

BEAUTY'S DAUGHTER

By Kathleen Norris



SYNOPSIS

Victoria Herrendene, a vivacious little girl, had been too young to feel the shock that came when her father, Keith Herrendene, lost his fortune. He is a gentle, unobtrusive soul. His wife, Magda, cannot adjust herself to change. She is a beautiful woman, fond of pleasure and a magnet for men's attention. Magda and Victoria have been down at a summer resort and Keith leaves for a bridge party, excusing himself for being snubbed. Unaware of the Herrendenes' return to their small San Francisco apartment, Keith does not approve of Magda's mad social life and they quarrel frequently. Magda receives flowers from a wealthy man from Argentina whom she had met less than a week before. Magda takes Victoria to Nevada to visit a woman friend who has a daughter named Catherine. There she tells her she is going to get a divorce. Victoria soon is in boarding school with her friend Catherine. Magda marries Manners and they spend two years in Argentina. Victoria has studied in Europe and at eighteen she visits her mother when Ferdie rents a beautiful home. Magda is unhappy over Ferdie's drinking and attentions to other women. Vic dislikes him. When her mother and stepfather return to South America, Victoria refuses to go with them. Magda returns and tells Vic she and Ferdie have separated. Victoria is now a student nurse. Magda has fallen in love with Lucius Farmer, a married artist. While she and Vic prepare for a trip to Europe, Ferdie takes a walk in his hotel. The night before Magda and Vic are to sail, Magda elopes with Lucius Farmer. While nursing the children of Dr. and Mrs. Keats, Vic meets Dr. Quentin Hardisty, a brilliant physician, much sought after by women, who is a widower with a crippled daughter. In a tete-a-tete at the Keats home, he kisses Vic. Several days later he invites her with other guests to spend a week-end at his cabin. Vic is enchanted with the cabin. Next morning she and Quentin go hiking and return ravenous. The party is disrupted Sunday afternoon by the arrival of Marian Pool, a divorced woman. Vic is jealous of Mrs. Keats and a few days later tells Mrs. Pool she is going to Honolulu. In his office, Quentin questions Vic about leaving. He proposes to her. She accepts him and they are married. Vic and Quentin are idyllically happy in their home. During six years Victoria has four children. The Hardistys first see Serena Morrison, an exotic and striking looking beauty. Quentin appears interested, but they do not meet. Magda gives Vic some advice in how to hold a husband, warning her of sirens who are on the outlook for men.

CHAPTER VII—Continued

"Some men never would," Magda conceded. "But some men are after women—smart women and beautiful women—all the time! The world's full of them now—women who have comfortable big alimonies or settlements, and who are on the loose hunting for someone like Quentin—someone to love!"

"There are lots of men handsomer than Quentin for them to go after," Victoria observed with a laugh.

"But it isn't looks that count, Vic. That hard-faced, deep-voiced, dark-headed square sort of man is—well, I tell you," Mrs. Herrendene said, shrugging lightly, looking away, "I tell you that if I were ten years younger I'd give that lad of yours a run for his money!"

For once Vicky was not amused; she was secretly affronted by her mother's words. Magda broke the silence.

"Marriage isn't what it used to be, Vic. In the old days if a man wanted to wander there were places he could go that his wife never heard about. Women suspected what was going on, but they were having their ten or a dozen children and feeding chickens and making soap and putting up preserves, and they didn't have much to say. It's different now. The women they can buy are of their own class, and they're not all after presents and trips and alimony. They want love—they've got money! They're after the love part! There's a sex war on, Vic—women don't want one experience, they want twenty, now!"

"Well, I hate the word 'sex,' and I hate so much talk about it, and I hate the idea that it's the most important thing in the world!" Vic presently said, with feeling.

"But it is the most important thing in the world," her mother assured her seriously.

Victoria shook her head, frowning. She fell into thought, and her mother, idling in her favorite fire on a couch beside the fire, was silent, too. Later that evening Victoria asked Quentin if he thought sex was so important.

"Sex?" he echoed in surprise.

Vicky laid a hand on his.

