

Shifting SANDS

Sara Ware BASSETT

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SYNOPSIS

The future of the still youthful and comely "Widder" Marcia Howe...

CHAPTER III—Continued

What disaster had laid him here helpless before them?

As if her questions penetrated his consciousness, the stranger slowly opened his eyes.

"Sorry to come here like this," he murmured. "The fog was so thick, I lost my bearings and my power-boat ran aground. I've been trying hours to get her out. She's hard and fast on your sand-bar."

He struggled to rise and Marcia, kneeling beside him, helped him into an upright position where he sat, leaning against her shoulder.

"I seem to have brought in about half the sea with me," he apologized, looking about in vague, half-dazed fashion.

"No matter. We're used to salt water here," she answered. "How do you feel? You're not hurt?"

"Only a little. Nothing much. I've done something queer to my wrist. I was trying to push the boat off, and something suddenly gave way."

Turning his head aside, he bit his lip as if in pain.

"We'll telephone Doctor Stetson. Meanwhile, you mustn't remain in these wet clothes. There is no surer way of catching cold. Do you think you could get upstairs if Sylvia and I guided you?"

"I guess so—if it isn't far. I'm absurdly dizzy. I don't know why. I suppose, though, I must shed these wet toys."

"You certainly must. Come, Sylvia, lend a hand! We'll help him up."

"Oh, I'm not in such a bad way as all that. I can get up alone," he protested. "Only please wait just another minute. The whole place has suddenly begun to pitch again like a ship in midocean. Perhaps I may be faint. I haven't eaten anything for a day or two."

"Why didn't you tell me? The soup, quick, Sylvia. I only wish I had some brandy. Well, at least this is hot, and will warm you up. I'll feed you. Hand me the cup and spoon, Sylvia."

"But I feel like a baby," fretted the stranger.

"No matter. We must get something hot inside you right away. Don't fuss about how it's done," said the practical-minded Marcia. "There! You look better already! Later you shall have a real, honest-to-goodness meal. Run and call Doctor Stetson, Sylvia, and open the bed in the room opposite mine. You might light the heater there, too."

As the girl sped away, Marcia turned toward her visitor.

"Suppose we try to make the rocking chair now. Shall we? But what worries me is your wet clothing. I'm afraid you'll take your death of cold. Let me peel off your shoes and socks. I can do that. And I believe I could get you out of your water-soaked sweater if I were to cut the sleeve. May I try? We needn't mind wrecking it, for I have another I can give you."

The man did not answer.

Instead, he sat tense and unsmiling, his penetrating brown eyes fixed on Marcia's face. Apparently the scrutiny crystallized in him some swift resolution, for after letting his glance travel about the room to convince himself that no one was within hearing, he leaned forward:

"There is something else I'd rather you did for me first," he whispered, dropping his voice until it became almost inaudible. "I've a package here I wish you'd take charge of. It's inside my shirt. But for this infernal wrist, I could reach it."

"I'll get it."

"I'd rather you didn't talk about it," continued he, hurriedly. "Just put it in a safe place. Will you, please?"

"Certainly."

Puzzled, but unquestioning, Marcia thrust her hand beneath his sodden clothing and drew forth a small, flat box, wrapped in a bedraggled handkerchief.

"If you'll look out for it, I'll be tremendously obliged."

"Of course I will," smiled Marcia. "Look! Here is my pet hiding-place. This brick in the hearth is loose and under it is plenty of space for this small box. I'll tuck it in there. Just

hold it a second until I pry the brick up. There we are! Now give it to me."

She reached hurriedly for the package, but as their hands met, the moist, clinging handkerchief became entangled in their fingers and slipping from its coverings a leather jewel-case dropped to the floor.

Out of it rolled a flashing necklace and a confusion of smaller gems.

Marcia stifled an involuntary cry. Nevertheless, she neither looked up nor delayed.

"Sorry to be so clumsy," she muttered, as she swiftly scooped up the jewels.

It was well she had made haste, for no sooner was the clasp on the box snapped and the treasure concealed beneath the floor than Sylvia returned, and a moment later came both Doctor Jared Stetson and Elisha Winslow.

"Mornin', Marcia," nodded the doctor. "Lish happened to be in the office when your niece called up, an' hearin' you had a man patient, he thought mebbe he might be of use. What 'pears to be the trouble, sir?"

