

# TANGLED WIVES

By Peggy Shane

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WNU Service

## CHAPTER XII—Continued

"I felt as if that's what I'd be doing if I married him. I knew George was in earnest, and I couldn't convince Howard."

Rocky nodded. "I understand. It's just as you say to someone who wants to leave your house in a rainstorm, 'I don't want to give you pneumonia.' Was that it?"

"Oh yes, I'm afraid I'll never be able to make anyone understand about that note."

"I'll call up the hospital and get them to put George Mortimer under arrest."

The wedding rehearsal was finished, but most of the party were still gathered around the bishop discussing it.

Rocky followed Doris over the long green path that led to the house. They came to the small side porch that belonged to Beatrice, and entered it through a screened door.

In the small sitting room inside it, Rocky rang up the hospital. He got the doctor immediately.

Rocky scowled. His distressed eyes were on Doris. "He's gone."

"Gone?"

"Yes, Doctor's a bit upset. He put the receiver in its holder. "Had a broken shoulder bone, you know, and a fever. They told him to stay in bed." He drew down the ends of his mouth, stared at Doris with lowered head. "If he gets away there may be trouble for you."

She was bewildered. "You mean—they won't take my word for it?"

"I don't know. We must get in touch with the police. Where was he going?"

"Toward Canada, I think. He came down here to find me. He saw the story about the arrest in the papers."

Rocky tapped nervously on the telephone desk. "Of course he's crazy."

She looked frightened. "If I marry you—you won't be safe. He'll come at you sometime out of some bushes." Her features worked convulsively. "You see, I did kill Howard. I ought never to have married him!"

"Nonsense. That's morbid. He won't get me."

Doris went to the door and looked out on the gay screen porch. Her eyes were blank. "That's the way Howard talked."

Rocky rose, and put his arm about her. "But darling, the police are sure to get him."

Her voice was dry, constricted. "Until they do—he mustn't find out about us. I tell you he's not normal. He'll do something awful to you."

Rocky kissed her averted head. "Don't you worry. The police will have an easy time. He won't know the alarm is out for him. And with his arm in a sling—" He let go of her, and turned back toward the telephone. "He'll be stopped at the border."

He sat down and put his hand on the receiver, but did not take it up. "Now the great thing is to get in touch with the right people. If I simply call for the police, they'll have the news all over the world in no time—George Mortimer will be warned—and then he may never be caught. The big thing to avoid is publicity—and that ought not to be hard if—"

He did not finish his sentence because three newspaper reporters walked into the room. They had come to write up the St. Gardens wedding, but they knew a good story when they saw it.

There was a dead moment in which Doris looked at the girl reporter expressionlessly. The two men reporters stood still, staring. One was a young blond boy in baggy gray clothes. The other was shorter and older with very large ears, and hair that needed cutting.

The girl reporter spoke first: "My G—d!"

The blond young man rubbed his chin with a grimy hand. "You're drunk!" he said. "Or am I drunk?"

The man with the big ears spoke with a slow New England drawl. "Do you see what I see?"

The girl reporter smiled her nicest smile, showing white teeth and crinkly blue eyes: "And I thought I was covering a society wedding!"

Rocky left the telephone stand and went to Doris as if to protect her. She was no longer afraid. She knew who she was now. Besides, she liked the girl reporter's looks. She smiled at her now, courageously. "Yes, I'm Diane Merrell."

The girl reporter sighed happily—a prayer of repletion—as if she had just eaten the best dinner of her life. "I just can't believe it."

The man with the big ears drawled, "It looks like our big chance."

The blond boy clapped his hands on the shoulders of his two colleagues. "Big chance! You said it! Fame, glitter, boy—here's where you leave the stix! We'll get her away before the other guys wise up. There's a mean guy here for the A.P. and he'll have this in every paper in the country before we can get through on long distance if we aren't careful—" He pushed the other man away and moved toward the phone. "Let me get to that telephone."

Rocky held Doris in a vise. He was beyond speech. He was the frightened one. Her face was pale and drawn but she held it high as she said, "I didn't shoot Howard Valery."

The reporters paid no attention to her statement. They were too dizzy with joy at finding her to think of anything else but getting the credit for their discovery before the glory of it was snatched by a faster thinker.

While they argued Rocky quietly took possession of the telephone "Look here—" he tried to intervene in the talk. It was useless. Beside the dazzling possibility of an exclusive story their situation was as nothing.