"I don't mean in youth, when flirting is natural and right. But afterward—does it have to go all through life, men tempting women and women tempting men to throw every-

thing else over, decency and home and honor and obligation?"

"It is that way," the doctor said slowly, "it is that way. They tell me about it," he added.

"How do you mean, 'it is that way'?"

"I mean that a man who really loves his wife and kids, who is perfectly satisfied with his home life—"

"Perfectly satisfied!" The same phrase affronted her, and she laughed.

"Well, perhaps what I mean is that his new affair has nothing to do with his—his organized life. He meets some woman who appeals to him tremendously—irresistibly—"

"Physically!" Vic put in, scornfully, as he hesitated for a word. He accepted it simply, unsuspectingly.

"Oh, yes, primarily that. Primarily that. She has some trick of using her eyes—some note in her voice—something that sets him on fire just as definitely as if a fuse were lighted."

There was a pause. Victoria was studying his face attentively.

"Yes, but suppose all that," she presently said. "Grant all that! Is he then to tear up his whole life, kick his wife out, deprive his children of their father—"

"It's usually the wife who does that, Vicky."

"A man might expect his wife to forgive him," Vicky said, after thought. "But then how would she know that it mightn't happen again?"

"She wouldn't," Quentin said, mildly, unsmilingly.

"Ha!" Vicky exclaimed, out of deep thought. Quentin laughed.

"It would seem that it takes you by surprise," he observed.

"Well, it does. I've always felt—I've always hoped—that a man liked a woman for other things—her being sweet-tempered, and a good sport, and making him a comfortable home, and loving him—"

"She stopped short in her catalogue so much in earnest that tears were near her eyes."

"He does, Vic. A man who has a wife like that is lucky, and he knows it. But that doesn't mean that—oh, well, that the look some woman gives him over her shoulder as she goes out of his office won't—won't stay with him for days."

"Oh, Quentin!" Victoria exclaimed in surprise and dismay. And irresistibly she added, "Does that happen to you?"

"Sometimes!" The doctor admitted, laughing.

"But—but there's no sense to it! Look what it leads to. Look at Mother, and so many others—the mess they make of it! In the end—in the end—"

"In the end it's the Vicky who show them what fools they were," Quentin said, teasingly.

"Quentin, have you ever—since we were married, I mean—saw that that feeling about any other woman?"

"I'd tell you if I had, would I?"

"I think you would."

"Well, I don't know but that I would! I believe you'd be very understanding about it. You'd pity the sinner and forgive the sin. But a man with five kids, another coming, a new stove to put in, bills unpaid, and an operation at eight tomorrow morning has a swell chance at that sort of thing!" Quentin yawned.

"I'd be afraid of your mother, anyway," he laughed.

CHAPTER VIII

Serena, wife of Spencer Ashley George Morrison, was by birth part English and part Dane; she had been married to this, her third husband, for only a few years, and was in her early thirties when the Morrises came to California in search of sunshine and health. Not that Serena herself was not glorious in health and strength, and her child, Gita, seven years old, as strong as a little bullock, but her husband had been seriously injured in a hunting accident and would never be whole and well again.

There was a good income somewhere. The little family could afford to choose what place and what climate it preferred. Menlo Park—some eighteen to twenty miles down the peninsula from San Francisco—finally had seemed to be the ideal place, and they had bought the Tracy house, right next door to Dr. Quentin Hardisty's big place, in the week when Madeleine Hardisty was a year old.

The Hardistys' old-fashioned place was spacious, plain, comfortable. But the Morrises' residence was quite new, and tided in plastered Spanish patios, lovely oddments of sloping roof, oaks, peppers, roses, flagged paths. Little Gita Stewart, Serena's daughter, lonely and curious and bold, had had a year in creeping through the evergreen hedge that separated the two gardens, crossing the Hardistys' old tennis court and, skirting the berry patch, threading her way under the oaks and over the lawn, and finally discovering what she later had described to her nurse as the most fascinating family she had ever met: a mother who was fixing the puppy's hurt head with rags and water and medicines, and boys named Kenty and Dicky and Bobs, and girls named Gwen and Sue, and a baby that could walk.

