

JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK. Copyright, 1924.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

She sat casually, hands clasped over her knees. Beside her was a man without make-up who smoked a pipe. Jo Ellen thought she looked like a vampish sort of queen, or maybe a princess.

"Gawd!" muttered the queenly one, "did you ever know such rotten weather to work in?"

"Only in the east," said the man. "The coast is the place."

"O I've struck it hot enough on the coast!"

"But not heavy like this. Heavy. And this is a punk location, if you ask me."

"I don't ask you, dearie. You never have a decent word for a location. But I suppose it is punk. Harden picked it. What difference does it make? This company never seems to land the goods. What's Nellie beefing about?"

"Just beefing. Nothing at all. You can't satisfy her."

"She makes me tired, that smarty. Say, there's one of the natives here—did you see that girl with the red hat?"

"Go on. I'm listening to your ravings."

"Honest, she's a lulu."

"Are you telling her? She's right behind us."

"Miss Rydell!"

This was the director, and the girl in the blue robe arose quickly.

"You've just come over from the casino," the director was saying. "You've missed the attaché. You suspect him. You come—right there—looking toward the boats and back again. The scarf—you've got the scarf?"

"Yes. . . ."

The rehearsal of the scene moved forward. Twice the Rydell girl emerged and retired under detailed direction that seemed to be picking to pieces the very fibers of an emotion, all for Miss Rydell to put together again. This putting them together again was evidently very difficult. When Miss Rydell had done so, the director wanted her to do it again. At the first suspicion of the attaché and the stealthy searching look Jo Ellen had held her breath. The sunlight, which would be moonlight on the screen, splashed the amber smoothness of the girl's neck and shoulders, and Jo Ellen thought her charming. Very likely the charm was supposed to be rather wicked. Probably vampish. Whatever named.

you gave it, you couldn't help tingling at the look of the girl. But when the director had suspected the attaché and had been cumbrously stalling, and when Miss Rydell had without complaint stolen forth for the third time, Jo Ellen began to think she looked silly.

"Camera!"

At last the camera began to mutter and the queenly figure entered for the fourth time with the gestures of cat-like caution.

"Cut!" roared the director, as if in great pain.

What was wrong? There was a pause in which the mystification of most of the spectators remained complete.

Then Jo Ellen saw Emma Traub, halted, in that attitude of cataleptic rigidity, so characteristic of her embarrassed moments, not a dozen feet from the focal point of the scene. No explanation, early or late, ever made clear how she could have managed to effect so dramatic a blunder. Her theory as laid before Jo Ellen was that she thought they were doing the boat, and, coming by one of her short cuts through the bushes, had walked straight into the spotlight of romance. Slight of the camera and the despairing shrug of the director sent her scuttling out of range, a comic bewilderment distorting her face.

The bewilderment survived the escape. It seemed to be twitching in her when she saw Jo Ellen, and had added strides that brought her lank body to Jo Ellen's side.

"Thought I'd find you," she whispered. "There's something to tell you."

"To tell me. . . ."

Emma Traub bent close, assuring herself, obliquely that Myrtle had moved away. "I found out the dick didn't get him."

The make-believe drama was obliterated at a stroke.

"How?"

"Your friend got away."

Jo Ellen gave fragmentary laugh. "Your friend?" It sounded especially funny in this setting. Also it carried the color of other considerations. "I'm glad he got away," she said.

"Yes. Of course." Emma's way of saying this might have indicated that she was glad, too; not fervently, but perhaps as a matter of human interest, as frustrating bulls and dicks, as in a large way contributing to various immediate satisfactions. She would not be thinking about the distrust, or would have taken it for granted. Apparently other considerations were more vivid to her. Jo Ellen had noticed from the beginning a kind of vehement interest which had the oddity of everything that belonged to Emma Traub. It was not merely the gossip sort of interest such as showed in a person like old Lou Mallin, for instance. It was queerer, something down deep. Jo Ellen concluded that it was part of the fact that Emma herself was queer. If she was not hopelessly queer, why did she stand there, mostly on one foot, as though entangled, as though the shedding of her bit of news did not dismiss the matter? The Emma Traub resented being held. The partnership of secrecy might remain, but it irked her to feel that she was really involved, that the Traub woman should have the privilege or obligation of haunting her.

"Well," she said, with a sound of brushing it all away, "that's that." Emma Traub's loose lips tightened. "That's the end of it," said Jo Ellen.

"You think so?"

It was so like Emma Traub not to let anything either mysterious or unpleasant be brushed away, that Jo Ellen remained untrusting until she had glanced at Emma's face.

"How do you know about this?" was Jo Ellen's left-over question.

"Asked Stan Lamar."

Emma nodded. Seemingly she was not trying to astonish.

"How could. . . ."

"He's admission." This was like a sudden admission.

"Here?"

"I saw him. I could see he knew me. They didn't get you," I said. "No," he said. "I say. You're pretty nifty to come in the daytime, showing yourself." That's squared," he says. "They're off that. How did you know they wanted me? O I knew what he wanted to know! Did you tell me that's what he was after. The dick asked me if I say you, I said. 'And I lied to 'im good.' Obligated to you," he said. "Yes, I say, 'and you're obliged to her, too. See? But you leave her alone. Get that straight. Leave her alone, or I'll—well, I dropped 'im ther and dug out. Wait a minute," he says, but I dug out. 'I don't see. . . .'" Jo Ellen began.