Rocky held a firm grip on the telephone. "Is there any way of making friends with you people? Aren't you human at all? If you want a story I should think you'd listen to it. We've got one that will knock your eye out—maybe you can help us decide what to do."

Before anyone could answer, the telephone's ring pealed through the tiny room. Rocky answered.

"Are we human?" shouted the boy, Charley. "Of course we are. Aren't we offering—"

"Hello," said Rocky into the tele-



"Yes, I'm Diane Merrell."

phone. Suddenly he smiled at Doris. "It's Reno. Yes—"

The rest of his words were lost in the hullabaloo made by the reporters. Rocky hung up the phone. "It's all right. It's all over," he said to Doris.

A door opened on the screened porch.

"What's that?"

"It's the wind."

Rocky, holding his place by the telephone, interrupted with some firmness. "Before anything else happens, this lady and I are going to be married."

"Oh, Rocky."

"Yes. There is a bishop just coming in from the garden. Can't you hear his firm tread on the stairs?"

"Have you got a license?"

"No—but—"

"I'll get it for you," said Charley. "How's that for friendship? Now let me get New York on the phone. All I'll say is that Diane Merrell is on her way to give herself up to the police, and will reach New York late this afternoon."

"That won't give us time to get married."

This time every one heard the step on the porch. A man sprang from behind a huge chair—a dark shape looming in the doorway.

The face of the man in the cab showed above a white bandaged arm. Doris screamed.

"You're going to marry him—after everything?"

His eyes gleamed strangely. His left hand held a small revolver. "I knew you'd come back here. I knew you were crazy about that man."

The two men reporters stood like statues. The girl sagged against the portiere and clung there. Rocky half rose from the telephone bench. Doris stared into the muzzle of the wavering pistol.

"I've been looking for you for six weeks. I went to Detroit after the girl that was found out there—calling herself Diane Merrell. I saw the two girls they picked up in New York. Then just as I'd given up hope—" his voice was thick like that of a drunken man—his overtones were heavy with self-pity. "I made a mistake—a big mistake when I shot Howard Valery. I should have shot myself instead—myself and you."

Doris turned terrified eyes on Rocky for one short moment. She could feel his tenseness even across the room, and she knew he was going to lunge in front of her. Rocky would be killed. That would be the second man dead on her account. Strangely enough she felt no fear for her own safety. She wanted George to shoot her. If only he wouldn't get Rocky.

George Mortimer laughed—the shrill high note of insanity.

"You first—then me!"

Rocky threw himself. He seized the shaking wrist and pointed it upward as the gun went off. George Mortimer fell straight back without bending.

Rocky spoke out of the side of his mouth. "Here's your real scoop. He's the murderer of Howard Valery."

Charley had recovered some of his poise. "So we gathered from his general conversation. What shall we do with him? He's a looney—and dangerous."

Doris had opened the clothes closet where Beatrice had locked Molly. "That's a good idea."

It took all three men to lift him and put him in the closet.

When Beatrice St. Gardens' wedding was over, Rockwell St. Gardens was drinking a quiet glass of wine in the seclusion of the rose arbor with his good friends Oscar and Adoree Du Val. Beatrice had ridden safely away with the governor's son. Most of the guests had gone, though the bishop was still there, quietly resting after his day's work.

"It was so beautiful," sighed Mrs. Du Val sentimentally. "Never have I seen a wedding go so smoothly—and well. Really it was like a play."

Oscar Du Val lifted his glass and deepened the color of his wine. "My only regret was that Doris and Rocky weren't here."

"Ah yes," said their host. "It was too bad. She seems a very nice girl, but I hardly saw her when she was here. She is in bad health, poor girl, isn't she?"

Mrs. Du Val leaned her fat elbows on the table and looked meaningfully at St. Gardens. "Yes—she is—that is true she has not been well." Her cooling voice rejoiced and mourned alternately. "It is a sickness we do not mind seeing a young bride having—'n'est-ce pas'?"

St. Gardens lifted an eyebrow. "I did not know. Congratulations."

Mrs. Du Val beamed happily. "Come, Oscar. It is now we drink the health of your grandson that is coming!"

As the three lifted their glasses to drink, a strange young man bounced through the gate. His blond hair was wild, and his gray suit needed pressing, but his blue eyes were dancing with excitement. "Mrs. Du Val! This is Mrs. Du Val, isn't it?"