The adult members of the family did not meet so simply. It was at a country-club lunch that Victoria first noticed the straw-haired woman and identified her as the beauty Quentin had noticed more than a year earlier. Everyone was noticing Serena that day and asking about her; it was her first social appearance since the long-ago night at the opera, although she had been in her new house for almost a month.

Quentin and some of the other men had been playing golf since breakfast time; Victoria had come later to the club to carry her husband home for lunch. With Gwen and her two older children she was watching the tennis when she saw Mrs. Morrison for the first time; presently Phyllis Tichnor came up with the newcomer in tow.

"Vic, you know Mrs. Morrison?"

"I don't," Vic said, smiling. "I'm so glad to I remember seeing Mrs. Morrison at the opera last year, and I think our children know each other?"

"Our children?" echoed the beautiful Mrs. Morrison, raising the delicate dark line of her eyebrows.

"Isn't your small girl Gita Stewart?"

"You ought to know each other," said Phyllis. "You live right near. Is there a place between you and the Tracy house or aren't you right next door?"

"Oh, of course we are," Serena said slowly, with no change of expression beyond a hint of languid curiosity. "It's your children Gita talks to Amah about?"

"I am not a very formal person. You can't be, when you have six children," Vicky explained, when they were comfortably seated, watching the tennis. "But I do mean to come and see you one of these days!"

"You have six children?" The beautiful voice could not be said to



"You Have Six Children?"

have even a trace of Norse accent, and yet there was a charming little halt in Serena's words now and then, a slight clinging and lingering that marked her as not all English-born.

"She always tells everyone that I'm young," Phyllis said.

"I have. And they make it hard for me ever to get away."

"But do come and see me. Except for Phyllis here," Serena said, completely expressionless in voice and face, "I am quite strange in California."

"We were in school in Paris together, Serena and I, but I didn't know they were here until last week!" Phyllis explained.

"If you know Phyllis you know everybody; she's the special minister between Europe and America," Victoria said. "We were in the 'Assumption' in Rome together, too, but we had known each other before that."

"You were at the 'Assumption'?" How I hated it!" Serena said, in her calm, emotionless way.

"Gallo coming to take us driving on Sundays," Phyllis put in, and the three laughed together. Then Phyllis went away, and Victoria could study at her ease the extraordinary beauty of the flower-like face in the clear shadow of the parasol. Exquisite womanhood; those were the two words that Serena suggested.

There was a silence filled with faint distant sounds and the click of balls. The club gardens blazed with flowers; there were stretches of green lawn beneath the trees; the sun shone warmly.

"There, who's that?" Serena suddenly asked, with the first sign of animation in voice and manner that Vicky had seen her.

"Which one?"

"The brown man—the square one, in white. With that other man."

"That's my husband—Dr. Hardisty," Vicky said, pleased at her interest. "Run get him, Gwen—yes, go along, Susan, you can go!"

"Your husband?" Serena asked, not moving her eyes from the distant figures of the men.

"Yes—Well, trot along with them, Kenty," Vicky said bracingly. "Don't cry because they're ahead of you. Quentin," she added welcomingly, as he came up with the children hanging on his hands, "we're all ready to go—we'll be just in time!"

Quentin and Mrs. Morrison were looking at each other, smiling.

"You'll have to introduce me, Vicky."

"Oh, I do beg your pardon! I always think that everyone knows everyone else. Mrs. Morrison, my husband, Dr. Hardisty. Quentin, do you remember who this is?"

"I do," Quentin said, smiling down at Serena, his white teeth and white clothes in almost startling contrast to the Indian brown of his face and skin. Serena looked up from the lavender shadows of the white parasol that was slowly turning behind her golden braided head. "You were on your way to China?"

"It was before my husband's accident—yes, we had a wonderful trip!" the woman said, smiling lazily with sea-blue eyes, raising heavy dark gold lashes.

"And they're neighbors," Vicky told him. "They are the people in the Tracy place!"

