The Younger Set



By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS. Author of "THE FIGHTING CHANCE," Etc.

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NOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

BAP, I—Returning from Manila, Captain wyn, formerly of the army, is welcomed me by his sister, Nima Gerard, her wealthy shand Austin, and their numerous child in Elicen Erroll, ward of Nina and Austin wart of their household. Selwin has been coreed, without guilt on his part, by his fe, Alize, who is now the wife of Jack abven, with whom she ran away from wyn. II—Elicen, who is very fond of her ther, Gerald, despite the young man's dect of her, indespite the young man's dect of her, indespite the young Erroll's ngling in the fast set. Gerald is employ-by Julius Neergard, a reale state operator a large way. Selwyn promises Edeen he il look after her brother. He tells her out Boots Lansing, his army chum in mila, who is coming to New York. In the & Elicen and Selwyn ride past Alize. IV fleen's deceased father was an archaeolist, and she has inherited some of his solarly qualities. Selwyn helps Gerald settle a gambling debt and determines to dertake his reformation. V—Alixe and wyn meet and discuss their altered relans. He is introduced to Mrs. Rosamund ne, leader of the fast set and Alixe's closaried from gambling. VI—The friend-p of EDeen and Selwyn progresses, VII—rald promises Selwyn he will stop gamble. Neergard discloses to Selwyn, who is crested in his office, a plan to control the with a country club by buying up farms not appeal to Selwyn, and he consults stin, who denounces Neergard and his sthods. NOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Chapter 8



ILEEN settled deeper among her pillows as the table was removed. and Selwyn drew his chair forward. "What is the matter.

嚠

with Gerald?" she ask-"Could you tell me?"

Nothing serious is the matter, Ei-

he lay still a moment; then, with slightest gesture, "Come here." e seated himself near her. She laid hand fearlessly on his arm. Pell me," she demanded. And as

remained silent, "Once," she said, came suddenly into the library. tin and Gerald were there. Austin med to be very angry with my ther. I beard him say something worried me, and I slipped out bethey saw me.'

elwyn remained silent. Was that it?" -don't know what you heard." on't you understand me?"

Not exactly." Well, then"—she crimsoned—"has ald m-misbehaved again?" What did you hear Austin say?" he

heard-something about dissipa-He was very angry with Gerald. s not the best way, I think, to bee angry with either of us-either

or Gerald-because then we are ally inclined to do it again, whathey laughed a little. Her fingers, ich had tightened on his arm, re-

ed, her hand fell away, and she sightened up, sitting Turk fashion smoothed her hair, which contact h the pillows had disarranged so It threatened to come tumbling

Oh, hair, hair," she murmured. n're Nina's despair and my endless ishment. I'd twist and pin you t if I dared. Some day I will too. at are you looking at so curiously, tain Selwyn-my mop?"

t's about the most stunningly utiful thing I ever saw." he said. curious.

was a new note in their cordial macy, this nascent intrusion of the sonal. To her it merely meant his charming recognition of her maty-that she was fast becoming a nan like other women, to be looked and remembered as an individual no longer classed vaguely as one ing hundreds of the newly emerged se soft, unexpanded personalities resembled one another.

or some time now she had cherishhis tiny grudge in her heart-that had never seemed to notice anyg in particular about her except n he tried to be agreeable coning some new gown. The contrast become the sharper, too, since she awakened to the admiration of men. And the awakening was

y half convinced happiness minwith shy surprise that the wise rid should really deem her so love-

A red headed girl," she said teas-

ly. "I tho n—than"— "I thought you had better taste

Than to think you a raving beau-

Oh," she said, "you don't think

s a matter of fact he himself had ome aware of it so suddenly that had no time to think very much ut it. It was rather strange, too, t he had not always been aware it, or was it partly the mellow from the lamp tinting her till glowed and shimmered like a ing sorceress, sitting so straight

in her turquoise silk and misty en Dring had gone to bed Boots took his leave, and Selwyn rose, a troubled, careworn expression acing the careless gayety which made him seem so young in Miss

oll's youthful eyes. fait, Boots," he said. "I'm going with you." And to Ellean, al. were really fond of me, but youthful Selwyn-of course!"

most absently: "Good night. I'm

very glad you are well again."
"Good night," she said, looking up at him. The faintest sense of disappoint ment came over her-at what she did not know. Was it because in his completely altered face she realized the Instant and easy detachment from herself and what concerned her? Was it because other people, like Mr. Lansing -other interests, like those which so plainly in his face betrayed his preoccupation-had so easily replaced an in timacy which had seemed to grow newer and more delightful with every meeting?

