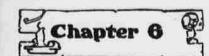
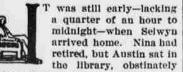


YNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

YNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS. CHAP, 1-Returning from Manila. Captain Selwyn, formerly of the army, is welcomed home by his sister. Nina Gerard, her wealthy bushand Austin, and their numerous child-ren. Elleen Erroll, ward of Nina and Austin. Is part of their household. Selwin has been divorced, without guilt on his part by his wile, Alixe, who is now the wile of Jack Ruthven, with whom she ran away from Selwyn. II-Elleen, who is very fond of her brother. Gerald, despite the young man's neglect of her. makes friends with Selwyn. III-Gerald is worried about young Erroll's mingling in the fast set. Gerald is employ-ent by Julius Neergard, a reale state operator in a large way. Selwyn promises Elleen he will took after her brother. He tells her about Boots Lansing, his army Chum in Manila, who is coming to New York. In the park Elleen and Selwyn ride past Allxe. IV -Elleen's deceased father was an archacol-ogist, and she has inherited some of his scholarly qualities. Selwyn helps fieraid to settle a gambling debt and determines to selwyn meet and discuss their altered rela-tions. He is introduced to Mrs. Rosemund Fanc, keader of the fast set, and Allxe's clos-est friend. He appeals to Allxe to help him kerp Gerald from gambling.





plodding through the last chapters of a brand new novel. "This is a wretched excuse for sitting

up," he yawned, laying the book flat on the table, but still open. "I ought never to be trusted alone with any book." Then he removed his reading glasses, yawned again and surveyed Selwyn from head to foot.

"Very pretty," he said. "Well, how are the yellow ones, Phil? Or was it all debutante and slop twaddle?" "Few from the cradle, but bunches

were arriving for the dance as I left." "Eileen went at half past 11."

"I didn't know she was going." said Selwyn, surprised.

"She didn't want you to. The playful kitten business, you know-frisks apropos of nothing to frisk about. But we all fancied you'd stay for the dance." He yawned mightily and gazed at Selwyn with ruddy gravity. "Whisk?" he inquired.

"No."

"Cigar?" mildly urgent. "No, thanks."

"Bed ?"

"I think so. But don't wait for me, Austin. Is that the evening paper? Where is St. Paul?"

Selwyn unfolded the paper. So his brother-in-law moved ponderously away, yawning frightfully at every heavy stride, and the younger man settled back in his chair, a fragrant cigar balanced between his strong, slim fingers, one leg dropped loosely over the other. After awhile the newspaper fell to the floor.

He sat there without moving for a long time. His cigar, burning close, had gone out. The fire having burned low, he rose, laid a pair of heavy logs across the coals, dragged his chair to

"Did you have a good time? You danced a lot, I dare say," he ventured. "Yes-a lot." studying the floor.

"I? No, not in the least. I will be

"Decent partners?" "Oh, yes."

"Who was there?"

sleepy?" he asked.

tomorrow, though."

She looked up at him. "You were not there," she said, smiling.

"No, I cut it. But I did not know you were going. You said nothing about It."

"Of course you would have stayed if you had known, Captain Selwyn?" She was still smiling.

"Of course," he replied.

"Would you really?" "Why, yes."

There was something not perfectly familiar to him in the girl's bright brevity, in her direct personal inquiry, for between them hitherto the gayly impersonal had ruled except in moments of lightest badinage.

"Was it an amusing dinner?" she asked in her turn. "Rather." Then he looked up at

her, but she had stretched her slim. silk shod feet to the fender, and her head was bent aside, so that he could see only the curve of the cheek and the little, close set ear under its ruddy mass of gold.

"Who was there?" she asked, too, carelessly.

For a moment he did not speak. Under his bronzed cheek the flat muscles stirred. Had some meddling, malicious fool ventured to whisper an unfit jest to this young girl? Had a word or a smile and a phrase cut in two awakened her to a sorry wisdom at his expense? Something had happened, and the idea stirred him to wrath, as when a child is wantonly frightened or a dumb creature misused.

