

Shifting Sands

by Sara Ware Bassett

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SYNOPSIS

The youthful and comely "Widder" Marcia Howe has as her guest her late husband's niece, Sylvia Hayden. A stranger, exhausted, finds his way to Marcia's home. Secretly, he asks her to hide a package containing jewelry. She does so. Elisha Winslow, town sheriff, brings news of a jewel robbery nearby. The stranger gives his name as Stanley Heath. Sylvia discovers the jewels, and naturally believes Heath is a robber, but, for Marcia's sake, decides to say nothing. Marcia feels she has altogether too deep an interest in her guest, but is powerless to overcome it. Heath wires "Mrs. S. C. Heath," New York, saying he is safe. He also orders a man named Currier to come at once. Sylvia, in her room, bedsacks herself with the jewels. At Marcia's approach she hides them there. Heath asks Marcia to bring them to him. They are gone! He makes light of the loss. Sylvia returns the jewels to their original hiding place. Elisha Winslow discovers them and has no doubt they are the stolen gems, and Heath is a thief. Leaving the jewels, he makes plans for arresting Heath. Currier arrives. Marcia overhears Heath describe how he acquired the gems, and is forced to believe him guilty of theft. At Heath's suggestion, Currier investigates the hiding place—and finds the gems! He returns to New York with them, but his references to "Mrs. Heath" have convinced Marcia her tender dream has been a foolish one. Elisha and Eleazer come to arrest Heath. Marcia is indignant, and unwittingly reveals to Sylvia the secret of her love. The jewels, of course, are not to be found.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued

"Oh, for heaven's sake don't do that," Elisha pleaded. "Artie Nickerson would be ragin' mad did he find I'd told you. If you must know what the message was, I can repeat it near 'nough, I reckon. It ran somethin' like this: "Safe on Cape with my lady. Shall return with her later." "And that was all?" inquired Marcia calmly. "All! Ain't that enough?" Elisha demanded. As she vouchsafed no reply he presently continued: "I don't want you should think I told you this, Marcia, with any unfriendly motive. It's only that those of us who've seen you marry one worthless villain don't want you should marry another. Jason was a low down cuss. You know that well's L." The woman raised her hand to check him. "I'm aware 'tain't pleasant to hear me say so—out loud, but it's God's truth." "Marcia!" Sylvia burst out. "Hush, dear. We'll talk of this later. Elisha, I think I must ask you and Eleazer to go now." "You ain't goin' to tell me where the jewels are?" "I don't know where they are." "Nor nothin' 'bout—'bout the telegram." "Nothing except to thank you for your kind intentions and say you quoted it myself correctly. I sent it for Mr. Heath myself. 'My Lady,' as you have apparently forgotten, is the name of Mr. Heath's boat." "My land! So 'tis," faltered Elisha. "I'm mighty sorry, Marcia—I ask your pardon." "It's all right. Just leave us now, please." The door banged behind the discomfited officials.

CHAPTER IX

The torrent of words Sylvia had until now held in check broke from her: "Was it true, Marcia—what they said about Uncle Jason I mean? Was it true?" "I'm afraid so, dear." "But you never told me; and you never told Mother, either. Of course I see why. You didn't want her to know because it would have broken her heart. I hate him! I hate him for making you unhappy and spoiling your life!" "Hush child. Jason has not spoiled my life," contradicted Marcia with a grave, sad smile. "But he has scarred it—dashed to pieces all the dreams you started out with—those beautiful dreams a girl has when she is young. I know you had such fancies once, for you are the sort who would. And Jason came and trampled on them—" "He made me see life as it was. Perhaps it was better I should." "Was Jason as bad as they said, Marcia? Ah, you don't have to answer. There is no need for you to try to reconcile your desire to spare me—spare him—with the truth. He was as bad—probably much worse. Dear, dear Marcia." Impulsively Sylvia bent her lips to the hands so tightly clasped in hers. "I cannot imagine," she rushed on, "why, when one of my family had made you as wretched as he did, you should have wanted another in the house. Had I suffered so I should never have wished to lay eyes on any more Howes as long as I lived."