"I've done something to my right wrist."

"H—m—m!" With skilled hand, he pushed back the dripping sleeve.

"You're a mite water-logged, I notice," observed he. "Been overboard?"

"Something of the sort," returned the man, with the flicker of a smile.

"Mr.—" for the fraction of a second, Marcia hesitated; then continued in an even tone. "—Mr. Carlton grounded his boat and had to swim ashore."

"You don't say! Well, I ain't surprised. 'Tain't no day to be afloat. You couldn't cut this fog with a carryin'-knife. How come you to take your boat out in such weather?" the doctor demanded.

"I was—was cruising."

"Oh, an' the fog shut down on you. I see. Fog has a trick of doin' that, unless one keeps an eye for fog symptoms. Now, what I'd recommend for you first of all, Mr. Carlton, is a warm bed. You look clean beat out. Better let 'Lish an' me help you upstairs, an' out of your wet things, 'cause with a wrist such as yours, I figger you won't be very handy at buttons. Not that 'Lish is a professional lady's maid. That ain't exactly his callin'."

Still, in spite of belin' town sheriff, he can turn his hand to other things. It's lucky he can, too, for he don't get much sheriffin' down this way. Wilton doesn't go in for crime. In fact, we was laughin' 'bout that very thing this noon at the post office. 'Pears there's been a robbery at one of the Long Island estates. Quantities of jewelry taken, an' no trace of the thief. The alarm was sent out over the radio early yesterday an' listenin' in 'Lish here, got quite hef up an' not a little envious. He said he 'most wished the burglary had took place in our town, excitement bein' at a pretty low ebb now."

Marcia, standing by the stove, spun about.

"Now, Elisha, don't you run down Wilton. Why, I have twenty-five dollars in my purse this minute," she asserted, taking a worn pocket-book from her dress and slapping it with challenging candor down upon the table.

"I keep it in that china box above the stove."

"That might serve as a starter," remarked the stranger, regarding her quizzically.

She faced him, chin drawn in, and head high and defiant.

"Besides that, in my top bureau drawer is a string of gold beads that belonged to my great-grandmother," she continued, daring laughter curling her lips. "They are very old and are really quite valuable."

"We'll make a note of those, too," nodded the man, his eyes on her.

"I'm afraid that's all I can offer in the way of burglary inducements."

"That bein' the case, s'pose you an' me start gettin' the patient upstairs, 'Lish," broke in Doctor Stetson. "If we don't, next we know he'll be havin' pneumonia as well as a bad wrist."

The stranger's admiring glance fixed itself on Marcia's.

"What is my next move?" he inquired.

"I told you before—you must take off your wet things and rest," she repeated.

"You still prescribe that treatment?"

"I still prescribe it."

"In spite of the—the symptoms?"

"Why not?" was her quick answer.

"Very well. I am ready, gentlemen." Erect, even with a hint of defiance in his mocking smile, the man rose to his full height. "Before we go, however, I must correct a slight error. You misunderstood my name. It is not Carlton. It is Heath—Stanley Heath."

CHAPTER IV

"And yet you told me, Marcia, this was a quiet, adventuresome place!" burst out Sylvia, the instant the door had closed.

"It doesn't seem so to me. When shipwrecked mariners fall into your arms entirely without warning, I call it thrilling. Who do you suppose he is?"

"He told us his name."

"Of course—Heath. Stanley Heath. It's quite a romantic name, too. But I didn't mean that. I mean where did he come from and why? Didn't he tell you?"

"Not a word."

Obviously the girl was disappointed. "I thought perhaps he might have while I was upstairs. I was gone long enough for him to pour out to you his entire history. At least it seemed so to me. I ransacked every closet and drawer in sight trying to find something for him to put on. It wasn't until I struck that old sea-chest in the

hall that I discovered pajamas and underwear. I hope you don't mind my taking them."

A shiver passed over Marcia.

"No, they were Jason's. I ought to have told you they were there. I kept them because I thought they might sometime be useful."

"Well, they certainly are," replied Sylvia. "They will exactly fit Mr. Heath. Where do you suppose he came from? And how long has he been knocking about in that boat, I wonder?"

"How do I know, dear?" Marcia sighed, as if determined to control her patience. "You know as much about him as I do. I mean," she corrected, honesty forcing her to amend the assertion, "almost as much. I did, to be sure, talk with him a little while waiting for the doctor, but he did not tell me anything about himself."

