JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK.

Copyright, 1924.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

Or there might be something about childhood, whether the family thought about it or not, that explained terrifically. Jo Ellen, instigated by Myrtle Fleck, had sat in a daze through a lecture on psychoanalysis. It had seemed reasonable enough, in the parts she could understand, but it made her uncomfortable. There was a good deal about dreams and she very seldom had a dream. That deficiency in dreams appeared as a defect, or at least as an abnormality. She preferred to be natural. It was made plain in the lecture that being natural was desirable. After that when she had a dream she made a great effort to remember it, to straighten out the thread of it, and this was desperately hard. Her dreams didn't seem to be clear. She concluded that they were not the kind you were expected to have, the kind that could be translated and would explain everything about you.

Myrtle Fleck said she had wonderful dreams. The boys in them were very clear, down to the color of their socks. She often thought she was going to be married in one of the dreams. In fact, she often felt as if this were at the brink of happening. But it never quite did. Some day she was going to a Freudian doctor to have her dreams read. She supposed she would have to tell them all, or nearly all. Anyway, it would be tremendous. . . .

Jo Ellen remembered that Marty had once told her of a dream in which she appeared. It was one day when the two had a picnic on the Point, where the trees are very tall and old and where a lot of them, naked and black, lay dead across the paths, making it a climbing or crawling matter to get around. The funny thing, he said, was that whereas she and Jo Ellen at the beginning of the dream the seemed to be seeing the dream quite circumstantially in the middle of a sandwich) with something like a wand, or maybe it was a sword in her hand, she suddenly became another person. "Do you mean another girl?" Jo Ellen had asked him. O no! he hurried to say. It was a woman—very much older—and impressively majestic. Since nothing in particular had happened in the dream, the listener wondered why he told it. Probably he had been reading something. To Marty the vividness of Jo Ellen had been quite enough to make the dream remarkable, although the transmutation had been stated as its special feature. He had asked Jo Ellen if she believed in dreams. This being before the period of the psychoanalysis lecture, Jo Ellen had merely been amused and perhaps slightly contemptuous. When she had asked, pointedly, what he meant, he had answered, unsatisfactorily, that he was just thinking. He knew that there was such a thing as believing in dreams. As usual, Jo Ellen was disconcerting.

To have Coney Island as something that impended was not what it might have been if there was no intervening secret. That intervening secret affected everything. It had assumed a bulky inconvenience since its beginning. The more she thought of the affair of the boat, the harder she found thinking of the secret as innocent. The whole thing had become harder to think about comfortably. It was harder to imagine not knowing anything more about Stan Lamar. He had escaped. That was that. It would be better not to know anything more about him. You could figure it out quite plainly that when you couldn't go on with a thing, couldn't go on knowing more, it was better to have it stop short, to have it blotted out by darkness. . . . His figure just evaporated into the world that was not Inwood. If you had been foolish, that was a good way to have the foolishness come to any end.

It was a pity, a little more of a pity than at first, that there had to be Emma Traub. No use telling Emma Traub about the boat. Not telling her seemed to make the case more complicated, but having her know threatened, unquestionably, to increase the awkwardness of the secret. If there was something really reprehensible about the boat part of it, no use forcing a guilty knowledge on Emma. Yet she had a curious interest in meeting Emma.

XIV.

The day of the Coney Island trip, although it promised adroitly in the early hours, had several paroxysms of rain with intervals of a nervous brightness. Marty was very enterprising in working out plans he had made. These plans were modified somewhat by the showery incidents and by the state of the streets and shore spaces while these were steaming toward dryness. He carried Jo Ellen's bathing suit, rolled tightly in its rubber cover, and knew precisely when they were to go in, and where. He had a theory about Steeplechase, because he knew she had been there on a birthday with Uncle Ben and had laughed much. On the whole, Steeplechase was not so successful an adventure as he had expected. It appeared that she had laughed chiefly at Uncle Ben, who had committed extraordinary deeds. You might think to hear Jo Ellen that Uncle Ben had Coney Island in an uproar. Where Uncle Ben had been amusing Marty was gallantly solicitous. He took care that Jo Ellen should escape the trick places where gusts of air blew your skirts up. He was somewhat astonished that she should wish to try the slides that tumble you about, and admired intensely her cleverness in not being tumbled shamelessly like some of the other girls. Jo Ellen had no misgivings about dignity. She was fickle as to anything she had seen or tried on earlier visits, whereas Marty liked to do things because he had done them before.

They were fully agreed upon two features of the day: the surf and the dancing. Jo Ellen threw herself into the sea with a reckless hilarity, swimming and plunging so vigorously that Marty was kept at the limit of his speed. Once when her cap came off, showing the flash of her hair, a squealing voice piped, "Gee! the ocean's on fire!" Marty scowled angrily. Fortunately the voice was not to be identified.

On the sand in the sun he built a hillock against which Jo Ellen was to rest her back while her hair dried. As they sat half buried, he exclaimed exultantly that it would be fine to be where you had miles and miles of sand and where no mob kept you from seeing the blue rim, on and on. He didn't say anything about holding her hand in such a picture, but the wish for this, or for some equivalent adjustment, was in his voice.

The best dance was in the big pavilion, where you could trot around a circle that expanded like an equator and where the band had almost the symphonic splendid Jo Ellen liked to imagine. Marty was a better dancer than Jo Ellen had believed. He was prolific in new steps, which he introduced casually. When Jo Ellen followed them all he remarked with fervor that their way of dancing together was simply perfect, as if they were cabaret partners or something.

