

LOVE WILL NEVER DIE

By JOHN HUNTER

WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY
PRESELOW—Beautiful, the only character who is not a member of the world's elite, who is in love with Audrey.
HARKNESS—A handsome, well-to-do man, who is in love with Audrey.
AUNT ELLA—Audrey's mother, who is in love with Preselow.
LOIS DENBIGH—Audrey's friend, who is in love with Preselow.
CONNINGTON—Audrey's father, who is in love with Preselow.
THE BELL—A wealthy man, who is in love with Audrey.
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Audrey went inside to send the telegram to Aunt Ella, telling her where she was and what she intended doing. While Audrey was within Preselow thought hard.

The recent conversation had wandered away from the subject of Harkness by his contrivance, because he wanted to think of the matter over.

He was convinced that Audrey cared for Harkness, and he was equally convinced that it was his duty to disillusion her and endeavor to kill any affection she had for Harkness. His opinion persuaded him that he was doing this purely for the good of Audrey, and not because he wished to eliminate from the game a man who might prove a serious rival to his own matrimonial ambitions.

But how to do it? His knowledge of human nature warned him that any open attempt to vilify Harkness would merely arouse resentment in Audrey and possibly more than defeat their own object. It must be done subtly—cleverly was the word Preselow used to himself. In the meantime it might be as well if he avoided the subject altogether. Festina lente was always a sound maxim to bear in mind in an affair of this delicate nature.

Audrey handed in her wire and came over to him.

"Now for the park and the flowers," he said.

It is probable that Harkness' senses were stunned when he first saw Audrey with Preselow. He knew he had managed to observe the usual formalities, but he was not so hardly aware of what had happened.

He was in a desperate and dangerous mood. From the time when he had driven his great racing car away from Audrey at the Knockholt to the time of this meeting with her and Preselow he had not slept. Yet he was not tired. Instead he was consumed with a restless energy.

When he drove up to his garage on the afternoon which found Audrey at the Erewhouse he was dirty and wild, but wide-awake and incisive. The car was coated with mud and silt, and her radiating wheels all boiled dry. They seemed a correctly asserted pair—desperate, savage man and a monstrous, savage machine.

"Clean her!" he said curtly to the attendant. He went straight to his flat and dressed for the evening. Chance had led him to Bond street and the path of Audrey Brent.

Audrey had allowed Preselow to monopolize her at the Academy. Why Harkness thought of that he did not know, but it filled him with bitter resentment.

A Feminine Desire
PRESELOW felt slightly mystified. He had deduced from the evident care Constance Brent had lavished on the upbringing of Audrey that the girl would have been kept in complete ignorance of the existence of the Erewhouse. A question had been asked with the idea of discovering if Audrey knew the place, and when she calmly acknowledged its existence with equanimity, he was more than puzzled. He could not imagine such a girl being reconciled to her mother's connection with such an establishment. There was no sign of mystification, however, in his face as he leaned across the table.

"I think you are going to say yes," he said. "Now, where shall we go?"

The oldest thing in town at present is the show at the Arcadian. "Don't Tell Your Husband." Pretty dresses, good jokes, and everything.

"Don't Tell Your Husband!" The girl—Lois Denbigh—was acting in it. Once more she seemed to be Audrey. She had seen Harkness with Lois. Suppose, after all, he had when he had said there was nothing to it? Suppose he had given her up because he preferred Lois to herself? An essentially feminine desire seized Audrey as she reflected on all this. She wanted to see this woman and study her, to find out whether she was superior to herself. It might hurt her in the long run, but there would be a certain satisfaction about it. She steeled her agitation and spoke very calmly.

"It will be great fun," she answered, and tried to persuade herself that she meant it.

Preselow booked the seats, and they left the tea-shop.

They turned up toward Oxford street, and as they did so Audrey came to an abrupt standstill.

Walking toward them, on the same side of the road, was Jim Harkness. Harkness came straight toward them. It was evident to Audrey that he had not seen her, for his head was bent slightly, and though his stride was vigorous, it was easy to perceive that he was lost in thought.

Preselow glanced quickly at Audrey. His training had taught him the importance of details in a person's demeanor, and her agitation at the sight of Harkness had not been unnoticed by him. He remembered having seen Harkness at the Academy with Constance Brent and Audrey. Also, he remembered the tales he had heard concerning Harkness.

Harkness looked up and saw them. A hardly perceptible falter crushed in his walk, as though he had crushed an impulse to stop. His eyes rested on Audrey's face for a moment, and there was an unspoken question in the look. Then he lifted his hat and passed on.

Preselow acknowledged the salute still, and the fact was not lost on Audrey despite the turmoil of her thoughts. She wondered at the hostility of it.

Preselow was wondering also. He was trying to guess why the advent of this man whom he regarded as an "outsider" should have so disturbed Audrey's mental equilibrium. He decided it might repay him to find out.

"Curious thing meeting that fellow Harkness," he said indifferently. "I thought he was out of England. But" with a well-feligned hesitation—"of course he was with you at the Academy, wasn't he?"

"Yes," Audrey answered almost listlessly. "Do you know him?"

"I know of him," answered Preselow. The answer roused Audrey to inquire. "Why the distinction?" she asked.

Preselow shrugged his shoulders. The movement conveyed more than a little. Audrey felt vaguely uneasy.

"There is no need of a person because you know of him," said Preselow. "In fact, in this case, the more one knows the less one feels inclined to know." He laughed slightly.