"What did you ask me?" he inquired gently.

"I asked you who was there, Captain Selwyn."

He recalled some names and laughingly mentioned his dinner partner's preference for Harmon. She listened absently, her chin nestling in her palm. only the close set, perfect ear turned tov urd him.

"Who led the cotillon ?" he asked. "Jack Ruthven, dancing with Rosamund Fane."

She drew her feet from the fender and crossed them, still turned away from him, and so they remained in si-lence until again she shifted her position almost impatiently.

"You are very tired," he said.

"No; wide awake."

"Don't you think it best for you to go to bed?" "No, but you may go."

And as he did not stir, "I mean that

you are not to sit here because I do." And she looked around at him. "What has gone wrong, Elleen?" he

said quietly. He had never before used her given

name, and she flushed up. "There is nothing the matter, Cap-

elbows close together on her knees face framed in her hands.

"You ask me if I am tired." sh sald. "I am-of the froth of life." His face changed instantly. "What? he exclaimed, laughing.

But she, very young and seriously in tent, was now wrestling with the mighty platitudes of youth. First of Gerald, pale and shaky, hanging over all she desired to know what meaning his desk and trying to dictate letters to life held for humanity. Then she ex- an uncomfortable stenographer. pressed a doubt as to the necessity for human happiness, duty being her discovery as sufficient substitute.

But he heard in her childish babble quickening for the first time, and he tell him you are not well. And, old listened patiently and answered gravely, touched by her irremediable loneliness.

he said that he would take up any. you know how it is in that set"thing she chose with her. And when she spoke vaguely of a life devoted to

good works of the wiser charity, of being morally equipped to aid those who required material aid - he was very serious,

but ventured to "You ask me if I am suggest that she tired," she said. dance her first

season through as a sort of flesh mortifying penance preliminary to her look as rocky as that?" spiritual novitiate. "Yes," she admitted thoughtfully of me, are you?"

"You are right. Nina would feel dreadful if I did not go on or if she imagined I cared so little for it all. long faced, blue nosed butters-in, do But one season is enough to waste. Don't you think so?" "Quite enough," he assured her.

"And-why should I ever marry?" she demanded, lifting her clear, sweet derstands how others make them. You eyes to his. "Why, indeed?" he repeated, with

conviction. "I can see no reason." "I am glad you understand me," she Gerald?" said. "I am not a marrying woman." "Not at all," he assured her,

"No, I am not, and Nina-the darling nodded. -doesn't understand. Why, what do you?"

you have to tell me?"

"Only-it's very, very sllly-only several men-and one nice enough to know better-Sudbury Gray"-

"Asked you to marry them?" he fin ished, nodding his head at the cat. "Yes," she admitted, frankly astonished. "But how did you know?"

"Inferred it. Go on." ing for details, and the details were too foolish and too annoying to re-

peat. I do not wish to marry anybody. think I made that very plain to everybody."

"You are too intelligent to conlv. sider that sort of thing just now." "You do understand me, don't you?"

she said gratefully. "There are so many serious things in life to learn and to think of, and that is the very last thing I should ever consider. I am very, very glad I had this talk with you. Now I am rested, and I

shall retire for a good long sleep." With which paradox she stood up, stifling a tipy yawn, and looked smilingly at him, all the old sweet confi-

dence in her eyes. Then, suddenly mocking: "Who suggested that you call me by

Austin to yes. pers. The fami- Dring poured tea very

ly dined at 7 so prettily. Drina could sit up; special treat on a

count of Boots' presence at table. Gerald was expected, but did not come. The next morning Selwyn went downtown at the usual hour and found So he dismissed the abashed girl for the moment, closed the door and sat down beside the young man.

"Go home, Gerald," he said with defellow, don't ever come near the office again when you're in this condition."

