

# RICH MENS CHILDREN

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"TOMORROW'S TANGLE," etc.

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## SYNOPSIS.

Bill Cannon, the bonanza king, and his daughter, Rose, who had passed up Mrs. Cornelia Ryan's suit at his ranch, to accompany her father, arrive at Antelope. Dominick Ryan calls on his mother to see a half invitation for his wife, and she refused. The determined body refused to recognize her daughter-in-law. Dominick had been trapped into a marriage with Bernice, because, as attorney, several years his senior, she squanders his money, they have frequent quarrels, and she slips away. Cannon and his daughter are snowed in at Antelope. Dominick Ryan is rescued from the storm in unbecoming condition and brought to Antelope Hotel. Antelope is out of a storm. Cannon burrows Dominick back to life. Two weeks later Bernice discovers in a paper where Cannon is and writes letter trying to smother over difficulties between them. Dominick at last is able to join fellow snowbound prisoners in hotel parlor. He loses temper over talk of Buford, an actor. After three weeks, end of imprisonment is seen. Telegrams and mail arrive. Dominick writes letter to Rose. Tells her he doesn't love wife and never did. Stormbound people begin to depart. Rose and Bernice embrace. Father sees them and demands an explanation. Rose's brother Gene is made manager of ranch, and he goes if he stays over a year. Cannon expresses sympathy for Dominick's position in talk with Rose. Dominick returns home. Bernie exports herself to please him, but he is indifferent. Cannon calls on Mrs. Ryan. She discusses Dominick's marriage difficulties, and Cannon suggests buying off Bernie. Dominick goes to bank conference with Bernie and family. Mrs. Cannon bows to her and starts uneasiness in Bernie. In Mrs. Ryan's name Cannon offers Bernie \$100,000 to leave her husband and permit divorce. She refuses. Dominick sees Rose. Cornelia Ryan engaged to Jack Duffy. Cannon offers Bernie \$100,000 and is turned down. Bernie tells sisters of offer. Buford, the actor, makes a hit in vaudeville. Rose tells Dominick that he must stick to wife, and first time acknowledges that she loves him. Cannon offers Bernie \$200,000, which she refuses, saying Cannon wants Dominick for Rose. Gene wins the ranch. Bernie accuses Rose of trying to steal her husband and tells her of the offer of bribe. Rose tells father what she learned about the attempt to bribe Bernie and declares that she would never marry Dominick, should he ever be divorced. Cannon promises from father to let Bernie alone. Stranger sees Bernie in restaurant, apparently interested in her, and follows her home. The stranger, who is Buford, the actor, calls on Dominick. Declares that he married Bernie secretly some years before. Bernie comes in and he recognizes her. Dominick packs belongings to go to mother.

## CHAPTER XXI.—Continued.

"Don't go to your mother's," she cried, following him up the hall, "for to-night, Dominick, please. And don't tell her. I beg, I pray of you, don't tell her till to-morrow."

Her manner was so pleading; so imploringly insistent, that he turned and looked somberly at her. She was evidently deeply in earnest, her face lined with anxiety.

"This is the last thing I'll ever ask of you. I know I've got no right to ask anything, but you're generous, you've been kind to me in the past, and it'll not cost you much to be kind just once again. Go to a hotel, or the club, or anywhere you like, but not to your mother's and don't tell her till to-morrow afternoon."

He stared at her without speaking, wishing she would be silent and leave him.

"I'll not trouble you after to-morrow. I'll go. I'll get out. You'll never be bothered by me any more."

"All right," he said, "I'll go to the club. Let me alone, that's all, and let me go."

"And—and," she persisted, "you won't tell her till to-morrow, tomorrow afternoon?"

He had entered the parlor in which the Chinaman had lit the lamps, and opening the desk began hunting for his papers. To her last words he returned no answer, and she crept in after him and stood in the doorway, leaning against the woodwork of the door-frame.

"You won't tell her till to-morrow—tomorrow, say, after three?"

He found the letters and drew them out of their pigeonhole.

"All right," he almost shouted. "I won't tell her. But, for God's sake, leave me alone and let me go. If you keep on following me round this way I won't answer for what I'll do."

"You promise then," she said, ignoring his heat. "You promise you'll not tell her till after three?"

He turned from the desk, gave her a look of restrained passion, and said, "I promise," then passed by her as she stood in the doorway and walked to the stair-head. Here his valise stood, and snatching it up he ran down the stairs and out of the house.

