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BETTY'S VACATION

By MARION C. LEESAM.

Betty Saunders listened enviously while two of the other stenographers of the little firm of Brown & Co. talked eagerly about vacations.

Betty's eyes filled with tears as she tried hard to concentrate her mind on the transcribing of her notes and, as her fingers skimmed lightly over the typewriter keys, she pictured the kind of a vacation she was going to have.

Being young and pretty, good times appealed to Betty, but many an invitation had been turned down with regret, as she disliked leaving her mother alone.

Her thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the sound of a buzzer summoning her to the president's office. She hastily wiped away all trace of tears and, taking her notebook, walked across the hall into the private office.

"Miss Saunders, this is my son who has just returned, having spent eighteen months in France. Instead of going back for his last year at college he is going to start in here and learn the business. You will take his dictation now, and any inside lines on the work that you know about I will trust you to make clear to him."

Jack Brown, Jr., was so interested in watching Betty he hardly heard what his father was saying, and as she left the room he seemed a little more interested in the idea of starting his business career than he had a few hours before.

As the days passed on Betty spent much more of her time in the office of the young Mr. Brown, and realized more and more how Mr. Brown, Sr., was relying on his son and by degrees relieving himself of some of the burdens he had been bearing alone.

The time passed very quickly to Betty and before she knew it the time came when she was to close up her typewriter and leave for two long weeks. Usually Betty had a half-holiday on Saturday, but today she worked overtime in order to get things ready for the girl who was to substitute for her.

Jack Brown, although he didn't show it, was quite annoyed at the thought of her being away, from a business standpoint, and then he couldn't quite picture anyone else sitting in her place.

It was a very warm, sultry afternoon and as Betty worked she felt happy at the thought of a vacation. Even though she couldn't go away, she could at least rest in the shady hammock at home, away from the rush and turmoil of the city.

While she was getting ready to go home Mr. Brown, Jr., came over and wished her a pleasant vacation.

"Where are you going, Miss Saunders, seashore or country?" Betty flushed and quietly told him of her mother's illness and how she was unable to go away. She was too proud to let him know she couldn't afford to take her mother away.

"That's a shame," said Jack, inwardly kicking himself for being the cause of her embarrassment. "You work so hard here in the office you deserve a little recreation."

After Betty had gone, he thought over the situation, and his face lightened as he thought of a plan. At 7:30 that evening the telephone at Betty's house tinkled and Mr. Jack Brown was on the line.

"I thought you might like to take a little motor ride, it's such a warm night, that if you have no other engagement."

Betty's heart jumped. "I would just love to, but—" "And, of course, your mother will accompany us. I think a ride along the seashore would do her good."

That settled it for Betty, and Mrs. Saunders was just as pleased, for a change for her away from the house was a great treat.

Many happy times followed during the two weeks. There were picnic parties and drives through the cool green country or other rides along the shore, and when Betty returned to the office she was a very happy girl.

The following spring came with all its brightness and soon vacation time was again being discussed at Brown & Co.'s. Betty listened to the chatter of the girls and thought of all the changes that happened in one year.

That night she and Jack took a long ride. When he stopped his car at Betty's house, on their return, he tenderly took her hand.

"Well, little girl, where are you going on your vacation this year?" "I don't know," said Betty, her thoughts far away.

"I do," said Jack. "You're going to marry me and we're going on a month's honeymoon." He slipped a sparkling ring on Betty's finger and then kissed it reverently.

"How is that for a vacation?" Betty was too happy to answer, but Mr. Brown, Sr., did a good deal of kidding. "He has run away last month, but quickly resigned the post of his secretary position."

THE RUNAWAY

By ALICE FREEMAN.

Buzz-z-z-z rang the telephone. "Oh, Louise, you answer it. My hands are all sud."

A group of five girls were scattered around the kitchen of the large country house. A little over a week before they had come to the country to stay two weeks under the chaperonage of "Aunt Evelyn" at her summer home.

