

Peter Knight, defeated for political of-Peter Knight, defeated for political office in his town, decides to venture New York in order that the family fortunes might benefit by the expected rise of his charming daughter. Lorelei Knight, known critic interviews Lorelei Knight, now stage beauty with Bergman's Revue, for a special article. Her coin-hunting mother, outlines Lorelei's ambitions, but Slosson, the press agent, later adds his information. Lorelei attends Millionaire Hammon's gorgeous entertainment. She meets Merkle, a wealthy dyspeptic. Bob Wharton comes uninvited. Lorelei discovers a blackmall plot against Hammon, in which her brother is involved. Merkle and Lorelei have an auto wreck. The and Lorelei have an auto wreck. The blackmailers besmirch her good name, Lorelei learns her mother is an unscru-pulous plotter. She finds in Adoree Dem-erest a real friend, and finds Bob Whar-ton is likable. Lorelei leaves her family

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goes to live alone

Greater tragedy stalks into Lorelel's life. She is besmirched by vile men and women urged on by her mother and brother. The memory of one night's experience was a horror burned into her mind for life. Her only friend in this crisis is a drunken profligate, and he makes her ill with his attempted caresses. How she solved one problem, how she was trapped into taking the biggest step of her life is described with vivid detail in this installment.

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Lorelel has been taken to a "swift" restaurant by her employer who has designs on the girl. She is badly frightened-and helpless. At this point Bob Wharton appears. She sees In him a protector.

CHAPTER XII-Continued.

Miss Wyeth tittered; the sophomore with the bristling pompadour uttered a bark of amusement. Meeting Bob's questioning glance, Lorelel seconded the invitation with a nod and a quick look of appeal, whereupon his demeanor changed and he drew a chair between her and Nobel Bergman, forcing the latter to move. His action was pointed, almost rude, but the girl felt a surge of gratitude sweep over her.

There was an interlude of idle chatter, then the orchestra burst into full clamor once more. Much to the chagrin of her escort, Lorelei rose and danced away with the newcomer. "Why the distress signal?" queried

"Mr. Bergman has-been drinking." "Rum is poison," he told her, with mock indignation. "He must be a low

"He's getting unpleasant." "Shall I take him by the nose and

run around the block?"

"You can do me a favor."

He was serious in an instant. "You were nice to me the other night. I'm

sorry to see you with this fellow." "He forced-he deceived me into coming, and he's taking advantage of conditions to-be nasty."

Bob missed a step, then apologized His next words were facetious, but his tone was ugly: "Where do you want the remains sent?"

"Will you wait and see that mine are safely sent home?" She leaned back, and her troubled twilight eyes besought him.

"I'll wait, never fear. I've been looking everywhere for you. I wanted to find you, and I didn't want to. I've been to every cafe in town. How in the world did you fall in with the old bell-cow and her calf?"

When Lorelei had explained, he nodded his complete understanding. "She's just the sort to do a thing like that."

Wharton ignored Bergman's scowls; he proceeded to monopolize the manager's favorite with an arrogance that secretly delighted her; he displayed the assurance of one reared to selfish exactions, and his rival writhed under it. But Bergman was slow to admit defeat. Dawn was near when the crowd separated and the hostess was driven away, leaving Lorelei at the door of a taxicab in company with two or her admirers. The girl bade them each good Mght, but Bergman ignored her words, and, stepping boldly in after her, spoke to the driver.

Bob had imbibed with a magnificent disregard of consequences, and as a result he was unsteady on his feet. His hat was tilted back from his brow, his slender stick bent beneath the weight he put upon it.

"Naughty, naughty Nobel!" he and I journey arm and arm into the over her every day she gets her back purpling east."

"Drive on." cried Bergman, forcing Lorelei back into her seat, as she half

Bob leaned through the open cab window, murmuring thickly: "Nobel, you are drunk. Shocked-nay, grieved as I am at seeing you thus, I shall take you home."

