

ped Mark. "We-"

with the Woman?"

in this house.

ed on his chief.

got.

face working.

ly at Van Dyke.

latter

lerstand-even yet?"

"By telephone. If-"

"I think not," denied Van Dyke, the

cold sorrow in his voice now apparent

"So much the better!" declared

Blake, again picking up the telephone.

Van Dyke, in gloomy wonder, turn-

"You have often boasted, Jim," said

"No," growled Blake, "I don't. Out

with it, man! What are you trying to

get at? Don't beat about the bush.

You're wasting time that we haven't

Van Dyke faced Roberston; his lean

"Mark." he said, tapping the dupli-

cate telephone list, "your house in New York is charged here with two

calls. We thought it was a mistake

interrupted him. The telephone was

set down by a hand that shook as

though from palsy. For a single in-

stant the heavy-lidded eyes were whol-

ly, starkly unveiled in a glare of un-

believing horror. Then they turned

Wanda Kelly wound her arms tight-

greenish and flabby, the stern jaw

A wordless gurgle from Jim Blake

fact you see things just a second soon-

to every one. "The Woman is here

Bellefonte, Pa., September 12, 1913.

The WOMAN A Novel by Albert Payson Terhune

Founded on William C. de Mille's Play of the same name

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"Pardon me, Robertson," intervened Standish, as he saw Grace's last barrier break down; "but I advise you to clear the room before you let her speak. Three people here already know the name. I advise you to keep the number as small as possible.'

"That is our affair, not yours," retorted Mark. "She shall tell us all. Inside of a few hours the whole country is going to know that name."

"Mark," begged Grace, "let me tell it to you alone!"

"No," refused the husband. "It's too stupidly upon Grace who bowed her late now to spare any one's feelings. head in a spasm of hysterical uncheck-ed weeping before the panic query in And witnesses are necessary in an affair like this. It concerns us all. And their gaze. we must move quickly."

"Mr. Standish," he went on with a savage joy that rent away the last remnant of the velvet from the iron beneath. "It's been a long fight. But you couldn't beat the organization. You've been howling for a fight to a finish. This is the finish."

"It is the finish," agreed Standish, his deep voice infinitely sad. "And I am sorry for it. I don't think you need me here any longer, gentlemen. And I will barely have time to reach the capitol before the bill comes to a vote. Good night."

He looked furtively at Grace. But she was staring blankly ahead of her with eyes that saw nothing.

"Good night," he repeated. "I would have spared you, Robertson. But you would have it."

And he was gone. His words had 'fallen on deaf ears. The men were leaning forward eagerly to catch Grace's first syllable

"And now," Mark demanded, as his wife still hesitated, "who is she, Grace?

3

Blake had forestalled her answer. He crossed the room to the telephone "We win!" he was chuckling. "It's a way we've got. Hell's full of losers. and held her.

And I'm still loss-proof."

earlier, tak. I'll few m ing no longer even a passive part in the scene.

Robertson had forced his own dazed | And at the sound, the dumb devil that "What does that matter now?" snapbrain back into a semblance of its "She never heard of the affair until former strong control. "Van Dyke," he said as calmly as if early this evening. So it must be

since then that she talked with the he were giving a routine order, "you Woman about it. Miss Kelly has been will have every trace of this story deon duty downstairs ever since six stroyed tonight. It must never get o'clock. She has not left this hotel. beyond this room. I can count on How could she have communicated you?"

"Certainly," agreed Van Dyke with equal coolness

There was no hint in his voice or in his manner that Mark's command entailed the defeat of a bill, the collapse of millions of dollars worth of stocks, a probably panic on Wall street and the money interests' total if temporary loss of power in con-For the moment, the great gress. corporation lawyer chanced to be also he, "that you owe your success to the a man.

On his way from the room, Van er than other people. Don't you un-Dyke paused beside Blake's chair. "Jim," he said hesitatingly, "I'm go-

ing over to the capitol. Shall I tell Mullins to let the bill come to a vote?"

"Yes," answered Blake, without stirring or so much as looking up.

"Yes," he said again, and his voice was dead. "Yes-I'm-I'm licked." As Van Dyke opened the dor, Wan-

da made as though to follow him. "If you don't need me any further, Mr. Blake," she said gently, "I'll go."

Blake lifted a palsied hand in nega tion

"In there," he muttered, pointing toward the door that led to the inner "I must speak to you-afterrooms. ward.

