

at him out of cold, brown eyes, he knew. It was Half Pint!

Suddenly his mind went back to his early days of seven and eight years. He remembered how satisfied he felt after poking his tongue out at an enemy. He did so at his neighbor. But his neighbor's mind had gone back to the twelve-year stage. A dainty, tiny, gloved hand went up and the tiny thumb touched the end of the funny nose with the freckles on it and the tiny finger wriggled as if for exercise.

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Something, he thought, had to be done about this fresh girl.

He was entering the bank when one of his admireses caught up with him. She was Vernita, with the light brown complexion and brown hair. She was wearing a blue turban and a blue dress. The dress was too long for morning wear. He wondered whether Half Pint would wear a long dress in the morning.

"Hello, Pretty Boy," she said smiling up at him. She saw that his eyes were black. "What's the matter? You aren't angry because I met you, are you?"

"I," said Prescott, "am not angry with you. But I shall be pretty soon."

He then walked away.

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"Pretty Boy, why didn't you come to see me last night? You haven't got another girl, have you? Because if you have, I'll—"

Prescott stopped and looked down at her.

"What?" he demanded.

"Oh, Pretty Boy, don't you love me any more? Come over to my apartment tonight."

"I'm busy tonight."

"You fool! Do you think—"

He had walked away.

"What about Tuesday?—Wednesday?"

"I'll be over Monday," he said carelessly, touched his hat and walked into the bank.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday he worked in his garden. Dressed, went to work, and went to see his girl-friends and thought about Half Pint. What was her name? How could he get revenge? Why wasn't she impressed by his—er—manly beauty? Where did she get her nerve from? Of course, he did not care one thing about her—if hating her did not count. Half Pint was one girl he really hated. What was her real name?

His Aunt Louise told him their last name was Wilson. She also told him that they had a "lovely" parlor suite, but the dining room suite was "simply horrid." She also told him that the Wilsons were still paying for their "lovely" parlor suite and their "simply horrid" dining room suite.

What he wanted to hear about was that half-pint sized imp.

Friday, he was sitting in the bank counting the number of perfect legs that came into the bank. He was not bothered about the faces. Too many women were on his hands now. He had just counted the fourth pair of perfect legs when he caught his breath sharply. He had seen the perfect, perfect pair of legs.

The perfect, perfect pair of legs were held up by a tiny pair of green shoes.

Since—the perfect, perfect pair of legs were coming toward his window, he did not bother to look at her face. Only a pretty woman could have had such legs. She would be smiling up at him in a few minutes.

A bank book was pushed under the window to him by a tiny red brown hand with tiny, pointed, green nails. Prescott looked at that hand sharply. There was something familiar about that hand. He had a feeling that he had felt—he looked up suddenly and into a pair of cold, brown eyes.

"You!" he gasped.

"Of course it's me! Who else do you suppose I could be?"

She pushed a five-dollar bill through the window and added: "Hurry up!"

Silently he wrote in the book. He noticed that her name was Hephzibeth. He wondered how anyone could name her child a name like that. He didn't know it, but she wondered the same thing.

"Thank you," she said coldly. Her lips curled scornfully as she added: "Pretty Boy."

He watched the little green-clad figure with the hat perched on the side of her red head, as she walked out of the bank.

Somewhat he didn't like the way she had called him, "Pretty Boy." It sounded foolish and made him feel foolish. That girl always made him feel foolish.

He turned to wait on another customer. After the customer had gone, the telephone rang.

"Is that you, Pretty Boy?" came a baby voice over the wire. "This Honey and—"

"This," said Prescott, "is Alwin Prescott," and hung up the receiver. ceiver.

This made him feel better.

Prescott chuckled to himself all day, Monday. Vernita, with the brown hair and complexion was peevish at his inattention.

"What's the matter, Pretty Boy?" asked Vernita.

"Nothing," he answered. But there was a far away happy look in his eyes.

"You're not paying any attention to me," said she, snuggling up closer to him.

He put his arm around her. He had gotten even with Half Pint. It was really wonderful!

"Kiss me, Pretty Boy."

He kissed her. He had gone to Watson's for lunch with Laverne, with the blue eyes and blond hair. Who should walk up to him to serve him—but Half Pint?

