

Prologue to Love

By
MARTHA OSTENSO

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CHAPTER I

For one of those minutes that are not reckoned as time, but rather as a curious vessel to hold experience, she had stood still on the station platform, rapt and breathless and unmindful of the inquisitive glances that rested on her taut figure. The desire had been acute to fling out her arms to the circle of the mountains that rose from the valley like a prodigiously wrought gold and purple bowl filled with the wine of sundown in May. She had stood, aware of the cool star on the southern crest, and of the silver shallop of the new moon a-sail with its veiled and mystical cargo. Then the words had shaped themselves in silence upon her lips, words she knew now had passed far back in her childhood, waiting for her return: "You beautiful! Oh, you beautiful!"

Only a few moments before, she had checked her luggage without giving her name, and the slight narrowing of the old clerk's eyes had brought a twitch of amusement to her mouth. She remembered him well enough, and although it was nine years since he had seen her—she had been but fourteen then—it was evident that some recollection stirred behind the old man's eyes. Perhaps, after all, she might have told him she was Autumn Dean, so that he might be the first to know that the Laird's daughter had come home. He was one of the "relies of Barkerville," as her father used to call them affectionately, those old men who had become as legendary as that long-dimmed field of gold. It would have been fitting to tell him first, this old man who was the essence of everything to which she was returning, this fabulous, romantic northland of her girlhood. But it amused her to keep her secret a little longer, to be to herself alone the daughter of old Jarvis Dean, the Laird of the "Castle of the Norms." That phrase brought an almost unbearable ennui for what had been when she herself had so named her father's house.

The murmur of the valley town, like the warm sound of a human heart within the cool heart of the hills, lay below her now as she made her way quickly up the steep dark street to the house she remembered in the mountain's cleft. A few new dwellings had appeared, the shade trees had grown, there was a denser thicket of shrubbery flanking the street, but the curious upward climb of the way was unmistakable. There, where the gravel road took a pranking turn as though seeking greater seclusion under the brow of the hill, old Hector Cardigan's cottage peered through, half suspiciously as she had remembered it, as though it had made its way from the inner secrecy of the mountain and were of half a mind to return there. Her heart gave a little leap of delight as she saw the "monkey-puzzle" tree on the tiny front lawn, and the two somber, meticulously clipped yews on either side of the shell-lined walk. The ancient wrought-iron Italian lamp hung as of old in the narrow crypt of the porch, but instead of the wanly flickering oil wick, a dim electric bulb glowed steadily behind the parchment. Old Hector had had his house wired, then!

Her impulse was to go bounding up the steep little steps two at a time, as she had been wont to do, but she reflected quickly that Hector, grown older and more than ever given to solitude, from her father's reports of him, might be startled at such an intrusion. Instead, she ran lightly up the flight to the carved, narrow, oak door, and clutched her handbag to still the excitement of her heart as she lifted the heavy brass knocker. She remembered that the knocker had been level with her eyes when she was a ready kid of fourteen.

That was Hector's step now, quick and military still in its precision. She could remember that long polished panel of hardwood floor of the hall within, polished to mirror luster by Hector himself, as no servant could do it, had the old man ever been able to afford a servant. The door opened quickly, boldly, in its old manner of brusque inquiry. And there stood Hector, erect and fiery, fastidiously groomed as of old, severely dinner-jacketed, his gray hair grayer now but combed as ever with sculptured nicety. He stood very little above her own height, so that it seemed to her that she was smiling on a level with his eyes.

As she waited for his recognition, a curious thing was happening. She had snatched off her hat and stood with her head flung back, her hair shaken vividly about her cheeks. Hector's eyes were fastened upon her face with a look that grew from strange, incredulous amazement to something verging upon pain. His hand reached uncertainly out toward her, as though he expected her to vanish before his eyes, then his fingers grasped the door knob until the knuckles gleamed white. His face had become drained of all color, and although she saw that his hand leaned heavily on the door knob for support, Autumn laughed gayly, stepped over the threshold, and flung her arms about his neck. "Hector, Hector! Don't you know me, you old goose?" she demanded,

shaking his shoulders as she smiled up at him.

"Forgive me, child," he said. "You—you startled me. I hadn't expected—but here, come inside. My manners are abominable!"

They proceeded into the low, shadowed living room, Autumn pausing just within the door to let her eyes sweep over the place. She wanted to make sure that the character of this extraordinary room had not changed. No, except for an added piece or two, it was the same as when she had last seen it—a haunting melody of the centuries, the oak walls dim and secret with their tapestries, the Louis XIV Gobelins, the fragile and priceless Renaissance grotesque with its quaint assembly vanishing irretrievably into the weave, vanishing back into the dead hands of the weaver, and the bold Francois Spierinx of Delft with its heraldic challenging time.