The moving of chairs overhead and the sound of feet creaking down the stairway heralded the return of Jared Stetson and Elisha.

Marcia went to meet them.

"'Tain't a broken wrist, Marcia," was the doctor's greeting on entering the kitchen. "Leastways, I don't think it is. I've bandaged it an' 'Lish an' me have your friend snug an' warm in bed. Tomorrow I'll look in again. For tonight, the bandage will do. A hot water-bottle mightn't be amiss. Nor a square meal, neither. Beyond them two things, there ain't much you can do at present, but let him sleep. Seems a nice sort of feller. Knows him long?"

"Not so very long."

"Why, Marcia—" broke in Sylvia.

"One sometimes comes to know a person rather well, though, even in a short time," went on the older woman, ignoring the interruption.

"S'pose 'twas a comin' to see you that brought him down this way," Elisha volunteered. "Somehow I don't recall meetin' 'em before."

"He hasn't been here before," was the measured response.

"Oh, so he's new to Wilton waters, eh? That prob'ly accounts for his runnin' aground. Fine lookin' chap. Has quite an air to him. Notthin' cheap 'bout his clothes neither. They was A1 quality clear through to his skin. Silk, with monograms on 'em. Must be a man of means."

Silence greeted the observation.

"Likely he is—havin' a power-boat an' leisure to cruise round in her," persisted the undaunted Elisha.

"I really couldn't say."

"Well, apparently he ain't one that boasts of his possessions, an' that's to his credit," interposed Jared Stetson good-humoredly.

Elisha's interest in the stranger was not, however, to be so easily diverted.

"Seen the boat?" he inquired.

"No."

"Oh, you ain't! I forgot to ask Heath the name of her. I'm sort of a crank on the names of boats. It always riles me to have a foolish name given a boat. No matter how small she is, her plankin' is all that divides her owner from fathoms of water, an' in view of the fact he'd oughter regard her soberly an' give her a decent name."

"Well, I hope the name of Mr. Heath's boat will meet with your approval," ventured Sylvia archly.

"I hope 'twill," was the glum report, as the sheriff followed Doctor Stetson through the doorway.

The moment the door-banged behind them, Sylvia turned toward Marcia.

"Forgive my butting in, dear," apologized she. "But I was so surprised. You did say you didn't know Mr. Heath, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"But—but—" "Sometimes it's just as well not to tell all you know—especially in a place like this," was the evasive response.

Was the reply a rebuke or merely a caution?

Sylvia did not know.

And what was the meaning of the rose color that flooded the elder woman's cheek?

Had Marcia really meant to give the impression that she knew Stanley Heath? And if so, why?

Sylvia wracked her brain for answers to these questions.

She would have been interested indeed had she known that while she wrestled with the enigma, Marcia, to all appearances busy preparing the tray for the invalid upstairs, was searching her heart for answers to the same questions.

Why had she sought to shield this stranger?

The man was nothing to her. Of his past she had not the slightest knowledge, indeed he might be the greatest villain in the world. In fact, circumstances proclaimed him a thief. Nevertheless, she did not, could not, believe it. There was something too fine in his face; his eyes.

True, he had made no attempt either to defend himself or to explain away the suspicions he must have known would arise in her mind. On the contrary, with a devil-may-care audacity that fascinated her, he actually appeared to have tried to deepen in her mind the impression of his guilt.

Still she refused to believe. Even in the face of overwhelming evidence she clung to her unreasoning faith in him.

Suppose he had stolen the gems and fled with them from Long Island? Suppose he had lost his bearings in the fog; tossed aimlessly on the sea for a day and a night; and then run aground at her doorstep? It was possible, quite possible, even probable.

Yet was it?

Not for a man like Stanley Heath, Marcia stubbornly insisted. So deep was the conviction, she shrank lest he should feel called upon to justify or defend himself.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Campus Swank Via Knitted Fashions

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



So-away-to-school wardrobe there is no more direct road to take to arrive at campus swank than via the knitted way.

The new knits are in a riotous color mood. Their bright and handsome hues are as richly colorful and fascinating as the autumnal background against which they are silhouetted. Then, too, pronounced patternings in a bewildering array of checks, plaids and stripes animate the scene in striking display. As to the styling of the new knitted costumes, designers are doing it with incomparable chic and charm. See the three modes illustrated and be convinced.