"I'm a perfect fool," faltered the boy So when she said that she was tired his voice trembling. "I don't really of gayety, that she would like to study, care for that sort of thing, either. But

> "What set?" "Oh, the Fanes, the Ruth"- He stammered himself into silence.

"I see. What happened last night?" "The usual, two tables full of it. There was a wheel too. I had no intention- But you know yourself how it parches your throat-the jollying and laughing and excitement. I forgot all about what you-what we talked over. I'm ashamed and sorry, but I can stay here and attend to things, of course"-"I don't want Neergard to see you,"

repeated Selwyn. 'W-why," stammered the boy, "do I

"Yes. See here, you are not afraid

"No"-"You don't think I'm one of those you? You have confidence in me, haven't you? You know I'm an average and normally sinful man who has made plenty of mistakes and who unknow that, don't you, old chap?"

"Y-es." "Then you will listen, won't you.

The boy laid his arms on the desk and hid his face in them. Then he

For ten minutes Selwyn talked to you suppose? But would it be a breach him with all the terse and colloquial of confidence to anybody if I told confidence of a comradeship founded upon respect for mutual fallibility-no "I doubt it," he said. "What is it instruction, no admonition, no blame,

no reproach, only an affectionately logical review of matters as they stood and as they threatened to stand. 4,000 acres. Why put a lot of good The boy fortunately was still pliable and susceptible, still unalarmed and noney out of commission when they an draw interest on it and toss an infrank. It seemed that he had lost significant fraction of that interest as money again, this time to Jack Rutha sop to the farmers? Do you see? ven, and Selwyn's teeth remained

sternly interlocked as bit by bit the That's your millionaire method, and story came out, but in the telling the it's what makes 'em in the first place." "There is nothing more," she said story came out, but in the telling the without embarrassment. "I told Nina each time, but she confused me by ask-might have been, and Selwyn supposed He drew a large, fancy handkerchief from his pistol pocket and wiped the beads from the bridge of his limber he was able to stand his loss without lose. But they reappeared again. seeking aid. "Now," he said, "I am satisfied that,

"Anyway." said Gerald in a muffied voice, "I've learned one lesson-that a options on every acre of the four thoubusiness man can't acquire the habits sand. There is money in it either "Right, as usual," he said cheerful- and keep the infernal hours that suit way and any way we work it. people who can take all day to sleep it get it coming and going. First of all, off."

> "Right," said Selwyn. "Besides, my income can't stand it,"

added Gerald naively. "Neither could mine, old fellow.

And. Gerald, cut out this card busi-

satisfied that it's a devilish good thing."

"Are you?"

details, virtually all of 'em. Here's the situation in a grain of wheat. The Slowitha club owns a thousand or so scres of oak, scrub, pine scrub, sand and weeds and controls 4,000 morethat is to say, the club pays the farmers' rents and fixes their fences and awards them odd jobs and prizes for the farm sustaining the biggest number of bevies; also the club pays them to maintain millet and buckwheat the minor murmur of an undercurrent cision. "When Neergard comes in I'll patches and to act as wardens. In return the farmers post their 4.000 acres for the exclusive benefit of the club. is that plain?" "Perfectly."

"Very well, then. Now, the Slowitha is largely composed of very rich men. mong them Bradley Harmon, Jack

Eilcen. Ruthven, George Fane, Sanxon Orchil. the Hon, Delmour-Carnes-that crowd -rich and stingy, That's why they tre contented with a yearly agreement with the farmers instead of buying the

his neck for a long minute, then went "Emphatically. I've mastered the out silently. That night Selwyn stopped at his sister's house before going to his own rooms and, finding Austin alone in the library, laid the matter before him exactly as Neergard had put it. "You see," he added, "that I'm a sort of ass about business methods.

This furtive pouncing on a thing and clubbing other people's money out of them with it-this slyly acquiring land that is necessary to an unsuspecting neighbor and then holding him up-I don't like. There's always something of this sort that prevents my cordial co-operation with Neergard-always something in the schemes which hints of-of squeezing-of something underround

ed. Now that his head was turned.