"But—when did you get back, Autumn?" Hector asked, his voice firm now, with its old courtly inflection.

"I've just come. I walked right up here from the station."

"But your father didn't tell me you were coming home."

Autumn tossed her hat and purse on the low Spanish settle, ruffled her



"Your education is complete, I see."

fingers through her hair, and came over and stood beside him, her feet spread boyishly apart, her hands clasped behind her back. She looked at Hector with grave amusement.

"He isn't expecting me," she said lightly. "I want to surprise him."

Hector turned slowly away. "H-m-m, yes," he said, thoughtfully. "It will be a surprise to him."

"Besides, you old fraud, I wanted to surprise you. Think of it, Hector, it's nine years since you saw me last."

"Nine years! It seems impossible. Well—we're getting older. I'm approaching my dotage, child. But you—you are eternal youth itself. You have the heritage of your mother."

Autumn's laugh pealed out deliciously. "But not her beauty, Hector!"

"That was what startled me when I saw you at the door. You are her image."

He moved to the couch that faced the fireplace, seated himself, and clasped his hands between his knees. Autumn turned and looked down upon him, and a wave of swift pity for him swept over her, obliterating for a moment the bewilderment and dismay that were growing upon her at the strangeness of his reception. Time, the merciless invader, was storming the fine citadel of that gallant old soldier, and already had come an intimation of the ruin that was to be. Autumn went quickly and seated herself beside him, taking his brown hand in her own.

"Is this all the welcome you give me?" she asked. "You look as if I had brought you the plague. What's wrong, Hector?"

He looked at her thoughtfully, then got to his feet.

"There's nothing wrong, my dear. It's just the surprise, I suppose. It has knocked me quite silly. How are you going out?"

Autumn patted one of his brown hands affectionately. "I'm going to ride one of your hunters," she told him. "It wouldn't look right for the daughter of Jarvis Dean to go home in an automobile, would it?"

Hector smiled. "One of my hunters? I have only one left, my dear, but you are welcome. Are you going to ride in those clothes?"

"No, I'll telephone for my luggage. I have a riding habit handy in a bag. You see, I had it all planned. Where is the telephone, Hector? Isn't that frightfully stupid! It's the only thing about the house I have forgotten."

Hector pointed to a low Japanese gilt and black lacquer screen that stood below a Seventeenth century brass lantern clock with single hand. "Back there," he said.

When she had arranged for the immediate transfer of her luggage to Hector Cardigan's house, she returned to the fireplace. Hector had laid another log on the fire, and the pitch was snapping spiritedly. He had also brought out a remarkably cut old English decanter with a ruby glass snake wound about the neck. Two fragile wine glasses stood on the tray beside it, and the liquid within them glowed with fixed and inviolate corpulence. On a Meissen porcelain plate were tiny frosted cakes and shortbreads.

"Oh, Hector! You sweet!" Autumn cried, kneeling before the wine to look at the light flaming through it. "I take back all I said about my welcome." She seated herself upon a battered hassock and took the glass he offered her. She sipped the wine and reached for one of the tempting little cakes.

"Chablis, isn't it?" she remarked. Hector smiled at her over his glass, and it seemed to her that he was more his old self again, the surprising and eternally enigmatic old self that she had known, Puck and Pan and Centaur, all in one, and sometimes Ariel and sometimes Caliban—all the naive and grotesque and impish legendary beings she knew.

"Your education is complete, I see," he laughed. Autumn laughed too, and ate another cake in one mouthful.

"Oh, when I went over," she said, "they were teaching children to drink so that they would stop begging for another war." Her mood changed then and she frowned down at the last drop that lay in the crystal hollow of the glass. "Seriously, though, that's why I wanted to come home, Hector. I had to get away from the constant reliving of a nightmare that my generation missed."

"I know—I know," Hector remarked.

"The only real thing in the pampered life of Aunt Flo was the loss of her son—my cousin Frederick, you know. I don't know whether there is such a word or not—there ought to be—but Aunt Flo simply voluptuated in her loss. I couldn't live with it any longer."

"It isn't the same back home as—"

"Oh, I don't mean they are all like Aunt Flo," she hastened to add. "But there is something smothery about England now, with all those hungry-eyed women stepping on each other's toes. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yes," Hector admitted. "I think I do. You wanted room to breathe in. Well, you are right, too. Only—your father isn't the same man either. You will find him very difficult at times. He rarely comes to see me any more—and you know how devoted I have been to him."

"Father has always been difficult, Hector. But I've always loved him, nevertheless—and he has always loved me."

"Certainly. He loves the ground you walk on. I think, perhaps, that was one of the reasons he didn't want you to come back."

"Listen, Hector," Autumn said, shaking a finger at him, "I know father wanted me to stay in Eng-

land. He wanted me to marry and settle down over there. Why?"

