

Bright Star

By
Mary Schumann

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CHAPTER X—Continued

"Oh, Mother," he sighed. His eyes were tearless, but the aching pain was released. Her arms folded around him; her cheek lay against his hair; they were close in that mystic bond of mother and son.

"It's hard, Hugh."

"I'm glad you know." He groped to his feet, stood by the mantel. "Don't grieve too much. I have to get myself together—meet it. It has happened to quite a few others . . . they've lived through it."

"It isn't hopeless? Tell me about it, for while I saw you getting haggard and silent, it wasn't until Dorrie came this week that I realized—"

"Did she speak of it?"

She shook her head. "I only knew something is very wrong. I met Lizzie Pendleton this week in a department store. She said, 'Too bad about Hugh and Dorrie.' I asked her what she meant, and she gave me an odd look, and said she supposed I knew—and swept away. I pieced it together."

He began to pace the room. Then he told her the story, or as little as he could, minimizing, suppressing, scanting details. "I suppose you have to know—I hoped you wouldn't. But situations like this never stand still. To go back to where we were—he shook his head—"is impossible. Something is killed—destroyed."

His mother's eyes were filled with tears; she looked suddenly old and white, her vitality borne away by her deep suffering for him.

The telephone rang in the closet under the stairs and they heard Kezia scramble to answer it. Her oment by, "You won't be home? . . . Yes, cars have a way of getting out of commission at times! . . . I'll tell your husband not to expect you . . . Here? Of course he's here—got in an hour ago."

She appeared at the library door then. "Hugh, the telephone." She lingered a moment, caught by the gravity of their faces. "It's Dorrie," she whispered.

Hugh took up the receiver. "Hello, Hugh," she began with hesitation. "I didn't think you'd be home until tomorrow."

"You didn't?"

"No, I didn't," her voice strengthened and had a whip of defiance in it. "Anyhow I'm at the Lawrences, and they find they have a flat tire, wanted me to stay all night . . . But if you're home I'll send for a taxicab."

"Shall I come for you?"

"No need of it. It's way across town. I'll be along in half an hour."

"Very well," said Hugh grimly, "but don't come here. Go to our own house."

He began to gather up his things. "I'll take your car, Mother, if you don't mind."

Kezia hovered over him in excited solicitude. "I'll drive you over, Hughie. Come, Jerry, help me get the car out." She paid no attention to his protestations that he drive himself, but hurried away with Jerry following.

Soon Kezia sounded a summoning horn from the driveway. Hugh put down his burdens in a corner of the hall. "I'm going . . . but I'll be back in a little while. I'm only going to talk to her."

He strode out the door. He waved to Kezia in dismissal. "Thanks—but I want to walk."

CHAPTER XI

The walks were littered with leaves that scuffed under Hugh's feet. His shadow lengthened as he passed under one arc light, shortened as he approached the light at the next corner. He walked slowly, took the long way round, that he might give Dorrie time to get home; for Cune to get away; time for her to rehearse her story for the last time. And he must be cool, as he was now, viewing the whole thing with balance.

The turmoil which had mounted in him the last hour, and which had increased when he heard Dorrie's voice on the wire, ebbed away.

Dorrie had taken off her hat and coat. They were thrown on the davenport. A plaid scarf with russet tinges was still around her neck. "Hello, Hugh," she said briefly.

"Hello, Dorrie."

She leaned over and tied the lace of her shoe. "Have a nice trip?" she inquired as she raised her head.

In spite of himself the sight of her flushed cheeks, her strange shining eyes, sent a tremor through his blood. He rested his arm on

the mantel. "I had a profitable one."

She cogitated this. "Meaning—?"

"What I said."

"Very well—if you wish to be enigmatic!" Cruel pin-points danced in her eyes. "Are you going to ask me if I had a profitable time while you were away?"

"I took it for granted."

She shrugged. Then said: "The house is cold; you'd better build a fire if we're going to stay here."

Under his steady gaze her eyes dropped.

"I must have a talk with you," he said slowly.