"Next door?" Quentin's face broke again into his own pleasant smile.

"You remember Gita, Quentin, who plays with the children? Mrs. Morrison is Gita's mother."

"Oh, I thought the name was Stewart?"

"Gita's father is dead," Serena explained. She continued to look up at Quentin, and Quentin to look down at her. "You've all been such angels to the child," she said. "She's been horribly lonely all her life, alone with her amah. I brought her amah with her, from China."

Vicky was baffled by the other woman's sleepy manner, by the vague words that seemed to have some meaning beyond their obvious meaning, for Quentin at least, for his face was absolutely radiant as he continued to hold Serena's hand and to look down at her.

"She's had you, hasn't she?" Vicky said sensibly. And she touched Quentin's arm with that wifely signal that says, "The children are ravenous. Let's get home and have lunch!"

Serena was paying no attention to Vicky; she looked only at Quentin.

"I can't be much with my little girl. You see my husband's an invalid," she said, in a child's flat tone.

"Ah, that's too bad!"

"They said he was slated for a brilliant career. But he was thrown from a horse, and dragged, about four months ago. It's his back, and he lost his eye."

There was something extraordinarily incongruous between her unruffled flawless beauty and the terrible thing she said; the white hand, the white skin, the gold hair and innocent blue eyes under the parasol were apparently unaffected.

"Tough luck!" Quentin said. Victoria pressed his arm again.

"Will you come and see him, Dr. Hardisty?"

"I'd like to."

"I wish you would!" Mrs. Morrison said. "We're always there in the late afternoons." The frills of her parasol tumbled slowly as she twirled it.

"Daddy, I'm hun-n-gry!" Kenty shouted. Quentin accompanied his family to the waiting car, after a cordial good-bye from them all to the new neighbor. Mildly, as he took his place in the driver's seat, the doctor observed to his wife that he wished that the children would not be rude.

"He's terribly hungry, Daddy, and we're late."

"I know," Quentin said. "I know. But she was telling us of her husband; I don't imagine she often gets to talking of her troubles."

Victoria glanced at his profile in surprise, ready to laugh. But he was quite serious.

"But did you ever know anyone to talk of dreadful or ghastly things, so calmly? That poor husband of hers—imagine being cut off in the very beginning of your career, blinded?"

Quentin, turning into their own, made no comment, and Kenty said animatedly:

"Why din' Gita go to the club, Mummy?"

"She stays with her amah!" Susan supplied.

"You speak of the man's misfortune," Quentin began unexpectedly, at lunch. "I was thinking of hers."

Victoria raised interrogative eyebrows. She had been cutting chicken into tiny pieces on Susan's plate, murmuring to the waitress, murmuring to her mother.

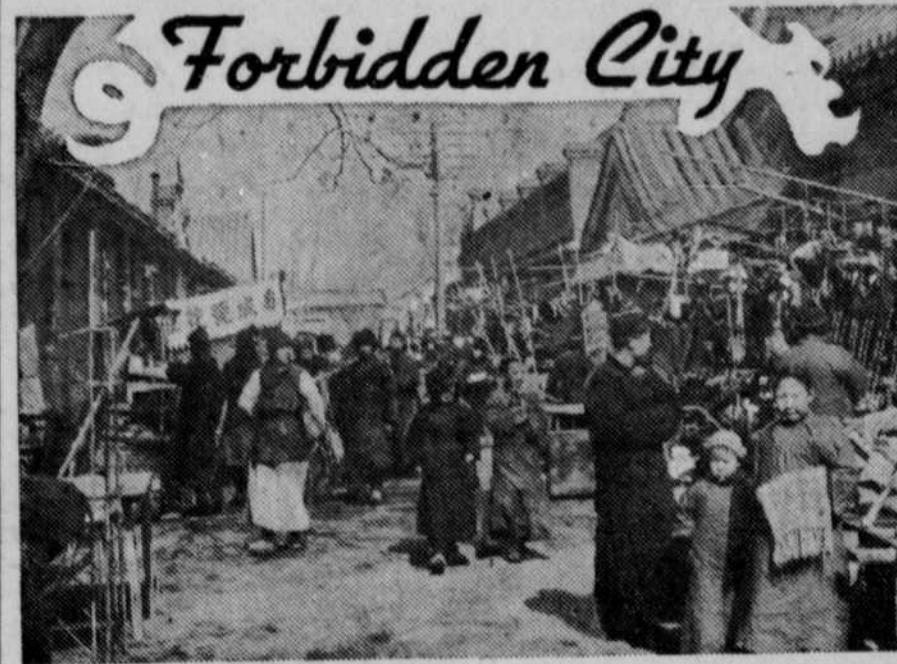
"I was thinking," Quentin expanded it, "that it must be a pretty dull life for her, planted down here in a country house with an invalid and a child!"