"I have tried not only to forgive but to forget. I have closed the door on the past and begun a new life." "And now into it has come this Stanley Heath," the girl said. "For the fraction of a second Marcia did not reply; then almost inaudibly she murmured: "Yes." Sylvia slipped one of her strong young arms about the bowed shoulders. "It just seems as if I could not bear it," she burst out passionately. "Sylvia, look at me. Tell me the truth. Do you, too, love Stanley Heath? Was that the reason you fought against Elisha's finding the jewels? Tell me. I must know." "No," she answered without hesitation. "At first he did fascinate me. I changed my mind, though, later on. Not because on acquaintance he became less charming. It wasn't that. If anything, he became more so. I just—changed my mind. As for the jewels, I could not bear to let that little runt of a sheriff win out. You see, I thought the gems were there under the brick and that when you urged him to search, you did not know it." "I had known all along they were in the house, for I stumbled upon them by accident one day when I was here alone; but I had no idea you had. I truly believed Mr. Heath had hidden them beneath the hearth, and I was determined Elisha should not find them." "You think Mr. Heath took the jewels?" asked Marcia, slowly. "Certainly I do. Don't you?" "No." "But, Marcia, can't you see how plain it all is? I know it is terrible for you, dear. It almost breaks my heart. It is an awful thing to believe of anybody—harder still of a person one loves. Nevertheless, we must face the facts. People do not carry such things about with them—especially men. He came by them in no honest way, you may be sure of that. He is guilty, Marcia—guilty." "I do not believe it," was the stubborn protest.

"I realize, dear, it is hard for you to own it," soothed Sylvia. "We hate to admit the faults of those we—care for. Still, nothing is to be gained by remaining blind to them. Perhaps Mr. Heath was horribly tempted to commit this sin. We do not know. We are not his judges. The thing for us to do is to help him out of the mess he is in. Aid him to escape." "Believing him guilty—you would do that?" "Surely I would." "You mean you would help him to evade the law? The punishment such wrongdoing merits?" "Yes. To give him a sporting chance, the start of those who are after him. You love Stanley Heath. Don't you want to see him go free?" "Not if he is guilty." "Well, nobody is going to round up Mr. Heath if I can prevent it," asserted Sylvia, throwing back her head. "If you won't help him get away, I will. He must go in the boat—now—to-day." "The boat has gone. Mr. Currier arrived this morning after you had gone and took the boat back to New York with him." "And the jewels?" "Yes, the jewels, too." "Humph! So that's where they are!" "Yes." "Pretty cute of him to make so neat a get-away! What sort of man was he? A gentleman, like Mr. Heath?" "The older woman colored." "Well, no. At least he—no. Oh, he was polite and had a nice manner—a quiet voice—" "But he was different from Mr. Heath—an inferior—one who took orders," interrupted Sylvia. "In other words, he is the hands and Mr. Heath the brains of the team." "How can you, Sylvia?" "Because I must, Marcia—because we must both look this affair in the face. Confess the circumstances are suspicious." "They seem to be," she owned with reluctance. "Have you considered them?" Sylvia inquired. Marcia drew her hand across her forehead.

"I—I—yes. I have thought them over. I don't understand them at all. Nevertheless, I do not believe Stanley Heath is guilty," was the proud retort. "You are making a great mistake, if you will pardon me for saying so," Sylvia responded gently. "You are deliberately closing your eyes and mind to facts that later are bound to cause you bitter unhappiness. Let alone the man's guilt. He has a wife. You seem to forget that. As Elisha Winslow remarked, you have already been miserable once. Why be so a second time? Help Stanley Heath to get out of Wilton and forget him." "I cannot do either of those things. In the first place, I have given my word to hand Mr. Heath over to the authorities. As for forgetting him—why ask the impossible?" Sylvia's patience gave way. "Go your own way then," she snapped. "Go your own way and if by and by you regret it—as you surely will—do not blame me. Don't blame me, either, if I do not agree with you. Stanley Heath shall never remain here and be betrayed to the law. Stick to your grim old puritanism if you must. I'll help him get away." She started toward the stairway. "Sylvia, come back here!" Marcia cried. "I shall not come back." Marcia rushed after her, but it was too late. Sylvia was gone.

Stanley Heath was lying with expectant face toward the door when Sylvia entered. "What's the rumpus?" he demanded. "I guess you know. There is no use

mincing matters or beating about the bush. The jewels have gone and you must go, too." The man looked dumfounded. "Don't misunderstand me, please," Sylvia rushed on. "I'm not blaming you—nor judging you. I don't know why you took them. You may have been tempted beyond your strength. That is none of my business." "You believe I stole them?" "Certainly I do." "Suppose I didn't?" "I expected you'd say that," was the calm retort. "Let it go that way if you prefer. I don't mind. What I want to do is to help you to get away." "Even if I am guilty." "Yes. I just can't bear to have that mean little sheriff who's after you catch you." "What's that?" "That wretched Elisha Winslow who came here this morning with Eleazer Crocker tagging at his heels. In some way they had found out about the jewels and where you had hidden them. They wanted to come upstairs and arrest you post haste; but Marcia wouldn't allow it." "Marcia heard the story, too?" "Of course." "Poor Marcia!" "You may well say poor Marcia," Sylvia echoed sarcastically. "You have made her most unhappy. Oh, Mr. Heath, Marcia has not had the sort of life that I told you she had. She has been wretched—miserable. Go away before you hear more suffering upon her. I'll help you get out of town. I am sure we can devise a plan." "Wait just a moment. What does Marcia say? I think I'd better talk with her first." "Don't! It will only be a waste of