They went into the sun room with its wicker furniture. Formally Hugh drew up a chair for her, brought her coat and laid it around her shoulders. He touched a match to the asbestos-backed grate, adjusted the flame. Then stood in silence. Dorrie looked into the fire; her white hands were clasped around her knee. She lifted her creamy eyelids. "Going to tell me you're through?" she asked.

"Yes, Dorrie, I'm through."

He thought she trembled a little, and the discernment that she was in need of pity, even as he, battled with his resolution. He stood watching her eyelashes flicker over her cheeks as she looked down.

"Hugh, you'll make it easy for me?"

"Certainly."

She relaxed in her chair a trifle. "It's one of those things which can't be helped. At first I was disappointed in him—he didn't act the way I expected when you found out. But when Joan went off the deep end—nothing seemed to stand in his way then."

"Except me."

Her "yes" was small, almost inaudible.

Curled bronze hair, white skin, lovely face, he must look his last upon them. Even desire was forbidden. The hate which surged up in him at her shallowness was almost as great as his desire.



"Yes, Dorrie, I'm Through."

Something rose in his throat which made it difficult to speak. He swallowed.

"No need to prolong this, is there?"

She started. "You're going?"

"You won't be afraid to stay alone tonight?"

She gave a gesture of dissent. "I'll be at Mother's. After you apply you'd better go away a bit—not far . . ." It was on his tongue to say "near enough for him to see you occasionally—keep him from other entanglements," but he checked it. He turned and left the room.

Hugh went back to his mother's house to live, occupied his old room in the south corner. He spent some evenings at his club, playing cards, others reading in the company of his mother, or in long rambles. Margery and Will were unobtrusively sympathetic when he met them; Kezia was crassly exultant.

"What a relief! We can have sage in our chicken dressing now!" Dorrie had disliked sage. But if Kezia saw Hugh's annoyed look when the radio moaned out a love song, she usually shut it off and dialed a different station. She made an effort to be more thoughtful of her mother in his presence, evidently wishing his approval. Once or twice she tried to discuss Jerry with him.

"Why do you give Jerry a mere nod when you come in? You could be civil—say a few sentences now and then. I tell him that it's just your way—one of those big, silent business men with the reconstruction of the nation on your shoulders—but I wish you'd be decent."

"It's no go, sis. I don't like him."

"How can you say that? You don't know him." She was agrieved.

He rattled his paper as a signal that he wanted her to take herself from the arm of his chair so that he might read. "I think I do."

Their eyes met and a thwarted look crossed her face. She slouched off his chair with: "You'll all drive me to something one of these days! . . . No one takes me seriously!"

A few nights later he was sitting by the dying fire in the living-room, leaning forward, staring at the embers, when she came in a little after twelve.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



FAMOUS
HEADLINE HUNTER

ADVENTURERS CLUB

Hello Everybody

"Hurling Death"
By FLOYD GIBBONS

ERNIE SMITH claims he's the only man that has ever done it. Way back in 1895 Ernie took a ride and he doesn't think it has ever been duplicated. Since that day people have learned to cruise around in automobiles, and airplanes, and submarines and whatnot, but Ernie professes to be the only man in the world who ever took a ride on—a rock!

Ernie lives in Waltham. He's reached the age of discretion now, and he doesn't go whooping around in the country on rocks anymore, but when he was sixteen years old—well—it seems he didn't much care what he traveled on.

In those days he lived in the little town of Vinalhaven, Maine, and had a job working for a fellow named Coombs who ran a small boat building establishment down by the water front.

Blasting Solid Rock to Make a Cellar.

Coombs was just building his shop at the time this all happened. He had the foundation laid and was nailing down the floor. Just across the street, a fellow named Carnes was conducting some building operations too.

Carnes was digging a cellar—blasting it out of solid rock. And Ernie and Coombs, plugging away on their own carpenter job, worked to the tune of intermittent thunder as Carnes set off one blast after another.

Carnes set off several blasts without giving them a word of forewarning, but one fine summer day he yelled across the street: "Hey, you boys better get out of the way. I've got a little more powder in here this time." So Ernie and Coombs lay down their tools and began looking around for a place where they would be under cover.

The water front at Vinalhaven started with a high sandbank. Below that was a narrow beach, and beyond the beach, mud flats stretched far out into the water.