Bernie, hearing the door shut, returned to her room and went on with the work of sorting her wardrobe and packing her trunks. She did it deliberately and carefully, looking over each garment, and folding the choicer articles between sheets of tissue paper. At midnight she had not yet finished, and under the blaze of the gas, looking very tired, she went on smoothing skirts and pinching up the lace on bodices as she laid them tenderly on the trays that stood on the bed, the table, and the sofa. The night was far spent before everything was arranged to her satisfaction and she went to bed.

She was up betimes in the morning. Eight o'clock had not struck when she was making a last tour of the parlor, picking up small articles of silver and glass that she crowded down into cracks in the tightly-packed trunks. At breakfast the Chinaman, an oblique, observant eye on her, asked her what she should prepare for lunch. Conscious that if she told him she would not be back he might

become alarmed at the general desolation and demand his wages, she ordered an even more elaborate menu than usual, telling him she would bring home a friend.

She breakfasted in her wrapper and after the meal finished her toilet with the extreme solicitude. Never had she taken more pains with herself. Though anxiety and strain had thinned and sharpened her, the fever of excitement which burnt in her temporarily repaired these ravages. Her eyes were brilliant without artificial aid; her cheeks a hot dry crimson that needed no rouge. The innate practicality of her character asserted itself even in this harassed hour. Last night she had put the purple orchid in a glass of water on the bureau. Now, as she pinned it on her breast, she congratulated herself for her foresight, the pale lavender petals of the rare blossom toning altogether harmoniously with her dress of dark purple cloth.

Before she left the room she locked the trunks and left beside them a dress suit-case packed for a journey. Standing in the doorway she took a hurried look about the apartment—a last, farewell survey, not of sentiment but of investigation, to see if she had forgotten anything. A silver photograph frame set in rhinestones caught her eye and she went back and took it up, weighing it uncertainly in her hand. Some of the rhinestones had fallen out, and she finally decided it was not worth while opening the trunks to put in such a damaged article.

It was only a quarter past nine when she emerged from the flat. She took the downtown car and twenty minutes later was mounting the steps to Bill Cannon's office. She had been motionless and rigidly preoccupied on the car, but, as she approached the office, a change was visible in her gait and mien. She moved with a light, perky assurance, a motion as of a delicate, triumphant buoyancy seeming to impart itself to her whole body from her shoulders to her feet. A slight, mild smile settled on her lips, suggesting gaiety tempered with good humor. Her eye was charged with the same expression rendered more piquant by a gleam—the merest suggestion—of coquettish challenge.

The Bonanza King was already in his office. The same obsequious clerk who had shown her in on a former occasion took her card in to the inner sanctum where the great man, even at this early hour, was shut away with the business which occupied his crowded days. In a moment the young man returned smiling and quite as murmuringly polite as he had been on her former visit, and Bernie was once again ushered into the presence of the enemy.

The old man had read the name on the card with a lowering glance. His command to admit the visitor had been hardly more than an inarticulate growl which the well-trained clerk understood, as those about desk duties can read their half-made signs. Cannon was not entirely surprised at her reappearance, and mingled feelings stirred in him as he turned his swivel chair away from the table, and sat hunched in it, his elbows on its arms, his hands clasped over his stomach.

She came in with an effect of dash, confidence, and brilliancy that astonished him. He had expected her almost to sidle in in obvious, guilty fear of him, her resistance broken, humbly coming to sue for the money. Instead, a rustling, scented apparition appeared in the doorway, more gracious, handsome, and smiling than he had ever thought she could be. She stood for a moment, as if waiting for his invitation to enter, the whole effect of her rich costume, her feverishly high coloring, and her debonaire and self-confident demeanor, surprising him into silence. A long white feather on her hat made a background for her darkly-flushed face and auburn hair. There were some amethysts round her neck, their purple lights harmonizing richly with the superb flower pinned on her breast. Her eyes looked very black, laughing, and provocative through her spotted veil.

"Well," she said in a gay voice, "here I am again! Is it a surprise?" She advanced into the room, and the old man, almost unconsciously, rose from his chair.

"Yes, sort of," he said, dryly.

She stopped by the desk, looked at him sidewise, and said:

"Do we shake hands?"

His glance on her was hard and cold. Bernie met it and could not restrain a sinking of the courage that was her most admirable characteristic and that she had screwed far past its ordinary sticking-point that morning. She sank down into the same arm-chair that she had occupied on her former visit and said, with a little languid effect of indifference:

"Oh, well, never mind. We don't have to waste time being polite. That's one of the most convenient things about our interview. We just say what we really think and there's no need bothering about humbug."

