

### SYNOPSIS

Anna ("Silver") Grenoble, daughter of "Gentleman Jim," formerly of the community, but known as a gambler, news of whose recent murcomes to Heron River to live with Sophronia Willard, Jim Grenoble's sister. Sophronia's household consists of her husband, and stepsons, Roderick and Jason. The Willards own only half of the farm, the other half being Anna's. On Silver's arrival Duke Melbank, shiftless youth, makes himself obnoxious. Roderick is on the eve of marriage to Corinne Meader. Silver says she wants to live on the farm, and has no intention of selling her half, which the Willards had feared. Silver tells Sophronia ("Phronie," by request) something-but by no means all-of her relations with Gerald Lucas, gambler friend of her father. Roddy marries Corinne. She has a maid, much of their restraint.
Paula, who seems to attract Jason. It was a black blue Silver again meets Lucas, who has established a gambling resort near town. She introduces him to Cothough against her will. Friendship between the two develeps, to Silver's dismay. At a dance Duke Melbank insults Silver. Roddy's solicitude brings Silver to the realization that she loves him. Roddy is offered a position at the University farm, but, to Corinne's dismay, he declines it, declaring he is a farmer, not a "white collar man." Determined to break up the growing intimacy between Lucas and Corinne, Silver tells Roddy she has decided to sell her portion of the Not understanding, he reproaches her for her "treachery."

#### CHAPTER VIII-Continued -9-

Jason went self-consciously to a shelf and drew down a portfolio of drawings. "Nobody but Paula has ever seen these," he said.

The drawings were pastel scenes with a simplicity of line and tone that surprised Silver. "Why, Jase, they are lovely!" she exclaimed. "Would you rather do this than that's the reason-" farm?"

get a kick out of doing this once that he could scarcely speak. in a while. Which one do you want, Silver?"

grays and browns.

"Has Roddy never seen this?" she

asked.

"No-he hasn't seen any of them. I used to show him some of my things-and he liked them. But after he met Corinne-well, it's none of my business. I never could quite figure it out, myself. D-n it -I feel sorry for Roddy!"

the door. "And don't worry about Roddy. When a man falls in love, it does funny things to him sometimes.'

Jason laughed. "Gosh, doesn't it?" he exclaimed, and looked at Paula. "Shall I tell Silver?" he asked suddenly.

"Sure!" she said at once.

Jason looked at Silver and smiled. "Paula and I are going to be married in the summer," Jason confessed, "-maybe in the spring. We're thinking of a little dairy farm up north-maybe-we're not sure

Silver exclaimed with delight. "Am I the first to hear about it?" "We didn't know ourselves-not until this afternoon," Jason grinned. Tears came into Silver's eyes as

she looked at them. Jason and Paula -beginning life together on a dairy farm . . .

"Don't say anything," Jason said. "Don't tell the others just yet."

"Well, I suppose I ought to wish you luck," Silver said, "but when two people are in love, there's nothing much anyone can say. Isn't that so, Paula?"

"It sure is so," Paula agreed, lapsing into an accent she had almost conquered since her advent from the Rhineland ten years ago.

The days passed, and Sliver Grenoble came presently to know what it meant to live on a farm in winter. But the weekly round of hard work fell into a rhythm which somehow eased the discomfort, and in the old stone house there was al-

ways an overtone of contentment. In Roddy alone, it seemed, was there any discontent. He had explained that Mrs. Meader had not been well and that Corinne was staying with her for a few days. time to do a little thinking about But when the middle of December approached and Corinne was still and wholly untrained in responsibilwith her mother, Sophronia became ity. But she would grow up in rather voluble on the subject of time, Roddy reflected, and the pass-Roddy's living alone in the big ing months would bring to her a house. For Roddy had withdrawn more and more to himself. His days things. he spent in work about the place. in his "shop" sorting and grading be brought to readze that they "Let's go, then," Silver said.

and completing his records, so as to be ready for another season of experimenting with his beloved corn. Roddy's mood was rarely dis-

cussed by the others, but Silver der in Chicago has reached the town, knew that beneath their silence lay an intensity of feeling that one day must break the bonds of reticence that held it. She knew, too, that while Corinne's absence had something to do with the way Roddy felt, behind it all was the growing resentment toward herself that had begun that night when she had told him of her intention to sell her land as soon as his lease had expired. That had rankled until he could think of nothing else. She knew, too, that the family was aware of it. That, undoubtedly, accounted for

It was a black, blustery night, and Silver put on her old leather jacket and her close-fitting tweed hat. She went out into the inky darkness and started toward the summit of the hill, when a sudden flare of light, like the striking of a match, arrested her attention through the small window of Roddy's workshop in the shelter of the slope.

Roddy must be in there, she thought, getting ready for another night's work. The thought of his self-imposed loneliness smote drearily across Silver's heart. Why should she not go to him now and talk to him-beg him not to remain away from his father's house because of her?

She stepped to the threshold and paused.

"Roddy!" she called softly. He scooped up handfuls of corn.