When the old man raised his eves Mark and Grace alone were left in the room with him. Robertson was standing moveless unseeing. Grace's sobs broke the tense silence, as she fought weakly for self-control. Blake crossed over to her. She rose at his approact.

er about the heavy body. But Grace "Daughter," said Blake, almost timneither felt the contact nor heard the idly, "they've all gone. None of them whisper of eager futile comforting. will tell. But there's one thing we've Blake stared open-mouthed, his face got to know. I'm with you, no matter what you've done. But-but-tell me oose, the keen eyes bulging. Mark -that-that this was all over and-Robinson was still frowning perplexedand done with-before you married Mark!' "Don't you understand?" pleaded the

"Father!"

The Woman faced him in dry-eyed "No, I don't," returned Mark. "What horror. Every trace of weeping was have the two phone calls to my home seared away by the flame of sudden got to do with-?" indignation. And, at the sight, Jim "Suppose the second call were not

Blake gave a great wordless cry and a mistake-?" hesitated Van Dyke. gathered her into his arms as though Robinson's face went purple. The she were a baby. "Oh, my little girl!" he choked,

big veins near his temples swelled grotesquely. He took an involuntary "Dad's own, own little girl! We've step toward Van Dyke. The latter been tearing your poor heart to pieces raised a protesting hand. and your old father was the bitterest

"Mark," he said, flinching not at all against you. It's all right, I tell you, before the bloodshot fury in the husgirl. It's all right. Dad'll see you bandis little eyes, "we are here as lawthrough. You shan't be bothered. yers, making an investigation. At last we have struck the right trail. I am darling. Don't!" sorry it leads where it does. I-"

His voice grew husky. Leaving her He got no further. At a stride Robabruptly, he crossed to Robertson. ertson was beside his wife. Roughly "Mark," he faltered, avoiding his brushing aside Wanda's embracing son-in-law's eye, "you promised to proarms he caught Grace by the shoulder tect her. This is the time to do it. It

was 'for better, for worse.' If that "You hear what this man insinuvow is any good at all, it's a good "What are you going to do?" queried ates?" he cried thickly. "I den't ask for 'worse' as for 'better.' Mark-be Van Dyke, who had dropped back in you to foul your lips by denying it. gentle with her, boy." him later. But give me He seemed about to say more. But, the right to do that by telling the glancing furtively at Mark's set Woman's name at once.' changeless face, he forebore. "Grace!" croaked Blake, his throat

Gathered Her Into His Arms

Though She Were a Baby.

sanded with a horror that he would

not confess, "don't you hear what

In his harsh eagerness, Mark forcibly lifted his wife's bent head and

forced her eyes to meet his. "What's the matter?" he demanded

ly, as if expecting a blow, he moved

She caught his shaking hand and

murmured a broken incoherent sylla-

ble or two amid the passion of her

Blake's legs gave way and he

sprawled inert into a chair, his head

on his breast. He had all at once

they're saying, girl?"

back to Van Dyke.

"Almighty!"

had locked Grace's lips departed. "Tell you?" she echoed. "Oh, if you knew how I've wanted to!" "Then

"I didn't dare. I didn't dare." "Truth and honor surely-" "Your love meant more to me than truth and honor. I sacrificed them to keep it. I would sacrifice them and everything else to get it back. Is that shameless? Perhaps. The truth

usually is. If I had told you, you

"Haven't | Paid? Won't You Say

We're Square?

would never have forgiven me. You know you wouldn't. If I've wronged you-"If you had loved me as a true woman loves, you would have told me.

You would have had to. You could not have deceived me like this. Love doesn't feed on lies. It was my right to know everything, so that I could decide my own course. Instead, you have led me into this trap. There is no escape now. And it is too late to reproach you or to try to make you realize what you have done. You say your love for me kept you from tell-ing? Believe that, if it is any com-

fort to you. I-" "You say I don't know what true love is," she laughed bitterly. I'm afraid I can never learn it from you. So your love has died? Love can't die, any more than God can die. You have never loved me."

"Never. I see now that you didn't. For you don't know what love means. [Continued on page 7, Col. 1.]

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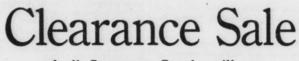
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"I'm going to phone Gregg to let the house know the whole story; names, dates and all. By the time I get on the wire Grace will have told."

"Hold on, Jim," objected Van Dyke. "Not yet."