"So glad to hear it," said the old

man with his most ironical air. "Suppose then you let me know what you've come down to say."

"Can't you guess?" she answered, with an expression that was almost one of flirtatious interrogation.

"Nup," he answered, looking steadily at her. "I have to have it said in that plain style with no politeness that you say is the way we always talk."

"All right," she answered briskly. "Here it is as plain as A B C. I've decided to accept your offer and take the money."

She looked up at him, smiling gallantly. But as her eye caught his her smile, try as she would to keep it, died. He suddenly realized that she was extremely nervous, that her lips were dry, and the hand she put up to adjust her veil, and thus hide her intractable mouth, was shaking. The admiration he had of late felt for her insolent fearlessness increased, also he began to feel that now, at last, he was rising to the position of master of the situation. He leaned back in the swivel chair and glowered at her.

"You know," he said slowly, "you've a gall that beats anything I've ever seen. Two days ago you lusted this business higher than a kite by stopping my daughter on the public street and telling her the whole story. You did the one thing you knew I'd never forgive; and you ended the affair, hammered the nails in its coffin and buried it. Now you come flourishing into my office as if nothing had happened and say you'll take the money. It beats me/how you've got the nerve to dare to show your face in here."

Bernie listened with the hand holding the veil pressed against her mouth and her eyes staring over it.

"It's all straight enough," she burst out, "what you say about telling your daughter. I did it and I was crazy. I'll admit that. But you'll have to admit on your side that it was pretty rough the way I was treated here, ordered out like a peddler. I was sore, and it was you that made me so. And I'll not deny that I wanted to hit you back. But you brought it on yourself. And, anyway, what does it matter if I go? Maybe your daughter's mad and disgusted now, but women don't stay that way for ever. If I get out, drop out of sight, the way I intend to do, give Dominick his freedom, isn't she going to forget all about what I said? Wouldn't any woman?"

The Bonanza King made no answer. He had no intention of talking with this objectionable woman about his daughter. But in his heart hope sprang at the words. They were an echo of his own desires and opinions. If this woman took the money and went, would not Rose, in the course of time, relent in her attitude of iron disapproval, and smile on the man she loved? Could any woman hold out for ever in such a position?

"See here," Bernie went out, "I'll leave a statement. I'll put in in your hands that I changed my mind and voluntarily left. I'll draw it up before a notary if you want. And it's true. She needn't think that I'm being forced out to make a place for her. I'm glad to go."

She had leaned nearer to him from the chair, one finger tapping the corner of the desk to emphasize her words. Scrutinizing her as she spoke, he became more than ever im-

pressed with the conviction that she was held in a tremor of febrile excitement. Her voice had an under note of vibration in it, like the voice of one who breathes quickly. The orchid on her breast trembled with the trembling of her frame.

"Look here," he said quietly, "I want to understand this thing. What's made you change your mind so suddenly? A few days ago you were all up on fiddle-strings at the suggestion of taking that money. Here, this

morning, in you pop, and you're all of a tremble to get it. What's the meaning of it?"

"I can't stand it any more," she said. "When you said I couldn't the other day, that I'd break down, you were right. I can't stand it. Nobody could. It's broken me to pieces. I want to get away from it all. I want to go somewhere where I'm at peace, where the people don't hate me and hound me—"

Her voice suddenly grew hoarse and she stopped. He looked at her in surprise. She bent her face down, biting her under lip, and picked tremulously at the leaves of the purple orchid as if arranging them.

"You've beaten me," she said in a suddenly strangled voice; "you've beaten me. I can't fight any longer. Give me some money and let me go. I'm beaten."

She lowered her head still farther and burst into tears. So unexpected were they that she had no preparations for them. Her handkerchief was in the head purse that hung on her wrist, and, blinded by tears, she could not find the clasp. Her fumbling hand tried for a possible reserve supply in her belt, and then in despair went up to her face and lifted her veil trying to brush away the falling drops. The Bonanza King stared at her amazed, as much surprised as if he had seen a man weep. Finally he felt in his own pocket, produced a crisply-laundered square of white linen and handed it to her, observing soothingly:

"Here, take mine. You're all broke up, aren't you?"

She seized his offering and mopped her cheeks with it, sniffing and gasping, while he watched her in genuine solicitude.

"What's wore you down to this state?" he said. "You're the nerviest woman I ever saw."

"It's—it's—all this thing," she answered in a stifled voice. "I'm just worn out. I haven't slept for nights—a memory of those miserable nights of perturbation and uncertainty swept over her and submerged her in a wave of self-pity. The tears gushed out again, and she held the old man's large handkerchief against her eyes, uttering small, sobbing noises, sunk in abandoned despondence in the hollow of the chair.

