

# THE FORBIDDEN YEARS

by  
WADSWORTH CAMP

Her answer was doubtful. "I'm not certain, I hope so." "Anyway," he said, "I'll see you to-morrow. Would you like to go to-night if I hadn't got myself hooked up?"

Rulon came back to her, and the sentiment he undoubtedly expected her to indulge to-night, and his quick temper; and she answered disconsolately:

"I'm hooked up too. What are you doing, dear?"

"Going to the opening of a new night club called the Bars and Stripes."

"Oh! With Steve?"

"His voice went sullen."

"No, Esther made me promise to take her some time ago, and I'd forgot all about it, but she hadn't, and had tagged a table herself. Don't know why she should be so infernally set on taking in this particular racket, but she's got to go, and it will give me a chance to talk sensibly to her."

Barbara gasped. Esther was going to the Bars and Stripes after all. Perhaps she didn't know that Essie Helder was to be the hostess; but that seemed unlikely, because little Esther always knew so much. You never could tell how she was going to jump. In her surprise Barbara forgot to tell Gray that she also expected to witness the deliberately noisy return of this dreaded connection of the Helder clan.

## CHAPTER IX

Rulon glared at Barbara's arm in its sling.

"Why didn't you let me know when I telephoned about our table for the Bars and Stripes?"

"What was the use? Mr. Hackey said I had to play just the same."

Rulon disapproved.

"He's wrong, too, ask me; but he's the skipper. How the deuce did you do it?"

"People are always having accidents that they don't mean to happen."

His quick temper showed for a moment.

"The imminent Benedict Manvel have anything to do with it?"

She tried to laugh.

"Charles! You can be ridiculous! Why not blame a slippery floor? And you'd better let me go to my dressing room, or I'll hang the curtain."

Another misgiving smothered his flash of anger.

"Barbara, I know those things can hurt; I realize I mustn't ask too much of you; but I did let you off last night, and you guaranteed to give me to-night for supper—"

Her smile was reflective.

"It does hurt, but I'll keep my promise, Charles. I'll go with you to the opening."

As she climbed the iron stairs she realized how much she desired to go to the Bars and Stripes, even though her arm pained abominably, even though Rulon undoubtedly would make the evening difficult. What mattered more than such discomfort was the opportunity to learn why Esther should advance eagerly, and drag Gray with her, on so ugly an unveiling.

While she was changing the call boy brought her a collection of evening newspapers, and she scanned with amusement and distaste the little publicity Hackey had scratched out of her mishap. She had, she learned from the various accounts, miraculously survived a serious automobile accident on the Jericho Turnpike while returning from

a day spent with wealthy, socially prominent, and admiring friends. She was, she also discovered with some amazement, sacrificially insisting on playing that evening over the frantic opposition of her physician and her manager.

When she went down she detected an unusual restlessness from the beast in front; an unorganized sense of movement a low incoherent growling. Rulon, in the wings, suppressing his laughter, informed her that Hackey had just gone before the curtain, and had described his version of her accident and his conception of her brave, sacrificial spirit, and had craved indulgence for "a little lady whom we're very lucky to have with us at all to-night."

"I could choke him," she muttered.

But on the stage she had to admit he knew the tricks of his trade, for the attitude of the well-filled house was exceptionally friendly and sympathetic, and her share of the applause was warmer than usual.

"Over your frantic opposition!" she sneered at Hackey when he came back after the last curtain. "I haven't forgotten you said I'd play if I made my entrance on a stretcher. I remember you swore I'd stroke the crew if I had to pull the oar with my teeth."

Hackey produced a wink almost as sinister as Uncle Walter's.

"Dollink! Dollink! Didn't they almost burst into tears for my mangled Venus? As Miss Broadway you're a hundred per cent, sweetness; as a business woman you're a zero so big you can't even see the outline."

He meant it, and it was double-edged. She wasn't surprised, following his glance, to see Rulon hurrying up.

"Not much to say about that, Guv'nor."

"Except to give thanks to Hackey, the misunderstood."

Rulon laughed.

"Hackey, the slave whipper!"