Audrey's consciousness rebelled. She was remembering that her mother had not liked Harkness, and she began to wonder if her mother had known something of the man, had heard something which she had not communicated to herself. She felt a desperate anxiety to learn everything there was to learn.

"I'm afraid I know very little about him," she said, "but I thought him very nice."

Preselow eyed her searchingly. Her attempt to appear at ease did not deceive him. He realized that she was laboring under some tremendous emotional incubus, which had been increased by the sight of Harkness. She was speaking to him naturally, but her eyes were not seeing him. She seemed stupefied by a weight of thought she could hardly support.

Was it possible that she loved Harkness? The supposition seemed incredible at first, but a few seconds of reasoning told Preselow that it was more than likely. Harkness had that raffish, cynical surety about him which must appeal to women, especially to unsophisticated girls. He asked a quick question.

"Where did you meet him?"

"He expected Audrey to tell him that it was at the Erewhouse, but her answer, while it surprised him, strengthened his conviction that she was in love with Harkness.

"At Lucerne. He stayed at our hotel; then came on to Monte Carlo with us."

"Ah! Monte Carlo." Preselow was almost soliloquizing. "I can imagine he would go there."

"Why?" There was a note of defiance in Audrey's voice, which did not trend carefully.

"It would appeal to him, I think."

"I see." Audrey's tone was dulled with slight disappointment. "It appealed to me, too."

"It is a lovely place," admitted Preselow. "But rather spoiled now, if you will pardon my saying so. Filled with rascals, profiteers and—adventurers."

The pause between his last two words was deliberate, but Audrey did not notice it.

"I'm afraid the people didn't worry me," she said dryly. "I only saw the sunshine and the sea, and the beautiful scenery."

The reproof blunted itself on Preselow's civility. "It is not every one who is gifted with such fortunate development of mind," he murmured. They reached a telegraph office, and

THE GUMPS—Lobsters! Women and Children First!



SOMEBODY'S STENOG—In Which We Arrive at an Explanation

Registered U. S. Patent Office By Hayward

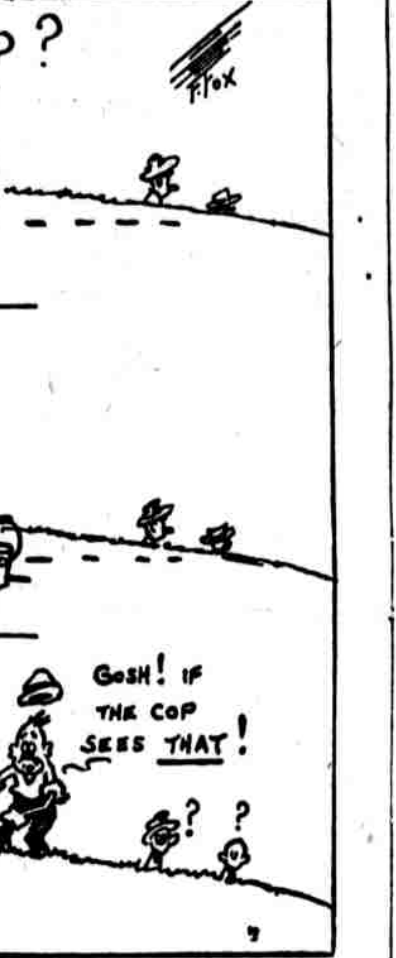


The Young Lady Across the Way

The Powerful Katrina and the Drinking Fountain

SCHOOL DAYS

THE FENCE CORNER CLUB



PETEY—Another Great Dam Due to Burst

By C. A. Voight



GASOLINE ALLEY—Shoot Him!

By King



CHAPTER XVI
At the Arcadian

Audrey enjoyed neither the flowers in Regent Park nor the very nice little dinner with Preselow and Audrey. The sight of Harkness had ruined the rest of the evening as far as she was concerned.

Preselow was not certain as to the cause of her comparative listlessness. He could not imagine her being so tremendously in love with Harkness that the mere sight of him should cause her so much depression. The much expressed reason that he himself was incapable of such love unless the object of it happened to be his own, sleek person.

The seats Preselow had secured at the Arcadian were in the circle. He saw several people he knew in the stalls and hoped profoundly that they would not recognize him. This outing was never to be mentioned to Connington's ears. He was not certain that his uncle would approve of Audrey spending an evening in his company.

The show was a good one, filled with bright music and clever dialogue. But Audrey heard very little of it. She saw only one person in the whole play, and that was Lois Denbigh.

The girl was beautiful. Audrey was forced to admit it. Even allowing for the effect of the lavish make-up and the dazzle of the lights, she was a splendid creature. And she was clever. Such a girl could never be empty-headed. In fact, Audrey was sure she realized something of the art which Lois exhibited every time she came on to the stage. Her voice was clear and powerful, and her technique as facile as hard study and good masters could make it. The people who said that Lois Denbigh was going to be the greatest of all musical comedy stars were not venturing on an unwise prophecy. Slowly, Audrey began to wonder if her judgment had been at fault.

Jim Harkness had come to watch Lois Denbigh act. On how many previous occasions had he occupied that same box? She had heard of men who went night after night to a theatre because they wished to see one actress perform. Audrey watched Lois closely. The girl had glanced swiftly at the newcomer. More than once she turned toward the box as she spoke her lines. To Audrey it seemed that all her smiles were for Harkness.

Just before the end of the act Audrey saw a uniformed attendant in the box and Harkness writing something on the back of a visiting card. He handed the card to the attendant and the man vanished.

The curtain came down on the act and the lights went up for the interval. Harkness followed him from the box.

CONTINUED TOMORROW