

# JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK.

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(Continued From Yesterday.)

She would not have said, in the morning, that she had made up her mind. It was impossible to believe that such a process had proceeded. She knew only that at the end of the day she would turn downtown. A decision of any sort, even a desperate decision, would have a lift in it. This was not like a decision. It was like a yielding, a kind of blind acceptance, that carried no glory of resolution. Perhaps it was more like looking beyond, as at a road, and seeing yourself moving ahead without having said to yourself or to any other that you would go that way. You found the act beginning to happen. It had begun to happen when you saw yourself on the road. That was all.

In the same way the day's work had an inevitable cast. It seemed inevitable that Cannerton should come in, and that he should be not only sober but solemn. He had a piece of typewriting which he asked her to put with the other papers she was to place under Eberly's eye. Cannerton, despite his papers, had a theory that Eberly's eye had receptive, or at least weak, movements when a proper strategy might seize an advantage. The innocent expectation was that Jo Ellen would use this strategy.

When it was too late Jo Ellen knew that Eberly's mood had swerved quite out of human reach, and that this was not one of the days on which tactical tactics could be applied with any hope.

Since it was one of her own bad days she was drawn up harshly when she lifted the Cannerton papers, with the bluish slip on top, and glared at her.

"Did anybody speak to you about this?"

"Yes," she said.

"That's was a mistake on your part. I can't be worked. You ought to know that by this time. Your job isn't to practice tricks in the forest of anybody who wants to put over something."

"I didn't think it was a trick," Jo Ellen retorted.

"I don't care what you call it. He knew it was a trick and you let him make you a partner in it. You're not supposed to be his partner here."

"But—I hope you don't believe I know what it is?"

"Then it should have had your notation—that something was added—anything to show that there was no pussyfooting and that you were my secretary?"

"I'm sorry," said Jo Ellen with a furious brevity.

"I hope you are," Eberly snapped the papers into the wire basket. "I hope I shan't have to feel that traps

are being laid. I hope you'll get it into your head that they'll try to work you. Naturally. Why shouldn't they?—if they found you could be worked—and I let you work me?"

"If you find me unsatisfactory—"

Jo Ellen began.

Eberly waved his hand. "I find you young. When you are young you have to let age snarl at you. Calling you young is not a criticism, or even a comment. It is a statement of fact. I want you young. But I must retain the privilege of informing you, at appropriate times and in appropriate ways."

"I don't think—"

"You don't think the appropriate-ness is beyond question. Perhaps it isn't. The point is, that the question is one I disagree—assuming that my inappropriateness but yours. If you understand that, we're through."

Jo Ellen stiffened. "Through—"

"Through discussing."

"I thought you were firing me," Jo Ellen remarked coolly. "But her face reddened."

"No," said Eberly. "You may be all wisdom, but you'll be quite clever enough to know you're being fired if that should ever happen here. Don't let us talk about anything so disagreeable—assuming that it would be as unpleasant to you as it would be to me. I hope it would. I like to think you're interested—and that your interest will never be divided. That's what I was getting at. If you want to be good to me you won't tell me how this happened. I don't want to know."

"Even if I wasn't working you?"

Eberly paused long enough to look at her for the first time. His eyes seemed to be occupied chiefly, in that instant, with her hair, as if he had never sufficiently observed its color.

"You have certain qualities"—after the glance he might have meant a decorative quality—that I admire too much to test in argument. He got up and took his hat from the rack. "Don't let them work you."

The incident was disagreeable chiefly for the speculation it kindled, and this became formidable at the hour of leaving the office. Going downtown was a crisis in itself. Carrying the boxes of the talk filled the departure with a special confusion. A few words one way or the other, and she might have been leaving the office for the last time.

No. She would probably have been there until Friday. If he had taken her up when she said "unsatisfactory," this part of the great adventure would have been over. A something in Eberly's manner hadn't turned on a fire extinguisher on her flames, this particular job would have burned up. Eberly was wrong. She was sure that. Something that could be wrong and get away with it, because he was boss. Uncle Ben would have quoted the old one: that he did it for the reason the blacksmith liked the person—because he wanted to and because he could. There were other bosses. No trouble about another job. But the thing was a knifish reminder of how it would feel to be going downtown, with no office to return to . . . to have but one job, in a cage . . . like so many other women. One job, fenced in, day after day.

People got used to such things, the way they got used to crowds like this one on the way to the elevated. Most of these people seemed to be driven by something. To get home. A good many of them wouldn't care much for home after they got there. But they were driven. Perhaps they made one another hurry . . . or there might be something behind them that they didn't like.

