

THE LADY IN DISTRESS

Alicia chewed the stub of the pencil. The carving knife wasn't in reach and she firmly believed in the landlady's promise to spank her if she got out of bed. That was the disadvantage of being eleven years old and a recent inmate of a hospital. People bossed you. The pencil stub and a sheet of heavily-scented lavender paper had been inveigled out of Mrs. Glandon by a promise of impeccable behavior while the week's marketing was being done.

Alicia wrote laboriously and eyed the result with marked dissatisfaction, but there was neither time nor paper for another effort. Chick Ayers would be along on his bicycle any minute now and she mustn't keep him waiting.

She hailed the telegraph messenger from her window, in a thin, high treble that carried distinctly down into the street. Chick's head came up and he waved a hand as he sped by. Alicia frantically wagged the square envelope, and Chick nearly ran down a flustered old lady on the crossing. In two minutes he was up the stairs, panting.

"What you want, Alicia? I'm in an awful hurry."

Alicia held out the envelope. "Please, Chick, deliver it to him yourself. It's very important."

Chick started at the address. "Cunningham Reed!" he whispered in awe. "Why—why, Alicia, what you doing?"

"Please hurry!" said Alicia and fell back on the pillows. She was still very weak. A three months' siege with typhoid fever doesn't leave much of even sturdy constitutions and Alicia had never been exactly husky. But there was a smile on the little white face under its mass of dark red hair which the breeze through the window stirred gently.

Compton Niel put down the burnt cork and picked up the lipstick, viewing the reflection in the mirror with complete detachment. He could put on a perfect make-up without giving conscious thought to the matter. He was thinking that this was Friday and that tomorrow night would be his last appearance at any of the Reed theaters.

"Reed says you ain't got no spring," the theater manager had brutally told Nell. Brady had said that the first of the week and Niel had straightway sought an interview with Reed. Niel had a new act that he believed would go over big. If Reed wouldn't only listen to him! But Reed wouldn't. He sent out word that a little new blood wouldn't do the Reed chain of theaters any harm, and Niel had gone away with a sinking heart. God knew that he was aware that there was not any spring in him! A man couldn't watch the only being in the world that he loved make an eight or ten weeks' fight with death and not lose his spring. Besides, since coming from the hospital Alicia had not slept well and Niel had not been getting his rest.

And, of course, the little imp had gotten it out of him about the failure to land a new contract. She always did. One couldn't lie to her. "And now," she remarked gravely, "you are a gentleman in distress." Throughout her illness, Niel had presented flowers and picture books and puzzles with the elaborate ceremony that delighted her and always to a "lady in distress."

"There will be a pair of us," he answered ruefully, "if I don't get a new booking." He had grinned and joked a good deal, but he was afraid that he hadn't fooled his small daughter much. She was an uncanny little piece. She sometimes read his thoughts, as: "Daddy Comp, what rent do we have to pay the hospital?" the day he had drawn the last dollar of his savings account. . . . He'd keep on his make-up when he went home tonight. Alicia always considered that a special favor. It was not easy to perform for another half hour when every muscle ached, but it was worth it to see the sparkling eyes and flashing face.

Cunningham Reed eyed his secretary sternly. That young lady was nearly in tears. "I—I couldn't help it, sir. He wouldn't take no for an answer. Said his orders were to put it in your hand, and there was just no stopping him!"

Reed dismissed her with a nod and turned over the missive that the determined telegraph messenger had shoved at him. He wouldn't have been human if he hadn't been a little curious. What peculiar urgency was there that a mere boy should storm a victorious way through three offices? Why hadn't he held the boy? He looked at the penciled address, ripped open the envelope and scowled unbelievably at the owlish characters that staggered uncertainly across the pale purple page.

"1497 Bonant street. Dear Mr. Reed, will you please come here at 9 tonight. Not any later. A LADY IN DISTRESS."

"What the devil!" muttered Reed. "Hey, Welton!" A young man appeared from some inner recess. "What do you make of this?"

Welton studied the note. "Doesn't look good to me, sir."

Reed's eyes softened with a twinkle he carefully concealed. "Why?"

"Well, they've made it look like a child's writing and, obviously, no child would be writing to you. I'd say that

It looks very much like a plot. Shall I get hold of a secret service—?"