Hector coughed lightly and took another sip from his glass. "If Jarvis has any reason for not wanting you back here," he said finally, "he'll probably tell you what it is better than I could, my dear. Though, for that matter, I am inclined to agree with him in this, I think."

"What do you mean by that, Hector?"

"I mean—you should not have come home," Hector said abruptly.

Autumn got impatiently to her feet and stood before him, her hands on her hips. "Now, see here, Hector," she exclaimed, "are you going to be as unreasonable as father has been about my coming back where I belong? He has been perfectly ridiculous about it all this time. I've been fed up with Europe for two years."

Old Hector rubbed his palms nervously together. "I know, Autumn, I know. But—your father is not a happy man, my dear. He—he is given to moods of melancholy—of brooding. Moreover, he has never considered the ranch a proper environment for you. I'm afraid it will distress him very much that you have come back."

Autumn flung her head impetuously upward. "That is simple nonsense!" she declared. "Is Monte Carlo my proper environment? Is Mayfair?" She reached for a cigarette on the low lacquered table beside the couch, lit it and waved it triumphantly. "I've put up with erudition and polishing and attempts to marry me off to anemic noblemen until I'm sick of it, and now I'm home. I'm home because I belong here—here in British Columbia—here in the Upper Country—here between the Rockies and the Cascades. Doesn't that sound dramatic? And here I'm going to stick!"

"You'll probably stick, as you say," Hector commented. "You've got enough of Jarvis Dean in you for that. And if you hadn't—there's still the blood of Millicent Odell. If you don't get what you want from sheer stubbornness, you'll get it because no one will have the heart to refuse you."

"A very dangerous combination, eh, Hector?" Autumn observed. She refused a second glass of wine, although Hector filled his own once more. She moved to the mantel and examined one or two of the curios upon it, amulets, ancient dice, an Italian dagger with a jeweled hilt, a string of Inca beads hanging down over the Dutch tiles. Some of the things she could recall, others had been acquired by Hector in his travels since she had last seen him. Presently her eyes fell upon a strange brass object with a strap attached to its top. She picked it up. Instantly a sound of unutterable purity pierced the room with a thin, thrilling resonance that seemed to drift on and on, beyond the confines of the bedecked walls. Startled and entranced with the beauty of the sound, Autumn turned to Hector and saw that he had risen and was coming toward her.

"I picked that up in Spain on a walking trip I took one year through the mountains," he told her. "It is a Basque bell—a Basque sheep-bell."

"I've never heard anything so lovely!" Autumn exclaimed, turning the bell up to examine it more carefully.

Hector looked down at it and whimsical wistfulness came into his face. "I should like you to have it, Autumn," he said. "When you come in again, take it out with you. There is no one else I would give it to, my dear—not even your father."

She looked up at him in quick, pleased surprise, holding the bell so that it chimed again, light and clear as the echo of a fay song in some unearthly place. "Do you really mean that, Hector?" she said softly. "I know how you hate to part with your treasures—and this one—"

"It's very old," Hector murmured, and his eyes narrowed with a strange absent dimness, as though he were looking into the remote past where his spirit abode in a brilliant reality. "Some shepherd—in the Pyrenees, perhaps—heard that bell fifty years ago—when your grandmother was a girl here in these hills, just over from Ireland. When your grandmother was breaking hearts up and down the Okanagan, my dear, some shepherd boy was listening to that plaintive note on some mountain-side—on the other side of the world."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Suede Plays Important Role In Wardrobe of College Girl

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



A GAIN comes up that ever recurring problem—clothes befitting fall and winter activities, formal and informal and for all occasions in between. Campus doings, the football series, evening festivities, motoring, travel, town-wear outfits, the well-equipped wardrobe must be built around all these fashion demands. And here's the big news! Everyone of these issues is being met with fashions in suede.

Every college girl, in fact every woman who aspires to the best that fashion has to offer, should reckon, in fact must reckon, with suede as one of the factors of high importance in the assembling of a wardrobe. What leather workers, designers and style creators have succeeded in doing with suede deserves to be classed with the seven wonders of the world.

Suede has that something about it that lures you on to indulgence, especially this season when the hats, bags, neckwear, belts and countless other accessories are made of it, coats and suits tailored of it, daytime one-piece frocks, the evening gowns and wraps fashioned of it, surpass all previous showings. According to Paris cables and reports of returning buyers this is going to be the biggest suede season ever.

The fact that you can get anything you want these days fashioned of suede from sports togs to evening attire adds to its lure. Then, too, with the tang of autumn in the air comes the urge for clothes that tune to the colorful landscape and as every woman knows when it comes to rich beautiful colors there's nothing in fashion media that can surpass suede. Note the wide scope of coat and dress types expressed in terms of suede as here pictured.