Emma prodded her with three stiff-fingered fingers. "He'll find you some way. Understand? He'll see you. That's what he's here for. I know. An I'm saying to you, don't be a fool. Drop him. A crook's a crook. If you get mixed up, no matter how

good you are—see?—no matter, you'll be sorry. Sorry."

Jo Ellen laughed. "Don't worry about me. I shan't see him."

"He'll see you. He'll find the way. And you want to see him."

Jo Ellen flushed. "How do you dare to say that?"

"I dare," muttered Emma Traub, standing very close. "I don't mean you're lying. You think you don't want to see him, but—I know—"

"You go right on knowing," cried Jo Ellen and turned abruptly away. By a straight line homeward, away from the scene of the movies, she

hurried, with a little flame of anger burning under her private air of indifference. The thing to do while she thought it over was to be away from everything, behind the security of the house. It would be just as well to think out what she would do if she ever met him anywhere. She didn't

admit to herself that she had ever done this before.

Now that Emma Traub had given a kind of nervous nearness to the possibility, and had taken the liberty of telling her how she really felt, it was necessary to do some downright thinking. Emma might be queer; it

might be indispensable to her to have suspicions; but her way of seeming to know sinister things had to be taken into account.

At some one could suspend all possibilities for a breathing spell. If they found her there, she could have a headache—though she never had a

headache. . . .

When she heard the swishing sound she knew, as undeniably as if she had herself arranged and impelled it, that Stan Lamar was plunging through, at a sharp angle, toward the path.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

THE NEBBES

JUST A 5 AND 10-CENT GUY.

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess



Barney Google and Spark Plug

An Earthquake's Got Nothing on Sparky.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck



BRINGING UP FATHER

Registered U. S. Patent Office SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus



JERRY ON THE JOB

TIME HANGS HEAVY.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban



That Guiltiest Feeling

By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield



New York - Day by Day -

By O. O. MINTYRE.

New York, July 8.—It seems quite difficult for the newcomer to New York not to attune his eyes to the Broadway glitter and explosion. Glenn Hunter, a capable young actor, received a salary of \$10,000 a year went into bankruptcy the other day.

Hunter was a country boy lifted to sudden popularity and before he knew it was swept into a sea of debt. A few years of thrift and he would have been on easy street. The gleaners and wasters are waiting to pluck those to whom success comes easily.

The bleached bones of thousands strew the way that is white. Daily in front of the Astor one may see Kid Griffo, the boxer, who made thousands and spent it lavishly, shuffling along, collar turned up and cap pulled down, hunting a friendly face.

He was a good fellow when he had it. Too, there is Kid Broad, who used to make \$15,000 in a single night. To day he welcomes the chance to make \$7 a day working as an extra on the moving picture lots. A waiter in Fifty-ninth street, Child's was three years ago a high flying spender.

The warning pathetic figures of Broadway broadcast is, however, rarely heeded. It takes an inebriated hunk to play the dangerous game of Broadway. Those who fall for the tinselled tantara have to be backed by millions. Then they usually fall.

Harry Thaw tried it. And so have numerous other millionaires, and nearly all met disaster. Hundreds of men on Broadway live well through ability to spot the "live one" and separate him from his cash. It is a coldly calculated business.

The old-fashioned melodrama used to picture the pitfalls of Broadway and the lure of the bright lights. Most of us regarded it as emotional hysteria. Yet it has never been overdrawn. There's a snap for every dazzling light.

Arthur West has discovered the original of the slow motion picture. Two Scotchmen, after a round of drinks, reached for the check.

But the Scot is rarely trapped by Broadway bunk. He may not pay \$10 to sit at the riuisside table or slip a twenty to the head waiter. Also he may be called a tightwad, which is more often better than the doleful line. "He was a good fellow when he had it."

In Greenwich Village tea rooms she was known as "Elaine the Eateric." She was one of the meteors that periodically brighten the routine lives of the village regulars. She had money, bright conversation and a knowledge of art—a triple combination rare to the village. Then one day she vanished. The next day she had killed a man in a western city and the following day was found self slain in a Detroit hotel. It was the old story—told in a word—Drugs.

This is one of those days when I would like to have the slap-stick ready for someone who blandly inquires: "How do you manage to think of all the things you write about?" I have been sitting at the typewriter two hours without the feeblest flicker of a brain throb. My time, however, has not been altogether wasted. I have amputated two hang nails, sharpened three lead pencils, filled the back of an envelope with strange hieroglyphics, pencilled a mustache on the face of a beautiful lady of the magazine cover, adjusted a rubber band between two desk knobs so it would give forth a musical ring, cleaned the crystal of a wrist watch, cut a calling card into tiny knowlike bits, rubbed a penny on my trousers leg until it shone and set fire to a box of matches and received one of the world's worst burns.

And just to top off a barren day a friend telephoned me my engagement with him to dinner is off. And he planned to have gravy! No wonder so many people worry about what is happening to the old world. It seems to me today to be a terrible place.

(Copyright, 1924.)