

BLACK IS WHITE
BY GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

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SYNOPSIS.

In the New York home of James Brood, a man of letters and a man of letters and a man of letters... (Detailed synopsis of the story's plot, including characters like Lydia, Yvonne, and Frederic, and their interactions.)

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

"It sounds rather ominous." "If he waits long enough you may discover that you love him and his going would give you infinite pain. Then is the time for him to go." "Good heavens!" he cried, in astonishment. "What a remarkable notion of the fitness—"



Of the Three, Lydia Alone Faced the Situation With Courage.

He took one of her hands in his, and stroked it gently, even patiently. "I will come straight to the point. Frederic is falling in love with you. Wait! I do not blame him. He cannot help himself. No more could I, for that matter, and he has youth, which is a spur that I have lost. I have watched him, Yvonne. He is—to put it cold-bloodedly—losing his head. Leaving me out of the question altogether if you choose, do you think you are quite fair to him? I am not disturbed on your account or my own, but—well, can't you see what a cruel position we are likely to find ourselves—"

"For his father, then?" she inquired slowly. The perspiration stood out on his brow. He made no response. His lips were compressed. "You have uttered her name at last," she said wonderingly, after a long wait. Brood started. "I—Oh, this is torture!" "We must mend our ways, James. It may please you to know that I shall overlook your mental faithfulness to me. You may go on loving Matilde. She is dead. I am alive. I have the better of her, then, ai-e? The day will come when she is dead in every sense of the word. In the meantime, I am content to enjoy life. Frederic is quite safe with me, James; safer than he is with you. And now let us have peace. Will you ring for tea?"

CHAPTER X.

Of a Music-Master.

A month passed. Yvonne held the destiny of three persons in her hand. They were like figures on a chess board and she moved them with the sureness, the unerring instinct of any skilled disciple of the philosopher's game. They were puppets; she ranged them about her stage in swift-changing pictures and applauded her own effectiveness. There were no rehearsals. The play was going on all the time, whether tragedy, comedy or—chess.

She judged Yvonne too in a spirit of fairness that was amazing when one considers the lack of perspective that must have been hers to contend with Lydia. Lydia could not think of her as evil, immoral, base. This beautiful, warm-hearted, clear-eyed woman suggested nothing of the kind to her. It pleased her to play with the good-looking young fellow, and she made no pretense of secrecy about it. Lydia was charitable to the extent of blaming her only for an utter lack of conscience in allowing the perfectly obvious to happen so far as he was concerned. For her own gratification she was calmly inviting a tragedy which was likely to crush him without even so much as disturbing her peace of mind for an instant, after all was said and done.

He was staring down into the court, his fingers grasping the curtains in a rigid grip. He did not reply. There was a light in the windows opening out upon Yvonne's balcony. "I fancy Frederic has come in for the concert," he said slowly. "He will take you home, Lydia. You'd like that better, eh?"

He turned toward her and she paused in the nervous collecting of her papers. His eyes were as hard as steel, his lips were set. "Please don't ask Frederic to—" she began hurriedly. "They must have left early," he muttered, glancing at his watch. Returning to the table he struck the big, melodious gong a couple of sharp blows. For the first time in her recollection, it sounded a jangling, discordant note, as of impatience. Ranjab appeared in the doorway. "Have Mrs. Brood and Mr. Frederic returned, Ranjab?"

—in the automobile on rainy or blizzard days. But he never allowed her an instant's rest when it came to the work in hand, and therein lay the gentle shrewdness of the man. She was better off busy. There were times when he studied the face of Lydia's mother for signs that might show how her thoughts ran in relation to the conditions that were confronting all of them. But more often he searched the features of the boy who called him father.

Always, always there was music in the house. Behind the closed doors of the distant study, James Brood listened in spite of himself to the persistent thrumming of the piano downstairs. Always were the airs light and seductive; the dreamy, plaintive compositions of Strauss, Ziehrer and others of their kind and place. Frederic, with uncanny fidelity to the preferences of the mother he had never seen but whose influence directed him, affected the same general class of music that had appealed to her moods and temperament. Times there were, and often, when he played the very airs that she had loved, and then, despite his profound antipathy, James Brood's thoughts leaped back a quarter of a century and lived themselves on love-scenes and love-times that would not be denied.