A coat such as shown to the left will grace any grandstand occasion, at the same time that it flings a defy to biting winds on a frosty autumn day. This model is of duck green suede. Jean Parker, featured screen artist, wears it. Self lacing gives the hand touch to this handsome practical coat, the lacing ap-



plied to pockets, front, shoulders and sleeves. Handcarved matching buttons are used for the high double-breasted line. The demure Peter Pan collar, padded shoulders, huge patch pockets and back flare are smart notes. The flowerpot crown bonnet in wood violet suede matches the casual double pouch bag and stitched slippers.

This same screen artist also selects a dress of suede. See it centered in the group. This one-piece frock, in an adorable dahlia red, boasts patch pockets on the simple bodice with an overlay bow of matching suede. The skirt, in four sections, has a slight flare at the hemline. With this costume by Voris of Hollywood, Jean wears gloves that match her dress in exact tone, and her hat (not pictured) is a visor type of moss green suede.

The suit to the right is a likable affair. It is done in amber suede which offsets the Mojave brown of the high-neck blouse, which in turn matches the swagger hat with high crown. A copious purse of suede a shade deeper than the suit complements the ensemble.

The East Indian influence in fashion is reflected in the dinner frock of robin's egg blue suede shown in the inset. It is worn by Joan Perry. A sparkling massive gold bead necklace adds the finishing touch. (Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Patterns You'll Use Repeatedly With Joy

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Dart-Fitted Slip. Large women, to whom fit is all-important, will revel in the smooth slimmness of this dart-fitted slip,



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The Patterns. No. 1768 is designed for sizes 14, 16, 18, 20, 40 and 42. Size 16 requires 3 3/4 yards of 39-inch material without nap, with short sleeves; 4 3/4 yards with long sleeves; 5/8 yard trimming.

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Send your order to The Sewing Circle Pattern Dept., Room 1324, 211 W. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill. Price of patterns, 15 cents (in coins) each.

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

Fine Ethical Taste Displayed by Taft

When President Taft left the White House he went into lecturing.

"I think he enjoyed it quite as much as any other part of his career," says Mark Sullivan—an old hand at lecturing himself. "He went into it with the wish to amass a modest competence. Just before Taft left the White House, Edward Bok asked him to deliver some lectures at Hill school for which Bok would pay a fee. Taft, with some feeling, turned to his wife and said: 'You see, I told you there would be opportunities to make a living.'"

"Taft felt reluctant to practice law," added Sullivan, "because so many of the judges on the federal courts owed their appointments to him."

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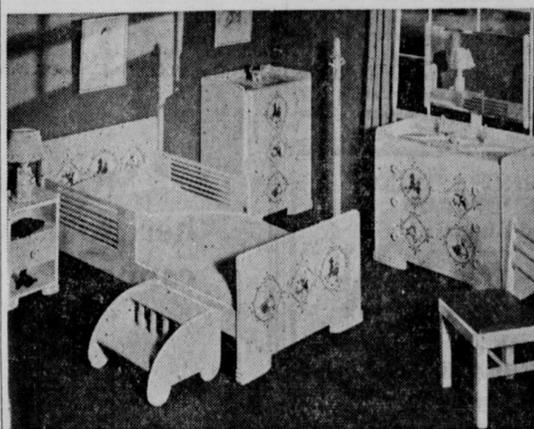
Prologue TO LOVE

A Dramatic, Moving Serial by
MARTHA OSTENSO

Here is a truly great love story, written with the depth of understanding which characterizes Martha Ostensio. It is the saga of young love in the mountains of British Columbia; the story of two young people kept apart by a father's past. PROLOGUE TO LOVE is a story you'll like. It is the warmly human, intensely dramatic tale of people you might know. Don't miss a single installment.

BEGINS TODAY—SERIALLY IN THESE COLUMNS

Modern Swedish Ensemble for Young Hopefuls



In contrast with the past, when only wealthy families could afford special furniture for the nursery and less fortunate children inherited hand-me-downs from adult bedrooms, is the present practice of using juvenile furniture for the coming generation. Moderately well-off families now are buying ensembles like this Swedish modern suite for their hopefuls.

Silver Fox Trim For Cloth Coats

The style prestige of choice silver fox both as a trim for the cloth coat and for the separate fur piece or stole is in nowise abating. Throughout all coat collections you see this fur used to a lavish degree. One of the newer treatments sponsored this fall is the big youthful looking sailor collar which trims many a fashionable coat in advance showings.

Pastel Velvet Is Nice for Evening

Perfectly charming are the new little frocks fashioned of pastel velvet, which are short length and simply styled with no suggestion of formality. Some are made in shirt-waist styling; others in slim svelte princess lines. They answer to the call for a gown not too dressy yet in good taste for informal occasions and fit in well on some other occasions.