

JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK.

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(Continued from Yesterday.)

"You run and tend to him. I'll be along in five minutes."

Jo Ellen did run back. Marty had twisted into a sitting position on the sofa. He sobbed again when he saw her.

"He's coming. In five minutes. You must stay as I put you."

He submitted to being stretched out again with his feet on the chair.

"It isn't hurting so badly?"

"No," he said. "The pain... it isn't that. But—don't you see... I can't move... here—" he ran his trembling fingers over the thighs. "Numb. Funny feeling. You don't think, do you?"

"Don't let us think until the doctor comes. If you'll be good I'll go down and watch and fetch him in."

The five minutes seemed to have the dimensions of an hour. She thought it an outrage that he should not be breathless when he came.

"Well, young man," he grunted when Jo Ellen brought him in, "what have you been doing?"

Marty stared with his terror-stricken eyes.

"I don't know," he said.

The doctor took off Marty's coat and vest.

"You were hurt in the war?"

Marty nodded.

"Where was it?" His fingers were busy.

"In the back... lower. Yes... there."

"Where I'm touching you now?"

"Yes."

"Does that hurt?"

"A little. That's where the pain got me when I tumbled."

"You were in the hospital over there?"

"Yes."

"An operation?"

"They had to sew me. It was a gash."

"From a shell, I suppose?"

Marty repeated with a curious absent sound. "A shell."

The doctor was silent while his fingers rested on Marty's wrist.

"You'll have to be patient until we see what's happened. You gave yourself a jolt." Then he looked up at Jo Ellen. "A glass of water."

Jo Ellen hurried into the little kitchen and heard the doctor following. With the glass, unfiled, in her hand she turned to him. "Is it anything serious?"

"Serious? It's serious to be hit by a fragment of shell—in the spinal region. You don't want me to lie to you? A lesion—this may have completed it. That would be serious." He was opening his drug case, and Jo Ellen dumbly filled the glass at the faucet.

The doctor said, "not so much."

then dropped a pellet into the glass. "Put him to bed," he said, "and keep him quiet."

It was as he spoke that his eyes followed a white speck—perhaps it had rested in Jo Ellen's hair—followed it on its way to the floor. As his foot crunched the grain of rice he asked bluntly:

"When were you married?"

"This afternoon," answered Jo Ellen and understood his intent glance.

"And you not being an experienced nurse," he continued casually, "I'll give you a lift—I mean him a lift. Get the bed ready." Glancing at the glass, into which he decided to drop another pellet: "He'll sleep. Keep him quiet in the morning until I come."

Having swallowed the drink, Marty was gathered up by the doctor and carried into the bedroom.

Jo Ellen sat on the edge of the sofa, her hands knotted. She knew that the doctor looked at Marty's back. She heard the doctor say: "You've touched it and seen things. Keep your nerve. Don't worry. I'll look you up early tomorrow." She had an impression of the doctor sitting beside the bed, and that he said something in a low tone to Marty. It might have been simply the word "quiet." The silence became frightful. Why didn't the doctor go?

At last he came out and retrieved his hat and drug case.

It seemed to Jo Ellen that a sentence of awful silence had been imposed upon the world.

With his hand on the knob of the door the doctor turned, then moved over to where she stood, in a stiff daze.

"Too bad," he said, with a hand on her shoulder. "I'm as sorry as if... as if I had known you both. You look like the kind that would be plucky. Don't you worry, either. Go to bed. He won't wake till morning." She stood beside the closed door. There seemed to be only one thing that had to be settled at once. Should she telephone to Marty's mother? It would be a knife in her throat to do it, but if it had to be done—at once—she would do it.

Very likely his mother would not have reached home.

She might still be in Inwood... No, she couldn't call Inwood.

In the morning... after the doctor had said his say... after Marty woke up. Yes, in the morning. She was sure Marty wouldn't wish her to call his mother yet.

She sat again on the edge of the sofa, her eyes following the features of the room, all that had been placed by their collusion. The effect was very good. Particularly "homey," Marty had insisted.

She unhooked the shoulder flap of her dress and began to cry silently.

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JERRY ON THE JOB

IF A THING IS DEAD IT CAN'T BE KILLED

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New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. McINTYRE.

New York, July 29.—New York breeds the worst and most vicious type of criminal. This is a phase of the great city that is overlooked in the gust of boasting of its pomp. Despite its great charities the metropolis is a city that neglects many outcasts.