The Bonanza King was moved. The facile tears of women did not affect him, but the tears of this bold, hard, unbreakable creature, whom he had regarded only as an antagonist to be vanquished, stirred him to a sort of abashed sympathy. There was something singularly pathetic about the completeness of her breakdown. She, who had been so audacious an adversary, now in all her crumpled finery weeping into his handkerchief, was so entirely and utterly a feeble, crushable thing.

"Come, brace up," he said cheerfully. "We can't do any talking while you're acting this way. What's the proposition again?"

"I want some money and I want to go." She raised her head and lowered the handkerchief, speaking with a strained, throaty insistence like a child. "I can't live here any more. I can't bear it. It would give a prize fighter nervous prostration. I can't bear it." Her voice grew small and high. "Really I can't," she managed

hysterical condition that was beyond her control. Now she made an effort to recover herself, sat up, swallowing and gasping, while she wiped her eyes.

"I'm ready to do it all," she sniffed. "Only—only—" she paused on the verge of another collapse, suppressed it, and said with some show of returning animation, "only I must have some money now—a guarantee."

"Oh," he said with the descending note of comprehension. "As I remember, we agreed to pay you seven thousand dollars for the first year, the year of desertion."

She lowered the handkerchief entirely, presenting to him a disfigured face, all its good looks gone, but showing distinct signs of attention.

"I don't want the seven thousand. I'll waive it. I want a sum down, a guarantee, an advance. You offered me at first fifty thousand dollars. Give me that down and I'll go this afternoon."

"That wasn't our original arrangement," he said to gain time.

"Deduct it from the rest. I must have it. I can't go without it. If you give me the check now I'll leave for New York tonight."

Her reviving interest and force seemed to have quenched the sources of her tears as suddenly as her exhausted nerves had made them flow. But her disfigured face, her figure which seemed to have shrunk in its fine clothes, were extremely pathetic.

"If you don't trust me send one of your clerks with me to buy my ticket, send one to see me off. I've left my husband for good, for ever. I can't live here any longer. Give me the money and let me go."

"I don't see that I'm going to have any security that you're going to carry out the whole plan. How do I know that you're not going to New York to have a good time and then, when you've spent the money, come back here?"

She sat up and sent a despairing look about the room as if in a wild search for something that would convince him of her sincerity.

"I swear, I promise," she cried with almost frantic emphasis, "that I'll never come back. I'm going for good and I'm going to set Dominick free. Oh, do believe me. Please, I'm telling the truth."

He was impressed by her manner, as he had been by her tears. Something undoubtedly had happened which had suddenly caused her to change her mind and decide to leave her husband. He did not think that it was what she had told him. Her excitement, her overwrought condition suggested a cause less gradual, more like a shock. He ran over in his mind the advantages of giving her the money. Nothing would be jeopardized by it. It would simply be an advance made on the sum they had agreed upon.

"Fifty thousand's too much," he said slowly. "But I'll be square to you and I'll split the difference and give you twenty-five. I'll give you the check now and you can take it and go to-night."

She shook her head obstinately.

"It won't do," she said. "What difference does it make to you whether you give it to me now or next year? I'll give you a receipt for it. There won't be any trouble about it. It's as broad as it's long. It's simply an advance on the main sum."

He looked moodily at her and then down. Her demand seemed reasonable enough, but he distrusted her.

"If you don't believe me," she insisted, "send out that clerk of yours to buy my ticket to New York. Tell him to go up to the flat and he'll see my trunks all packed and ready. I tell you you've beaten me. You and Mrs. Ryan are one too many for me."

He again looked at her, his lips pressed together, his eye coldly considering.

"I'll give you thirty thousand dollars and it's understood that you're to leave the city tonight."

She demurred, but with less show of vigor, and, for a space, they haggled over the sum till they finally agreed upon thirty-five thousand dollars.

As the old man drew the check she watched him with avid eagerness, restraining by force the hand that trembled in its anxiety to become possessed of the slip of paper. He noticed, as she bent over the desk to sign the receipt, that her fingers shook so they could hardly direct the pen. She remarked it herself, setting it down to her upset nerves, and laughing at the sprawling signature.

With the check in her hand she rose, something of the airy buoyancy of demeanor that had marked her on her entrance returning to her.

"Well," she said, opening her purse, "this is the real beginning of our business relations. I feel as if we were partners."

The old man gave a short, dry laugh. He could not rid his mind of suspicions of her and the whole proceedings, though he did not see just how she could be deceiving him.