Mrs. Bradford was really an aunt to only one of the girls, but as the others expressed it: "She seemed to belong to the rest of us just as much as to Elsie." With the exception of Louise Strand, all the girls had come out to enjoy their vacation. But with Louise it was different. She had come away from the city to forget—if such a thing were possible; forget a certain young man and the happy hours she had spent with him; forget the other girl who had sprung up suddenly from nowhere and taken him away from her—the girl who had taken the sunshine out of her life. If she could only forget!

Mrs. Bradford had gone to town early in the morning. The girls were just trying to decide how to spend the day when the telephone buzzed.

"Oh, Louise, you answer it," came a cry from the direction of the sink. A minute later Louise returned to the kitchen and said: "It's a young man, Elsie, and he wants to speak with you."

Elsie dried her hands and went to the telephone: "Hello—yes—oh, when did you get back?—That would be fine. Well, there are five of us in all—we could go any time. Let's go early and bring our lunch. We'll bring the lunch if you'll provide the fruit and tonic. Eleven o'clock—all right—at Pointed Rock crossing. All right; good-by."

All this was a meaningless string of endless sentences to the other girls, who had gathered around Elsie, so the moment she said "good-by," a chorus of voices cried out for an explanation. "Who was it?" "What did he want?" "What does it all mean?"

"One at a time, please," interrupted Elsie with a mysterious laugh. "It was Bob Tracy. The Tracys are old friends of Aunt Evelyn. I used to play with Bob when I was just a wee tot and came to visit auntie, so we have almost grown up together. He's been away at college, and has just come home on a vacation with some friends. He heard that there were a few girls over here with me, and wanted us to go on a berry-picking party, so I suggested making a picnic of it."

"Just the thing!" enthusiastically from all the girls except Louise, who said nothing. "Who was it?" "What did he want?" "What does it all mean?"

An hour later they were ready to leave the house, each with a small pail. A large basket containing a hastily prepared lunch was on the top step. "Where is the key?" asked Ruth. "Why, I thought Aunt Evelyn gave it to you."

"And I thought some one else had it." "What shall we do?" asked some one. "Well, I don't really care much about going," volunteered Louise, trying to hide the eagerness in her voice, "and it's a shame to keep the boys waiting, so I could just as well stay at home. I can find something to read."

A few minutes later Louise, with a book in her hand, sat down by the window, thankful of having escaped the blueberry party. Just then she noticed some one coming up the path toward the house. At the same time she noticed a basket on the top step.

"Why, I do believe the girls have forgotten their lunch," and in the same breath she added: "Who can that man be?"

She went to the door and opened it. As the man came nearer she thought she recognized a familiar gait in his walk. Suddenly she became very white.

"Could it be?" she thought. Just then the young man reached the step and glanced up. "Louise!" he cried, as he fairly flew up the steps.

"Jack!" was all she could say. After one happy moment in his arms, thoughts of the other girl flooded her mind. She tried to push him away from her, but he held her close.

"Louise, dearest," he said softly, "why did you run away from me like that?"

Then she told him about seeing him out driving with another girl; how she had at first felt angry, then disappointed; how she had shed tears and then gone away until he had gone to college.

"I thought you would come to say 'Good-by' before you went away," she finished, "and I didn't want you to offer any excuses for another girl. But how did you get here?" she added.

"I felt as though I had nothing to go home for this time," he told her, "so when Bob Tracy asked me to spend my vacation with him, I accepted the invitation. Then he dragged me off to that blueberry picnic today. When I saw my chance to come back for the lunch basket, I quickly volunteered. That bunch of girls didn't appeal to me, Louise. That girl I was driving with," he continued, "was my young married sister, who you have often heard me speak of. Didn't you know, dear, that there was only one girl for me?"

"I suppose I should have," she admitted shyly. "Copyright, 1919, Morning Newspaper Syndicate."

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