood stream. But
kidneys sometimes lag in their work—do
not act as Nature intended—fail to re-
move impurities that, if retained, may
poison the system and upset the whole
body machinery.

Symptoms may be nagging backache,
persistent headache, attacks of dizziness,
getting up nights