And again there were the wild, riotous airs that she had played with Favevelli, that soft-eyed music master! Accursed airs—accursed and accusing! He gave orders that these airs were not to be played, but failed to make his command convincing for the reason that he could not bring himself to the point of explaining why they were distasteful to him. When Frederic thoughtlessly whistled or hummed fragments of those proscribed airs, he considered himself justified in commanding him to stop on the pretext that they were disturbing, but he could not use the same excuse for checking the song on the lips of his gay and impulsive wife. Sometimes he wondered why she persisted when she knew that he was annoyed. Her airy little apologies for her forgetfulness were of no consequence, for within the hour her memory was almost sure to be at fault again.

"Is there anything wrong with my hair, Mr. Brood?" asked Lydia, with a nervous little laugh. They were in the study and it was ten o'clock of a wet night in April. Of late, he had required her to spend the evenings with him in a strenuous effort to complete the final chapters of the journal. He had declared his intention to go abroad with his wife as soon as the manuscript was completed. Lydia's willingness to devote the extra hours to his enterprise would have pleased him vastly if he had not been afflicted by the same sense of unrest and uneasiness that made incessant labor a boon to her as well as to him.

Her query followed a long period of silence on his part. He had been suggesting alterations in her notes as she read them to him, and there were frequent lulls when she made the changes as directed. Without looking at him, she felt rather than knew that he was regarding her fixedly from his position opposite. The scrutiny was disturbing to her. Brood started guiltily. "Your hair?" he exclaimed. "Oh, I see. You women always feel that something is wrong with it. I was thinking of something else, however. Forgive my stupidity. We can't afford to waste time in thinking. We must stop the accused thing. He—"

"Yes, sah. At ten o'clock." "If Mr. Frederic is in his room send him to me." "He is not in his room, sah." The two, master and man, looked at each other steadily for a moment. Something passed between them. "Tell him that Miss Desmond is ready to go home." "Yes, sah." The curtain fell. "I prefer to go home alone, Mr. Brood," said Lydia, her eyes flashing. "Why did you send—"

comes out—and I realize that I helped in its making. No one has ever been in a position to tell the story of Thibet as you have told it, Mr. Brood. Those chapters will make history. I—" "Your poor father's share in those explorations is what really makes the work valuable, my dear. Without his notes and letters I should have been feeble indeed." He looked at his watch. "They were at the concert, you know—the Hungarian orchestra. A recent importation. Triangles, music, Gypsies." His sentences as well as his thoughts were staccato, disconnected.

Lydia turned very cold. She dreaded the scene that now seemed unavoidable. Frederic would come in response to his father's command, and then— Someone began to play upon the piano downstairs. She knew and he knew that it was Frederic who played. For a long time they listened. The air, no doubt, was one he had heard during the evening, a soft sensuous waltz that she had never heard before. The girl's eyes were upon Brood's face. It was like a graves image. "God!" fell from his stiff lips. Suddenly he turned upon the girl. "Do you know what he is playing?" "No," she said, scarcely above a whisper.



Confronted the Serene Image of Buddha.

his voice. The gates were being opened at last! She saw the thing that was to stalk forth. She would have closed her ears against the revelations it carried. "Mother will be worried if I am not at home—" "Guido Favevelli. An Italian born in Hungary, Budapest, that was his home, but he professed to be a gypsy. Yes, he wrote the devilish thing. He played it a thousand times in that room down—and now Frederic plays it, after all these years. It is his heritage. God, how I hate the thing! Ranjab! Where is the fellow? He must stop the accursed thing. He—"

"Mr. Brood! Mr. Brood!" cried Lydia, appalled. She began to edge toward the door. By a mighty effort, Brood regained control of himself. He sank into a chair, motioning for her to remain. The music had ceased abruptly. "He will be here in a moment," said Brood. "Don't go."