What was it, then, that he found more interesting, more important, than their friendship, their companionship? Was she never to grow old enough or wise enough or experienced enough to exact - without exacting - his paramount consideration and interest Was there no common level of mental equality where they could meet-where termination of interviews might be mutual, might be fairer to her?

Now he went away, utterly detach from her and what concerned her, to seek other interests of which she knew nothing; absorbed in them to her utter exclusion, leaving her here with the long evening before her and nothing to do, because her eyes were not strong enough to use for reading.

Lansing was saying, "I'll drive as far as the club with you, and then you can drop me and come back later."

Right, my son. I'll finish a letter and then come back."

"Can't you write it at the club?" "Not that letter," he replied in a low voice and, turning to Elleen, smiled his absent, detached smile, offering his

But she lay back, looking straight up at him.

"Are you going?"

"Yes. I have several"-"Stay with me," she said in a low

For a moment the words meant nothing; then blank surprise silenced him, followed by curiosity.

"Is there something you wished to tell me?" be asked. "N-no."

His perplexity and surprise grew "Wait a second, Boots," he said. And Mr. Lansing, being a fairly intelligent young man, went out and down the stairway.
"Now." he said too kindly, too sooth-

ingly, "what is it, Elleen?" "Nothing. I thought-but I don't

care. Please go. Captain Selwyn." "No, I shall not until you tell me what troubles you."

"I can't." "Try, Eileen."

"Why, it is nothing, truly it is nothing. Only I was-it is so early-only a quarter past 8." He stood there looking down at her,

striving to understand.

"That is all," she said, flushing a trifle. "I can't read, and I can't sew, and there's nobody here. I don't mean to bother you"-

"Child," he exclaimed, "do you want

"Yes," she said. "Will you?" He walked swiftly to the landing

outside and looked down. "Boots," he called in a low voice "I'm not going home yet. Don't wait

for me at the Lenox." "All right," returned Mr. Lansing cheerfully. A moment later the front door closed below. Then Selwyn came

back into the library. For an hour he sat there telling her the gayest stories and talking the most delightful nonsense, alternating with interesting incisions into serious subjects which it enchanted her to dissect under his confident guidance.

Alert, intelligent, all aquiver between laughter and absorption, she had sat up among her silken pillows, resting her weight on one rounded arm, her splendid young eyes fixed on him to detect and follow and interpret every change in his expression personal to the subject and to her share in it.

His old self again! What could be more welcome? Not one shadow in his pleasant eyes, not a trace of pallor, of care, of that gray aloofness. How joily, how young, he was after all!

They discussed or laughed at or mentioned and dismissed with a gesture a thousand matters of common interest in that swift hour-incredibly swift unless the hall clock's deadened chimes were mocking time itself with mischievous effrontery.

She heard them, the enchantment still in her eyes. He nodded, listening, meeting her gaze with his smile undis-When the last chime had sounded she lay back among her cush-

"Thank you for staying," she said quite happily. "Do you think me interesting to real men, like you and Boots?" she asked.

"Yes," be said deliberately, "I do. don't know how interesting, because never quite realized how-how you had matured. That was my stupid ity.

"Captain Selwyn," in confused triumph, "you never gave me a chance-I mean, you always were nice in-in the same way you are to Drina, I liked it-don't, please, misunderstandonly I knew there was something else to me-something more nearly your own age. It was jolly to know you

sisters grow faster than you imagine And now, when you come, I shall ven ture to believe it is not wholly to do me a kindness-but-a littleyourself one too. Is that not the basis of friendship?"

"Yes." "Community and equality of inter-

"And-in which the-the charity of superior experience and the inattention of intellectual preoccupation and the sion to ignorance must steadily, if gradually, disappear? Is

Astonishment and chaprin at his misconception of her gave place to out right laughter at his own expense.