"Not yet?" What d'ye mean? Why not? We're almost against the ropes over there at the capitol. This is our last punch and it's going to be a knockout."

"Wait, Jim!" begged Van Dyke. "Wait till you hear the name."

"We've got the name. Grace is going to tell us."

"You've got it, yes. But you can't use it, Jim."

Blake, telephone instrument in hand, pased to glare down in angry amazement at the saturnine lawyer who so calmly opposed him in the hour of victory.

"Why in blazes can't we use it?" he blustered. "Are you weakening?"

He took the receiver from the hook. But Van Dyke, with a peremptory gesture, halted him.

'Wait, I say!" ordered the lawyer. "Neligan, go downstairs and get rid of that officer. And don't come back." "Go with him, Tom," whispered Wanda. "For my sake. You don't want to hear the name.'

"You're right," assented Tom, following in Neligan's wake. "It's none of my business. Now that you are safe-"

The door closed behind the two departing men.

"Come, Grace," prompted Mark "Who is she?"

Grace's lips paled. But they were dry and cracked. Her tongue would not'stir.

CHAPTER XXI.

Jim Blake, Loser.

sharpiy. "Why don't you speak? Tell Van Dyke he lies. Tells him he lies, J say! Oh!" And so for an instant they stood. It was an odd tableau: Grace, helpless, shaking, 'dumb; Wanda, her arms clasped protectingly about the unheeding Woman, who did not so much as realize their presence nor feel the warm sympathy, of their embrace; Mark, his triumph tinged with impatience at his wife's hesitation; Blake, still gripping the telephone and glowin ering in angry surprise at the lawyer: Van Dyke grim, alert, master of the moment, his lean face set in lines of unwonted sadness. It's a trick to-to-'

And it was Van Dyke who broke the brief silence. His precise dry voice was tinged by a note of something al-

most solemn as he addressed Robert-

"Mark," he said, "Miss Kelly has told us that she promised the-the Woman not to tell. When did she make that promise?"

Slowly, with bent shoulders and dragging step Blake made his way to the big room's farthest end. There, in the window's embrasure, out of ear-

There, there! Oh, don't cry like that,

shot, his back to the others, he halted. Drawing aside the curtains he glanced out into the night. The gloom of the sleeping city was below and around him. But, in one black mass, tiers upon tiers of garish lights glowed. There, in the capitol, the Mullins bill was coming to a vote. There, Matthew Standish, freed by a miracle from the toils that craftier men had woven about him, was winning the victory which was to clear for him the pathway to the very summit of political power.

But he found his subconscious self straying from the picture he was so ruthlessly drawing. His mind would not fix itself on the lighted capitol and the wreck of his life-work; but crept over back into the dim room behind him. Even his tongue tricked him. For when he would have made it recite further the tale of his losses, it muttered brokenly:

"My own little girl! Dad's own, own little girl!"

CHAPTER XXII.

The Hour of Reckoning.

Mark Robertson and his wife, left alone, together, in the other end of the great library, faced the situation for which Grace had so long been preparing and for which her frightened years of preparation had proved so

He knew. That was all. And no word of hers could gloss over or make bearable the truth. Wherefore she spoke no word, but stood looking at him; taking in every detail of the stout figure and the strong common place face as though she wished to carry with her forever their memory. Mark strove for speech. But for the

first time in his roughly aggressive ca-His fierce appeal broke off in a cry of pain. He had at last raised her face and had read it. For the briefest reer, suitable words were denied him. Alternately he longed to tell her in naked terms what she was and how utterly he despised her. Again, a gush of self-pity urged him to reproach her for the wrecking of his ideals, the moment he stood stupefied, expression-less. Then, cautiously, half-cringingblasting of his happiness. Vanity "Why, Grace!" expostulated Blake, coming part way to his aid, he framed -and left unspoken-a curt sentence pitiful bravado. "You're crazy! You don't know what you're implying of farewell. And, in the end, all he -what you're letting them think.] could say was: won't believe it. Not a word of it. "Why didn't you tell me?"

It was not what he had intended to

say. It was banal. It expressed none, of the stark moods that seethed in him. Yet_as she did not answer, he

found himself asking once more: "Why didn't you tell me?" And now, unknown and unwished

for, there crept into his bald question grown old-very, very old. Meantime, a note that was almost of entrecty.

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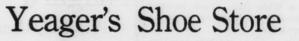
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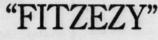
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