Suddenly he arose and confronted the serene image of the Buddha. For a full minute he stood there with his hands clasped, his lips moving as if in prayer. No sound came from them. The girl remained transfixed, powerless to move. Not until he turned toward her and spoke was the spell broken. Then she came quickly to his side. He had pronounced her name. "You are about to tell me something, Mr. Brood," she cried in great agitation. "I do not care to listen. I feel that it is something I should not know. Please let me go now. I—" He laid his hands upon her shoulders, holding her off at arm's length. "I am very fond of you, Lydia. I do not want to hurt you. Sooner would I have my tongue cut out than it should wound you by a single word. And yet I must speak. You love Frederic. Is not that true?"

are young, you are trusting. Your lesson will cost you a great deal, my dear." "You are mistaken. I do understand myself," she said gravely. "May I speak plainly, Mr. Brood?" "Certainly. I intend to speak plainly to you." "Frederic loves me. He does not love Yvonne. He is fascinated, as I also am fascinated by her, and you too, Mr. Brood. The spell has fallen over all of us. Let me go on, please. You say that Frederic loves like his father before him. That is true. He loves but one woman. You love but one woman, and she is dead. You will always love her. Frederic is like you. He loves Yvonne as you do—oh, I know it hurts! She cast her spell over you, why not over him? Is he stronger than you? Is it strange that she should attract him as she attracted you? You glory in her beauty, her charm, her perfect loveliness, and yet you love—yes love, Mr. Brood—the woman who was Frederic's mother. Do I make my meaning plain? Well, so it is that Frederic loves me. I am content to wait. I know he loves me."

Through all this, Brood stared at her in sheer astonishment. He had no feeling of anger, no resentment, no thought of protest. "You—you astounded me, Lydia. Is this your own impression or has it been suggested to you by—by another?" "I am only agreeing with you when you say that he loves as his father loved before him—but not lightly. Ah, not lightly, Mr. Brood."

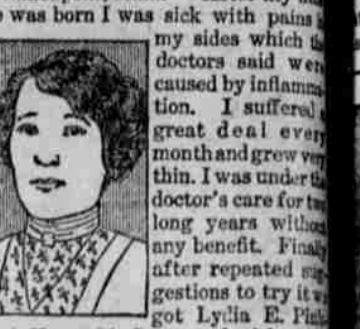
"You don't know what you are saying," he muttered. "Oh, yes, I do," she cried earnestly. "You invite my opinion; I trust you will accept it for what it is worth. Before you utter another word against Frederic, let me remind you that I have known both of you for a long, long time. In all the years I have been in this house, I have never known you to grant him a tender, loving word. My heart has ached for him. There have been times when I almost hated you. He feels your neglect, your harshness, your—your cruelty. He—"

"It is nothing less. You do not like him. I cannot understand why you should treat him as you do. He shrinks from you. Is it right, Mr. Brood, that a son should shrink from his father as a dog shrinks at the voice of an unkind master? I might be able to understand your attitude toward him if your unkindness was of recent origin, but—"

"Recent origin?" he demanded quickly. "If it had begun with the advent of Mrs. Brood," she explained frankly, undismayed by his scowl. "I do not understand all that has gone before. Is it surprising, Mr. Brood, that your son finds it difficult to love you? Do you deserve—"

Brood stopped her with a gesture of his hand. "The time has come for frankness on my part. You set me an example, Lydia. You have the courage of your father. For months I have had it in my mind to tell you the truth about Frederic, but my courage has always failed me. Perhaps I use the wrong word. It may be something very unlike cowardice that has held me back. I am going to put a direct question to you first of all, and I ask you to answer truthfully. Would you say that Frederic is like—that is, resembles his father? He was leaning forward, his manner intense. Lydia was surprised. "What an odd thing to say! Of course he resembles his father. I have never seen a portrait of his mother, but—"

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Pretty Blue.
Saplee—What is this Blue Bird we hear so much about?
Snapleigh—The Dove of Peace—Judge.
A Tale Often Told.
"Society is just now afflicted with a new species of bore."
"Still another?"
"It's the young woman who tells everybody she meets how the war in Europe prevented her from finishing her musical education."