"You're not thinking about me," Vernita pouted.

He had ordered several dishes, sent them back, ordered some more, complained and sent them back. He

had ordered milk. When she brought it, he declared he had ordered ginger ale. In short, he had given her hell. In the end, he had walked out without leaving her a tip. He had never had a better time in his life.

"Pretty Boy!"

He became conscious of Vernita.

"What?"

"Don't you love me?"

"No."

He took her in his arms and kissed her. Once, twice, then he decided it was too hot to make love. Vernita had started using a perfume he hated and it was always stuffy in her apartment. She always wanted to make love when it was too hot. Vernita just made him sick and tired. This was his last visit there.

"Let's go out riding," he said abruptly.

"But, Pretty Boy, it's eleven. Let's just stay here." She put her arms around him and smiled up at him.

"Come on. I'm going."

"Oh, all right," she pouted.

The cool sweet breeze soon drove the pout from Vernita's mouth. It even made Prescott feel more civil toward her.

After driving miles and miles he turned off in an apparently deserted road. He snapped off his lights and began to tell Vernita how beautiful she was. She laughed softly and put her arms round his neck.

"Do you love me?"

Prescott frowned. She would ask him that. He didn't love any woman.

"Do you?"

A familiar voice saved him. Both looked in the direction it came from. This road was not deserted.

"Are you a fool?" came the familiar voice.

"Don't be like that, baby?"

Alwin took Vernita's arms from round his neck. That voice was very familiar.

"Some fools," laughed Vernita.

"Let me go! Do you want to get hurt?"

"Say, what do you suppose I brought you here for?"

Prescott straightened.

"You damn fool. Let me go!"

Prescott opened the car door. There was only one person who said "Damn!" like that. How dared she come out here alone in a car with a guy like that! The next instant he was out of the car and running toward the other car, with a flash light in his hands.

"Hey," growled the man, blinking, "what the hell are you doing?"

"Half Pint," said Prescott, "get out of that car!"

"No," said Half Pint unsteadily, "I can take care of myself."

"Mind your own business, beautiful!"

"If you don't get out of that car, I'm going to take you out!"

"Oh yeah? I brought this dame here and she's gonna stay here! See? Do you want me to break your pretty nose?"

Prescott felt sorry for this poor man. Did he really think he could break his "gorgeous" nose?

"Get out!" he said to Half Pint.

"Just take me out!"

"I warned you," snarled the man, "now I'm gong to break your pretty nose."

Vernita let out a loud squeal as the man got out of the car.

Suddenly Prescott's fist shot out and landed on the unknown's chin, as Half Pint's hand had landed on his cheek before. The unknown sank to the ground.

Prescott took Half Pint out of the car and deposited her between Vernita and himself. Vernita sniffed.

"Miss Hephzibeth," (he felt Half Pint wince and didn't blame her) "Wilson—Miss Vernita Jones."

"How do?" said Vernita coldly.

"Hello," said Half Pint just as

coldly. Then to Prescott, "I know how to take care of myself!"

"Yes? You sure have a poor way of showing it." This time he was the winner.

"I wish you'd just mind your own business!"

"Listen, Half Pint, I—"

"Don't call me that! My name is Midge!"

Vernita spoke up.

"Oh, Pretty Boy—"

"Alwin," said he.

"But Pret—"

"Alwin!"

She shot Half Pint, or Midge a frozen glance.

"Miss Hephzibeth—"

"Midge," corrected Midge.

"Miss Heph—"

"Midge!"

"The next time you go out with some guy, Half Pint—"

"Midge!"

"Half Pint!"

"Midge! If you insist on calling me that, I'll call you—you—"

He thought she would say, "Pretty Boy."

"Call you—Quart!"

"What a name!"

Vernita laughed. Alwin and Midge did not like that laugh.

"I thought you were known for not bothering with anything but pretty women," she laughed nastily. "I see you're very interested in this

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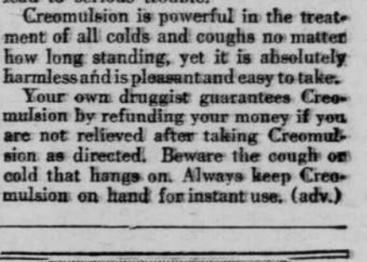
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