"The Jewels Have Gone and You Must Go, Too."

time. Marcia is hard, merciless. Her conscience drives her to extremes. Even should you get her opinion, you would not follow it. But I'll send her to you—if I must. But remember, I warned you." "I shall not soon forget that, Sylvia, nor the splendid loyalty you've shown today. I shall always remember it. Whatever happens, please realize that I am grateful," Heath said earnestly. "Run along now, and fetch Marcia." It was some moments before Marcia answered the summons and when at last she came, it was with downcast eyes and evident reluctance. "Tell me, please, exactly what happened down stairs," Heath smiled. She related the incident tersely; without comment. Stanley Heath, scrutinizing her with keen, appraising eyes, could not but note the pallor of her cheeks, the unsteadiness of her lips, the nervous clasping and unclasping of her hands. "And that is all?" he inquired when convinced she had no intention of speaking further. "That is all." "Thank you. Now what do you think it best for me to do? I should like your opinion." "But how can I give a just opinion? I cannot judge," she burst out as if goaded beyond her patience. "I know none of the facts." A radiance, swift as the passage of a meteor, flashed across Stanley Heath's face and was gone. "Suppose you yourself had taken these jewels and were placed in this dilemma?" pressed he. "The case would not be similar at all." "Why not?" "Because—because I should be guilty." "You mean—you think—" "I do not believe you took the jewels," was the quiet answer. "Marcia! Marcia! Why don't you believe I took them? Have I ever told you I did not take them? Ever led you to suppose me innocent?" "You have never told me anything about it." The man restrained an impulse to imprison her hands in his. "Suppose I did take them?" he went on in an even, coolly modulated voice. "Suppose the case stands exactly as this shrewd-eyed Wilton sheriff suspects it does? What am I to do?" He saw the color drain from her face. "I only know what I should do, were I in your place. I should go through with it—clear my soul of guilt." "And afterward?" "Start over again." "That would be very difficult. The stigma of crime clings to a man. My life would be ruined were I to pursue such a course."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The Rogues' Gallery



He is Also Powerful Enough to Pull Over a Fifty-pound Bridge Lamp, Haul All the Light Plugs Out of Their Sockets, and Any Family Possession He Hits With His Tail Is Just Something You Formerly Owned.

WE HAVE ANOTHER DOG NOW

By FRANK CONDON

WELL, the Skipper is going along on over to the dog heaven, and I suppose the less said about that, the better. The Skipper was a Boston, the small type, of no great mental stature, fussy like all elderly females, seven years in command of our yard, nervous as a bowl of jelly and a natural hater of grocer's boys, laundry wagon drivers, bill collectors and pimply youths going through college if you hand them two dollars for a magazine. The Skipper passed on at the dog hospital and I'm glad she didn't cash in here at home, for that would have been truly awful. She always had a hunch about the dog hospital. The doctors are all kindly, genial and helpful, but nevertheless, the Skipper used to shudder whenever we drove her over to the hospital for some mild ailment, like red-eye or hot nose. She just didn't like the place and there was reason for her fear.

Once upon a time, she had four pups in that hospital, and it took a Caesarian to pull her through. This time, she came down suddenly with a sickness, that if you get it and you're a dog, your goose is cooked. I didn't know. I thought it was just another stomach-ache from eating snails. Well, the dog hospital telephone lady rang me up on the fourth day and said: "I've got some bad news for you: That's all she needed to say, and for the next five days, our place was like a morgue. We all swore fervently we'd never own another dog, not in this world. Too harrowing. About the fifth dogless day, the house began to take on a slightly haunted feeling. Not enough noise. No scratching sounds. There was an old swing in the yard where the Skipper was wont to snooze away the afternoons and we hastily gave that to the Salvation Army truck, but it didn't do any good.

"Maybe," I opened up, "maybe we ought to get us a new dog. After all, we are normally a dog family and this preternatural silence around here is giving me the willies." Everyone immediately agreed. "But no more Boston. They are entirely too fragile for this world. We've had miserable luck with small animals, so suppose we purchase a large, quiet, meditative dog with a philosophic outlook on life. Bostons are always fretting themselves into a fever." There ensued a brief period of dog-hunting and kennel looking, and presently this new dog appeared upon our horizon, and very much larger than a man's hand. A bald-headed German owned the kennel, and when he opened a certain wire door, out of the dimness floundered the strange-appearing animal that has since become part of our household. The German said he was exactly three months old. I noticed that he was having trouble with his legs and steering gear, as he staggered about the room, hitting objects. "Acts kind of drunk," I observed. "What's the matter with him?" "He's just young," the German explained.