"Get out, will you?" snapped the manager, undertaking to slam the door. "I'm tired of your insolence. I'll-"

Bergman never finished his sentence, for in his rage he committed a grave

next instant was jerked bodily out of his seat. Lorelei uttered a cry of fright, for the whole side of the cab

seemed to go with her employer. There was a brief scuffle, a whirl of flying arms, then Bergman's voice rose in a strangely muffled howl, followed by nasal curses. With a bellow of anguish he suddenly ceased his struggles, and Lorelei saw that Bob was holding Bob him by the nose. It happened to be a large, unhandsome and fleshy member, and, securely grasping it, Bergman's conqueror held him at a painful and humiliating disadvantage.

Bob was panting, but he marraged to say, "Come! We will dance for the lady."

A muffled shrick of pain was the answer, but the street was empty save for some grinning chauffeurs, who offered no assistance.

"Be a good fellow. I insist, my dear Nobel.'

"Drive on, quickly," Lorelel implored, but the chauffeur cranked his able as possible to Robert Wharton, motor rejuctantly. A moment passed, then another; he cranked once more. Bergman was sobbing now like a

Bob paused and wheezed: "Bravo! some new steps, too, eh?" All power of resistance had left the victim, who seemed upon the verge of collapse. "I say we've learned some new steps; haven't we, Bergy?" He tweaked the distorted member in his grasp, and Bergman's head wagged loosely. "Oh, please-please-" Lorelei cried,

tremulously. "Don't-" "Canter for the kind lady," Whar-

ton insisted. Bergman capered awkwardly. "Mr. Wharton! Bob-" Lorelei's

agonized entreaty brought her admirer to the cab door, but he fetched his prisoner in tow. "Let him go or-we'll be arrested." "I'll let go if you insist. But it's

a grand nose. I-love it. Never was there such a nose."

Bergman, with a desperate wrench, regained his freedom and staggered away with his face in his hands.

"It-actually stretched," said Bob, as he regretfully watched his victim. "I dare say I'll never find another nose like it."

Lorelei's cab got under way at last, but barely in time, for a crowd was assembling. Not until she was safely then she burst into a trembling, chokof Wharton had risen, and for the first time he seemed not entirely bad.

CHAPTER XIII.

Jimmy Knight felt his sister's desertion quite as keenly as did his mother and father, for his schemes, though inchoate, were ambitious, and his heart was set upon them. Lorelel's obstinacy was exasperating-a woman's unaccountable freakishness.

He confided his disappointment to Max Melcher. "It's pretty tough," complained Jimmy. "I had Merkle going, but she crabbed it. Then just as



"Canter for the Kind Lady."

mided. "Come out of that cab; you that boob Wharton was getting daffier up and the whole thing is cold."

> "You mean it's cold so far as you're concerned," Melcher judicially amend-

"Sure. She's sore on me, and the whole family." "Then this is just the time to marry

her off. New York is a mighty lonesome place for a girl like her. Suppose I take a hand." "All right."

"Will you declare me in?" "Certainly."

Melcher eyed his associate coldly. blunder—he struck wildly at the "There's no 'certainly' about it. You'd muckers in this business," she re-Ausbed face so close to his, and the throw your own mother if you got a marked philosophically.

chance. But you can't throw me, unyou slabbed at the morgue."

Jimmy's reply left no doubt of the intentions. Strange stories were told Jimmy knew several young men who He's getting too bossy, anyhow." appeared out of the East side at Melcher's signal. They were inconspicuous fellows, who bore fanciful dimehold of the old-time western cattle outlaws than they. Jim knew these ronmen well; he had no wish to know tnem worse.

"I can't promise anything definite "He's about ready to ask her-she's the one to fix. She bates men, though, and that Merkle story made her crazy."

Melcher pondered for several moments. "I think I know Lorelei better than you do," he stated, deliberately, and I believe we can pull this off, provided Wharton really wants to marry the odds, and she's just the sort to fall for it. Meanwhile I want it understood with your mother that I share in what comes her way."

"I'll fix that," promised Jim.