Neergard looked full at the back of

"Like the water which he's going te squeeze out of the wells?" Selwyn laughed.

"Phil," said his brother-in-law, "# ou think anybody can do a profitable business except at other people's expense you are an ass."

"Am I?" asked Selwyn, still laughing frankly.

"Certainly. The land is there plain enough for anybody to see. It's always been there. It's likely to remain for a few eons, I fancy. "Now, along comes Meynheer Julius

Neergard, the only man who seems to have brains enough to see the present value of that parcel to the Slowitha people. Everybody else had the same chance. Nobody except Neergard knew enough to take it. Why shouldn't he profit by it?"

"Yes, but if he'd be satisfied to cut it up into lots and do what is fair"-"Cut it up into nothing! Man alive,

do you suppose that Slowitha people would let him? 'They've only a few thousand acres. They've got to control that land. What good is their club without it? Do you imagine they'd let a town grow up on three sides of their precious game preserve? And. besides, I'll bet you that half of their streams and lakes take rise on other people's property-and that Neergard knows it-the Dutch fox!"

They discussed Neergard's scheme or a little while longer. Austin,



They discussed Neergard's scheme. shrewd and cautious, declined any personal part in the financing of the deal, although he admitted the probability of prospective profits.

"Our investments and our loans are of a different character," he explained, but I have no doubt that Fane, Harnon & Co."-"Why, both Fane and Harmon are

members of the club," laughed Sel-

wyn. "You don't expect Neergard to

A peculiar expression flickered in

Gerard's heavy features. Perhaps he

thought that Fane and Harmon and

lack Ruthven were not above exploit-

ing their own club under certain cir-

cumstances; but, whatever his opin-

lon, he said nothing further and, sug-

gesting that Selwyn remain to dine.

A few moments later he returned.

"I forgot Nina and I are dining at

the Orchils' Come up a moment. She

crestfallen and conciliatory.

wants to speak to you.'

go to them?"

vent off to dress.

the hearth and settled down in it deeply.

Long after his cigar burned bitter he sat with eyes fixed on the blaze. When the flames at last began to flicker and subside his lids fluttered, then drooped, but he had lost all reckoning

of time when he opened them again to find Miss Erroll in furs and ball gown kneeling on the hearth and laying a log across the andirons.

"Upon my word!" he murmured, confused; then, rising quickly: "Is that you, Miss Erroll? What time is it?"

"Four o'clock in the morning, Captain Selwyn," she said, straightening up to her full height. "This room is icy. Are you frozen?"

Chilled through, he stood looking bout in a dazed way, incredulous of the hour and of his own slumber.

"I don't know how I happened to do it," he muttered, abashed by his plight. "I rekindled the fire for your benefit." she said. "You had better use it. before you retire." And she seated herself in the armchair, stretching out



smooth, innocent hands, so soft, so amazingly fresh and white. He moved a step forward into the warmth, stood a moment, then reached forward for a chair and drew it up be

side hers. "Do you mean to say you are not

tain Selwyn. Why do you ask?" "Yes, there is," he said.

"There is not, I tell you" "And if it is something you cannot understand," he continued pleasantly, 'perhaps it might be well to ask Nina to explain it to you."

"There is nothing to explain." "Because," he went on very gently, one is sometimes led by malicious suggestion to draw false and unpleasant inferences from harmless facts"-"Captain Selwyn"-"Yes, Eileen."

But she could not go on. Speech an thought itself remained sealed; only a dare." confused consciousness of being htat remained-somehow to be remedled by something he might say, might deny. Yet how could it help her for him to deny what she herself refused to be-Heve-refused through sheer instinct while ignorant of its meaning?

Even if he had done what she heard Rosamund Fane say he had done i had remained meaningless to her save for the manner of the telling. Bu now; but now! Why had they laugh ed? Why had their attitudes and man ner and the disconnected phrases it French left her flushed and rigid among the idle group at supper? Why had they suddenly seemed to remem ber her presence and express their abrupt consciousness of it in such furtive signals and silence?

It was false anyway, whatever it And, anyway, it was false meant. that he had driven away in Mrs. Ruthven's brougham. But, oh, if he had only stayed, if he had only remained -this friend of hers who had been ac nice to her from the moment he came into her life, so generous, so considerate, so lovely to her and to Gerald! For a moment the glow remained. then a chill doubt crept in. Would he have remained



my first name?" she asked. 'Some good angel or other. May I?" "If you please. I rather like it. But I couldn't very well call you anything except 'Captain Selwyn.'

"On account of my age?" "Your age!" contemptuous in her confident equality.

"Oh, my wisdom, then? You probably reverence me too deeply." "Probably not. 1 don't know. couldn't do it-somehow"-

"Try it-unless you're afraid." "I'm not afraid!"

"Yes, you are, if you don't take a

"You dare me?" "I do."

"Philip," she said, hesitating, adorable in her embarrassment, "No! No! No! I can't do it that way in cold blood. It's got to be 'Captain Sel-

wyn,' for awhile anyway. Good night." He took her outstretched hand, laughing. The usual little friendly shake followed. Then she turned gayly away, leaving him standing before the whitening ashes.

He thought the fire was dead, but when he turned out the lamp an hour later under the ashes embers glowed in the darkness of the winter morning.

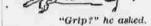


ID-LENT, and the enemy grins," remarked Selwyn as he started for church with Nina and the children. Austin, knee deep in a dozen Sunday supplements, refused to stir. Poor little Eileen was now convalescent from

had he known Boots Lansing called to see Eileen, she was to be but she wouldn't come down, saying

there? Where her nose was dld he go after too pink. Drithe dinner? As na entertained for what they Boots, and then said, it was ab Selwyn return-And yet ed and talked and yetarmy talk with He sat, sav him until tea agely intent up | was served. Dri-

on the waning na poured tea He sat, savagely intent fire; she turned very prettily. upon the waning fire. restlessly again. Nina had driven



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1

ness. It's the final refuge of the feeble minded. You like it? Oh, well, if you've got to play-if you've no better

resource for leisure, and if nonparticipation isolates you too completely from other idiots-play the imbecile gentleman's game, which means a game where nobody need worry over the stakes."

"But-they'd laugh at me!" "I know. But Boots Lansing would not, and you have considerable respect

for him." Gerald nodded. He had immediately succumbed to Lansing like everybody else.

"And one thing more," said Selwyn. "Don't play for stakes-no matter how insignificant-where women sit in the

zame. Fashionable or not, it is rotten sport, whatever the ethics may be. And, Gerald, tainted sport and a clean record can't take the same fence together." A little later the boy started for

home at Selwyn's advice. But the memory of his card losses frightened him, and he stopped on the way to see what money Austin would advance him.

Julius Neergard came up from Long Island, arriving at the office about noon. The weather was evidently cold on Long Island. He had the complexlon of a raw ham, but the thick, fat hand, with its bitten nails, which he offered Selwyn as he entered his office, was unpleasantly hot, and on the thin

nose, which split the broad expanse of face, a bead or two of sweat usually glistened, winter and summer. "Where's Gerald?" he asked as an

office boy relieved him of his heavy oox coat and brought his mail to him. "I advised Gerald to go home," observed Selwyn carelessly. "He is not perfectly well."

Neergard's tiny, mouselike eyes, set close together, stole brightly in Selwyn's direction, but they usually looked just a little past a man, seldom at him,

"Grip?" he asked.

"I don't think so," said Selwyn. "Lots of grip round town," observd Neergard, as though satisfied that Gerald had it. Then he sat down and rubbed his large, membraneous cars. "Captain Selwyn." he began. "I'm

"Water!" repeated Selwyn wonderngly. "Why, it's dry as a desert!"

working very carefully, we can secure

if the Slowitha people find that they

eally cannot get on without controlling

hese acres, why"-and he snickered

so that his nose curved into a thin.

ruddy beak-"why, captain, I suppose

we could let them have the land. Eh?

