

# SOULS for SALE

By RUPERT HUGHES.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

It was just as he started to turn in his bed to go to sleep, that he was awakened by the sound of a door opening. He looked up and saw the shadow of a figure in the doorway. He called out: "Who's there?"

"It's me," said the voice. "I'm here to see you."

"Who?"

"The man who was with you when you were in the hospital. He's here to see you."

"Who?"

"The man who was with you when you were in the hospital. He's here to see you."

He heard her catch her breath in a quick stab, and he was afraid that her prayers would be answered. He hastened to say:

"Let me show you the girl who got the part. Let's see what you think of her."

He called out: "Oh, Helen, put on that dress of Miss Dainty."

"Here," came the hail from the man at the wheel.

And then the white beam shut for a second, and a portrait of a successful model. This girl was pretty where Mem was beautiful. She was superficial and frivolous where Mem was deep and important. But she had the vim and vigor that Mem lacked. She was as sparkling as a diamond. Her eyes danced, modest, flirted. Her lips twinkled with contagious merriment. Mem hated her, but smiled in spite of herself, gazed at her with a look of awe.

Only those who know little or nothing of the dramatic world, or whose own hearts are so hard that they do not care when they would, pretend that the world of make-up and stage is cold or cruel. It is amazing how much of the theatrical or commercial life is spent in making the inevitable grafts of the stage. Mem's eyes were so agitated because she had finally said: "You come and see the test yourself, and then if you think you ought to have the part, you can come and see for yourself."

He opened the door for her and led her into the lot. He called to a man standing on a short flight of steps: "Helen, have you that dress of Miss Woodville's that I took the other day?"

"I guess so."

"Put it on, will you?"

"Sure, go in Number Two."

And now Mem, who had been so modest and reserved in the laboratory, now with confidence and reliance, was to see her own work approved. She felt a sudden rush of joy for her hard judgment on these poor creatures who had had to fail for their artistic love with their features.

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It was a bunch of grapes, smiling with the most precious. Her very fingers were tremulous and her hair about her head was a vineyard wreath. She had her sorrows, her joys, and her woes. It was probable that she was heartbroken because she had been denied a tragic mask and doomed to make people happy instead of profitably sad. But whatever her private woes, she shed gayety. The dark and ultraviolet rays were lost in the prism of her soul and she reflected only in the narrow window of good cheer.

"I see why you took her," Mem smiled. "I don't wonder."

"It's fine of you to say that," said Rookes, and squeezed her hand in grateful compliment. The kindness of this set the girl's eyes off again. She went out into the sunlight sun-bathed and leaders. But being convinced of one's unworthiness and feeling one's defeat are not conclusions; only aches and sorrows.

Before Rookes could escape she was crying again. She loathed herself for her weakness, her pettiness, before a disappointment. She called herself a disappointment. She called herself a disappointment. She called herself a disappointment.

When a picture failed, the producer had a monopoly of the blame and the entire financial loss.

He was the commercial demon, the friend of sordid mercantile ideals. Yet Bernard Shaw, with his intuition masked as satire, had said to him: "There is a hopeless difference between us, Mr. Bernard; you are interested in art; I am interested only in money."

As a matter of truth, he was the most passionate of idealists, compelled to keep the ship afloat. Like the captain of a ship, he had all the food, passengers, and the shifts of winds and weather. He must study the barometer of public favor and determine and keep the prow forging ahead in calm and in head gale.

He had to build the ship, feed the crew, the stocks, and the prima-donnas passengers, and keep them all from mutiny. If the ship sank, they would all desert him and he would go down with it alone. In the hard times he must sacrifice much of the cargo, cut down the pay and the rations, shorten sail. Otherwise, the ship would founder, and none would thank him for taking the necessary measures to keep it alive.

The critics would blame him for many things, but they would never forgive him for letting the ship sink. Success would be both his crime and his condemnation, but failure would be no atonement.

When a picture succeeded, the star, the author, the director, the photographer, the art director, the continuity writer, the distributor, divided the praise, the size of each slice depending on who awarded it.

When a picture failed, the producer had a monopoly of the blame and the entire financial loss.

days later he was engaged for the biggest part in the most beautiful musical piece in years, and ever since he has been a star.

"If the first manager had not fired him the second would never have given him his chance. If you had played that little village vamp you would maybe have played it so badly we should never have engaged you again. But now—you go home and wash the just you wait. Now that's all right."

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

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He had to admit that her smile was artificial; her lips drew back heavily and mirthlessly from her teeth. Her lips were prettier than she had supposed, and her teeth more regular, but her smile was a struggle. Her arch expression was changed. Her glance advanced was labored, and when she executed the mischievous wink her eyelid went down and up as delicately as a roller skate.

She shook her head and wasted a blush of shame on the dark. She could not blame Mr. Rookes for rejecting her. She told him so, and he was careful for that. "I've listened a lot," she said. "I wish I could have another try."

"I wish you could, but the part's fitted for this picture. Another time I'll remember, but it's too late for this picture."

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