"They have our rabbits, too, Dad," Susan contributed animatedly. "They have the two rabbits we give Gita."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Name Changed

There have been famous Crom wells in English history, but at the restoration the name of Cromwell became odious and many bearers of the name made some change so as to disguise it. Mr. Vincent Crumley, in whose company Nicholas Nickleby acted Romeo, was how one man changed an illustrious name.



Peiping Merchants

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

WITHIN THE Imperial City of Peiping, on the exact center of all, oriented to the cardinal points of the compass, lies the Forbidden City, the Violet Town, which was the residence of the Dragon emperors. It is an inclosure a little longer than broad, and lies behind a wide moat and a double wall. The moat, in the summer time, is full of flowering lotus, and white cranes stalk thoughtfully among the rose-pink blooms.

Each corner of the wall has its tower, small, but very richly ornamented. There are four gates, one to each face of the wall, and their names are notable: East Gate Glorious; West Gate Glorious; Gate of Divine Military Progress, which is the Shen Wu Men, the North Gate, wherefrom in 1644 the last Ming emperor went sorrowfully to strangle himself on Coal Hill across the city, while the triumphant rebel soldiers were breaking into the Imperial City outside. Through it fled the Empress Dowager when the International Column battered down the southern gates in 1900. On the south is the Wu Men, the Meridian Gate, the great gate of ceremonies, not opened since the fall of the empire.

Only from Coal Hill immediately to the north, or from the White Dagoba in the Pei Hai to the north-west, can you bring the Forbidden City within the eye at once. From either height, you see the simple outline of its plan. Down the center line the great pavilions march, one behind another, their roofs tiled with imperial yellow, since all this was of the throne.

They are audience halls, council halls devoted to this phase or that of ancestral veneration, and imperial living quarters. Smaller buildings lie along the wall to east and west; houses for the concubines and eunuchs, and space for stores. Each pavilion has its courtyard and its formal approach. The courts are threaded by little conventional moats with white marble balustrades; the terraces are balustraded, as are the ceremonial flights of steps.

In the north end are the pavilions and gardens that the Empress Dowager used. They are small and intimate, landscaped, shaded by cypress and cedar, and traversed by narrow walks among flower beds and fountains, for the old lady loved such things.

Some of the buildings are used as museums, displaying much unusual treasure, although, at the time of the disturbances in 1932 and 1933, most of the exhibits were boxed and shipped south, to the great indignation of Peiping.

The Forbidden City displays the Chinese decorative scheme at its most extravagant and royal. It is done in reds and yellows and blues and greens, all most violent. A little money is spent on its upkeep, and perhaps the close-set walls save it from the grinding of the wind-blown dust that dulls the colors and the gilding of places in the open.

The proportions of the buildings are majestic without being vast, for the Chinese architect knew how to create his effects without relying on mere size. The clear sky and the brilliant sun enter into all conceptions; the secret of their excellence lies between the air and light and a just balance in line and mass.

Yet, as for size, there is a courtyard in the south section of the Forbidden City where, at a victory celebration in 1918, some 15,000 troops were arrayed, with a large number of civilian officials and spectators, and it is related that the courtyard seemed in no sense crowded.

What now is seen in these palaces and courts is a setting only, a stage from which the players have departed, with their bright robes, their banners, and their stately processions.