"I came over to beg you not tonot to stay away from our house She turned to him impulsively. because of me," Silver said. "If

He stood up and looked at her. He laughed and shook his head. At the painful flush that sprang then looked at Paula. "I guess not," into her cheeks, he stepped toward he said quietly. "I'm a farmer. But her with contrite haste. His feelit's because I like farming that I ings were in such confusion now

"I'm sorry, Silver," he said heavily. "It's certainly no time for me After a moment's thought Silver to hold out against you-after this. selected a light autumn sketch in We don't seem to understand each

other, that's all." Silver turned her eyes from him. "I can't go on like this," she said. "It has been utter misery."

"I can't say I've been enjoying it myself." He looked down at her and saw that she was shivering. "But listen-you'd better get back into the house," he remarked gruffly. He reached down and drew her Silver tucked the drawing under to her feet, then took her hand in her arm. "I'll hang this in my the most acute embarrassment he room," she said, then started toward had ever known. "Let's forget it, Silver."

For a moment she permitted her hand to rest in his, then withdrew it hurriedly. Without a word she ran to the door and vanished in the darkness toward the stone house.

Later, when Roddy thoughtfully returned home, the strong wind beating up the slope against him seemed fantastically like that sudden impact of Silver's cold, slender body.

"Good Lord!" he muttered, and ran his hand across his eyes. "I must be crazy."

But as he lay in bed thinking over the events of the night, it was the memory of Silver Grenoble's clinging to him that gnawed and worried at the core of his being until at last as he stared up toward the invisible ceiling, his whole life seemed to be tangled in a hopeless

He vowed savagely that tomor row he would do two things-he would write a letter to Neal Anthony definitely rejecting his offer, and in the evening he would drive to Ballantyne and fetch Corinne

Beneath the cobalt glitter of the sky Roddy found himself driving along at a snail's pace, although he had forty miles yet to go-and fifty miles back home again, with Corinne beside him.

Corinne had deliberately prolonged her visit with her mother, as Roddy knew, in the hope that he might finally accept Neal Anthony's offer, if only to please her. She had been affection itself, indeed, and always spoke regretfully of her prolonged absence. But Roddy had had Corinne. She was young and spolled

And at night he would shut himself | change. For one thing, Corinne must | Paula said hesitatingly.

would have to economize at every

turn during the coming year. It was two o'clock in the morning when Roddy returned to the farm with Corinne. She had broached the subject of Neal Anthony. When written that day, Corinne had lapsed into a silence more deadly than any virulent denunciation he ing a conclave!" might have anticipated.

In the house she sank down on the couch in the living room and a child." gazed blankly before her.

Roddy came over to her. He drew chair, seated himself, and took her hands into his own.

"Look at me, Corrie!" he begged alone-" softly. "Let's not begin like this. You don't know what it means to have you home again, And you can't guess how lonely it has been here and-" without you."

She sighed and leaned back "It's so easy to sentimentalize."

that job Neal Anthony threw my way. I wish I could have taken it -for your sake, Corrie. But-I couldn't. And some day you're going to be glad I didn't." Corinne sighed again. "I'd rather

coldly. "You've made your deci- your head aching?"

She drew her hands away from him and Roddy sat back in his chair. For a moment he regarded her thoughtfully. During the past few days a hope had formed in his mind that he must express to her -a profound and solemn hope on which, he believed, depended the serenity of their lives together.

"All right, Corrie," he said at to ply her fingers until Corinne belast, "We'll drop it-and start in again. But let us start in right filed wailing ceased. this time. Let us face the problems together and work them out together. I want a home-a home with you, Corrie, where we can bring up our children and be happy



She Sank Down on the Couch in the Living Room and Gazed Blankly Before Her.

together. I've been thinking about that very thing while you've been away. If we had a baby, you'd find ver." something to live for here. We'd be closer to each other, Corrie-"

She sprang up suddenly. "Have you gone crazy?" she cried huskily. right after breakfast, to take you "Do you want me to bring a child on our hike." into a place like this-where we may be starving next year? Or wasn't it enough for you to throw Anthony's offer into my face? You gested. "I'm expecting a telephone had to think up something more call tomorrow." brutal-"

going to starve," he went on lame- ly out of the room. ly, obstinately. "Lots of people are bringing up children on less than light, Silver found that her miniswe have."

Corinne was not listening. He felt that lawless feeling for Roddy that completely lost, floundering about had battled within her for weeks in a gray and chilling chaos.

ed dully, "I did not know that I to do everything in her power to was insulting you. I'll not do it save Roddy's wife from herself and again."

He got to his feet and turned to find her eyes upon him, widening for a moment with reflective indolence, then closing as though she

On an evening in February, Paula had come down from the big house the gloomy outlook for the farmer. and sat beside the table munching "A man doesn't know whether to an apple.

into place on the bridge of her nose lower-and if you don't plant at all. and shook her head.

at the walls and says the wind is better now that spring was here. drivin' her crazy."

Corinne for a while," Silver said, old self during the past weeks. He "It's the first time anybody here had had much to do with the sense of her place in the scheme of has been in Roddy's house in almost change in Corinne's state of mind

a week." But there would have to be a "I think I'll go along with you," but she and Corinne had becom-

Corinne was huddled up in bed weeping stormily.

