

LOVE WILL NEVER DIE

By JOHN HUNTER

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CHAPTER I
Call of Youth

Head on the Upper Terrace was playing the "Blue Danube Waltz," and the haunting tune floated across the promenade, cosmopolitan crowd which surrounded the Lower Terrace and out to the Mediterranean.

Audrey Brent, leaning on the balustrade in the shelter of a clump of white-palm trees, gazed round her appreciatively. Behind, a fairy place built by a magician, towered the Casino, and in the sunshine, inviting. Beyond stretched the terrace, a vivid kaleidoscope of color and movement filled with strolling, well-dressed men and women. The hum of their talk made a pleasant, monotonous drone to the ears of the girl, a monotone of dull insistence. Against the white marble the shadows of black and clear-cut as silhouettes, and a shimmering haze obscured the distance.

"I love Monte Carlo," said Audrey. "I have been here many times," he said quietly. "But I have never enjoyed a visit so much as I have this one. My good fairy must have been guiding me when I went to the hotel at Lucerne where you and your aunt were staying."

Audrey gazed reflectively at the promenade crowd through the trunks of the palm trees. She and Harkness offered a strange contrast. Audrey was slight, almost fragile, with a girl's freshness about her and a girl's innocent candor in the level glance of her brown eyes. Harkness towered over her, standing between her and the sunlight, so that his shadow darkened her upturned face and dilled the light in her eyes. He was a well-built man, young with the easy strength of the passer, of indeterminate age, perhaps thirty or more, his face bronzed perceptibly by a life spent much in the sun. His sleek black hair brushed back and innocent of parting, his eyes startlingly gray against his swartheness and cold, despite the smile which lurked in them as he regarded Audrey. She had met the girl at Lucerne in the first place, where she had been staying with her Aunt Ellen, and a friendship had sprung up between them which was rapidly promising to become something stronger. When Audrey and her aunt had announced that they were leaving for Monte Carlo, before proceeding to England and home, Harkness made the discovery that he was needed in England—the reasons he gave were extremely vague—and he had traveled with them.

"I suppose you will be glad to be home and see your mother again," observed Harkness after a lengthy silence, "despite the fact that you have enjoyed your holiday."

"My mother is a wonderful woman, you know, at least I think so. She is ever so beautiful and clever, and as kind to me. My father died when I was very tiny—I don't remember anything of him—and so my mother has been just everything to me all my life."

Harkness caught his breath. Her last words schooled in his brain like thunder, and he felt his cold senses awaken at the repetition. "Everything to me all my life! The folly of the thing which had gradually taken hold of him—the probable wickedness of it—was hardly considered. He only realized the girl and her setting. The blazing sunshine, the hard, black shadows, the dreamy waltz tune, languorous, subtly stirring, the gay crowd, and the murmur of the sea on the distant foreshore, tossed the spirit like jewels into the air. He felt the call of youth to the inevitable miracle of its life, and all the years of his experience were stripped from him, the dark ways through which he had traveled during those years forgotten.

His powerful brown hand closed over Audrey's slim white fingers as they rested on the balustrade. "Audrey," Harkness almost wondered at the sincerity which vibrated in the voice.

"The girl faced him. She did not attempt to withdraw her hand and in her eyes was a light which Harkness had never seen in a woman's eyes before."

"You were saying your mother had been everything to you all your life?" he trembled as he spoke. "Do you think that anybody else could ever be that to you and care for you and protect you, you would ever one day say the name of me?"

"He meant it. He told himself that he meant it—over and over. And yet, deep down inside him, he was conscious of something laughing—ironically."

"I have only known you a little while, Audrey," his voice was very low, but steady. Her eyes shined, and for a brief second of shame she almost thought he could read an accusation in her look. "But I—Audrey faltered. "You do love me, Jim?"

"Behind the palms, in the shadow of trees as much alone as people can be in the backwater of a vast self-interested crowd, as alone as though they sat apart on a silent hill-top."

"That little cry, that plaintive appeal, carrying, as it did, a full conviction of the girl's sincerity, gripped Harkness and crushed the last remnants of his self-consciousness within him. His arms went about her, and she lay pliant against him, with her hair brushing his cheek.

"I love you," Harkness whispered strongly nature. "All the man's 'I love you' was in the utterance. "And you will come and see me directly I get back?"

"In these days, dearest, I shall live in the next meeting."

"Her lips were offered him, and he held her back from this kiss, an indefinable feeling that she would share some inviolable sanctuary in the fact that he had not offered to kiss her until she had asked him to do so. And then they met hers.

They were silent for a few moments, and at last Harkness said softly: "I would much more, have tried to explain, except that his tongue failed him. Audrey stepped close, and as she looked up at him her eyes were dimly lit with a light in her face which Harkness never saw before."

"Of course you are," she whispered, "I am brought to a delightful conclusion in the installment on another page."

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By Hayward



The Young Lady Across the Way

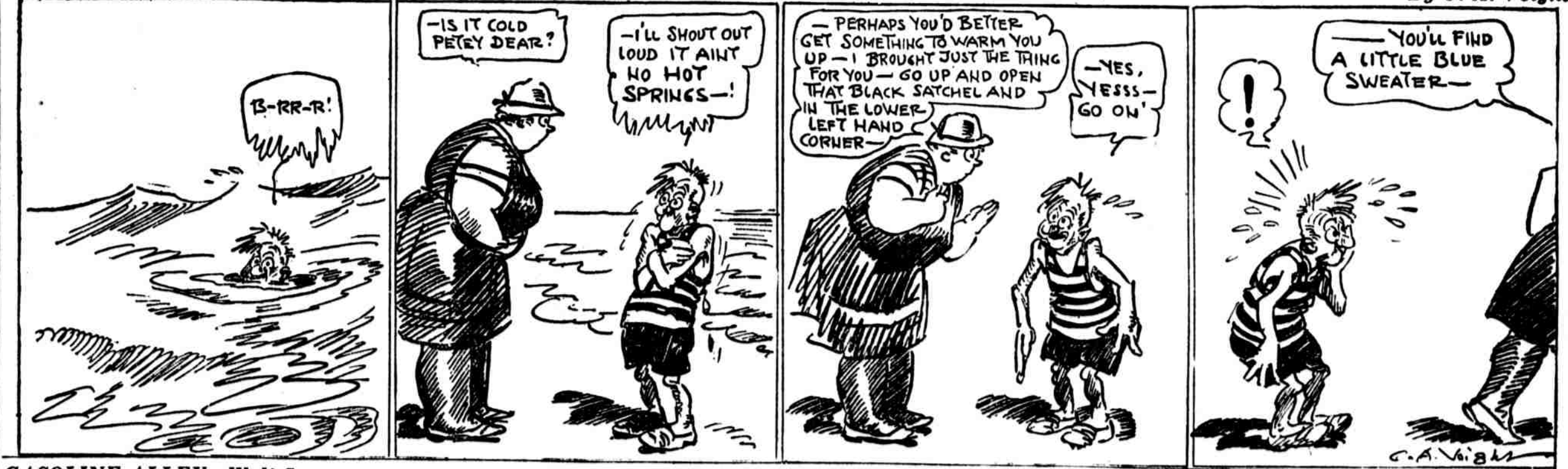
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SCHOOL DAYS



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CONTINUED MONDAY

"The Dancing Master"
is brought to a delightful conclusion in the installment on another page.