

A DAUGHTER of TWO WORLDS

A Story of New York Life
By LEROY SCOTT

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YES, there she was once more on the front page. She skimmed one account through, glancing at a phrase here and one there. The reporter, seeking romance to relieve the grisly war news, had left out nothing that would give color to his story. The beautiful Mrs. Kenneth Harrison—until a month before one of the most brilliant young women in New York's smartest society—revealed as the daughter of Black Jerry Malton, a fugitive from the police on the charge of a gigantic forgery—gives herself up in order to elude an old sweetheart who was about to be sentenced to death. Jennie glanced at the other columns. Their stories were much the same. All were built along the lines of melodrama which newspapers believe their readers want—and perhaps believe rightly.

Yes, once again she was, next to the war, the supreme newspaper sensation of the day. She dropped the papers in differently to the rest of her cell. If all meant nothing whatever to her now, one way or the other.

"Well, anyhow, here's something that ought to cheer you up," Uncle George said heartily, with a pat on the shoulder. "It's a letter from your father. Guess Jerry couldn't show up this morning. She took the letter which Black Jerry, as part of his great plan, had composed so carefully the evening before and left in charge of his bookkeeper. She read it.

"Dear Jennie: My old man had never had a word to say to you for all your life. I guess no kid could have got by with such a load. If I hadn't been for our old man, you'd be O. K.

"It's going to be just as bad for you in the future unless I stop being a load. So I'm going to pass out. Don't worry about me. I won't be losing much. I don't care about things any more, except you, and this is the best way to help you.

"I guess it'll be the give. That always did seem to me the easiest way of passing out.

"I hope luck breaks better for you after I am out of your way.

"My God!" repeated Uncle George. For a moment he stood silent, gazing at the sheet of notepaper. Then he said wistfully:

"Jennie, for fifteen years and more this town has got Black Jerry all wrong. Let me take this letter to show to some of the newspaper boys. They'll find out, anyhow, what's happened to him, and this letter will help set them right as to the sort of man he really was. I'll give it back to you."

Jennie nodded her consent. Uncle George wisely decided that this was an occasion when Jennie had best be left alone with her grief. So remarking:

"As soon as Aaronson shows up we'll see to your bail," he stole away. Left to herself, Jennie sobbed on, convulsively yet silently. She now saw and understood as never before what she had meant to her father. Always he had loved her, always he had thought of her and planned for her! And now at the end, when the crash had come, he had given up his life for her, because she had believed this would make her life easier!

What a failure she had made of her life! How she had involved all those who had loved her best in disaster and ruin! She had probably saved Harry, yes; but she had only come to his rescue after she had lost her great world—what a miserable performance!

Toward 1 o'clock the raucous cries of newsboys penetrated even to the inner fastness of her cell; but these cries did not for an instant divert her mind from her misery. But a little later Uncle George appeared again, and it was now a very excited Uncle George, indeed, who stood on the other side of the bars.

"Have seen Aaronson, and he's working like the dickens on your case," he announced.

"This did not interest Jennie in the least.

"And Harry, on motion of the district attorney, has been acquitted."

"I'm glad," she said simply.

"And what your father said he'd do in his letter he did all right," Uncle George continued. "They found his clothes over on the end of an East river dock that he jumped from. It's all in the afternoon papers. His body hasn't been found yet—maybe never will be, for those East river tides are terrible. And that letter he wrote you it went right with the newspaper boys."

"The boys thought Jerry must have been half-crazed, but that letter got right to them. For once in his life the newspapers have treated Jerry white."

"But none of that is the real news," exclaimed Uncle George. "Listen, Jennie, no, read it for yourself. Here's an extra that will tell you all about it."

Jennie took the paper. There was a huge black double headline across the entire top of the front page, with headlines of lesser degree, announcing the double suicide of the prominent young financier Kenneth Harrison and of the great stage favorite Jackson Holt, on board the former's yacht. The captain, the hastily written account stated, had received an order the evening before to withdraw with the crew from the Myra for the night—an order such as frequently came to him. On his return to the Myra that morning at 11 o'clock, he had discovered the two dead men in the cabin, and had at once sent for the police. Two automobiles had been found, one shell discharged from each. The police had discovered them in a building.

"Why did you never declare that in this Harrison forgery business you were setting upon the alibi and only as the instrument of your husband's death?" demanded the district attorney.

"I would, too," said Uncle George. "I stopped in at the district attorney's office, and learned he had sent for Kenneth Harrison's father."

After Uncle George had gone, Jennie kept on wondering, when she was not thinking of other matters, for an hour or two or three. And then again she was ushered across the Bridge of Sighs, and again into the office of the district attorney. She was much of an automaton—worn, sick with herself, broken with grief, bewildered with events—moving chiefly because she was ordered or some one led her; not till later were her senses to understand and appreciate the full significance of the happenings of that day.

Uncle George was in the district attorney's office, and so was Officer Casey, and so was a tall, efficient-looking gentleman to whom she was introduced as her attorney, Mr. Aaronson. She was given a chair at the corner of the district attorney's desk.

"I suppose you have heard of the deaths of your husband and of Jackson Holt?" inquired the district attorney.

"Yes, sir."

"I have here an original document, part in the handwriting of each, and part signed by each, which is your privilege to read and which I request you to read."

Jennie took the heavy sheet of the Myra stationery, and read those confessions that out in the cabin of the rain-pelted yacht had been written under the compulsion of Black Jerry's pistol, confessions which were now to stand forever as the unchallenged truth. Having read them she looked up in bewilderment.

