

# JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK. Copyright, 1924.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

Marone was retarded and the tray of cocktails hung at a little distance. "What was I saying?"—oh yes! This cousin of Stan's was paralyzed on the day of his wedding. The girl thought it was the result of a fever, but that's what he gave out, poor devil. But it appears the thing began with a clashing out—or some sort of frightful crushing—when French father found him with his daughter. How's that for drama? The girl, they say, doesn't—thanks, old dear—

The cocktails had come. Jo Ellen saw the tray through a crimson veil rent by white lightnings. Perhaps this enormous man was the magnificent Marone, and it might be his voice that was saying something now entangled with the contractions of Cora Vance. Cora Vance had lifted a glass. Jo Ellen reached forward and succeeded in taking the glass that stood nearest. It was filled with a rosy liquor, and glittered in the midst of the blur as a definite thing you could feel with your hand. Perhaps you might, if no one stopped you—if the magnificent Marone's hands stayed where they were—drink two or three of them. . . . But first there was this one, flaming mistle, which Cora Vance touched with hers. . . . The rosy liquor scorched her throat. She was glad it burned. It would be splendid to drink fire, to gulp a molten draft that could cauterize the frightful sore spot in her breast. . . . and stop the thinking. "It's the real thing," said Cora Vance.

There was something she must say to Cora Vance. She couldn't keep on putting it off. You couldn't do a thing like that. Listen like a coward, and say nothing. . . . nothing. But here was Cannerton muttering. "Let's get down before the S. R. O."

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On the stairs French father seemed to be screamed in her ears. It made her wobble. She was glad the space was narrow, like a funnel that shot you down into oblivion, the cocktail might be doing some of the wobbling, but . . . that could come with a thud that sent you staggering. Nobody knew. Cannerton, who sat beside her at the little table, trying to look arch, and Cornell, who sat on the other side with Cora Vance, would think it was the cocktail if they thought anything. Were they starting? Nothing mattered. Another drink didn't matter. It was another thing. Over in a far corner was Stan Lamar, about to sit down when

he saw her, and—yes, he was staring. It wasn't the cocktail that made her believe that. Astonishment of this sort was too plain to be mistaken. Would he see that she had been drinking? Would he realize she was sitting with the woman who thought he was not quite a crook? How long did the noisy eating last? There was no way of telling that. It seemed astounding that she had been hungry earlier in the evening. You couldn't keep on being hungry with so many other feelings tearing at you. You couldn't follow Cornell's imitation of George Cohan, at which everybody laughed as if they had never heard an imitation. You couldn't understand how they all managed to ignore the fearful craziness of the world. Would they all think it was dramatic that the girl shouldn't know how the crippled bridegroom came to be crippled? Would Cora Vance think it was dramatic that the bride should be told in just this way? Very likely it was stacy. Some real things were so stacy you couldn't stage them. Cannerton had said that—Cannerton with the privilege of babbling about her "adorable bluish." How long had Stan Lamar known what Cora Vance knew? Was Stan noticing how her face looked? She wedged herself into the corner and looked over at him. "Did you know how Marty was hurt?" "This seemed to be unexpected. Who told you?" "Yes," he answered. "Not at first."

you're afraid to go downtown?" "Oh, no! Not afraid. Not that." "Came out?" "Some dirty tongue in his company. It was bound to come out." "Yes," he answered. "Not at first."

"Cora?" "Tonight." "Holy—say, that was a rotten thing to do!" He seemed to be stupefied. "She doesn't know anything about me—she doesn't know I'm married. She told it—well, as a story—because she saw you and happened to mention that she had been married to you. She had been married to you, and that you had a cousin—you see? Wasn't it simple?" "Yes, it was simple. It was rotten, too."

Jo Ellen couldn't see his face distinctly. He was bent upon being indignant. Perhaps he was indignant. Certainly he was disconcerted—extraordinarily. A person might be rather drunk and see that much. "It must have been Pritchard."

"You mean that it wasn't you?" "I mean that Pritchard told me. And he knows her." "It's all so simple." (To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

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## New York - Day by Day -

By O. O. MINTYRE.

New York, Aug. 21.—Now and then for diversion I spend a few days in one of the picturesque theatrical boarding houses in the hub-bub of the Roaring Forties. The landlady believes I am a trourper—a member of a "dumb" act that opens or closes shows.

My room is comfortable and adequate. There is a brass bed, a washstand with bowl and pitcher and curtain corner to be used as a wardrobe. Next door to me live the Flying Donovans—three aerial performers who defy death on the trapeze.

Saturday is the big night in the theatrical boarding house for most of us "artists" may sleep all day Sunday. There is the "chip in" midnight meal laded up from a nearby delicatessen. Each contributes a dollar toward the feast.

The greatest lack in the theatrical boarding house is the bath. There is one to each floor and it is a first-class first-aid process. Those who do not wash out the tub after the "blution" receive the landlady's chilling rebuke.

The evening meal is a pleasant process. At may table are two nattily dressed hoofers who panicked "em" in Tulsa; a blonde member of one of those impossible flirtation clubs, a Mr. Wright who supplies sag lines and his wife who is a member of a female orchestra.

There is an unusual reserve among theatrical folk until the conversational ice is cracked. The blonde finally confided she had a knockout lyric to be sung to the tune of "Hark, hark, hark. The Boys Are Marching." They ran:

"Buy! Buy! Buy! A little dinner, 'Cause I'm just a little sinner! Vamp! Vamp! Vamp! That's the Broadway battle cry."

I was asked if I had been playing the "brush"—meaning any place outside of New York. I confessed I was "at liberty." Mr. Wright promised me a cut-week engagement if I would do a few try-outs at Union Hill, N. J.

In real life just as in fiction almost every theatrical boarding house has its slaver—the very young and caped figures wearing false whiskers and carrying searchlights. The New York detective is as a rule the exact opposite save the hotel detective who runs to type—a brown derbyed, square-toed hulking fellow. Most of the detectives at headquarters might be taken for alert young stage brokers. They dress well and give no impression of mystery. Quite a few are college men and are jolly companions.

A Jimmy Swinerton story. An old hermit of the Arizona sand hills stopped a rural mail carrier with:

"Got 'ary a letter for me?"

"No," was the reply.

"Better have one next time you go by."

"What is your name?"

"Never mind the name, Bub, but have that letter or you won't do any more mail carryin'."

The real story of the west, it seems to me, should be told in just such illuminating stories. Most writers attempt the same idea with flowery phrases. The best description of New York came from an old-timer who after ten days here was asked how he liked the city. "I think it is going to be a permanent camp," he said.

(Copyright, 1924.)