

BRIGHT STAR

By Mary Schumann

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CHAPTER I

Hugh Marsh waited on the station platform for the 11:25 from Washington which was bringing his younger sister, Kezia, home from school. The train was a few minutes late. He was annoyed and wished he had called before he left his office to time its arrival. He might have worked a few minutes longer on the cost sheet he was preparing.

Around him were the milling people who wait for trains, people of all classes and conditions, some with harassed faces who carried cheap suitcases, one or two laughing family groups, some traveling salesmen, with smart luggage and an air of success.

A long whistle coming from around the curve, startled the groups on the station platform into scrambling activity. Baggage was lifted, good-byes were said, the crowd surged forward toward the steel rails as the train thundered by and came to a gradual stop.

Kezia, twenty years old, slim and delectable, her eyes bright with excitement, a small brown hat on her curly ash-blond hair, a jacketed brown silk suit with a spray of



"Good-by—Perhaps We May Meet Again."

orchids at the shoulder, came down the steps of the sleeping car. The smartness of her costume and the suppleness of her face, which she moved, made her look much prettier than she really was. She smiled radiantly at the well-dressed man of 30 who picked up her bags with his from the row the porter had set out, chatted to him as they came along the narrow space between the wall of the embankment and the train.

"Here—here!" said Hugh touching her arm. "Hugh, darling!" she cried in glad surprise. She kissed him, held both his hands for a second, then turning to her companion, said: "This is Hugh, the most wonderful brother in the world, Mr. DeGraffe. Nice people should know each other. Mr. DeGraffe has been very nice on this trip!"

The men shook hands. DeGraffe, obviously amused by Kezia, uttered a few inconsequential, murmured, "Good-by—perhaps we may meet again," lifted his hat and followed in the wake of a taxi driver.

Hugh and Kezia climbed the stairs to the street and the waiting car.

Hugh released the brake preparatory to starting. "Ever hear little girls shouldn't talk to strange men on trains?"

"How do you know I picked him up?" she asked, pouting. "Deduction—perhaps we may meet again."

She wrinkled her nose at him. "Even Emily Post says you may speak to a well-bred stranger in a museum or traveling! Don't be elder-brotherly!" She added in a whisper with a pert look at him, "I'm grown up now—know my way about!"

"Serving notice?" "Just as well," she laughed. They went forward to the green light and edged their way through a narrow street congested with traffic. The steel mills beyond the river vibrated with a rhythm that was like the roar of distant surf.

"How is Mother?" she inquired almost at once. "Very well."

"The love!" murmured Kezia tenderly. "And how is Dorrie?" "She's great. She had an engagement or she would have come this noon. She sent her love."

"No little hopes for the bassinette? . . . Shame on you, Hugh! You've been married four years."

"Give us time—we're young." "Think of sister Margery's example—three in no time at all!" "Living is expensive."

"And so is Dorrie."

The flicker of annoyance in his hazel eyes was his only answer.

"How's Ellen Pendleton?" she asked.

"She's going with a boy named

Jerry Purdue. Good-looking, smooth—but not up to Ellen, according to Mother."

"Ellen still arty?" "The edge in her voice did not escape Hugh. Kezia had always

"had it in" for Ellen, a distant cousin on their mother's side, a remnant of childish jealousy. Ellen had a natural charm, unique and appealing, which was all the more provocative because she was so unconscious of it. "I think she still paints a little," he replied. "Gavin and Lizzie wouldn't let her finish art school, you know."

To himself he wondered as he often had before: How the dickens had Gavin and Lizzie managed to produce such a lovely lyric creature as Ellen?

They moved faster up an avenue over which elms met forming a Gothic archway. A mile further on, Hugh made a sharp turn.

"There it is," said Kezia, in a choked voice, her eyes misted with tears. Their childhood home lay before them, a white house with colonial pillars set back on a deep lawn. When they turned into the drive a woman rose from a chair on the porch.

"Mother!" cried Kezia. She leaped out of the car the second Hugh brought it to a stop.

"Kezia, darling, it has been so long!" Fluvanna Marsh put her arms about her daughter, kissed her, then held her off to look into her eyes with wistful affection. "So long—and it is good to have you home to stay!" Then her fingers touched Hugh's sleeve with a caressing gesture although she had seen him only a few hours before on his way to the office. She murmured "Hugh."

That was part of Mother's hold over him, thought Hugh. If you skipped a day coming to see her, she never made you feel remiss. At each meeting she surrounded you with an unspoken flood of joy in your presence, as silent and intangible as sunshine.

"It's great to be home—simply marvelous! I could have cheered when I saw Pittsburgh this morning—dear old smoky Pittsburgh! It reminded me of Corinth . . . And everything's just the same, the house, the yard—you, Mother! Oh, I do love it all—and I'm going to have a wonderful time this summer! . . . Come on, Hugh, be a redcap for me! Carry my grips upstairs and I'll wash up."