"Wait till next year," he said. "When I see the divorce papers I'll feel a lot surer of the partnership."

She snapped the clasp of her purse, laughing and moving to the door. She was wild to get away, to escape from the dark room that held such unpleasant memories, and the old man, whose steely penetrating eye, fastened on her, was full of unsatisfied query.

"Well, so long!" she cried, opening the door. "Next time we meet it will be more sociable. I hope. We really ought to be old friends by this time."

She hardly knew what she was saying, but she laughed with a natural gaiety, and in the doorway turned and bowed her jaunty good-bys to him. He stood back and nodded good-humoredly at her, his face showing

puzzlement under its slight, iron smile.

Once in the street her demeanor again changed. Her step became sharp and quick, her expression keenly absorbed and concentrated. A clock showed her that it was nearly half-past ten, and she walked, with a speed that was as rapid a mode of progression as it could be without attracting attention, to the great bank on which the check was drawn. On the way down on the car she had thought out all her movements, just what she would do, and where she would go. Her mind was as clear, her movements as systematic as though she were moved by mechanism.

She ran up the steps to the bank and presented the check at the paying teller's window.

"In one-thousand dollar bills, if you please," she said, trying not to speak breathlessly, "all but five hundred, and you can give me that in one-hundred-dollar bills."

The man knew her, made some vaguely-polite remark, and took the slip of paper back into unseen regions. Bernie stood waiting, throbbing from head to foot with excitement. She was not afraid they would refuse to



Bernie Stood Waiting, Throbbing From Head to Foot With Excitement.

cash the check. Her sole fear was that Cannon, as soon as she was gone might have regretted his action and telephoned from his office to stop the payment on it. She knew that once the money was hers he would not make any attempt to get it back. His own reputation and that of his daughter were too inextricably bound up with the transaction for him to dare to apprehend or punish Bernie for her deception.

Her heart gave a wild leap as she saw the teller returning, and then pause behind the netting of his golden cage while he counted out the bills. She tried to speak lightly to him as he held them one by one on the glass slab. She was hardly conscious of what she said; all she realized was that the crisp roll of paper in her fingers was her possession, if not of great fortune, at least of something to stand between her and the world.

When she left the bank she walked forward slowly, the excitement which had carried her on to this point having suddenly left her feeling weak and tired. She entered the railway office and bought her ticket for New York for that evening's train. There once more emerging into the sunshine she directed her steps to the car which would take her to her sisters. She had decided to spend her last day in San Francisco with them. As the car whisked her up the hills she carefully pondered on how much she would tell them, where truth was advisable and where fiction would serve a better purpose.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Johnson on Melancholy.

Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed: "A man so afflicted, sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them." Boswell—"May not he think them down, sir?" Johnson—"No, sir. To attempt to think them down is madness. He should have a lamp constantly burning in his bedchamber during the night and, if wakefully disturbed, should take a book and read and compose himself to rest. To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise." Boswell—"Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course of chemistry?" Johnson—"Let him take a course of chemistry, or a course of rope dancing, or a course of anything to which he is inclined at the time. Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself."—Boswell (Life of Johnson).

Indelicate.

Washington's cosmopolitan society contains many members whose dollars came too late to supply the advantages of early education. An illustration of this occurred last winter, at a dance given by one of the capital's most opulent dowagers. The lady's debutante daughter appeared in the ball room in an ultra décolleté gown.

"Isn't it rather imprudent for your daughter to wear so low a gown on so cold a night?" remarked a "catty" young matron. "She's quite delicate, isn't she?"

"Mercy, no!" exclaimed the mother of the fair bud. "She's one of the most delicate girls you ever saw."

"Yes; I observe she's dancing the grizzly bear," said the young matron with incisive sweetness.



"What's Wore You Down to This State," He Said.

pressed with the conviction that she was held in a tremor of febrile excitement. Her voice had an under note of vibration in it, like the voice of one who breathes quickly. The orchid on her breast trembled with the trembling of her frame.

"Look here," he said quietly, "I want to understand this thing. What's made you change your mind so suddenly? A few days ago you were all up on fiddle-strings at the suggestion of taking that money. Here, this

to articulate, and then dissolved into another flood.

The old man, high in his swivel chair, sat with his hands in his pockets, his lips pursed and his eyes on the floor. Once or twice he whirled the chair slightly from one side to the other. After a pause of some minutes he said:

"Are you prepared to agree to anything Mrs. Ryan and I demanded?"

After the last outbreak she had completely abandoned herself to the