There is no doubt about the atmosphere of unusual, outstanding and undeniable style that surrounds this trio of chic autumn knits. Consider the spritely checked three-piece suit pictured to the right in the group. It is a stunning affair. It is the sort that is destined to prove the college girl's delight. For that matter every woman will realize in this model her dream come true as to the type of fall costume she has been visioning for about-town wear. Just the thing for motoring and traveling.

This entire ensemble is carried out in a hairy soft yarn in a close jacquard knit. For the knitted suit the latest is a luxurious three-quarter swagger coat such as styles this outfit. A sensible and graceful mode this, since it enables the wearing of this three-piece until well into the winter season. We see also in this model a fetching ex-

SUEDE SUITS By CHERIE NICHOLAS



Here's a newcomer—the suede suit. They are stepping out this fall in the most fascinating colors fancy can picture. To attract the more, they are made of suede as soft and supple as fabric and as delightfully wearable, being comfortably and pleasingly lightweight. In the model pictured the skirt has interesting panel inlays and three buttons which unfasten to allow freedom of action. Roomy pockets, wide revers and a fine finesse in tailored detail give to this handsome jacket suit an air of unusual distinction. As to the colors for the new suede jackets and blouses, suits and accessories, they are simply fascinatin-

MILLINERS SHOW NEW USE OF VEILS

Milliners have taken liberties with the classic lines of hats this season with the result that some interesting and amusing new features have appeared. An entirely new use of veils has been shown and, by the way, veils have been getting coarser and coarser until they somewhat resemble fish nets.

A little sailor is shown in white grosgrain which has been stiffened to give shape to the brim which stands out at the sides and tilts slightly over the forehead. A coarse veil of black silk is attached at the center of the crown and falls in back somewhat in the manner of bride's veil. Another in coarse straw is shaped like a Mexican sombrero with an upturned brim all the way around. A fish net veil extends over the crown to the edge of the brim where it is dotted with small pompons.

Dramatic Berets Show Up on Autumn Fashion Scene

Those big berets of velvet or pliant felt, made in thrilling rich dark colors, came onto the fall style scene early, but they will be still in good order when we get into our first warmish tweeds and flannels.

They set off a cotton sports dress with a refreshing dash for the present, but they will be the handiest kind of ensemble when we begin to wear all the strange new colors which autumn models are promising.

For a peek at coming tweeds shows muddy violets and sulphurous greens on the way, and plaids made of most unusual combinations—schemes that demand just the right accent in hat and blouse to show them off. These berets have the color, and they are becoming to almost any type of coiffure, besides.

Hoods, Pantalettes Many hooded dresses and coats are shown in Paris; also some trousered sports and street skirts. Some designers even show satin evening pantalettes instead of petticoats.

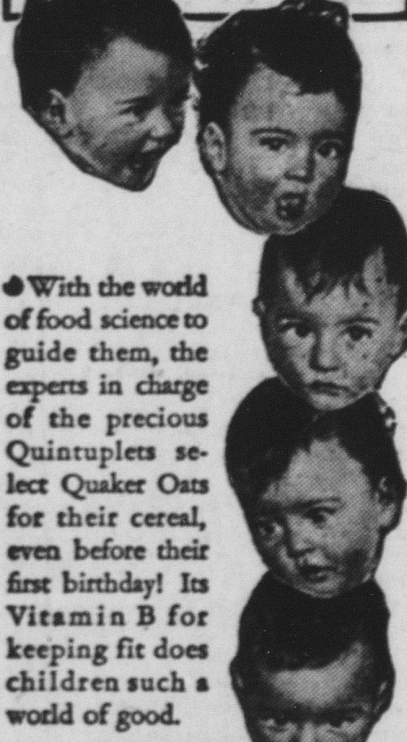
Housewife's Idea Box



To Wash Walls For best results, wash your walls in this way, provided they have a good oil-paint finish: Use three cloths. Wring first one as dry as possible from light soap suds. The second one, which you will use for rinsing, wring from clear water. The third, have dry for wiping immediately each small portion washed. Use an up-and-down motion.

Spinners Pensioned Spinners over sixty-five years of age in England are eligible for a pension of approximately \$2.50 per week. There are upward of 2,500,000 of them in the country.

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