

"Cinderella's Daughter"

By HAZEL DEYO BACHELOR

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SYNOPSIS

Virginia West and Kathleen Foster meet at boarding school and are instantly attracted toward each other. The girls are entirely different in temperament, for while Virginia is loyal and true, Kathleen is essentially selfish and has a hard attitude toward life. She becomes engaged to Bill Lyons merely for the thrill to it, and when during the Christmas holidays Virginia promises to marry Jimmy Anderson, Kathleen is thoroughly amused.

VIRGINIA flushed scarlet as the two girls faced each other. "Aren't you going to marry Bill?" she asked. And then, quickly remembering something, "You love him, don't you, Kathleen. You let him kiss you." "Now, see here, Virginia," Kathleen returned, a little impatiently, "Bill Lyons has no prospects. He's an adorable boy and very good-looking, but what has he to offer me? I have no assurance that he will make good. Then you're not going to marry him?" "I don't know; certainly not until I know more about him." And with that Kathleen quietly dismissed the subject and was in bed before Virginia had begun dreamily to undress. She turned over Kathleen's words again and again,

but somehow they did not mean very much with the memory of Jimmy. What did it matter how much money they had? Love was enough. Why, just to live with Jimmy, to share what he had would be happiness enough for her. Just before she fell asleep she wished vaguely that Kathleen had been more sympathetic, but she comforted herself with the thought that perhaps after all Kathleen loved Bill better than she realized.

Virginia said nothing to her mother about Jimmy, which was wise, as Jimmy was not to graduate until June, and their plans were hazy, to say the least. The Christmas holidays drifted to a close, and on the day before the two girls were to return to school the four of them went to a matinee, and after that to tea at one of the large hotels. Even in her absorption Virginia could see that Bill was not quite happy. He would sit and look at Kathleen for long moments, and inasmuch as Virginia and Jimmy talked quite openly of their plans it was not very difficult to imagine what Bill was thinking about. Virginia was not so selfish in her love that she had not time to study Bill. She had grown to like him very much. He had rare moments of humor when his usually serious face would light up charmingly, but he was not as sunny as Jimmy, who seldom saw the serious side of anything. Bill was more intense, too. His feelings did not lie close to the surface, but were bottled up inside him. Sometimes when Virginia caught a glimpse of the almost idolatrous love that he gave Kathleen it made her gasp. Her own love and Jimmy's was so safe there was nothing to be afraid of, no uncertain depths to plumb. Jimmy's love was always there for her to depend on, and she expanded like a flower under its influence.

Kathleen had a way of leading Bill on whenever she was with Virginia and Jimmy, of saying things that she would never have said if she had been alone with him. This afternoon, seated around the table with the waiting of the stringed orchestra not too far away and the pleasant teatime sounds of silver against china and of low-voiced conversation, she even went so far as to slip her fingers into his under the table. He looked at her face under the white hat and it was sweetly serious. His heart leaped. If only Kathleen would give him a promise. But when he asked her for anything definite she always had excuses. They were so young, he must wait till he got started. And then the minute another attractive man like Richard Allen appeared on the scene she had eyes for no one else. Virginia wished passionately that

Kathleen could be contented with Bill. It was cruel to lead him on to make him believe that she loved him and then laugh behind his back, joke about his seriousness, scoff at the idea of ever marrying a poor man. Bill was almost happy that afternoon, and Kathleen was sweet and responsive. They had a wonderful time talking about the future, all four of them, and Virginia had a lightning glimpse of a side of Kathleen's nature that was too often hidden. Long afterward, when change had come into the lives of both girls, Virginia remembered that afternoon at the tentable, the dreams they made, Kathleen, with her beautiful face half pensive and turned a little toward Bill, and she herself with her fingers held tightly in Jimmy's warm hand under the table. Tomorrow—Virginia leaves school.

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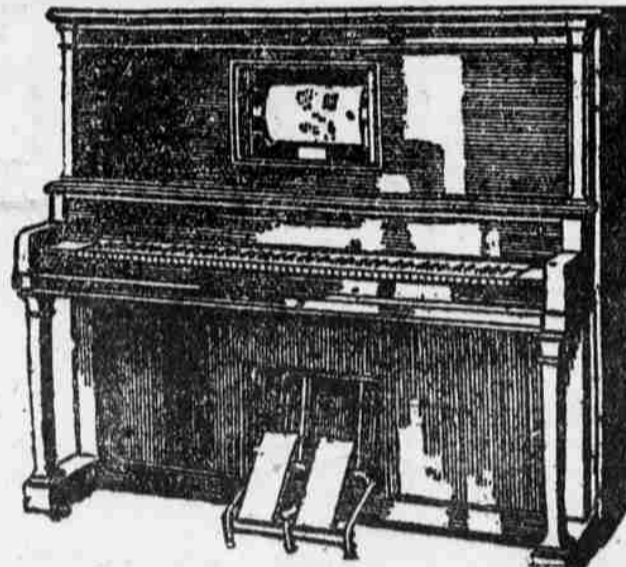
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