"Corinne!" Silver said sharply. "You ought to be ashamed of your-Corinne stared at her with wild

he told her of the letter he had eyes. "Who sent you here?" she demanded petulantly. "I suppose the whole Willard family has been hav-

"Stop it!" Silver broke in. "No one sent me-and you're acting like Corinne began to weep in earnest.

"Ie-I might have known-you'd say that. This place is driving me mad! The wind-and the cold-and being "You don't have to be alone," Silver protested. "Why didn't you

come down with Paula tonight

"Because they all hate me! I know it. They hate me because against the couch. Then she looked I'm not a farm lout-like the rest at him. "I wonder," she said slowly, of them. Roddy bates me-and loves to see me suffer! He's tickled "Listen, Corrie. I'm sorry about to death because Jason has humillated me. Paula for a sister-in-law -oh!"

Silver took her by the shoulder. "I'm not going to sit here and listen to that nonsense," she said severely. "You've got to get yourself out not discuss it any more," she said of this mood. Turn over here! Is

"It has been bursting-all day!" Silver ran her fingers gently over Corinne's shoulders. "I used to do this for my father when he had a headache," she said quietly, and began pressing her finger tips into the tendons and muscles that were knotted at the back of Corinne's neck. Corinne turned over on her face

and moaned. But Silver continued gan to relax at last, and her muf-

"That's better," Silver said.

"O-oh-that hurts!" Silver worked more gently. "You ought to get out and see what the world is like around you. I'll tell you-take a walk with me early tomorrow morning, over to the Flathe place and back. You have no idea how good it makes you feel."

A sort of docility had crept over Corinne. "I'll do anything," she mumbled, "just to get away from the grayness of this hill."

For some time there was silence between them, until Silver began to wonder if Corinne had fallen asleep. Presently, however, Corinne spoke up unexpectedly.

"Why didn't you marry Gerald Lucas, Silver, when you had the chance?"

"I should have been the most unhappy creature in the world," Silver replied. "Why?"

"Because-I've seen enough of Corinne lay still and did not speak. Fear filled Silver's heart as she fixed her eyes upon Corinne and

wondered, with something like despair, what was passing in the mind of this girl who was Roddy Willard's wife. Once or twice she felt that she must say something to warn her against Gerald Lucas and the bright disaster that awaited any woman who gave him her love. But the words would not come. At last, with an inner trembling, she got up and spoke softly.

"I hope you feel better." Corinne turned over and yawned. "Lots better. Thanks so much, Sil-

Silver patted the coverlet on Corinne's shoulder. "Try to sleep now. And I'll come up in the morning, "Perhaps it would be better to

postpone it till the afternoon-or maybe another day," Corinne sug-Silver regarded her for a moment

"Corrine-for God's sake!" Roddy in silence. "Well, go to sleep now, stammered in despair. "We are not anyhow," she said, and stole quiet-

Alone again under the cold startering to Roddy's wife had had a It dawned on him painfully that profound effect upon herself. All retreated now before a burning pity "All right, Corinne," he conclud- for Corinne and a feverish resolve her false sense of values.

## CHAPTER IX

IN MARCH, after a prolonged were shutting him out of her con- spell of bitter cold and very litsciousness, shutting herself in with the snow, a sudden thaw set in. The her own resignation and defeat. back of the winter, as Sophronia said, was broken.

But everywhere the talk was of pray for rain or drouth. If there's Sophronia pushed her glasses back a bumper crop, prices will go still you get nothing."

"There's no use in gettin' your- Roddy reflected. What if he had self worked up into a state over Co- to sell his last year's grain at pracrinne," she said to Paula. "If you tically no profit to himself! He ask me-all that woman needs is was no worse off than countless exercise. If she'd do a bit of her farmers whose obligations were own housework, it'd be better for staggering compared with his own. He could still give Corinne enough "I don't know," Paula ventured. money to buy herself some spring 'She doesn't seem right. She took clothes, though she probably would one of them headaches again today. never know how much it meant to Sometimes she scares me. She stares him. Well, perhaps things would be

For that matter, things were bet-"I think I'll go up and stay with ter. Corinne had been more like her "That's better," old Roderick said, was well aware that Silver Grenoble He had seen very little of Silver

very friendly. (TO BE CONTINUED)

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Without Fault? The greatest of faults, I should say, s to be conscious of none.-Carlyle.

## DEATH PENALTY

Forty states as well as the District of Columbia and the United States federal government have a death penalty for murder. In North Dakota, Rhode Island and some other states where life imprisonment is the penalty for murder, death by hanging is inflicted if a person kills somebody else while serving a life term. In some of the capital punishment states the jury has the right to fix the penalty at life imprisonment, by recommending mercy.

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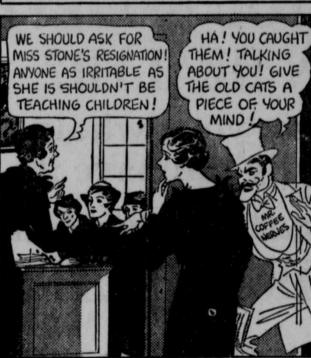
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