The good lady rose, her eyes widening with alarm. "Something has happened to Rocky! Tell me. I can bear it."

"Nothing. He's getting married. And he wants you to come quick!"

St. Gardens rose. Oscar Du Val ran his hands excitedly through his white hair. "But no—"

"It is not possible."

"He is married to Doris!"

"Oh that's all right. He divorced Doris today. He's marrying Diane Merrell. Get it—"

In his exuberance Charley went so far as to give Mrs. Du Val's well-cushioned ribs a poke. "Diane Merrell. The Diane Merrell!"

Mrs. Du Val gave a low scream. Oscar Du Val caught her in his arms. "Divorced Doris!" she moaned. "Why did I ever give birth to such a boy!"

"We will soon stop this," said Oscar Du Val.

"Yes—yes. Perhaps it is not too late. Oh, that poor little Doris!"

St. Gardens followed the Du Vals into the house.

Meantime the bishop was being roused from his quiet meditations. Two insane people were pounding on his door. Rocky and his friend Mike. Charley had got a marriage license which was now in Rocky's pocket, and there was a very important wedding to be performed downstairs, they told the good man. His "Mercy me!" his "Oh my goodness, his 'This is not quite in order,' were as disregarded as if they had never been said. But when he saw the two that he was to marry he had nothing more to say; a holy man, it was his business to say, "Whom God hath joined together," so he knew from their faces that it was all right. He made no more inquiries. He prepared to do his duty.

But before he could begin Rocky's parents came in, followed by St. Gardens. Mrs. Du Val was so relieved to see Doris that she burst into tears.

"They told me you were divorced—but now I see it was only a cruel joke."

"No, it wasn't a joke. Rocky and I are getting married. And we want you to—we want Mr. Du Val to give me away."

There was no time for many more explanations then. The Du Vals watched their son being married in a kind of stony amazement.

Doris had given herself up to the police, but she had been released, and George Mortimer was being held. So well had she been guarded by her three reporters that not a hint of what had happened disturbed the wedding.

Rocky and Doris got into their car. Not half the story had been explained to their parents, but as Rocky said, it would take far too long to go into it all, and as Oscar Du Val never read the newspapers he would not even know who Diane Merrell was. Charley would explain after they were gone.

"Good-by, good-by." The gears slid into place and the car started down the long pine-fringed way toward the cement pavement.

"Diane Merrell," said Oscar Du Val to himself slowly.

Then, as his son had suggested, he went in the house and began to look at the newspapers.

The first thing that caught his eye was his own name—

**DIVORCES SON OF OSCAR DU VAL**

Offspring of Famous Sculptor Was Stingy, Doris Du Val Avers.

Settlement Made Out of Court.

Oscar Du Val settled himself to read. There was a good deal to explain to Adoree, and he might as well begin to find out what had happened.

[THE END.]

# Be Elegant, Is Fashion's Message

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



Nothing in the way of sumptuous fabrics, fine laces, precious furs, glittering embroideries and gleaming jewels is too luxurious to satisfy fashion's ambition this season. The bringing back of the formal afternoon velvet suit is perhaps one of the most significant events in this mode of elegance.

As every style-conscious woman knows when the velvet daytime suit de luxe is in fashion there is a lot that must be lived up to in the way of endless accessory elegances. In proof of which we refer you to the charming little outfit which costumed the young modern seated in the group pictured.

The velvet which fashions this modish two-piece is a super-quality Lyons type. The fur is black skunk which was considered a most popular trimming in early Victorian days. The fall of fine lace down the front and peeping from beneath the fur-cuffed sleeves matches the lace of the blouse. Of course you have noticed how like a quaint basque of yore are the lines of the pert little snug-fitting jacket. The wee chapeau is in perfect keeping with the theme.

Another trend in velvet daytime fashions which should be mentioned is that of the fur-bordered tunic suit. The opportunities for fur and velvet opulence offered is beyond wildest flights of imagination. Then there is

the strictly tailored short jacketed velvet suit which looks smartest when topped with a beret of its very own velvet.

Lelong, who always dresses the young fille so beautifully presents the model posed to the left in the group. It is done in black net and Lyons velvet. The corded velvet finishing on the net flouncing is repeated on the shoulder. The fact that this young woman is wearing a handsome glittering necklace and bracelet should be taken into account for fashion regards rich jewelry ensembles such as this as a necessary luxury and proper finesse to every formal costume.