Her room had been redecorated in her absence and she exclaimed with pleasure. "Pale gold, and chintz of gold and green! Adorable!" She went about joyfully examining her possessions, her book-case, the pictures on the wall.

Margery was sitting on the porch with his mother when Hugh came downstairs. "Hello, Hugh." She lifted her face for his brotherly kiss. "I wanted to go to the train with you but things were complicated this morning. Angela would not sleep after her bath. She walked around her crib, clinging to the bars—and sang!—and she's only 10 months old. Stop laughing! . . . She really sang, I tell you!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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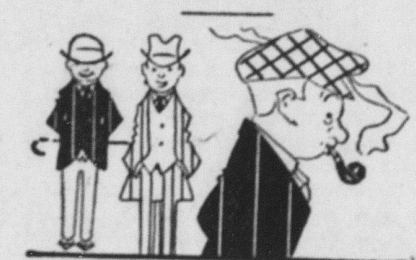
Little Hinks presented himself at the office with a noticeable gap in his upper dentures.

"Hullo!" was the cry. "Had an accident?"

"No," he replied. "Only a row with the wife."

"What! You surely didn't come to blows?" "Oh, no," said Hinks. "But next time I gnash my teeth I'll remember to take my pipe out of my mouth."—London Tit-Bits Magazine.

AIMLESS SORT



"Isn't Boggs an aimless sort of chap?"

"Aimless? That guy spends half his time wondering what he's going to do with the other half."

Shaky

A man was fumbling at his key-hole in the small hours of the morning. A policeman saw the difficulty and came to the rescue.

"Can I help you to find the key-hole, sir?" he asked. "Thash all right, old man," said the other cheerily, "you jush hol' the housh still and I can manage."—Fifth Corps Area News.

Not to Be Outdone

"Down where I lived," said the Texan, "we grew a pumpkin so big that when we cut it my wife used one-half of it for a cradle." "Well," smiled the man from Chicago, "that's nothing. A few days ago right here two full grown policemen were found asleep on one beat."—Dallas Times.

Verse and Reverse

"Think how much good the electric light company has done this town," cried the speaker, the company's president. "In conclusion let me say—if you'll excuse the pun—Honor the Light Brigade!" Quick as a flash came a voice from the audience: "Oh, what a charge they made."

No Better

The anxious father wrote to the college professor: "Haven't heard from my son for some time. Hope he's not sick. If he has been I hope to hear he's improving." The professor replied: "Son not sick, and not improving."

Not So Simple

Visitor From City—Oh, to be a farmer and live always with the blue sky overhead. Farmer—Yes, 'twould be nice if that was the only overhead.

Golfer's Stimulus

"When one goes golfing these days isn't it wonderful to drink in the sweet fresh air?" "O, is that what you drink?"

HAPPY DREAMS



First Fish—Do you sleep well at night?

Second Fish—Sure, ain't I rocked in the cradle of the deep?

Which Bar

Mrs. Frazzle—What a terrible wreck young Perkins is, to be sure. It is sad to see such a dissipated man.

Mrs. Dazzle—Yes, indeed; but you must remember that he was admitted to the bar at a very early age.

Why Not?

"I am always ill the night before a journey." "Then, why don't you go a day earlier?"—Windsor Star.

On the Front

Preacher—And so your daughter is about to marry. Do you really feel that she is ready for the battle of life?

Mrs. Brown—She should be. She's been in four engagements already.

He Was Quite Cool

Mrs. Blue—Was your husband cool when burglars broke in the other night?

Mrs. Green—Cool! Why, he was shivering all over.

Roman Empire's Highways

Were Several Feet Thick

The Roman Empire was intersected by roads, constructed principally between the Second and Fourth centuries after Christ.

These highways, notes a writer in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, varied from eight to fifteen feet in width, and were often laid for considerable distances on bases several feet thick. They were to a large extent roads of hard materials, whatever the country traversed afforded, and were so well built that the original construction of some of them is still found. Indeed, some of these highways were so durably built that they have sustained the traffic of 2,000 years without great injury.

Soldiers, slaves and criminals were employed in the construction of the Roman roads, which were almost universally built in straight lines, without regard for grade, probably because the use of beasts of burden as the chief means of transport made the preservation of the level an affair of minor importance.

The Roman Forum is said to have been the point of convergence of twenty-four roads which, with their branches, had a total length of 52,964 Roman miles.

In Great Britain there were four principal Roman roads—Warring street, from Kent to Cardigan bay; Iknield street, from St. David's to Tynemouth; Fosse way, from Cornwall to Lincoln, and Ermin street, from St. David's to Southampton.