They had agreed upon a shore dinner at Calingo's and Jo Ellen found opportunity to notice Marty's older manner, particularly in the matter of the waiter, who was fat and red, with a bristling black mustache. Marty was peremptory with the waiter, but the waiter was not to be affected by any sort of manner. He gave the impression of being deeply thoughtful about something else, and Marty had to repeat everything a second time. All that Marty contrived to say appeared to be of no importance whatever. The waiter spoke but a single word.

"Beer?" he asked absently.

"No," answered Marty.

When the waiter turned coldly away Jo Ellen concluded that if they didn't want beer they were beneath consideration and that nothing further could be expected. Some time later they saw the owner of the black bristles standing with his hands under his apron, his face more acutely red, as if in fury, or shame, or in the distress of some secret illness, staring into the alley traffic. Nevertheless, the shore dinner came at the moment when hope of it had been abandoned, and it was memorably good. Jo Ellen, having no cares, ate enthusiastically.

"I wouldn't give such a person a tip," she said as the end of the dinner drew near.

But at about this time the waiter began to seem less withdrawn, as if he had mastered the family grief or whatever it was that gnawed behind his frayed shirt front. He even betrayed a fear that some little detail of the feast, like the position of the sugar in relation to the dessert spoons, might fail of an utter nicety, a perfection exquisitely complete. Jo Ellen concluded that Marty, at the last, felt sorry for him, and Marty wished Jo Ellen wouldn't watch him while he paid the bill. It would have been better if a man-to-man matter could have been conducted without an audience. When the waiter, by a flipping motion, juggler style, had gathered the tip in the one hand that lifted the change tray, his earlier aloofness returned.

So did Marty's cheerfulness. They went forth into the outer turmoil with buoyant steps. The air reeked with fragments of jazz.

XV.

They had not talked much at the beach. Jo Ellen's responsiveness toward every painted spectacle, her birdlike alertness for each shifting phase of the scene, every barker's bark, every fragment of tune, her comfortable curiosity that could see stir without being stirred beyond a happy participation, were baffling to Marty's conversational impulses.

Yet his sense of well-being needed to be spoken. The feeling of approach to the status of a successful male creature expanded him, and Jo Ellen caught the signs of a voluble period.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

THE NEBBS

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY.

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess

Barney Google and Spark Plug

A "RARE CHANCE," BUT BARNEY MAKES IT.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck

(Copyright 1924)

BRINGING UP FATHER

Registered U. S. Patent Office

SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus

(Copyright 1924)

JERRY ON THE JOB

THIS NONSENSE MUST STOP

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban

(Copyright 1924)

Ain't It a Grand and Glorious Feeling

By Briggs

ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield

It's Absolutely Necessary.

New York

--Day by Day--

By O. O. M'INTYRE.

New York, July 3.—Amid the squalor of foreign colonies dotting the east side are thousands who could live in comparative ease and comfort in other communities. Yet they hang together not because of companionship but because of food.

The foreign colonies are no different from any other poorer section save in the matter of gastronomics. The Americanzation begins at Ellis Island when relatives equip new arrivals with clothes that do not distinguish them from natives.

But when it comes to tickling the palate the foreigner is at sea. He finds, outside the foreign colonies, onions are boiled and so are the potatoes. The menu lacks zest. Instead of garlic and red pepper there are untempting sweets.

The alien taste rarely changes. If the immigrant is used to his native strudels, pie is a poor substitute and he cannot reconcile our thin soups to heavy borsch. You find in London and Paris expatriates who mourn only because of the food.

Recently there came to a New York hospital an Italian in the throes of delirium. He was pitifully crying for spaghetti and red wine. For a month he had been working for a truck gardener on Long Island and could not abide the fare there. At a hospital he was given what he craved and recovered.

The foreigner, too, is used to a light breakfast—a porridge or a bit of toast. Luncheon is a heavy meal and here the process is reversed. Breakfast is a food jamboree and luncheon is a tid-bit. The most impressive thing about a foreign colony are the cafes.

Tenement homes conform to American customs. Children play American games. Young girls bob their hair and youths wear the flashy output of the one flight ups. But in cafes nothing is changed. One enters them to find himself back again in the old world so far as food goes.

The term "sap" is used to be applied to the country simpleton. It denoted a heavy set of adenoids, an expression of vacuity and a mentality that would not propel its owner out of a shower. But it would seem the big city has gobbled the spot. The "sap" is more of a New York product than of the cross-roads. Here the term is applied to the fellow with a ready check book and a weakness for gold diggers. The "sap" is the reason for the covert charge. Almost every week his endearing "ootsie tootsie" letters are being read to 12 perfect strangers.

But after all, the New York "sap" can fool us country boys. Not so long ago—and I've lived in New York before the Woolworth building was begun—a suave gentleman called on me to interest me in a get-rich-quick scheme. I was to pay him $5 a week from then on or something like that. And live in old age plenty. I paid for many weeks before the awakening. The other day I read where he had tossed a pearl necklace over the footlights in a bunch of roses to a show girl. Then he went into bankruptcy. The show girl was married to a chorus man. And perfectly happy.

New York's biggest department store on Fifth avenue is shortly to open. It is a marvel of up-to-date efficiency. The elevators open automatically. Purchases are delivered anywhere within Manhattan within a half hour and the head floorwalker said he did not care whether Mrs. Astorbilt ever came into the establishment or not. They want quick sales and cash sales. The store occupies an entire block and the shoe department occupies two floors. Rich people in New York do most of their buying in Paris—especially millinery and dresses. This store is to profit from the great middle class which will take a certain pride in telling neighbors of buying on "the avenue."

(Copyright, 1924.)