He put his hand on Barbara's shoulder, and she tried not to shrink.

"How'd you stand it?"

"It wasn't so bad."

"Still keen for supper?"

She nodded. Hackey's suspicious glance prowled from her to Rulon.

"What are you two up to to-night?"

Rulon answered.

"We're going to the opening at that new lunch wagon, the Bars and Stripes."

Hackey grinned.

The place with the odd name where I got run off by an ex-heavyweight? Maybe I'll drop in myself later."

"No tables, Guv'nor."

Hackey shrugged his shoulders.

"Standing room for the opening, eh? All the better. Bed's my favorite night club."

He shook his finger at Barbara.

"Watch your step, sweetness and light. Take care you don't slip on the dance floor and bump your head."

She made a face at him.

"Why not? Wouldn't you like to put me in an airplane crash?"

"Not to-morrow, thanks. We'll save that for next week, if there is a next week. Nobody ever knows. Glide along to your simple pleasures, pretty dumb-one."

But, when Rulon had gone

in that community, as in every other in the land.

An outburst of public indignation had followed the brazen announcement of organized livery drivers that private cars in funeral processions were interfering with their "business," and that, if necessary the procession would be halted and the organization men would refuse to participate in them. But the racketeers were not deterred by public opinion. They had their plans. They sought to execute them. They were halted only by the force of the law when the drivers

to his dressing room, Hackey ran after Barbara, and caught her halfway up the iron steps.

"When I said watch your step, Norcross, I meant watch your step."

"I swallowed your medicine the first time, Mr. Hackey, and it's good."

Savagely he chewed off the end of a cigar.

"Yes it is, Barbara; the only tonic that will work. String him along. For God's sake, sweetheart, keep out of a war with Charles Rulon."

Facing the doubtful prospect just ahead, she was nervous, irritable.

"I'll do my best to hold him off to-night."

Hackey snapped at her.

"What's to-night? The three hundred and sixty-fifth part of a year. You can't hold him off three hundred and sixty-five nights. Languish before his fire, actress. What are a few sighs, handclaps, and osculations among serious artists?"

Before his logic her irritation increased.

"I'll do my best to hold him off."

"It's one of the greatest injustices in life that you never went to business school."

His voice, heavy with sarcasm and worry followed her as she ran on up the steps and slammed the door of her dressing room.

She changed hurriedly, awkwardly, and in her state of perplexed apprehension Rulon became subordinate to her curiosity as to what Esther was about, and her anxiety to learn how Esther would accept the vindictive woman's flaunting of the Helders.

Rulon waited for her at the foot of the staircase. The new place of entertainment was only a few paces from the theater, but the distance was sufficiently long to let Rulon commence his campaign of making the night difficult. Under the blazing street lights, and in the crawling crowd, that combined to furnish for the amorous an obscurity and solitude almost complete, he pressed Barbara's good arm close to his side.

"You've quite won the heart headed Hackey, my dear."

She forced herself not to repel his affectionate gesture.

"You think he likes me, Charles?"

"I'm certain of it; but I mean more than just liking you."

His voice softened and caressed her.

"I don't see how anyone could help doing that. I mean he likes your work, your possibilities as a player."

She couldn't avoid the significance of his tightening grasp.

"You know, if everything goes well, I wouldn't be surprised if I persuaded him to feature us together next spring or autumn. There would be a step, eh?"

She failed to find any equivocation in his silky phrases. A threat and a bribe were all they contained. If everything went well! Obviously everything between them was doomed to go ill, and there'd be no feasting for her, probably no work with Hackey at all. She laughed faintly.

"You're a dreamer, Charles. I aren't look so far ahead."

She drew his attention to the pattern of lamps that flickered chromatically where the boarding announcing the Bars and Stripes had been.

The changing globes commanded attention to the name now.

"I wonder what it means?"

Rulon said.

Barbara's sense of apprehension grew.

"I've an idea."

"Better wait and see for yourself, Charles."

He stared ahead curiously.

"At least it's drawing a house."