He found it, in fact, no very difficult task to regain at least a part of his sister's lost esteem, though the process took time. He went about it with the lazy, catlike patience of his kind, beand assumed just enough of an injured air to be plausible. He enlisted the aid of his mother and of Lilas Lynn, and meanwhile made himself as agree-

Melcher was as good as his word, and there shortly appeared in the Dispatch an unpleasant rehash of the for- the psychological moment had come, he mer story. It was published in connection with the Hammon divorce pro-You done noble, Nobel. We've learned ceedings, news of which was exciting comment, and it further smirched Lorelei's reputation. Jim was appropriately indignant, but helpless, and Mrs. Knight unwearledly blamed everything upon her daughter's desertion of the family circle, predicting more evil to follow unless Lorelei came home at once. She also dwelt upon the fact that Peter was steadily failing and was in immediate need of both medical and surgical attention. The doctor had pronounced sentence, prescribing a total change of living and a treatment by foreign specialists.

> In some unaccountable way the story of Nobel Bergman's humiliation became public and afforded the basis for a newspaper article that brought him to Lorelel's dressing room in a fine fury. Even after she had convinced him of her innocence his resentment was so bitter that she expected her dismissal at any time.

Other press staries followed; the girl suddenly found herself notorious; scarcely a day passed without some disagreeable mention of her. Adoree Demorest, as indignant as Lorelei herself, declared finally that her friend must be the object of a premeditated Inside her little apartment, with the attack directed by some strong hand, chain on the door, did she surrender; and once this suspicion had entered Lorelel's mind it took root in spite of ing fit of laughter. But her estimate its seeming extravagance. Her good sense argued that she was of too little consequence to warrant such an assault, but her relatives seized the suggestion so avidly as to more than half convince her.

Mrs. Knight attributed this injustice first to Bergman, then to Merkle, whom she hated bitterly since her unfortunate attempt at blackmail; Jim was inclined to agree with her. Mrs. Knight, as always, ended her sympathetic reassurances by saying, "If you were only married, my dear, that would end all our troubles."

The climax of these annoyances came one night after a party at which Lorelei had been presented to an old friend of Miss Lynn's. Lilas had introduced the man as one of her girlhood chums, and Lorelei had tried to be nice to him; then in some way he arranged to take her home. The memory of that ride was a horror. She knew now that she was hunted; the man had told her so. She felt like a deer cowering in a brake with the hounds working close. This first attack left her trembling and wary. Her cover seemed pitifully insecure.

Thus far Max Melcher's campaign had worked even better than he had expected; and meanwhile he had employed Jim in assiduously cultivating Bob Wharton and arranging as many meetings as possible between Bob and Lorelei. A short experience had taught Jim to avoid his victim in daylight, for in Bob's sober hours the two did not saw a girl beautiful enough to suit me agree; but once mellowed by intoxica- before, and he said-" tion, Wharton became imbued with a carnival spirit and welcomed Jim as freely as he welcomed everyone. Inreceived at Melcher's place seemed to town's crazy about her." reconcile him to the loss of his money.

When, on the morning after her disher assailant he decided that it was time to test the issue. He pretended, answer?" of course, to be feroclously enraged. that there was nothing to be done except perhaps exact an explanation from Lilas.

Miss Lynn, however, could offer no excuse. She was heartbroken at the occurrence, but she was too full of her own troubles to give way to her sym- doing." Lorelei responded, curtly. pathy for others. Jarvis Hammon, it

and was furlous with her.

derstand? You try a cross and-the forget it, sis. Just don't think about cold-meat wagon for yours. I'll bave it. I'll bring Wharton around tonight,

and we four will have supper, ch?" Lilas' hesitation in accepting this ingenuineness of his fears, if not of his vitation seemed genuine, but she acquiesced finally, saying with a short in the Tenderloin-tales of treachery laugh: "All right. Maybe a little jealpunished and ingratitude revenged, ousy won't hurt my lord and master.

. When the four set out that night Wharton was in exceptional spirits, novel names—and no rustler's strong- and, as usual, devoted himself to Lorelet. For him life was a joyous adcountry ever boasted more formidable | venture; he took things as they came, and now that he knew the girl for what she was he did not allow himself the slightest liberty. He was a fervent suitor, to be sure, yet he courtwhen she's sore on me," he declared. ed her with jests and concealed his ardor behind a playful raillery.

Jim had ordered supper at a popular Washington Heights inn, and thither slowly. "We'll talk about it some marriages, anyhow. Ha! But you the quartet were driven in an open car other time-tomorrow. Please don't needn't tell him I was-full, underwhich he hired in the square before the theater.