"What breed of dog would that be?" "He's a Great Dane." "Why are all his legs broken?" "They ain't broken. They're just look so. When he gets older, they straighten out." I was further informed that the angular beast weighed 40 pounds and would tip the beam at 160 when he reached his full flower. "If it is our intention to purchase a large dog," I informed the onlooking family, "then here is certainly a large dog, or what will be one soon. In addition to that, we have never owned a purple dog, nor have I ever previously seen a purple pup, or heard of one. What do you all say?" We signed the contract then and there and the German dog merchant

led our new purchase out to the car and stuffed him aboard, where he instantly went to sleep. I was given, with a touch of formality, a typewritten pedigree card, mentioning the rather unusual ancestry of the new Dane. The card stated in so many words that his father was Caliente Tiger and his mamma was that famous Dane dame, Aurora Tiger. Both parents happened to be present during the negotiations at the kennel, but neither seemed inclined to recognize their son, or display any interest or pride in him. They were probably grumpy because he had turned out to be a purple son, as they were not purple themselves, one being a soiled gray, the daddy Dane, while the mother was a sort of tornado roan. They were both one size smaller than a navy tug, so we know what to expect as time passes.

The biography card stated further that the formal name of our new possession was Tiger Clifton Ranger, which to me is utterly ridiculous and far-fetched, and was vetoed by all on the way home. Fancy strolling about the house and calling plaintively: "Here, Tiger Clifton Ranger, come get your pork sausage." So we called him Jeeter.

As we were leaving for home, the German suggested that we return in a month, bring Jeeter back and the man would trim his ears, a process that consists of cutting notches out of the ears, which hang down normally like a couple of cold buckwheat cakes. When he shakes his head, they fly up on top and form a sort of lunatic beret, and that's the way they're going to stay, as I see no sense whatever in nicking Jeeter's fappers. The man insisted that if they weren't trimmed, I couldn't show him at the dog show. I don't want to show him. All I ask is that he remain quietly in the yard, try to learn a few good habits and quit pawing the screen doors. Skipper used that trick, too—pawing at the screens, making mournful noises and trying to beg inside the house, but there was a difference. Skipper's pawing was a quiet scratching, but when this Jeeter guy paws a screen door, you haven't any door left—only a hole where the screen was.

Anyhow, we are on a large dog basis now and are watching him grow. He eats pretty well and has an easy taste in foods, as he will eat anything except a live bee. He tried eating a live bee the other day and we had to explain matters to the local police. His regular food is ground round steak and cod liver oil, the oil being to make his legs strong enough to lift him. It costs us 60 cents a day and will be a little more when he grows up—I imagine about two dollars an hour, after he gets his full, adult appetite. He is growing stronger daily and can now raise himself off the rug if given time. At first, he could fall down perfectly, but was no good on the up stroke. He is also powerful enough to pull over a 50-pound bridge lamp, haul all the light plugs out of their sockets, and any family possession he hits with his tail is just something you formerly owned. He tried sleeping in the Skipper's old dog-house, but that idea was no good, as we had to take the roof off and pry him out with a hammer. He looks like an idiot and everything he does is precisely what an idiot would do if undisturbed, so I believe we will keep him.

The family was annoyed the other morning when it was discovered that in his early morning frolics, Jeeter had taken down a small tree and was apparently going to eat it, root by root. "That's all right," I said. "Let him play. You wanted a large dog and that's what you have. He is a healthy brute and will probably never die. Another thing." "What?" "You'll never find him over in the dog hospital with four pups and a Caesarian—not Jeeter, the Great Dane." © Frank Condon.—WNU Service.

Porters Who Shoulder Burden of Half a Ton

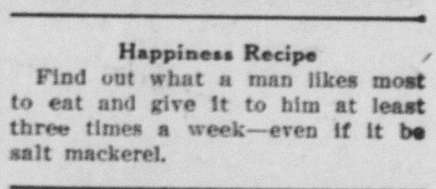
To become a porter in the Central Markets of Paris one must pass drastic weight-carrying tests. One such is to walk the whole length of the market carrying at least 400 pounds on the back. Would-be porters must show also that they are capable of carrying, for a shorter distance, half an ox, weighing about 500 pounds. The knack of balancing various kinds of burdens has to be painstakingly acquired. Several of the star porters can carry 600 pounds—more than a quarter of a ton. Standing still, some of them can hold across their shoulders a burden of half a ton.—Pearson's Weekly.



LITTLE MISS MUFFET
SITS ON A TUFFET...
AND SAYS "I WANT NO WHY!"
"I'VE GOT MY TUMS
IF SOUR STOMACH COMES...
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