"No-o," decided Reed with a serious face. "And you need say nothing about it to anyone, Welton."

"No, sir, of course not. The best way, no doubt, is just to ignore these things."

Alicia was almost in tears. Here it was nearly ten o'clock and there had been no knock on her door. She had directed Mrs. Glandon to show up at once any gentleman who should call. The landlady supposed that the child was playing some game with her father so was hardly prepared, when she answered a knock at nearly ten o'clock to confront a gentleman whose clothes, even to her unfamiliar eye, spoke that magic word, success.

"I was told," said the gentleman, "to call at 1497 Bonant street this evening."

"Yes—oh, yes! Well—" fluttered Mrs. Glandon, her landladyish aplomb for once completely shaken. "I'll show you right up. This way, sir," and then, "Alicia, here is the gentleman."

"Oh!" said a voice that seemed to take hold of Reed's heart, he couldn't for the life of him tell why. He entered the room to see an eager head raised from a pillow. He looked around expectantly. There was no one else in sight, except Mrs. Glandon, who had planted herself inside the door. Reed looked at her, just a glance that slid on and slid off, and Mrs. Glandon went out and closed the door and they could hear her retreat down the hall.

"It can't be," said Reed, smiling at Alicia. "that you are the lady in distress."

"Oh, please, yes, sir. I am! Will you sit down? We must hurry because, you see, Daddy Comp will be home in a few minutes and if he finds you here I don't know what he will think!"

The words came tumbling forth almost in one breath and when they were out Alicia did not know what to say next.

Reed was entertained. He had a dramatist's taste for mystery and the face against the pillow was very appealing. He leaned comfortably back in his chair and the act had the effect of upsetting Alicia's equilibrium completely. She had looked for an uncompromising individual who would have to be won. But this man seemed so ordinary that for a few minutes she was literally tongue-tied.

While they sat gazing mutely at one another a step sounded in the hall and Alicia sat up in despair. "You see!" she cried reproachfully. "Oh, why didn't you come before!"

Reed answered involuntarily. "I couldn't get away."

The words were not out of his mouth before the door opened under the hand of a most villainous looking negro in flopping overalls and a violently checkered shirt. Reed had seen this apparition before, but for the minute there was no connection in his mind and he came to his feet, startled. Alicia clasped her hands involuntarily.

"Oh, Daddy Comp, you kept it all on!"

Compton Niel was grinning feebly out of his impossible mouth, though there wasn't a particle of grin in his thoughts. What was Reed possibly doing here?

Then recollection began to assail Reed and he ejaculated slowly. "Well—I'll be—!"

The tone, for some reason, rendered Niel furious. It implied something outrageous and he retorted. "So will I, for that matter."

Alicia looked from one to the other, understanding nothing but their tones, but sufficiently alarmed by those.

"It was a clever dodge, Niel," said Reed deliberately. "I don't know where you learned that I was especially susceptible to children. I don't deny the weakness, but it is the first time I have ever had anyone try to play on it. You—"

But Alicia had suddenly comprehended the spirit if not the words of Reed's charge and she flew out of bed, stumbling over her nightgown as she confronted the dumfounded theater owner.

"Oh, aren't you horrid! You knew my Daddy Comp didn't—didn't—I told you! What makes you so mean?" and she burst into tears and quietly fainted.

Niel had her back in bed on the instant. He took the water Reed handed him, then commanded savagely. "Get out!"

Reed sat down and when Niel again turned on him spoke quietly: "When she is feeling all right so she can watch, too, we'll listen to that new act of yours."

For His Purpose, Car Was Worth the Money

Young Feasley not long ago bought an old "used" sport roadster. The dealer didn't have the nerve to call it "second hand," for everyone knew it had belonged to at least a dozen different people. Feasley paid only \$30 for it. Nevertheless some of his neighbors couldn't understand why he had invested even \$30 in such a back-number proposition, which was too ancient to be called an automobile and not quite old enough to be classed as an antique.

"What do you suppose Feasley wanted to buy that old roadster for—when he knows he can't depend on it to get him back from anywhere?" asked Lambert, the druggist.