It was a charming place for a supper. Contrary to her custom, Lilas her. Anyhow, he's so rich it's worth Lynn allowed herself free rein, and for once drank more than was good for had snatched.

It is a peculiar liberty to sit soberly through a meal and see one's companlons become intoxicated. Lorelei watched Lilas and Bob respond to the effect of the wine. The whole procedure struck her, like her present life as a whole, as both inane and wicked, haved himself, kept his mouth shut, and she longed desperately to lay hold of something really decent, true and permanent.

Jimmy Knight's admirable hospitality continued; he devoted his entire attention to his guests, he made conversation, and he led it into the channels he desired it to follow. Then, when



'She's Stalling, Bob. Make Her Answer."

acted with the skill of a Talleyrand. No one but he knew precisely how Bob's proposal was couched, whence it originated, or by what subtlety the victim had been induced to make it. As a matter of fact, it was no proposal, and not even Bob himself suspected how his words had been twisted. He was just dimly aware of some turn in the conversation, when he

heard Jim exclaim: "By Jove, sis, Bob asks you to mar-

ry him!" In prize-ring parlance, Jimmy had 'feinted" his opponent into a lead, then taken prompt advantage to "counter." with a start, sensing the sudden gravity that had fallen upon her three companions.

"What-?" wildered lover. "That's the way to put it over, Bob-before witnesses." "Don't joke about such things," cried Lorelei sharply.

"Joke? Who's joking?" Jim was indignant and glanced appealingly at Bob. "You meant it. didn't you?"

"Sure. No joking matter." Bob declared vaguely. "I was just saying that this is no life for a fellow to lead-batting 'round the way I do; then Jim said-I mean I said-I needed a wife, a beautiful wife. I never

Jim's relief came as an explosion. "There! That's English. You spoke a mouthful that time, Bob, for she cidentally the latter managed to reap certainly is a beauty bright. But I a considerable harvest from the asso- | didn't think you had the nerve to ask ciation, for Bob was a habitual gam- her. If she says yes, you'll be the luckbler, and the courteous treatment he lest man in New York—the whole

> "We'll make her say yes," Lilas addupon her arm. "Well? What's your

Bob fixed heavy eyes upon his but on learning over the telephone that heart's desire and echoed: "Yes, what the wretch had left the city he declared do you say?" More than once in his once more, and it was under way. It sober moments he had pondered such a query, and now that it appeared to lei began to doubt her own sanity. self.

"I say, you don't know what you're

Now, Bob, like all men in his con-"Don't you b'lieve it," he protested, him. "You are beautiful-beautiful.

Jim aggeed. "I guess you'll have to "I know what I'm doing, all right, all right."

"A man never speaks his mind until he's ginned," Lilas giggled, "Righto! I'm not half drunk yet." Jim urged the suitor on with a nerv-

ous laugh, at the same time avoiding his sister's eyes. "She's stalling, Bob. Make her answer."

"Yes or no?" forcefully insisted the wooer, determined, now, to show his complete sobriety. "No."

shook it justily. "Congratulations, your plans tomorrow." old man; that means yes. I'm her brother, and I know. Why, she told father that you were her ideal, and pa | Lilas. said he'd die happy if you two were married. He meant it, too; he's a mighty sick man."

Lorelei stirred uncomfortably, and the faint color in her cheeks faded tease the poor man any more. He didn't know what he was saying, and burst into a loud laugh. "Bah! I -now, for heaven's sake, talk about something else."

Jim leaped to his feet with a grin and a chuckle, then drew Lilas from her, rejoicing openly in the liberty she her chair, saying: "The lovers are embarrassed, and they're dying to be alone. Let's leave 'em to talk it over." "She's a dear, Bob, and I wish you

both joy. But don't kiss her here." said Lilas, warningly; then, with a wave of her hand, she turned toward the dancing room with Jim.

"Call us when you've fixed the date," When he and Lllas had danced the nodded at them.

"Thanks, noble comrades," he proclaimed; "she's mine!"