If conclusive evidence be needed that this is a season in which fashion creators have become luxury-conscious to a marked degree, here you have it in the regal evening gown posed in the foreground of our illustration. American beauty velvet richly embroidered with gold and jeweled stones fashions this exquisite mode. The tunic line continues gracefully into a fish-tail train lined with pink satin.

While the average woman may not be aspiring to the super formality which this gorgeous gown bespeaks yet it may be accepted as interpretative as to certain style trends which may be tuned to occasions more or less formal. For instance the American beauty tone of the velvet employed verifies word from Paris that deep warm colorings in purple and reddish key such as the very new blackberry and aubergine and various wine shades are in the ascendency. Also the prestige of velvet as medium-supreme for dinner and evening gowns is here re-affirmed. Then, too, the tunic theme introduced reflects the latest silhouette movement. Finally the elaborate jewel and gold embroidery is indicative of the mood which fashion is in to trim velvet with beguiling touches of beadwork and kindred effects.

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# UNWISE TO PLACE TOO MUCH STRESS ON SMALL THINGS

"The great secret of successful marriage," says Harold Nicolson, "is to treat all disasters as accidents and none of the accidents as disasters."

"All disasters as accidents!"

Easier said than done, you may comment. And yet—that is not the harder part of the proposition Mr. Nicolson sets for us.

It is not the great disaster which causes the failure or unhappiness in marriage.

In the first place these are few, in a lifetime, and far between. And then the human mechanism seems to have a resiliency that comes to its rescue in great disasters. Whether real distress arouses a mutual protective instinct, touching deep down inside us—whatever the reason, it is my observation that great disasters of any nature account for a small percentage of marital shipwrecks.

But when it comes to not treating incidents as disasters! There is something that has a place in every day and almost every hour of every marriage. And it is something that has a place in the history of a large number of divorces.

For the "incidents" are a natural concomitant of every-day life. And how we respond to them gives a very good picture of the life we are leading the other one in the marital partnership. "You make nothing of anything," a querulous woman said to a friend of this writer. Needless to say that friend is happily married—and all her human contacts are similarly successful.

It is those little things in which the danger lies—those inevitable "incidents" that can so easily, but must not be allowed to, turn into disasters!

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# CAPES BACK AGAIN IN LATEST STYLES

Capos are back again. Little waist length capes appear with daytime and dinner gowns. Hip-length capes of fur or wool are worn with street costumes. Long cloaks are swept about the most regal evening gowns.

Hip-length capes for both daytime and evening wear are the newest fashion note. They appear in fur, wool and silk treated to new tricks.

Helm uses rich bronze seal and galyak tinted a new gold beige called "chrome" to make striking hip-length capes for daytime wear. Sometimes they are worn with a muff and toque to match, again they appear with wool accessories matching the frock.

Chanel designs hip and three-quarter length wool capes for sports and travel wear. Deep green-ribbed wool frocks and suits appear with loose capes of the same fabric, swinging from the shoulders.

Schiaparelli adds the hip-length cape to the evening style picture, with a striking model of bright Peiping red taffeta having a quilted effect, worn with a slender gown of silver gray satin.

# BROWN AND WHITE

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



No, this lovely evening wrap is not going to be described as featuring the usual black and white contrast. On the contrary the handsome velvet which fashions this stunning wrap-around short coat is in a deep rich brown. You can scarcely vision how perfectly stunning white ermine is with brown velvet unless you see this wrap which Molyneux has created in the original. The newest evening colors trend to rich dark hues, especially radiant browns and wine tones and greens so dark they look almost black. There is a new blackberry shade which many designers are using instead of black this season.

# Diadems and Headbands

Sweet young things struggling with hair in the "between permanents" stage, find in the evening coiffure a maddening problem. Vionet, Lanvin, and other designers have taken pity on their plight by creating diadems and headbands which transform an ordinary "hank of hair" into a thing of loveliness. The girl with the too-rural face will look positively ethereal and fish-like when she beds her tresses with the Russian type of diadem. The woman whose features incline to the classic gains becoming dignity with the Grecian type of head-dress. Either is the quintessence of chic for wear with the season's most ravishing evening gowns.

# Separate Skirts

There is always a place in the mode for the smartly fashioned separate skirt. It is a favorite of the college girl, for with a skirt or two and enough blouses, she can give an endless variety to her wardrobe.

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