"Oh," explained young Day, his head clerk, "he don't want it to get him back from anywhere. All he wants is to drive a mule into the country and then park by the side of the road. It's a wonderful car for parking purposes."—Pathfinder Magazine.

Plaids Youthful, Also Very Smart

Bright Printed Materials in Little Sports or Trotteur Frocks.

Plaids are always gay and youthful. This season they have the added advantage of being very smart as well.

French designers, writes a fashion correspondent in the Detroit Free Press, are making lavish use of bright plaid printed silks in little sports or trotteur frocks, which are very much in the fashion picture. For color is important as never before. And the costume which combines two or three colors is much more in vogue than the monotone effects of a season or more ago.

A new version of the omnipresent cardigan suit shows a skirt of bright brown and gold diagonal plaid printed silk, finely plaited. The same silk makes a scarf which may be worn



Cardigan Suit Is in Brown Wool and Plaid Silk.

Jabot fashion or knotted bow in the front over a dark brown jacket of pineapple-knit tweed.

The blouse exploits a new fabric, a woven rayon and fiber which is very soft and supple, in a small geometric figure of brown and gold.

The same suit may be had in blue and white, green and gold and rose and white, and each of these combinations offers many possibilities in the way of smart accessories.

For spectator sports wear with the brown and gold costume is suggested a new T strap shoe of brown kidskin to match the cardigan. This shoe is decorated with attractive strappings of matching brown lizard and has a lizard heel.

Handstitched gloves are always smart. In fact they have become a classic for sports and informal street wear. The glove suggested is in a suntan shade of kidskin with darker brown handstitching.

Debutantes Start Vogue for Dainty Cameo Pink

Rose, and other varying shades of pink, seem to be the principal choice of the debutante clients of Worth this season. A charming model in rose pink points d'esprit which has many small volants forming the skirt, each bound in satin of the same shade and cut on slightly circular lines, is popular. The bodice has the same idea, and the whole frock is one of daintiness and youthfulness.

For a French client who made her debut the first of the year, Worth made a lovely frock in pink in the new wide meshed tulle which has been one of his prominent successes this season. This frock has a fitted bodice, following the slight outlines of the figure, with a modest square décolletage both back and front, and a very full skirt of two layers of the tulle over a heavy crepe de chine foundation. Two points of the hem dip on the sides and the back is also irregular. Its only trimming is a narrow moire ribbon belt at the natural waistline in a slightly darker shade of pink.

One-Piece Dress Chic for Slender Misses

One-piece dresses are very much in favor for slender young girls, particularly because they are softer of line and more flattering and because they may be worn with the warm tweed and fur topcoats. Wool fabrics, which have been neglected in recent seasons, are again shown in models from the best houses. Many new designs in these frocks are shown with the irregular neckline, the bloused bodice and the skirt with the fullness assembled in front.

Side Trains

Dipping skirts on evening gowns show a preference for greatest length on one side, usually the left. The other side dips also, but the left side may reach beyond the floor, providing a smart little train.

New Half-Cape Effect Designed for Spring



Showing an advance spring model in printed nuvolaine washable silk. It is brown with green and black. Note the new half-cape effect formed by the scarf at the neck.

Tiered Frocks Appear in Patou Spring Show

If Jean Patou be a true prophet, printed silks and tiered skirts on street frocks are to delight the feminine heart for another summer, writes a fashion correspondent in the Cleveland News. His manikins parade in ensembles for spring made with straight coats of black or navy reps or of satin lined with printed silks, and with tiered frocks of printed silks.

There are minor points of distinction between these new tiered frocks and those of last summer, however, since the three or four tiers making up the skirt are all finely plaited and are cut so that their lower edges make a wide scallop across the front of the skirt and a longer and equally wide scallop across the back. The round necks of the waists, too, have new collars composed of a narrow white fluting, each end of which drops down the front of the waist to border the shirt-closing, which is trimmed with buttons.

Patou also shows again the three-piece jacket suit with frock and jacket of matching print; except that this year he gives the jacket a lining.

Most of his spring evening wraps are of black satin, and quite plain. Many have cape backs and perhaps a shirred fullness inserted across the back at the hips to allow for a drooping hemline. To go with these coats he is showing his simple frocks of flowered chiffon.