"Hurrah!" Lilas kissed Lorelei effusively. Jim seized Bob's hand, cry-

soms and a wedding cake, too." His others had done. jubilation attracted the attention of upon Bob beamed with delight.

Lorelei was very white now. She had decided swiftly, recklessly, reasoning that this proffered marriage was merely a bargain by which she got more than she gave. She had accepted without allowing her better self an opportunity to marshal its protests, and, having closed her eyes and leaped into the dark, it now seemed easier to meet new consequences than to heed those higher feelings that were tardily struggling for expression. She did pity Wharton, however, for it seemed to her that he was the injured party. and of late a voice had been desperately urging her to grasp at what she could, that she might, as long as possible, delay her descent into worse conditions.

She heard Lilas inquiring: "When does the marriage come off? Right defiantly. Her face had slowly whit-

by the suddenness and the completeness of his good fortune, smiled vacantly. "Any time suits me," he said. "I'm a happy man-little Joys are capering all over the place, and old Doc-

tor Gloom has packed his grip." Jim startled them all by saying, crisply: "Let's make it tonight. know Bob-he's not the sort to wait."

"Fine! Never thought of that. But-I say-where do they keep these weddings?" he inquired. "Everything's closed now, and there's nobody dancing at the city hall, is there?" He appealed helplessly to Jim.

Jim rose to the occasion with the same promptitude he had displayed throughout. "Marriages aren't made in heaven any more—that's old stuff. They're made in Hoboken, while the cab waits. Get your things on, every-Lorelei awoke to her surroundings no loitering; he waved the girls away. sent the waiter scurrying with his bill, helped Robert secure hat and stick, and then dived into a telephone booth as a woodchuck enters its hole. When Lilas nodded and smiled at the be- he had disposed his three charges inside a taxicab he disappeared briefly, to return with a basket of champagne upon his arm. It is a wise general who provides himself in advance with ammunition.

The smooth celerity with which this whole adventure ran its course argued a thorough preparation on James' part, but Lorelel was in no condition to analyze. Even at the journey's end there was a suspicious lack of delay. The vehicle stopped in a narrow business street, now dark and dismal; its occupants were hurried up a stairway and into a room filled with law-books, where a sleepy justice of the peace was nodding in a cloud of cigar smoke. There followed a noisy shuffling of chairs, some mumbled questions and answers, the crackle of papers, a deal of unintelligible rigmarole, then a man's heavy seal-ring was slipped upon Lorelei's finger, and she knew heraelf to be Mrs. Robert Wharton. ed, with drunken decision. "Come, It was all confused, unimpressive, untressing adventure, Lorelei sent for her dear, say it." She bent a flushed face real. She was never able fully to rebrother and demanded vengeance upon toward Lorelei and laid a loose hand call the picture of that room or the events that occurred there, formed but a part of the kaleidoscopic jumble of the night's occurrences.

The wedding party was in the cab was all so like a nightmare that Lorehave taken shape without conscious ef- Once at rest in the dim-lit tunnel of fort, he was not displeased with him- the ferry boat, however, she was brought sharply to herself by hearing company him when Lilas Lynn checked her brother exclaim: "Say! He hasn't

kissed her yet." Lilas shricked, and Bob stiffened seemed, had heard about the party, dition, was quite certain that he was himself, then slipped an arm around in perfect possession of his faculties, his bride. As she shrank away he "You must expect to meet such and therefore he very naturally re- mumbled angrily: "Here! I won't sented such an absurd assertion, stand for that," and crushed her to

And you're mine. She's mine, eh? No foolishness about that, is there?" he appealed to Jim.

As they drew in toward the New York side the chauffeur inquired, "Where to, now?"

"Why, drive us-" Jim hesitated. There was a silence which Liles broke with a titter.

"Never thought of that." Bob turned again to Jim, who solved the difficulty with a word.

"Why, you're both going to Lorelei's Jim seized Wharton's hand and place, of course; then you can make

The bride's half-strangled protest was lost in a burst of enthusiasm from

"Surest thing you know," she cried: 'and we'll stop in my flat for a farewell bottle; I've got a whole case. We'll end the night with another party at Jarvis' expense. He's crazy about stand?" She fell silent suddenly, then should worry!"