The bobbed-haired bandit was a striking example. New York allowed her and thousands of others to drift into the dank basements where cheap excitement and twisted romance go hand in hand. She at one time or other came under the rule of all the agencies of righteousness.

None of them set her feet in the right path and kept them there. At 15 she was a child laborer and like hundreds of other spent the evenings picking up snuff on the Brooklyn water front. She was the child of a drunken father and a deserting mother.

She went straight from the basement to prison just as hundreds of others are doing. The other day I walked through some of the mean, narrow streets running off the Bowery—Mulberry, Roosevelt, Baxter and others. I saw scores of children living in dirt, neglect and squalor.

Many had already started on careers of begging and stealing. Their pinched faces showed undernourishment and they habit themselves in rags to beg. A boy of 9 was smoking a cigarette on the stoop of a tenement home. Another about the same age was expectorating amber sprays of tobacco juice.

"Mister give a dime for the movies?" begged one. He was asked what kind of movies he liked. "Killing and shooting," he replied. Querulous mothers were lazing through the day in dark hallways most of them reeking with fumes of whisky.

Fathers are odd-job men who spend many weeks in prison for petty offenses each year. New York is apparently too big for its people to catch the undercurrents of misery that swirl in the tenements.

The poorest man in our town was a fellow who cut weeds in backyards and beat carpets for a living. He had six children and lived in a lean-to across the creek. He earned 50 cents a day when he worked and was given the noon dinner by those who employed him. His squalor seemed pathetic, yet he lived like a prince compared to those in New York tenements. He gave his children a grammar school education and they had substantial food from his garden. One of his boys became a public accountant and a daughter a trained nurse.

The chorus man is a pathetic figure in theatrical life. Rarely does he rise above the chorus. Outside of theatrical producers, I have met few who knew a chorus man. They are clannish and live in a world all their own—a world of theatrical boarding houses. They dress well and of course are good looking—an asset they must have to be in the chorus. Jealousy that is so rife in the theater world never touches them. They have great reverence for the more fortunate players with whom they appear. Just now the chorus man has struck some very lean days. There are only about five shows in town employing them.

One of the popular chop houses in the Roaring Forties is owned by a vaudeville actor who is on the road most of the time. It bears his first name and is a haunt of the two-day artists. A sign on the wall reads: "We know you are all good, but most of our patrons are more interested in food than talk."

An honest taxi driver returned a jewel case containing \$75,000 worth of jewels that had been left in his car to the owner. His reward was a half dozen silk handkerchiefs.

Half undressed, she lay curled on the sofa, staring awake, for a long time. The walls of the room seemed to stare back out of the dark. Street lights filtered through the open windows to create fantastic shadows. Occasional street noises had a cruelly indifferent inflection. Sometimes they seemed contemptuous, or to be winking, or to be laughing at the way things happened in the world, things people tried to hide or to pretend. There was, too, a fearful solemnity in the silence, and even in the sounds, as if the monstrous breathing of life went on with no regard at all for anyone's individual miseries. If you were very happy you were willing to be alone with your happiness. You were glad the rest of life didn't interfere. Happy lovers, for instance, hated intrusions. Perhaps they didn't ask life to look the other way. They simply didn't care a whoop about the rest of life. When you were unhappy you wished life would relent and lend a hand, or at least show a decent interest. But it wouldn't do that. And it was best that it should be so. The present situation proved that. Intrusion would magnify the calamity... if it was a calamity. There was a way of knowing that in the morning you might not turn out that Marty's hurt was less a disaster than it had seemed. The shock of the stumble had done something. The doctor's face indicated that he knew precisely what it had done. But doctors made mistakes, and they had little tricks to fool you—for good reasons, no doubt. They couldn't tell you everything. Getting Marty into bed and doping him might mean much or little. It might mean a night's sentence or a life sentence. You were free to go on guessing what the doctor might mean by this or that. As for this third figure which she had rushed out to find, there was the doctor side of him and the man side of him—say the gentleman side of him. You couldn't be sure which side was speaking. Perhaps in the morning he would be more completely the doctor.

In the morning... Yes, in the morning—that is, when it was the day after the wedding you wouldn't be asking questions of the darkness. You would know something, and it would make a lot of

The Days of Real Sport



By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield

