

BLACK IS WHITE
By GEORGE BARR MCCUTCHEON
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SYNOPSIS.

In the New York home of James Brood, his son, Frederic, receives a wireless from him, Frederic tells Lydia De-

really are. I know it far better than you know it yourself.

He stared. "I wonder just how honest I am," he muttered. "I wonder what would happen if— But nothing can happen. Nothing ever will happen. Thank you, old girl, for saying what you said just now. It's—it's bully of you."

But she was not prepared for the impetuous appeal that followed. He threw himself down beside her and grasped her hands in his. His face seemed suddenly old and haggard, his eyes burned like coals of fire. Then, for the first time, she had an inkling of the great struggle that had been going on inside of him for weeks and weeks.

"Listen, Lyddy," he began, nervously. "Will you marry me tomorrow? Are you willing to take the chance that I'll be able to support you, to earn enough—"

"Why, Freddy!" she cried, half starting up from the couch. She was dumfounded.

"Will you? Will you? I mean it," he went on, almost arrogantly.

He was very much in earnest, but alas, the fire, the passion of the impetuous lover was missing. She shrunk back into the corner of the couch, staring at him with puzzled eyes. Comprehension was slow in arriving. As he hurried on with his plea she began to see clearly; her sound, level brain grasped the insignificance of this sudden decision on his part.

"There's no use waiting, dear. I'll never be more capable of earning a living than I am right now. I can go into the office with Brooks any day and I—I think I can make good. God knows I can try hard enough. Brooks says he's got a place there for me in the bond department. It won't be much at first, but I can work into a pretty good—what's the matter? Don't you think I can do it? Have you no faith in me? Are you afraid to take a chance?"

She had smiled sadly—it seemed to him reprovingly. His cheek flushed. "What has put all this into your head, Freddy, dear?" she asked shrewdly.

His eyes wavered. "I can't go on living as I have been for the past few months. I've just got to end it, Lyddy. You don't understand—you can't, and you won't."

"I'll see who it is," she said, and arose. Two red spots appeared in his cheeks. Then it was that she realized he had been waiting all along for the bell to ring; he had been expecting a summons.

"If it's for me, please say—er—say I'll—" he began, somewhat disjunctively, but she interrupted him.

"Will you stay here for luncheon, Frederic? And this afternoon we will go to— Oh, is there a concert or a recital—"

"Yes, I'll stay if you'll let me," he said, wistfully. "We'll find something to do."

She went to the telephone. He heard the polite greetings, the polite assurances that she had not taken cold, two or three laughing rejoinders to what must have been amusing comments on the storm and its effect on timid creatures, and then:

"Yes, Mrs. Brood, I will call him to the phone."

CHAPTER XIII.

Two Women.

Frederic had the feeling that he slunk to the telephone. The girl handed the receiver to him and he met her confident, untroubled gaze for a second. Instead of returning to the sitting-room where she could have heard everything that he said, she went into her own room down the hall and closed the door. He was not conscious of any intention to temporize, but it was significant that he did not speak until the door closed behind her. Afterwards he realized and was ashamed.

Almost the first words that Yvonne uttered were of a nature to puzzle and irritate him, although they bore directly upon his own previously formed resolution. Her voice, husky and low, seemed strangely plaintive and lifeless to him.

"Have you and Lydia made any plans for the afternoon?" she inquired. He made haste to declare her intention to attend a concert. "I am glad you are going to do that," she went on. "You will stay for luncheon with Lydia?"

"Yes, she's trying to pick up that thing of Fevelli's—the one we heard last night." There was silence at the other end of the wire. "Are you there?"

"Yes." "I will be home for dinner, of course. You—don't need me for anything, do you?"

"No," she said. Then, with a low laugh: "You may be excused for the day, my son. Your father and I have been discussing the trip abroad."

"I thought you—you were opposed to going."

"I've changed my mind. As a matter of fact, I've changed my heart."

"You speak in riddles."

She was silent for a long time. "Frederic, I want you to do something for me. Will you try to convince Lydia that I meant no offense last night when I—"

"She understands all that perfectly, Yvonne."

"No, she doesn't. A woman wouldn't understand."

"In what way?"

There was a pause. "No woman likes to be regarded as a fool," she said at last, apparently after careful reflection. "Oh, yes; there is some-

thing else. We are dining out this evening."

"You and I?" he asked after a moment.

"Certainly not. Your father and I. I was about to suggest that you dine with Lydia—or better still, ask her over here to share your dinner with you."

He was scowling. "Where are you going?"

"Going? Oh, dining, I see. Well, slowly, deliberately, 'we thought it would be great fun to dine alone at Delmonico's and see a play afterward."

"What play are you going to see?" he cut in. She mentioned a Belasco production. "Well, I hope you enjoy it, Yvonne. By the way, how is the governor today? In a good humor?"

There was no response. He waited for a moment and then called out: "Are you there?"

"Good-by," came back over the wire. He started as if she had given him a slap in the face. Her voice was cold and forbidding.

When Lydia rejoined him in the sitting-room he was standing at the window, staring across the courtyard far below.

Are you going?" she asked, steadily. He turned toward her, conscious of the telltale scowl that was passing from his brow. It did not occur to him to resent her abrupt, uncompromising question. As a matter of fact, it seemed quite natural that she should put the question in just that way, flatly, inclusively. He considered himself, in a way, to be on trial.

"No, I'm not," he replied. "You did not expect me to forget, did you?" He was uncomfortable under her honest, inquiring gaze. A sullen anger against himself took possession of him. He despised himself for the feeling of loneliness and homesickness that suddenly came over him.

"I thought—" she began, and then her brow cleared. "I have been looking up the recitals in the morning paper. The same orchestra you heard last night is to appear again today at—"

"We will go there, Lyddy," he interrupted, and at once began to hum the gay little air that had so completely charmed him. "Try it again, Lyddy. You'll get it in no time."

After luncheon, like two happy children they rushed off to the concert, and it was not until they were on their way home at five o'clock that his enthusiasm began to wane. She was quick to detect the change. He became moody, preoccupied; his part of the conversation was kept up with an effort that lacked all the spontaneity of his earlier and more engaging flights.

Lydia went far back in her calculations and attributed his mood to the promise she had exacted in regard to his attitude toward his father. It occurred to her that he was smarting under the restraint that his promise involved. She realized now, more than ever before, that there could be no delay, no faltering on her part. She would have to see James Brood at once. She would have to go down on her knees to him.

"I feel rather guilty, Freddy," she said, as they approached the house. "Mr. Brood will think it strange that I should plead a headache and yet run off to a concert and enjoy myself when he is so eager to finish the journal—especially as he is to sail so soon. I ought to see him, don't you think so? Perhaps there is something I can do tonight that will make up for the lost time." She was plainly nervous.

"He'd work you to death if he thought it would serve his purpose," said Frederic, gloomily, and back of that sentence lay the thought that

made it absolutely imperative for her to act without delay.

"I will go in for a few minutes," she said, at the foot of the steps. "Are you not coming, too?"

He had stopped. "Not just now, Lyddy. I think I'll run up to Tom's flat and smoke a pipe with him. Thanks, old girl, for the happy day we've had. You don't mind if I leave you here?"

Her heart gave a great throb of relief. It was best to have him out of the way for the time being.

"Well—so long," he said, diffidently. "So long, Lyddy."

"So long," she repeated, dropping into his manner of speech without thinking. There was a smothering sensation in his breast.

He looked back as he strode off in the direction from which they had come. She was at the top of the steps, her fingers on the electric button. He wondered why her face was so white. He had always thought of it as being full of color, rich, soft and warm.

Inside the door, Lydia experienced a strange sinking of the heart. "Is Mr. Brood at—" she began, nervously. A voice at the top of the stairway interrupted the question she was putting to the footman.

"Is it you, Lyddy? Come up to my room."

The girl looked up and saw Mrs. Brood leaning over the banister rail. She was holding her pink dressing-gown closely about her throat, as if it had been hastily thrown about her shoulders. One bare arm was visible—completely so.

"I came to see Mr. Brood. Is he—"

"He is busy. Come up to my room," repeated Yvonne, somewhat imperiously.

As Lydia mounted the stairs she had a fair glimpse of the other's face. Always pallid—but of a healthy pallor—it was now almost ghastly. Perhaps it was the light from the window that caused it, Lydia was not sure, but a queer, greenish hue overspread the lovely, smiling face. The lips were very red—redder than she had ever seen them. The girl suddenly recalled the face she had once seen of a woman who was addicted to the drug habit.

Mrs. Brood met her at the top of the stairs. She was but half-dressed. Her lovely neck and shoulders were now almost bare. Her hands were extended toward the visitor; the filmy lace gown hung loose and disregarded about her slim figure.

"Come in, dear. Shall we have tea? I have been so lonely. One cannot read the books they print nowadays. Such stupid things, al—"

She threw an arm about the tall girl and Lydia was surprised to find that it was warm and full of a gentle strength. She felt her flesh tingle with the thrill of contact. Yes, it must have been the light from the window, for Yvonne's face was now aglow with the iridescence that was so peculiarly her own.

A door closed softly on the floor above them. Mrs. Brood glanced over her shoulder and upward. Her arm tightened perceptibly about Lydia's waist.

"It was Ranjab," said the girl, and instantly was filled with amazement. She had not seen the Hindu, had not even been thinking of him, and yet she was impelled by some mysterious intelligence to give utterance to a statement in which there was conviction, not conjecture.

"Did you see him?" asked the other, looking at her sharply.

"No," admitted Lydia, still amazed. "I don't know why I said that."

Mrs. Brood closed her boudoir door behind them. For an instant she stood staring at the knob as if expecting to see it turn—

"I know," she said, "I know why you said it. Because it was Ranjab." She shivered slightly. "I am afraid of that man, Lyddy. He seems to be watching me all of the time. Day and night his eyes seem to be upon me."

"Why should he be watching you?" asked Lydia, bluntly.

Yvonne did not notice the question. "Even when I am asleep in my bed, in the dead hour of night, he is looking at me. I can feel it, though asleep. Oh, it is not a dream, for my dreams are of something or someone else—never of him. And yet he is there, looking at me. It—it is uncanny."

"An obsession," remarked Lydia, quietly. "He never struck me as especially omnipresent."

"Didn't you feel him a moment ago?" demanded Yvonne, irritably. The other hesitated, reflecting. "I suppose it must have been something like that." They were still facing the door, standing close together. "Why do you feel that he is watching you?"

"I don't know. I just feel it, that's all. Day and night. He can read my thoughts, Lyddy, as he would read a book. Isn't— isn't it disgusting?" Her laugh was spiritless, obviously artificial.

"I shouldn't object to his reading my thoughts," said Lydia. "Ah, but you are Lyddy. It's different. I have thoughts sometimes, my dear, that would not—but there! Let us speak of more agreeable things. Sit down here beside me. No tea? A cigarette, then. No? Do you forgive me for what I said to you last night?" she asked, sitting down beside the girl on the chaise longue.

"It was so absurd, Mrs. Brood, that I have scarcely given it a moment's thought. Of course I was hurt at the time. It was so unjust to Mr. Brood. It was—"

"It is like you to say that," cried Yvonne. "You are splendid, Lyddy. Will you believe me when I tell you that I love you? That I love you very dearly, very tenderly?" Lydia looked at her in some doubt

and not without misgivings. "I should like to believe it," she said, noncommittally.

"Ah, but you doubt it. I see. Well, I do not blame you. I have given you much pain, much distress. When I am far away you will be glad—you will be happy. Is not that so?"

"But you are coming back," said Lydia, with a frank smile, not meant to be unfriendly.

Yvonne's face clouded. "Oh, yes, I shall come back. Why not? Is this not my home?"

"You may call it your home, Mrs. Brood," said Lydia, "but are you quite sure your thoughts always abide here? I mean in the United States, of course."

Yvonne had looked up at her quickly. "Oh, I see. No, I shall never be an American." Then she abruptly changed the subject. "You have had a nice day with Frederic? You have been happy, both of you?"

"Yes—very happy, Mrs. Brood," said the girl, simply.

"I am glad. You must always be happy, you two. It is my greatest wish."

Lydia hesitated for a moment. "Frederic asked me to be his wife—tomorrow," she said, and her heart began to thump queerly. She felt that she was approaching a crisis of some sort.

"Tomorrow?" fell from Yvonne's lips. The word was drawn out as if in one long breath. Then, to Lydia's astonishment, an extraordinary change came over the speaker. "Yes, yes, it should be—it must be tomorrow. Poor boy—poor, poor boy! You will marry, yes, and go away at once, al—"

Her voice was almost shrill in its intensity, her eyes were wide and eager and—

—anxious.

"I— Oh, Mrs. Brood, is it for the best?" cried Lydia. "Is it the best thing for Frederic to do? I—I feared you might object. I am sure his father will refuse permission—"

"But you love each other—that is enough. Why ask the consent of anyone? Yes, yes, it is for the best. I know—oh, you cannot realize how well I know. You must not hesitate. The woman was trembling in her eagerness. Lydia's astonishment gave way to perplexity.

"What do you mean? Why are you so serious—so intent on this—"

"Frederic has no money," pursued Yvonne, as if she had not heard Lydia's words. "But that must not deter you. It must not stand in the way. I shall find a way, yes, I shall find a way. I—"

"Do you mean that you would provide for him—for us?" exclaimed Lydia.

"There is a way, there is a way," said the other, fixing her eyes appealingly on the girl's face, to which the flush of anger was slowly mounting.

"His father will not help him—if that is what you are counting upon, Mrs. Brood," said the girl coldly.

"I know. He will not help him, no."

Lydia started. "What do you know about—that has Mr. Brood said to you?" Her heart was cold with ap-

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CHAPTER XII—Continued.

"She was jealous. She admitted it, dear. If I don't mind, why should you incur—"

"Do you really believe she—she loves the governor enough to be as jealous as all that?" he exclaimed, a curious gleam in his eyes—an expression she did not like.

"Of course I think so," she cried emphatically. "What a question! Have you any reason to suspect that she does not love your father?"

"No—certainly not," he said in some confusion. Then, after a moment: "Are you quite sure this headache of yours is real, Lyddy? Isn't it an excuse to stay away from—from Yvonne, after what happened last night? Be honest, dear."

She was silent for a long time, weighing her answer. Was it best to be honest with him?

"I confess that it has something to do with it," she admitted. Lydia could not be anything but truthful.

"I thought so. It's—it's a rotten shame, Lyddy. That's why I want to talk to her. I want to reason with her. It's all so perfectly silly, this misunderstanding. You've just got to go on as you were before, Lyddy—just as if it hadn't happened. It—"

"I shall complete the work for your father, Freddy," she said quietly. "Two or three days more will see the end. After that, neither my services nor my presence will be required over there."

"You don't mean to say—" he began, unbelievably.

"I can think of them just as well here as anywhere else. No; I shan't annoy Mrs. Brood, Freddy." It was on the tip of her tongue to say more, but she thought better of it.

"They're going abroad soon," he ventured. "At least, that's father's plan. Yvonne isn't so keen about it. She calls this being abroad, you know. Besides," he hurried on in his eagerness to excuse Yvonne, "she's tremendously fond of you. No end of times she's said you were the finest—"

Her smile—an odd one, such as he had never seen on her lips before—checked his eager speech. He bridled. "Of course, if you don't choose to believe me, there's nothing more to be said. She meant it, however."

"I am sure she said it, Freddy," she hastened to declare. "Will she be pleased with our—our marriage?" It required a great deal of courage on her part to utter these words, but she was determined to bring the true situation home to him.

He did not even hesitate, and there was conviction in his voice as he replied. "It doesn't matter whether she's pleased or displeased. We're pleasing ourselves, are we not? There's no one else to consider, dear."

Her eyes were full upon his, and there was wonder in them. "Thank you—thank you, Freddy," she cried. "I—I knew you'd—"

The sentence remained unfinished.

"Has there ever been a doubt in your mind?" he asked, uneasily, after a moment. He knew there had been misgivings and he was ready, in his self-abasement, to resent them if given the slightest opening. Guilt made him arrogant.