The Ice Age

Estimates are based chiefly upon consideration of the rates of erosion of streams known to have been formed after the recession of the glacial sheet. The Niagara river is such a stream. A representative of the United States Geological Survey figured from the rate at which the falls of Niagara have receded since their discovery by white men that the glacier disappeared only 7,000 or 8,000 years ago. Other estimates are up to 30,000 years.

The Dobson Fly

Despite its enormous pincers, the Corydalis cornutus, or Dobson fly, cannot be considered dangerous, according to an authority. The Dobson fly is the final stage of life of the hellgrammite, a bait used by bass fishermen. The hellgrammite lives three years under water, devouring other small insects which it finds in its feeding grounds under stones. After it has passed from its awkward larva stage as a hellgrammite into a Dobson fly, it flies like a butterfly.

Theft of Crown Jewels

Was Regarded as a Joke

Theft of the crown jewels of England more than 260 years ago, is recalled by Pearson's Weekly, of London. At that time, the jewels were kept in a small iron cage on the lower floor of Martin Tower, in the Tower of London and here they attracted the attention of Captain Blood, a notorious Irish swash-buckler.

Blood disguised himself as a parson and paid regular visits to the Martin Tower. Soon he was friendly with the eighty-year-old keeper, and suggested that a marriage might be arranged between his "nephew" and the keeper's pretty daughter.

He appointed a rendezvous for the couple at the unromantic hour of 7 A. M., on May 9, 1671. But, instead of the "nephew," Blood turned up with three lusty swordsmen, who knocked down and gagged the old keeper. Blood snatched the crown, and while one accomplice seized the orb with its giant ruby, another sawed the sceptre into three parts.

But at that very moment the keeper's son returned from a long campaign in Flanders. He gave the alarm, and a guardsman captured Blood at St. Katherine's wharf.

Charles II treated the whole affair as a joke. Not only did he pardon Blood, but received him into court, and granted him an estate in Ireland to console him for his failure to bring off the most daring burglary in British history.

Old Women Dance on Fire

on St. Konstantine's Day

Old women dance on red hot embers every summer in the village of Vulgari, south-east Bulgaria, according to a writer in Pearson's Weekly.

These women are called "nestinarki." They are devout Christians, and their patron saints are St. Konstantine and St. Elena.

On St. Konstantine's day the peasants make a huge bonfire of logs in the village square. And while it is blazing up the "nestinarki" begin their fire dance procession.

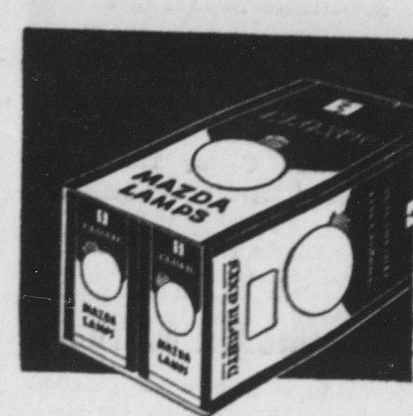
This is led by villagers bearing ikons of St. Elena and St. Konstantine. To the drone of bagpipes the old women dance to a weird rhythmic melody, their bodies trembling as if in a palsy.

The villagers gather round the bonfire. Then the "nestinarki," barefooted, dance for several minutes on the glowing embers, until they fall exhausted. Afterwards, it is claimed, their feet show not the least trace of burning.

Salt Wells Primitively Drilled
With equipment no more modern than bamboo pipes, the Chinese succeeded in drilling salt wells 2,000 feet deep.

Mexico an Immense Country
Mexico contains 23 states, two territories and a federal district which embraces the City of Mexico. The country, laid across the United States, would stretch from New York to Salt Lake City.

take . . .



A Carton of Mazda Lamps Home

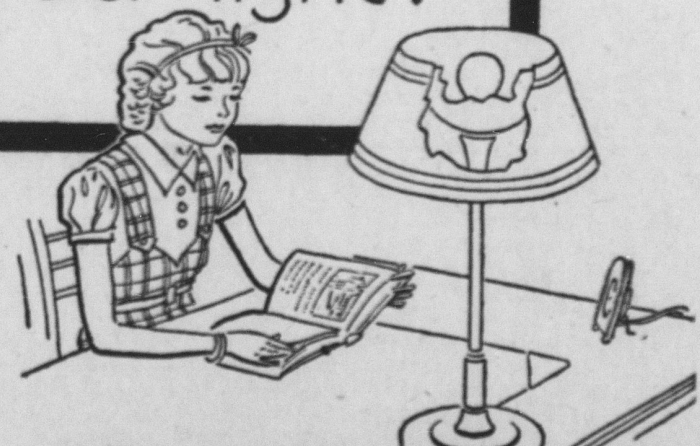
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