About the public buildings of Peiping, the shrines, the halls, the pavilions, and the palaces, there are many books written. German and Russian and British savants have measured, dissected and surveyed, French scholars have breathed much life into the dry bones of architecture, dwelling with ardor, also, upon the pavilions of pleasure, and the marble-capped wells in which were fled, head downward, discarded favorites, male and female, of not-too-immaculate sovereigns.

Many of the structures are jerry-built and flimsy. The Chinese lacquer with which the surfaces are faced is cheap stuff, prone to flake off before it attains age. The fine pai-lous that arch the streets and

define the approaches to important places are frail things which must be propped from every side while they are yet new. The stone, so intricately and beautifully carved, is soft and subject to quick erosion.

Many Lovely Things.

Many of the most imposing edifices, such as the White Dagoba that dominates the Pei Hai, one of the "Three Seas," are of brick and rubble, surfaced with plaster which, unless renewed every season, sloughs away in patches. Distant views are impressive, and close inspection disappointing.

Yet there are many things that are beautiful with an ageless beauty: corners of the Forbidden City, as delicate and fine as jewel filigree; the elaborate and cunning ornamentation under the eaves of the pavilions; the porcelain screens and arches; the timeless splendor of the tiled roofs, that persists in spite of the weeds and shrubs which spring from accumulations of dust in the cracks between the tiles. The patterns and designs are frozen in convention, but trees and water, air and light, are integral parts of every arrangement.

After you have dutifully followed the guidebooks through a score of temples and palaces, your impressions will tend to telescope upon themselves. But there are two things that you will never forget: the Temple of Confucius and the Temple of Heaven.

The Temple of Confucius is in the North City (the northern section of the Lama Temple and the old Hall of Classics. You come to it through noisome alleys that swarm with scavenger dogs and naked children.

A passage leads under murmurous dragon cypresses, between ranks of tall memorial tablets commemorating the visits and the patronages of emperors and princes. The passage opens upon a low terrace from which you descend to the central court by marble steps that flank a spirit stairway—Dragon eternally contending for the Pearl, between sculptured masses of sea and cloud.

From it you face the temple, looking along an avenue of ancient trees so thickly set that their interlaced branches cast a cool greenish gloom, very grateful in the summer time. Flanking it are low buildings that serve as storehouses and sleeping quarters for the priests.

The sun strikes through the trees and burns upon the old red walls of the pavilions, and the freshly painted patterns under the overhanging eaves glow richly in reflected light: turquoise blues and emerald greens, purples, and reds, and yellows.

There are small golden roofed kiosks, and sacrificial burners of a bronze no longer cast. The noises of the city do not enter here.

A gentle, courteous old priest with hairless, ascetic face material from the shadows to attend you; he is unobtrusive and detached in robes of gray and black. There is no statue in the shrine: it is the High Place of an idea. Tablets, richly engraved, hang above the altar, publishing the virtues of the Sage, and the gray ash of joss sticks in the incense burner testifies to the devotion of many worshippers.

The thing is wholly of the spirit. You need know nothing of Confucius, nothing of China, to realize that here is peace made visible; here is tranquility; here are a balance and a symmetry removed from striving; the conception of minds that have, after mature thought, settled their problems.

The Temple of Heaven.

Very different is the Temple of Heaven, out to the south in the Chinese City. It stands most fiercely in the sun, its walls enclosing a park larger than the Forbidden City. You go up from the highway along a broad avenue, mounting by a ramp to the center of a terraced line of pavilions. To the north is the round Hall of the Happy Year, its brilliant blue tiles and triple-roofed silhouette one of the distinctive things on the Peiping skyline.

Turning your back upon it, you walk south, through open pavilions and successive archways, to a stark altar of white carved marble, approached between winged columns. The altar consists of three round terraces, set one upon another, the top one smallest. The steps that ascend to it are in groups of nine, the mystical number; and the flagstones of the pavement are laid in concentric patterns in multiples of nine. And the roof of that altar is the vault of heaven.

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