Accounting for Tastes.
Bacon—I see expert French butter tasters claim they can perceive the flavor of the soil over which cattle feed.
Egbert—Must have sort of a taste of shrapnel now.
Enjoying Life in Trenches.
A soldier writes back: "Life in the trenches is fairly enjoyable if you know how to appreciate it."
Yes, indeed; life is worth while anywhere, if you make the best of it. The trenches offer peculiar opportunities for enjoying life. Living from minute to minute is intense, conscious living, replete with satisfaction. Every minute is as precious as though it was going to be the last. And the values of contrast heighten the zest for breathing. Just to be alive is keen joy in the trenches, surpassed only by the joy of living remote from the trenches.

FIND OUT
The Kind of Food that Will Keep You Well.
The true way is to find out what is best to eat and drink, and then cultivate a taste for those things instead of poisoning ourselves with improper, indigestible food, etc.

A conservative Mass. woman writes: "I have used Grape-Nuts 5 years for the young and for the aged; in sickness and in health; at first following directions carefully, later in a variety of ways as my taste and judgment suggested. "But its most special, personal benefit has been as a substitute for meat, and served dry with cream when rheumatic troubles made it important for me to change diet. "Served in this way with the addition of a cup of hot Postum and a little fruit it has been used at my morning meal for six months, during which time my health has much improved, nerves have grown sturdier, and a gradual decrease in my excessive weight adds greatly to my comfort." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Well-Being," it pays. "There's a Reason." Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. It gives genuine, true, and full of human interest.

DRIVEN TO THE LAST DITCH
Just One More Visitor and Mrs. Minkler Would Have Served Her "Pie-Pudding."
"That's the third time," observed Mrs. Minkler, who was visiting country relatives, "that I've heard reference made to Mrs. Minkler's pie-pudding, and it usually brings out a laugh if there's any joke about it, I'd like to hear it."
"Well, I'll tell you the story," said

one of the cousins. "Mrs. Minkler told it herself, so it won't do any harm to pass it on. Perhaps you've observed that we speak of the pie-pudding when we have to divide up something into unusually small portions; and possibly, since you are not acquainted with Mrs. Minkler, the joke may not strike you just as it did us. But here it is: "Mrs. Minkler does the cooking for her family of four, and as she isn't in love with the science of cookery, it's very little in the way of extra the

family gets. Mrs. Minkler says she considers 'apple sass and molasses' a good enough dessert for anyone. "Well, one day, for a special treat, she baked a pie for dinner, allowing a quarter piece for each member of the family. But while she was preparing dinner her sister-in-law looked into the kitchen and announced that two cousins had come over from Rushville to spend the day. "Shucks!" said Mrs. Minkler. "Now I'll have to cut the pie into six pieces. "A half hour later, two neighbors,

Judge and Mrs. Peters called, and Mr. Minkler asked them to stay for dinner, to which they agreed. "Mercy sakes!" grumbled Mrs. Minkler. "Now I'll have to cut the pie into eight pieces." "Just as dinner was being dished up, who should drop in but an old bachelor friend of the family from the other side of town, and he also accepted an invitation to take dinner. "Amanda Jane," declared the exasperated Mrs. Minkler to her sister-in-law, "I'll make out to cut that pesky

pie into nine pieces, but I tell you now it won't stand any more cutting than that. If a single other person comes here to dinner today, I'll squash the pie up, dish it round with sass on it, and call it a pudding."—Youth's Companion.

The Dardanelles.
The Dardanelles takes its name from Dardanus, who was supposed to have founded the lost city of that name near that other and far more famous lost city, ancient Troy. It is from one to

five miles wide, the most romantic part of the passage being only a mile wide between Sestos in Europe and Abydos in Asia, where 'Leander swam the Hellespont his Hero for to see.' At the time of the largely mythical war of the Greeks and Trojans as celebrated by Homer. The boat of Leander had for long years been pronounced impossible, but Lord Byron, rhyming volubly of all this region of song, in 1810, swam the Hellespont, club-footed as he was, from Sestos to Abydos.