The ferry drew into its slip, the cab motor shivered, the metallic rattle of windlass and chain proclaimed the return to Manhattan. Up the deserted avenues the vehicle sped, while inside the white-faced bride cowered with fingers locked and heart sick with dread.

CHAPTER XIV.

Hitchy Koo had gone home. When Lilas ushered her friends in and snapped on the lights, the apartment, laughed the latter, over his shoulder, save for the delirious spaniel, was unoccupied. She flung down her hat, encore and returned to the table Bob coat and gloves, then, with the help rose unsteadily, glass in hand, and of Jim, prepared glasses and a cooler. Lorelei was restless: the thought of more wine, more ribaldry, revolted her, and yet she was grateful for this delay, brief though it promised to be. Any interruption, trivial or tragle, would be welcome. She was forced to pledge "Brother!" He waved to a waiter her own happiness in a glass, then in and ordered a magnum of champagne. a wild moment of desperation longed Bring me a wreath of orange blost to deaden herself with liquor as the

Jim and Lilas were talking loudly the other diners; the occupants of a when a key grated in the lock, the nearby table began to applaud, where- door of the little apartment opened. and Jarvis Hammon paused on the threshold, glowering.

> Lilas' wineglass shattered upon the floor. "Jarvis! You frightened me," she

cried. "Evening, Mr. Hammon." lurched to his feet, upsetting his chair, "This is a s'prise."

Jim had risen likewise, but Hammon had eyes for no one except Lilas. "Ah! You're home again, finally. Where have you been?" he demanded, in a voice heavy with anger. His hostile tone, his threatening attitude But she was in a wanton mood tonight, brought an uncomfortable silence

upon the hearers. "Now, Jarvis," said the bridegroom. placatingly, steadying himself meanwhile with the aid of the table, "don't be a grouch. Everything's all right."

Lilas remained motionless, staring ened, and now its unpleasantness Bob, who appeared somewhat dazed matched that of her elderly admirer. Hammon dropped his smoldering gaze to the half-empty glasses, then raised it, scowling at Jim.

"Humph! Who is-this?" Lilas made her guest known. "Mr. Knight, Mr. Hammon. I believe you know Miss Knight."

"So you're the one." showed his teeth in a sardonic smile. "I'm the one what?" inquired Jim, with a sickly attempt at pleasantry.

"What does she see in you?" Hammon measured the young man with contemptuous curiosity. "Don't be an ass, Jarvis," began

Lilas. "I--" She was interrupted roughly. "That's precisely what I don't intend to be: and I don't intend that Bob shall be one, either." He turned to young Wharton. "What are you doing here, my body, while I telephone." He allowed boy? I'm sorry to see you with these grafters." Hammon indicated Jim

and Lorelei with a nod. "Eh? What's that?" Bob stiffened. 'Lorelei's my wife. 'S true, Jarvis." "Wife?" Hammon took a heavy step forward. "Wife? You're drunk, Bob!"

"P'r'aps. But we're mar-" "So! You landed him, dld you?" Hammon glared at the brother and sister. "You got him drunk and married him, eh? And Lilas helped you, I suppose. Fine! They're crooks,

Bob, and they've made a fool of you." Bob checked the speech on Lorelei's lips with an upraised hand, then said slowly, with a painful effort to sober himself: "We've been good friends, Jarvis; you're a kind of an uncle to me, but-you're a llar. You've lied 'bout my wife, so I s'pose I've got to lick you." With a backward kick he sent his overturned chair flying, then made for Hammon. But Jim seized him by the arm; Lorelel sprang in front of him.

"Mr. Whar-Bob," she cried. "You mustn't-for my sake." The three scuffled for an instant until Hammon said, more quietly;

"I couldn't fight with you, Bobyou're like my own son. But you've been sold out, and-and it looks as if I'd been sold out, too. Now go home and sleep. I didn't come here to quarrel with you: I have a matter of my own to settle." He laid a hand on Bob's shoulder in an effort to pacify him, but the young man's indignation flared into life with drunken persistence. It was Lorelei who at last prevailed upon her husband to leave peaceably, and she was about to ac-

Do you feel that a more frightful experience still is impending for Lorelei? And does she, in your opinion, feel it too?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)