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a lifetime, and I can't ask you to share my poverty, Queenie."

Queenie's big eyes were wide with fright. "Tell me, honey dear," she whispered, "what happened?"

"I bought a lot of box shoo—canery stock. Stood to make five or six thousand on it, but they discharged it and rough-piled it on Howard Street bulkhead and the rain—it's been raining on my boxes for days—and you can't wet that kiln-dried stock and sell it. The Amalgamated people won't take it—they can't afford to put out—their high-grade goods in a dirty package—they've spent millions advertising—it's like wrapping a roll of—fresh creamery butter in a newspaper—and expecting top notch prices—oh, Queenie, sweetheart—I've been sent to the cleaner's for fair."

"You dear old scout of fortune," the girl whispered, and bending over she kissed him on both eyes. "Why, you aren't ruined at all. I saved you."

"Don't try to jolly me up, Queenie. I'm through, I tell you. If I'd only had a bright girl in my office—instead of the boob I have—but you see, I was as poor as a church mouse—I couldn't pay the price for brains—and that girl couldn't understand what I was up against—"

SHE silenced him with a love slap. "Hush, silly boy. I knew what you were up against and I attended to it—"

"You!" Reuben K. Pitcher's eyes popped out until it was a safe bet one might have knocked them off with a stick. "You!"

"Certainly. Old J. B. Skinner came in the afternoon of the day your boxes were discharged on the wharf. He said he'd been looking at the weather map and the barometer up at the Merchant's Exchange, and that we'd have rain before nightfall. And do you know what else that miserable old man said, Rube? He said: 'That fresh young Pitcher has a lot of fine box shoo discharging on Howard Street bulkhead, although the good Lord only knows how he hornsoggled the manufacturer out of it, or where he's going to get the money to pay for it. And the young fool has it on an open dock, and if it rains to-night, exit Mr. Pitcher. His boxes won't be worth kindling wood.' Well dearie, that made me so mad I resigned then and there, and when I rang you up to tell you about it, your stenographer told me you were home sick, you poor darling. Then I rang up the weather bureau and the weather man said it was going to rain cats and dogs that night, so I went down to that sail loft in Stewart Street—you know, Rube, where old Skinner always buys the sails for his vessels—and I rented a—"

"You rented a lot of old sails and had 'em spread over my box shoo!" shrieked Reuben K. Pitcher, and grasped Queenie around the neck in his excitement.

"Exactly, Reuben. And not a minute too soon. The steamer had the last of it out at six-thirty, and we got the last sail on at seven, and it commenced to rain at seven-five. But I was bound that that miserable old J. B. Skinner shouldn't have the laugh on my Reuben boy. I hate these 'I told you so' people, and I knew the rain couldn't get through that heavy canvas, and—"

"You wonderful, wonderful woman!"

"Yes," continued Queenie calmly, "and after that I went down to your

office and took charge, and as soon as it ceased raining a Mr. Billy Allen came rushing in and said if you didn't get those boxes of his shipped out, he'd cancel the order. So I called up the drayman that does Skinner's work, and as Mr. Allen had given me shipping instructions, we shipped them out as snug and dry as they came in. Then I found a memorandum of the Amalgamated's order in your desk, and I billed them out, and here's the check. It came in this morning's mail, less four per cent for cash. That's unusual, isn't it dearie—four per cent for cash?"

"Not when you have to have the cash, darling. Oh, sweetheart, sweetheart, you've saved me—you've made me want to live again—and get back into the fight. Oh, it's good—to know—that all the women—aren't dubs—like that stenographer of mine."

"I discharged her, you know," said Queenie sweetly. "I could do the work for you and I thought we might as well cut down expenses. And I didn't think she'd do, Rube."

"She wouldn't, Queenie. When you go back to the office again, dear, please go over to the Marine National and get—one of those blanks—giving a person authority to—sign checks. Then you fill it out in your own name, and rustle up a—notary public and bring him out to—the hospital and I'll sign that bank paper so you can draw checks against—my account. And pay that drayman—want to keep our credit good—and send a check to Henry Peets, at Hoquiam, Washington, for—twenty thousand on account—and wire him a nice little note—and say that as soon—as I get out of—hospital I'll send him—the balance—quick. Poor Peets! He's busted, but we'll save him yet, and I'll show him—how to make money—in boxes; he knows how to manufacture but—he's chucking his profits into the stove wood pile. And as for old J. B. Skinner—I'll get my hooks into him—yet, and when I do—I'll come away—with some of his tail feathers—see if I don't—"

HE paused, for lack of breath and gazed at Queenie. When he had, in a measure, recovered his strength after his long speech, he grinned his old, cheerful grin, and continued:

"And—another thing, Queenie. Buy yourself a peach of a diamond solitaire—five hundred bucks, and charge it to expense, and—then get a wedding ring—oh, no, you can't do that; we have to go to the marriage license bureau—together—that'll have to wait—and delays are so dangerous. Aren't they, Queenie?"

"Never mind the solitaire, dearie," she said. "I'll be content with the wedding ring. You'll need that five hundred in your business. And by the way—that Billy Allen person deducted a hundred dollars from the invoice I sent him. He said it was up to you to pay for the branding of his boxes and you'd stung him deep enough as it was."

"Well, Queenie. I wish you'd write Billy Allen a nice note to-morrow and tell him to look at his confounded old boxes before he grabs off a hundred dollars of my hard-earned profits. Why,—dad burn that man's picture—I know he'd have to take my boxes and—it's such a good joke on Billy—tell him I borrowed one of his brands from another factory—and ran his brand on a hundred and forty thousand boxes—before I sold 'em to him!"

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