"What with my old record, and with my husband and his father charging me with it and denying any connection with the matter, no one would have believed me. What would have been the use?"

Her answer obviously sounded convincing to the district attorney. He took the document from her.

"That reference to the police closing in on them, which was the motive for their self-destruction, is something which Officer Casey here seems thoroughly to understand," he continued.

"Mr. Harrison has been here today, and when shown this statement he fully corroborated his son—I may say that he even went further. I must go through certain legal formalities, Mrs. Harrison, which may necessitate your later appearance in court; but as a result of

these developments I can say that probably neither that old charge against you nor the present more serious one will ever come to trial. I have, therefore, arranged to have you granted your liberty in the custody of your counsel. That is all."

Dazedly Jennie allowed herself to be led out, instinctively letting down the veil which had been part of the garb in which she had come to prison.

"I knew you were going to get free on some basis," exclaimed Uncle George, "so I've got a car waiting down in Franklin street. Come on."

"Just a minute." It was Casey who spoke. The heavy face of the plainclothes man was kindly, and he was holding out a big hand. "I'm mighty glad things have broken right for you, Jennie. Here's wishing you the best of luck."

"Thank you, Mr. Casey," and Jennie gripped his hand.

Immediately she was surrounded by a clamorous group of young and middle-aged men. "They're reporters—the district attorney gave out that confession to them before you saw it," Uncle George explained. And then to them: "See here, boys, she's tired almost to death. Just remember what she's been through. Besides, the district attorney's got all the dope—and, besides, you boys all know that your best stories are the ones you fake. So be good sports, and let her off this time."

They made way for her. But a part of the group, armed with black boxes, followed the pair, and as they stepped out into Franklin street a representa-

tion of the group halted Uncle George and spoke beseechingly. Uncle George turned to Jennie.

"They're camera men. Next to the war, this is the biggest story since—well, God knows since when. And these boys say they haven't got any decent pictures of you to print. You've clear, and a picture isn't going to hurt you now—so let 'em snap you."

"So Jennie lifted her veil and stood against the red brick of the Criminal Courts Building, while the camera-men huddled each other about and peered down into the queer hoods of their black boxes and clicked shutters upon the first picture to be made of her since she had been a child.

"And now for home," said Uncle George, when the men were through. "I'm taking you to my apartment—that's going to be your home after this. Here's our car."

Jennie noted that the car was the same limousine which had brought her here—only now the curtains were closed, drawn—and that the same "Jack" was at the wheel. "Step right in," said Uncle George at her elbow, opening the door. She obeyed. The door closed sharply, she sank back into the seat, and the car moved away.

The machine had swung around into Lafayette street before she realized that Uncle George had not entered the car with her. She looked about her. There in the dimness sat Harry Edwards.

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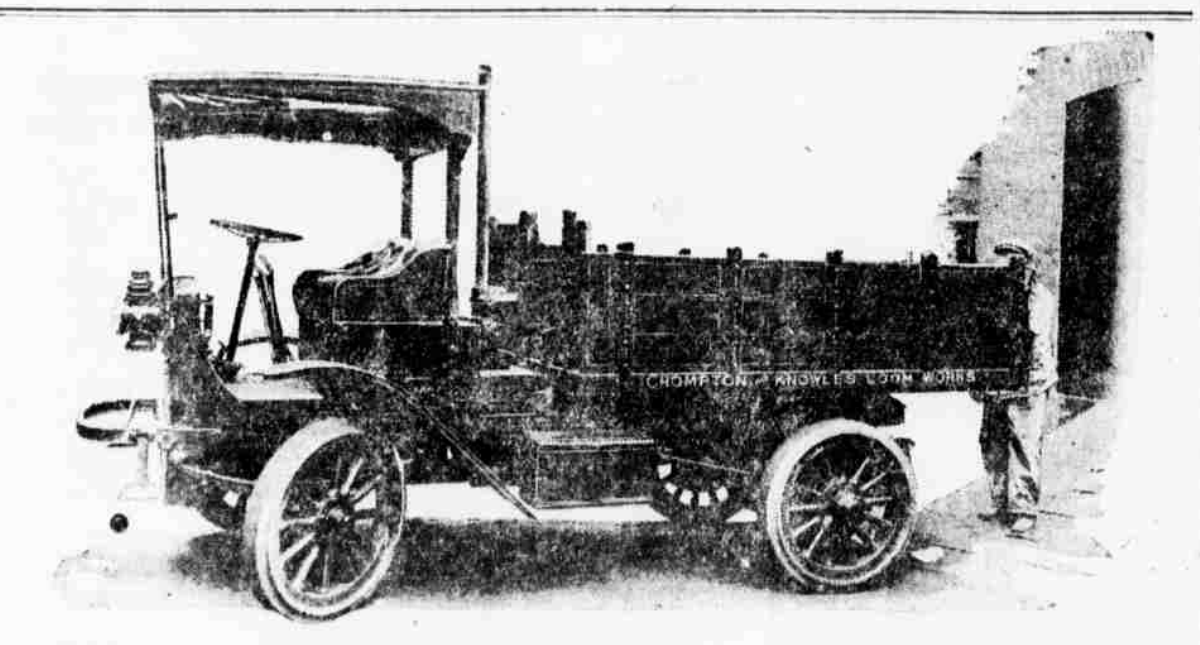
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