'But the point is," continued Neer-

ard, "that it borders the railroad on

the north, and where the land is not

wavy it's flat as a pancake, and"-he

ank his husky voice-"it's fairly rid-

iled with water. I paid a thousand

Dh, yes, if they must have it!"

Selwyn frowned slightly.

lollars for six tests."

"Underground water-only about forly feet on the average. Why, man, I an hit a well flowing 3.000 gallons ilmost anywhere. It's a gold mine. i don't care what you do with the tcreage-split it up into lots and adrertise or club the Siowitha people into submission, it's all the same; it's a gold mine, to be swiped and developed. Now, there remain the title searching and the job of financing it, because we've got to move cautiously and mock softly at the doors of the money raults, >* we'll be waking up some Wall street relatives or secret busiiess associates of the yellow crowd, and if anybody bawls for help we'll be up in the air next New Year's and dill hiking skyward."

He stood up, gathering together the mail matter which his secretary had already opened for his attention. "There's plenty of thme yet. Their leases were renewed the first of this year, and they'll run the year out. But it's something to think about. Will you talk to Gerald, or shall I?" "You," said Selwyn. "I'll think the matter over and give you my opinion. May I speak to my brother-in-law

about it?" Neergard turned in his tracks and looked almost at him.

"Do you think there's any chance of his financing the thing?"

"I haven't the slightest idea of what he might do, especially"-he hesitatedas you never have had any loans from his people, I understand."

"No," said Neergard, "I haven't." "It's rather out of their usual, I beleve.

"So they say. But Long Island acre age needn't beg favors now. That's all over, Captain Selwyn. Fane, Harmon & Co. know that. Mr. Gerard ought to know it too."

Selwyn looked troubled. "Shall I consult Mr. Gerard?" he repeated. "I should like to if you have no objection."

Neergard's small, close set eyes were focused on a spot just beyond Selwyn's left shoulder.

"Suppose you sound him," he suggested, "in strictest"-

"Naturally," cut in Selwyn dryly and, turning to his littered desk, opened the first letter his hand encounter-

So they took the rose tinted rococo elevator. Austin went away to his own quarters, and Selwyn tapped at Nina's boudoir.

'Is that you, Phil? One minute. Watson is finishing my hair. Come in now and kindly keep your distance, my friend. Do you suppose 1 want Rosamund to know what brand of war paint I use?"

"Rosamund?" he repeated, with a good humored shrug. "It's likely, isn't

"Certainly it's likely. You'd never know you were telling her anything, but she'd extract

every detail in ten seconds. understand she adores you, Phil. Elleen is furious at being left here all alone. She's practically well, and she's to dine with Drina in the library. Would you be good enough to dine there with them?



"Is that you. Phil?" Eileen, poor child, is heartily sick of her imprisonment. It would be a mercy, Phil.'

"Why, yes, I'll do it, of course, only I've some matters at home"-

"Home! You call those stuffy, smoky, impossible, half furnished rooms home! Phil, when are you ever going to get some pretty furniture and art things? Eileen and I have been talking it over, and we've decided to go there and see what you need and then order it, whether you like it or not.'

"Thanks," he said, laughing. "It's just what I've tried to avoid. I've got things where I want them now, but I knew it was too comfortable to last. Boots said that some woman would be sure to be good to me with an art nouveau rocking chair.'

"A perfect sample of man's gratisaid Nina, exasperated, "for I've tude." ordered two beautiful art nouveau rocking chairs, one for you and one for Mr. Lansing. Now you can go and humiliate poor little Eileen, who took sa much pleasure in planning with me for your comfort. As for your friend Boots, he's unspeakable-with my compliments."

(Continued on page 2.)





grip, but still unsteady on her legs, Her maid had taken the grip.