Took Shelter in a Little Shack.

It was low tide and the mud flats were almost bare. At the edge of the bank was a fish house—a flimsy little shack ten feet long by eight feet wide—and a few feet away from that was a big, solid wood pile 20 or 30 feet long and well over six feet high.

Coombs and Ernie elected to stand in the shelter of the fish house. There, they thought, they would be out of the way of flying stones and bits of rubble that Carnes' blast might kick up. They gave Carnes the signal that they were under cover.

Coombs was sitting behind the little shed, but Ernie, who wanted to see the fireworks, was standing at the corner, where he could get a full view of the explosion. Carnes lit the fuse and ducked for cover himself. For a minute they waited. Then, suddenly, the air was shattered with a terrific roar!

"I was watching it with both eyes," says Ernie, "and I thought the heavens had fallen in. The very air itself seemed to rock back and forth. The sky was filled with stones—millions of them, of all sizes and shapes. But what struck terror into my heart was a great boulder that had shot up out of that pit and was coming straight for our shelter!"

Carried on a Huge Boulder.

That rock was a monster. When they measured it later they found it was four feet long two feet wide and more than two feet thick. But Ernie didn't need any measurements to see it was big—didn't need anyone to tell him that if it ever struck that flimsy shed behind which he and Coombs were standing it would splinter it to matchwood and knock the very tar out of the man and the boy behind it.

Ernie let out a cry and started to move. A few steps away was the woodpile, high and solid, and he started to run for that.

"But I never made it," he says. "Instead, the rock made me. It landed on a stone ledge beside our half completed boat shop, bounced off at an angle and came rocketing straight at me."

The next thing Ernie knew the rock was landing for its second bounce RIGHT AT HIS FEET. Ernie had presence of mind enough to jump, but the jump did him no good. Suddenly he felt the rock come up under him and he was being carried through the air.

After that, Ernie couldn't tell you exactly what happened. And small blame to Ernie for that. Coombs was standing behind the fish shed watching the whole business. He had his eyes glued on Ernie all the time, and he couldn't tell you exactly what happened either. All he knows is that he saw Ernie carried for THIRTY-TWO FEET out into the mud flats—they measured the distance afterward—and then the rock went on over the flats leaving Ernie behind flat on his back in the muck.

When Ernie got his bearings again he was in the mud. The rock was still rolling, twenty or thirty feet farther out. He saw it stop, and then he heard somebody on the bank cry out, "Carnes has killed the Smith boy!"

Not Dead "By a Darn Sight."

"But I lay there in the mud," says Ernie, "saying, 'Not by a darn sight he hasn't.' It took me a few moments to work my feet and hands clear of the mud, and then, to the surprise of a dozen people I got up and walked over the flats toward the sand bank."

"Not a man offered me a hand as I started to climb the bank. They just stood there petrified, looking as if a ghost was coming at them. But when I did get up they asked me what happened. No one seemed to know except Mr. Coombs, who had been watching me, and he wasn't any too sure himself."

Two doctors had just landed from a boat at a wharf close by, and they looked Ernie over. Except that his clothes were practically torn to ribbons and his right side had a few black and blue spots, they couldn't find anything the matter at all.

The next day Ernie went back to work again, and his first job was juggling ROCKS—clearing away about two tons of them that had come out of Carnes' excavation and showered all over Coombs' half-laid boat-shop floor.

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Hands Reveal Character

Anyone who sits with hands loosely clasped in the lap is of a quiet, well-balanced mind, while the nervous person tries to control nervousness by tightly gripping the hands together, states a writer in Pearson's London Weekly. One who has a habit of clasping hands with fingers entwined is not keeping strictly to the truth, while one who partially covers the mouth with a hand while talking has certain knowledge, but is trying desperately not to reveal it. A person who remains seated while conversing with another who is standing finds it very difficult to tell an untruth and any attempt to do so is easily detected by the person standing.

Lavender Favorite Perfume

Lavender is one of the favorite perfumes the world over and enormous quantities of the dried flowers are used annually to make the perfume and other lavender products. The yield of oil varies from year to year depending on the weather and the age of the bushes. The plants are very tender to any frost. The oil has to be stored from three to five years before it is sufficiently matured for use in the perfumery and other trades.

