They Love Her—Then Disappear

THE VANISHING MEN

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What Becomes of Her Suitors?

WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY

BRENA SELCOSS, a beautiful recluse, living in England, of American birth, but Greek and Irish blood. An undisclosed mystery envelops her, for two men who have loved her erotic beauty and fascinating personality have strangely vanished. She excites the interest and admiration of

CAPTAIN PETER DE WOLFE, an American aviator, who on demobilization delays home-going to forget not the colonel. He has attracted the cosmetic technique

MURIEL BENHAM, a handsome, wholesome, typical English girl, once Brena's friend, but now embittered.

COLONEL EVERARD BENHAM, Muriel's brother and a martinet friend of Peter's.

"IF I EVER have a daughter," said Brena Selcoss, "I will never allow her to have this dangerous dream of a Prince Charming. It is the common foundation upon which girls throw sensible judgment to the four winds and come to grief immediately without a thought of the dreary years of actual life which are to come. It might have wrecked me when I was seventeen."

While Brena was seventeen, indeed, many landmarks had been set up in her development. Her mother had died quietly in bed six years before, without a gasp or a warning, with a moment's smile upon her enduring face.

Brena had been asleep in the next room, and Demetrius, having one of his spells of insomnia, sat almost all night long on the porch of their cottage in Dallas, Texas, in a rocker which squeaked a lone as his bulk moved. He had come up at dawn to find his wife, with the first rays of summer sun thrown through the shutters and onto the happy, fickle tresses in bars of gold. It shimmered on her lovely hair; in all the red-gold mass there was not one strand of gray.

"This is the time for great music," he had said to Brena, as he woke her with his gnarled hand upon her shoulder. "The fire has gone from your mother's beautiful body, my daughter, but she will live always with us because she was a brave and tender soul which endures forever."

"I thought that she was asleep," she said, after a moment, raising her bearded face in his calloused hands. "It is the way we all live always. I am unprepared—always unprepared."

This was the only dwelling brought out in him by the death of the Irish girl he had adored so completely, to whose songs he had listened while he lifted her ankles and at her sleepy smiles he had engraved the tricks of happiness and whose arms had stilled the restless sea, banished the great dark glowing eyes. He was an old man changed, by a gentle making, from a tempts to reach over the chasm which separated her from the yearning heart of his daughter.

These attempts were painful. Beside each other sitting for days together, they were as strangers, living in a place where, in a figure of history, stalked tragedy, adventure, other experience, with the exception of an occasional great foreign shadows passed toward the sea in the future.

For three years before Mrs. Vaughn Selcoss had died, she had been alarmed by the deterioration of her husband. In Dallas, when he moved, he had kept the dog's green glass cone in a safe, a gramophone, a phonograph, a piano, and a violin and bows, and a number of other musical instruments, and a dozen boxes with the labels of famous opera singers upon them. Brena's mother had turned to look in his eyes a hundred times.

"I wonder what would happen if Brena and I were suddenly imposed to you," she said in half explanation.

"Nothing," he said, unmoved.

Brena said, "Nothing, Mr. Gregory."

"Nothing, Mr. Gregory," he said, unmoved.

"Nothing," said Mrs. Selcoss, with a smile.

"Nothing," said Brena, with a smile.

"Nothing," said Mr. Gregory, with a smile