"No," she answered simply. The answer was not what he expected. He flushed painfully.

"I—I thought perhaps you'd—you'd got a notion in your head that—" He, too, stopped for want of the right words to express himself without committing the egregious error of letting her see that it had been in his thoughts to accuse her of jealousy.

She waited for a moment. "That I might have got the notion in my head you did not love me any longer? Is that what you started to say?"

"Yes," he confessed, averting his eyes.

"I've been unhappy at times, Freddy, but that is all," she said, steadily. "You see, I know how honest you



"Will You Marry Me Tomorrow?"

there isn't any use in trying to explain the—"

"I think I do understand, dear," she said, quietly, laying her hand on his. "I understand so completely that there isn't any use in your trying to explain. But don't you think you are a bit cowardly?"

"Cowardly?" he gasped, and then the blood rushed to his face.

"It is quite fair to me—or to yourself." He was silent. She waited for a moment and then went on resolutely. "I know just what it is that you are afraid of, Freddy. I shall marry you, of course. I love you more than anything else in all the world. But are you quite fair in asking me to marry you while you are still afraid, dear?"

"Before God, I love no one else but you," he cried, earnestly. "I know what it is you are thinking and I—I don't blame you. But I want you now—good God, you don't know how much I need you now. I want to begin a new life with you. I want to feel that you are with me—just you—strong and brave and enduring. I am adrift. I need you."

"If you insist, I will marry you to-

tributary acres constituting a splendid estate, and the Dutch aristocrats of New Amsterdam, across the upper bay, followed the example of the original Cubberly promptly in establishing themselves upon the salubrious and picturesque hills of Staten Island. The Cubberly cottage was but the pioneer among many. In fact, as historical records show, the new settlement on Staten Island grew so rapidly at that time that some people thought it might outgrow New Amsterdam. The Cubberly cottage came

into the possession of the Britons in the year 1695, when it was deeded to Nathaniel Britton, an ancestor of the owner who has given it to the public as a historical relic. The cottage, with all its contents, will be kept open to the public under the charge of the Staten Island Association of Arts and Science.

Run Away From "Nerves." No one can help feeling nervous at times in this age of rush and racket, but it is quite possible to put on the

brake, as it were, and not let the nerves run away with us.

If people fret you, it is not necessary to be rude to them. Try, instead, to avoid them.

Don't read books that irritate you. Books are plentiful, therefore put away the offending volume and choose another.

If a noise at night worries you, don't let it continue to do so. Get up and see to the matter and get it right.

When you feel it coming on plunge at once into some task that will take all your time and energy. It is better to run away from certain things than to let them irritate you. Such martyrdom is usually unnecessary and bad for you all round.

Handed Him One. Bill—Did you say the father of the girl he wanted to marry handed him one?

Jill—He certainly did. He gave the daughter away at the altar, you know.

The General Says: You can buy the most durable roofing... Certain-tee Roofing... Your local hardware or lumber dealer will supply you with Certain-tee...

LADIES!! USE GILBERT'S JEWEL TALCUM POWDER... The Talcum of Quality, for refined people. Perfumes rich, lasting, and exquisite. Powder of victory durance.

SHINGLES... An artillery battle was raging. Fred was terrific. Suddenly a war correspondent, one of the favored...

STOMACH SUFFERERS GET QUICK RELIEF... Maryland and Washington Folks Swiftly Restored by Wonderful Remedy.

Being and Doing. As the man is in the integrity of his character, so is his strength. Being is everything. It conditions happiness; it determines and measures service.

Not His Doing. His Sister—It makes me laugh every time I hear you talk about changing your mind.

Might Mark the Spot. They were two days out, and the young bride was dreadfully seasick. "Henry, dear," she moaned, "if I should die and they bury me here, you'll come sometimes and plant flowers on my grave, won't you?"—Boston Transcript.

Quite So. "What is the first step necessary in cultivating an artistic temperament?" Finding somebody to stand for it.

Grape-Nuts with cream or good milk, supplies the food elements in excellent proportion for building brain and muscle tissue. "There's a Reason"