In the tangle at Sixth avenue an elbow jostled her. Almost at the same moment a voice said, "Sorry!"

He was a good-looking young man—but he could not look. She knew at once that he was blind. Yet he had a peaceful, unworried face. It was odd to discover how tranquil he was in the midst of the scuffle.

"Are you going to take a Sixth avenue car?"

He appeared to know that she hadn't moved away, perhaps that she was still peering at him.

"No," she faltered.

"I wonder," he said—"I wonder if you'd put me on a Sixth avenue, going uptown."

"Certainly I will," Jo Ellen returned, and took hold of his arm. He was quite assured. The upsurge of the traffic left no sign upon him. He and Jo Ellen might have been moving in a garden path.

Waiting at the curb, Jo Ellen ventured to ask, "Was it the war?"

He shook his head, without solemnity. "No, a cross circuit—live wire."

They moved when the traffic policeman's hand went high. As the car drew up, a huge woman pushed her way in front of them, lunging violently. Two men who undertook a similar maneuver encountered Jo Ellen's arm. The blind man, finding the step, smiled cheerfully. "Thank you very much," he said.

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## New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. McINTYRE.

New York, Aug. 28.—Counts, dukes, princes and others of noble lineage are becoming as numerous in Manhattan as strap hangers in the subway. At a charity bazar the other day 60 of the guests were of the nobility.

Manhattan thrills to the superlative. Its people like to sing that the buildings are the highest, the shops the most magnificent, the ladies the loveliest, and the cafes the grandest. And society gets a corresponding kick in having guests of the peerage.

The moment a hand kissing prince arrives he is rushed off his feet with invitations for this and that. Mansion doors are thrown open and he is fawned upon by everybody from a movie star to the plump and haughty dowager.

This obsequence has resulted in many spurious nobles living in soft life. All that is required is a floridly accent and a monocle. In one of the smart hotels off Madison avenue three dukes were found to be merely duking at night and working in Wall street by day.

They admitted they were accepting certain pousirs from social climbers merely to attend functions. One made \$800 in one week in this fashion. He had just given up his clerkship when it was discovered he was the son of a grocer in a small Pennsylvania town.

It is quite astonishing the swank a monocle furnishes. In a certain hotel there was a young fellow who moved from a Harlem rooming house. He had no baggage, but when he registered he had a monocle. He was able to live there six weeks without being asked for a settlement.

The pallid monotony of the social life of New York aids this itch for nobility. In attempting exclusiveness they must see the same people doing the same things year in and year out. And as a result they welcome a new face.

New York is one of the earliest places in the world for one to cover up his identity. There was the famous "Wolf of Wall Street," who is known as David Lamar. Nobody knows his real name but himself. In Omaha 30 years ago he conducted a stationery store under the name of David H. Lewis. In Mexico City he was known as David Lehman, and in certain East Side haunts he is David Levy. There is also a famous hotel beat who registered at one hotel 23 times under the same number of different names.

Scandal affects the box office value of an actor, but not in the way it might be imagined. The trend is upward. Three stage players who were involved in notoriously disgraceful affairs were found to be more popular than ever and, as a result received increases in salaries.

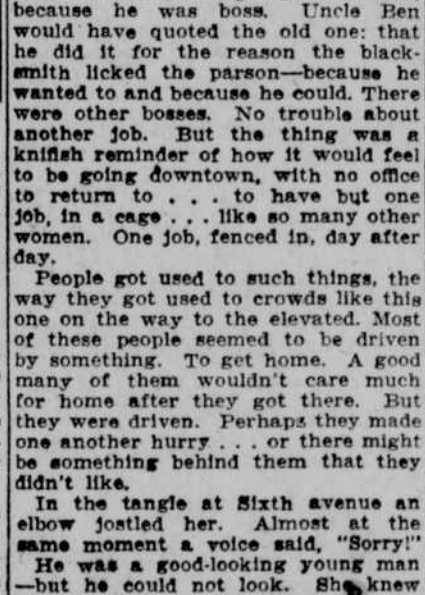
One of the actors involved complained to a comedian he couldn't sleep since scandal touched him. "Why don't you get a paper mache gutter and sleep in it. Then you would feel at home," said the comedian.

This is one of those days when thoughts refuse to jell. For some time I've sat looking out the window. A blind accordion player on an opposite corner is rendering appropriately "What will I do?" A stenographer is at a window priming and a wisecracking and slightly hicoughing friend interrupts meditation with the telephonic inquiry: "If three seven is 21, how much are a bunch of nines?"

This is the sort of a day when I'd like to read Fred Kelly's book, "The Wisdom of Laziness," but I'm just a little bit too overcome by ennui to turn the pages.

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