Traffic in the street was nearly blocked while automobiles plodded one by one to the entrance under the blaz-

ing name and set down their occupants; and, Barbara observed, an uncommon proportion of these were private vehicles. Probably the old guard collected to look upon Essie Helder's sensational return from Elba.

Persons who had applied at the last moment and been refused admittance, added to the merely inquisitive, who are always at hand for any novel happening, made a crush on the sidewalk through which Barbara and Rulon threaded an uncertain path.

"Watch out for your arm, dear."

A number of times her arm was jarred, and she suppressed little cries, but Rulon heard, and showed temper.

"Damn them! It isn't worth it. I won't have you hurt. Let's duck it, and get away from the animals."

"No. I'm all right. We're nearly there. I wouldn't miss it for the world."

Policemen appeared and volubly strove to get the mob in quicker motion. Barbara and Rulon edged nearer, but the worst block was at the entrance where a troubled commissionaire insisted on examining the reservations of all who went in. Rulon chuckled ruefully.

"I'd like to see a mutiny like this at one of my openings."

"A lot of people," Barbara said, "seem to have had the idea of coming."

"Darned well advertised," Rulon grumbled.

But Barbara knew that in certain quarters the bait was more than publicity.

"The gods be praised," Rulon sighed as at last they reached the threshold.

They passed the inspection of the harassed sentinel, and with a sensation of utter incongruity walked from the dazzling sidewalk into corridor oppressive with a murky dusk. Rulon chuckled.

"Seems to me as far back as infancy I was taught that in these dens, cheerful surroundings encourage vice. A man would turn reformer here. Maybe the great Hackey's right after all, and we're in for a moral lecture."

Barbara didn't answer. She stared straight ahead. Her mind was full of what Steve had told her, and she responded instantly with a heavy depression to the pitchy light which undoubtedly contained warnings of storm. In front of them a wide staircase climbed to darker heights where the somber twilight seemed in cloudlike motion from the exhalations of innumerable smokers. Up the staircase into this melancholy fog rose slowly, with an illusion of reluctance, men and women brilliantly dressed, but the glitter of clothing and the mirth of its wearers were both extinguished by the stormy, moving vapors at the summit.

"It seems wrong, all this gloom," Barbara mused. "Have you noticed, Charles? There's another thing out of the way."

They reached the foot of the staircase.

"What?" he asked.

"Nobody's laughing. In a night club!"

"They're not chattering themselves deaf either," he muttered.

Momentarily he brightened.

"We'll see. There's something dashed clever going on here. This coal-cellar light's an effect."

Always the showman, he surrendered himself to the problem of finding the reason for so forbidding a preliminary; but Barbara went n up as slowly as her predecessors, thinking only of what Steve had said. The clouds at the summit swirled stiffling around her, dampening even her curiosity as to how Esther was going to react to the notoriety about to be thrust upon the Helders. As she glanced around, indeed, she experienced a sudden sympathy for Esther.

(To be Continued)

## A National Theme Song

From the Omaha World-Herald.

In a chat with Rudy Vallee, President Hoover suggested that if the famous crooner could make up and sing a song with a prosperity theme he might "rate a medal."

"I'd sure like to have the medal, Mr. President, but it isn't easy to make up a song hit. We might take one of the old favorites, though, and work it over. For instance, I made my name with a song called I'm Just a Vagabond—"

"Oh, THAT wouldn't do, would it, Mr. Vallee?"

"No, I guess it wouldn't. Well, there was one called Blue Heav—"

"Let's don't have any more of those blues songs."

"Still, St. Louis Blues has a certain swing—"

"St. Louis isn't the only town that has the blues."

"Oh, I have it—Happy Days Are Here Again!"

"Mr. Vallee, you can't fool the public."

"How about Happy Days MAY Be Here Again?"

"Not sufficiently optimistic for a campaign year."

"Well, then, Happy Days WILL Be Here Again?"

"Why should we predict a democratic victory? That's the way they'd construe it."

"Who would?"

"Oh, I don't know—practically everybody, I guess, from what I can hear."

"Well, how about just Happy Days?"

"Has a wet sound, doesn't it?"

"How about just Days?"

"That might be safe enough, only you'd have to spell it out over the radio each time or they'd think you meant d-a-z-e."

"We'd probably have to get the special permission of the copyright owners."

"Well, I suppose we could get it pretty cheap if we'd assume the mortgage."

"I'll try to think up something, Mr. President."

"Luck to you, Mr. Vallee. I've been trying to think up something for nearly three years."

## More American Plants to Canada

Washington — Great Britain's new 10 per cent tariff went into effect March 1. According to department of commerce officials it will affect 46 per cent of American exports to the United Kingdom, the total of which in 1930 amounted to 700 million dollars. The new British tariff has a retaliatory clause which permits the imposing of duties as high as 100 per cent.

Another phase of the new economic policy is the proposed economic understanding between Great Britain and her Colonies and Dominions. Commenting upon this, the Baltimore Sun says:

"Compared to the exactions of American protective tariff pirates, the British protective tariff law may well seem to impose relatively small barriers in the way of our export trade with England. The basic duty of 10 per cent which is prescribed is a mere shadow of many American protective tariff rates, which range upward from 100 per cent.

"In the British tariff set-up, however, there is an arrangement which may well give the new law a strength in blocking imports from the United States which is not indicated by that figure of 10 per cent. It is the provision whereby imports from the British colonies are exempted from the duties indefinitely and those from the British dominions are exempted until the Imperial conference takes place in Ottawa, Canada, in July. The purpose of the limited exemption of Dominion products is, of course, to give England a club with which to bargain for Empire tariff concessions at Ottawa. How successfully they will use this club remains to be seen.

In the meantime, however, it is quite clear that this Dominion preference arrangement will tend to shift British orders away from the United States to the British dominions, and speed the already enormous emigration of American industry. In Canada, for example, many American firms maintain plants producing the same products that they produce at plants in the United States. With exports from the United States faced with a British tariff barrier which does not apply to Canadian products, there is an important new pressure to fill British orders from Canadian plants, as well as a pressure to establish Canadian branches to obtain tariff advantages."

## DIVERSIFIED PHILOSOPHY.

The yellow of the Chinaman

Is only in his skin;

At least he's shown the world just how

To take it on the chin.

Now Al Capone would like a chance

To hunt the Lindbergh babe;

You must admit the canny Al's

A most diverting knave.

The way the League of Nations

works

Is seeming very quaint;

It cannot stop a war that is—

But knocks those out that ain't.

Who listens to the candidates,

As eloquent they wax,

Metaphs might be a subject for

That new amusement tax.

The Philippines, strange to tell,

Have money now on hand;

If we were half such savages,

Now wouldn't that be grand?

"A banker lent his ear to me,"

So boasted Uncle Mose;

"And then," he added, ruefully,

"He gave me plenty noes."

—Sam Page.

Wearing 'Em High.

A man who had been a guest at

a fashionable hotel was paying his

bill. He looked up at the girl cashier

and asked what it was she had

around her neck.

"A ribbon, of course," she said.

"Why?"

"Well," he replied, "everything is

so high around her that I thought,

perhaps it was your garter."

HOSTESSES THEN AND NOW.

In olden days, spake grandma,

"Ther's company for tea,

So I must bake a pound cake; now

Where is my recipe?"

"Let's see! 'A pound of butter,

cramed

With sugar— Just a pound!

'A pound of eggs—'bout six of

these—

'And beaten till they mound.

"Beat separately the yolks and

whites—

So anybody knows—

With brandy do I flavor this,

Or is it, may be, rose?"

"Add flour, mace and cinnam-

on—"

"And yes, 'a spoon of brandy,"

Though I do say it, who should not,

This cake will be a dandy."

A hostess of today will yawn,

"Tonight we throw a party!

I must have food as well as drinks—

That bunch is surely hearty."

She trails unto the outside door

And calls her little daughter:

"Go to the store and get a cake.

How much? Oh, 'bout a quarter."

—Sam Page.

because they could get only three

cookies for 5 cents, instead of four,

and because sandwiches lacked con-

tent.

The Evidence.

From Pathfinder.

"But dear, I'm late because I've

had my nose to the grindstone all

day."

"