There were only two evening ensembles in his latest collection. Both were most demure and old-fashioned in their coloring, one a pale sky-blue velvet coat trimmed with white fox and a pale blue flowered chiffon gown; the second was all in pale pink.

Not only Patou, but Doenillet, Doucet and Worth favor for the simple morning frock a skirt with plaits grouped narrowly at the front and at the back, but stitched down to a low hipline, where they are released to give a piquant flare.

Velvet, Crepe, Taffeta, Voile for Young Miss

Frocks of velvet, crepe, taffeta and voile are most popular for general occasions for in one of these a young girl is ready for almost any daytime affair, says a fashion writer in the Cleveland News. A model in which are introduced several of the new points in vogue for women's dress this season is made of pastel blue crepe de chine on which are printed small conventional flowers in rose, with a touch of leaf green here and there. The oblique neckline is accomplished by slashing the material across the yoke in front, and tying the strips into a bow at one side. Below this the blouse is gathered in the middle front and is strapped about with a narrow sash of the crepe.

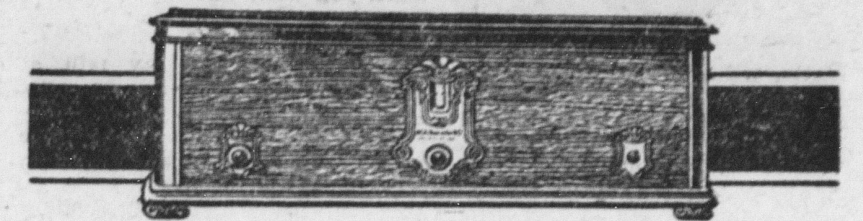
The skirt, which is modish and almost mature, is comprised of two tiers gathered only part way around, with the fullness clustered to one side of the front and back. This sweetly feminine little frock has an additional touch of daintiness in little strips of the crepe with which the sleeves are closed in bows at the back of the hand.

Hemless Finish Liked for Frocks and Suits

The hemless finish on nearly all frocks and suits coming from exclusive houses is the telltale note. This finish is always associated with the skirt cut on circular lines, whether in cloth or silk, and again, whether the garment is a tailored or softly fashioned type.

In cloth skirts, the practice is to finish the very narrow, turned-back edge which serves in lieu of a four or five inch regulation hem with several rows of machine stitching. In frocks of flat, satin or canton crepe, a narrow bias binding is employed, giving practically the same effect of hemlessness.

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Their Mistake

"Where's your new license?" demanded the officer, eyeing the 1928 plate.

"Why, officer, we're just on the way to the courthouse now to get it," exclaimed the grass widow and widower in the car, with one voice.

If a man is ignorant he soon publishes the fact.

Jarring Colors

Young Husband—I managed to get a girl, but I'm afraid she's rather green.

Young Wife—But, darling, I can't have a green girl in my canary-yellow kitchen.—Boston Transcript.

One thing to be said in favor of the old magic lantern is that it never tried to talk.

For Colds -



How many people you know end their colds with Bayer Aspirin! And how often you've heard of its prompt relief of sore throat or tonsillitis. No wonder millions take it for colds, neuralgia, rheumatism; and the aches and pains that go with them. The wonder is that anyone still worries through a winter without these tablets! They relieve quickly, yet have no effect whatever on the heart. Friends have told you Bayer Aspirin is marvelous; doctors have declared it harmless. Every druggist has it, with proven directions. Why not put it to the test?

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Hen Mothered Kitten

The mistress of a Hinsdale (Mass.) farm had a hen sitting. Going out to inquire as to the comfort of the expectant mother, she found the eggs uncovered, and in the nest a tiny kitten. The hen took to the nest again after feeding, and covered eggs, kitten and all. She continued her care of the kitten after the eggs were hatched, says the Boston Globe.

Two Species

What is described as a walking fish from Africa has been brought to Boston on a visiting ship. Humorists may now do their worst in comparing the peripatetic fish from overseas with the poor fish who already walk Boston streets.—Boston Transcript.

Complete Washout

New Author—Could you use my story if I were to boll it down?

Hard-boiled Editor—No chance. Boll down a gallon of water to a pint and it would still be water, wouldn't it?



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