Saint Bernard of Mastiff Family

Unlike many other breeds, the origin of the Saint Bernard is a bit hazy, but early historians have agreed this type of dog belongs to the Mastiff family. The ancient records produce evidence that Mastiff dogs were brought from Asia, and used by the Romans as herders of sheep, besides being kept as watch dogs at army outposts. It has also been established that Roman soldiers used large dogs to guide sheep over the mountain passes, one of which was called the Saint Bernard Pass, no more than a pack mule path. A hostile tribe destroyed this path and cut off travel over the mountains around 950 A. D.

Fen Eagles

Fen eagles were famous in the Eighteenth century for the quantities of fish they devoured off the Norfolk coast. One of them, shot down in Suffolk in 1810, measured nine feet across the wings. The high rewards given for their capture played a great part in their extermination. One hundred years ago, says the Montreal Herald, anybody who destroyed an eagle in the Orkneys was entitled to the gift of a hen from every household in the nearest village.

We've a Date to Sew!



1200



1988



1970

OH GRACE, before you go—you're not in a hurry, are you—notice Mabel's slip.

Isn't that the one that you were telling the girls about at the Bid-Or-Bi club last week, Mabel?

Yes, it's my Sew-Your-Own and I'm real proud of it because it fits so smoothly. There's no bunchiness at the waistline or hips—it's fitted, you see—and yet there's lots of room around the bottom. And do you know how long it took me to make it—no self praise, but exactly two hours by the clock. I simply followed the pattern's instruction chart—as easy to do as to concoct a new dessert.

Tie, Buttons, Hat to Match.

It would be grand for a tailored dress like mine, wouldn't it, Mabel?

Just the thing! Are you off to the Civic League luncheon at the Hall? Your dress made up beautifully in that aquamarine, Grace. I'm crazy about it. The yoke-and-sleeves-in-one idea is swell and the black tie and buttons to match your hat make you look like Mrs. Merriweather herself.

Now, now, cut the rave. You know that neat-but-not-gaudy is my motto. Bye, I'll see you in print.

So long . . . Anne, since you like my slip so much, I'll be glad to help you make one like it, if you want me to.

That's lovely of you, Mabel, but would that sort of thing be right for a "Stylish Stout" like me? You should hear George when I call myself a "Stylish Stout." He says I flatter myself.

That Slenderizing Effect.

Leave it to the men! This slip would be especially good for you, Anne, because it's fitted and, George or no George, you look stylish in that dress you're wearing—but you DON'T look stout. The panel in front breaks the skirt line, and the jabot and collar do wonders for the "Buz-zum." It would be grand made up in a flowered print for Spring, Anne.

That very idea occurred to me. Why don't we get together tomorrow afternoon and sew—are you game? Come to my house. I baked a batch of oatmeal cookies today.

It's a date, Anne, I'll be over in the morning as soon as the kids are off to school.

The Patterns.
Pattern 1200 is available in sizes 14 to 20 (32 to 42 bust). Size 16 requires 4½ yards of 39

Foreign Words and Phrases

Mirabile dictu. (L.) Wonderful to relate.

Oui dire. (F.) Hearsay.

Parvenu. (F.) A person of low origin; an upstart.

Qui vivra, verra. (F.) Who lives will see.

Regnant populi. (L.) The people reign. (Motto of Arkansas.)

Sanctum sanctorum. (L.) The holy of holies.

Trink-geld. (Ger.) A gratuity.

Usque ad aras. (L.) To the very altars; to the last extremity.

Ventre-a-terre. (F.) At full gallop; at breakneck speed.

Wanderjahr. (Ger.) A wander-year; a year of travel.

inch material plus ¼ yard contrasting.

Pattern 1970 is available in sizes 36 to 52. Size 38 requires 4¼ yards of 35 or 39 inch material plus ¼ yard contrasting.

Pattern 1988 is available in sizes 34 to 46. Size 36 requires 3¼ yards of 39 inch material and 1 yard of ribbon for shoulder straps.

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