"Where on earth did you-I mean that I am quite overwhelmed under your cutting indictment of me. Old duffers of my age"-

"Don't say that," she said. "That is pleading guilty to the indictment and reverting to the old footing. I shall not permit you to go back."

"I don't want to, Eileen." "I am wondering," she said airily, "about that 'Elieen.' I'm not sure but that easy and fluent 'Eileen' is part of

the indictment. What do you call Gladys Orchil, for example?" "What do I care what I call any-

body?" he retorted, laughing.

Their light hearted laughter mingled delightfully-fresh, free, uncontrolled. peal after peal. She sat buddled up like a schoolgiri, lovely head thrown back, her white hands clasping her knees; he, both feet squarely on the floor, leaned forward, his laughter

use you and I are talking!" she said. "but it has made me quite happy. Now you may go to your club." "I don't want to."

"Oh, but you must"-she was now dismissing him-"because, although I am convalescent, I am a little tired. and Nina's maid is waiting to tuck me

"So you send me away?"

"Send you"- She hesitated, delightfully confused in the reversal of roles-not quite convinced of this new power which of itself had seemed to invest her with authority over man 'Yes," she said, "I must send you away." And her heart beat a little faster in her uncertainty as to his obedience, then leaped in triumph as he rose with a reluctance perfectly

"Tomorrow," she said, "I am to drive for the first time. In the evening I may be permitted to go to the Grays mid-Lent dance, but not to dance much. Will you be there? Didn't they

ask you? I shall tell Suddy Gray what I think of him, I don't care whether it's for the younger set or not! Goodness me, aren't you as young as anybody? Well, then, so we won't see each other tomorrow. And the day after that-oh, I wish I had my en gagement list. Never mind: I will telephone you when I'm to be at home-or wherever I'm going to be. But it won't be anywhere in particular because it's Lent, of course. Good night. Captain Selwyn. You've been very sweet to me, and I've enjoyed every

When he had gone she rose, a trifle excited in the glow of abstract happiness, and walked erratically about, smiling to herself, touching and rearranging objects that caught her atten-Then an innocent instinct led her to the mirror, where she stood a moment looking back into the lovely reflected face with its disordered hair.

"After all," she said, "I'm not as aged as I pretended. I wonder if he is very nice to me."

Selwyn was playing the fizzing contents of a siphon upon the iced ingredients of a tall thin glass which stood on a table in the Lenox club.

The governor's room being deserted except by himself and Mr. Lansing. be continued the animated explanation of his delay in arriving.

"So I stayed." he said to Boots, with an enthusiasm quite boyish, "and I had a perfectly bully time. She's just as clever as she can be, startling at moments. I never half appreciated her. She formerly appealed to me in a different way, a young girl knocking at the door of the world and no mother or father to open for her and show ber the gimeracks and the freaks and the sideshows. Do you know, Boots. that some day that girl is going to marry somebody, and it worries me. knowing men as I do, unless you should think of"-

"Great James," faltered Mr. Lansing, "are you turning into a schatschen? Are you planning to waddle through the world making matches for your friends? If you are I'm quitting you right here."

"It's only because you are the decentest man I happen to know," said Selwyn resentfully. "Probably she'd turn you down anyway. But"-and be brightened up-"I dare say she'll choose the best to be had. It's a pity. though."

"What's a pity?" "That a charming, intellectual, sensitive, innocent girl like that should

be turned over to a plain lump of a "When you've finished your eulogy

on our sex," said Lansing, "Till walk home with you." As the two men entered their own door and started to ascend the stairs a door on the parlor floor opened, and their landlady appeared, enveloped in

a soiled crimson kimono and a false front which had slipped sideways. "There's the sultana," whispered Lansing, "and she's making sign lan-

guage at you. Wigwag her, Phil. Oh, good evening, Mrs. Greevel Did you wish to speak to me? Oh—to Captain

"If you please," said Mrs. Greeve ominously, so Lansing continued up-ward; Selwyn descended. Mrs. Greeve waved him into the icy parlor, whe he presently found her straightening

her "front" with work worn fingers. "Captain Selwyn, I deemed it my duty to set up in order to inform you of certain specials doin's," she said haughtily.

"What 'doings?" he inquired.

"Mr. Errell's, sir. Last night be evi-dentially found difficulty with the stairs, and I seen him asleep on the parlor sofa when I come down to anwer the milkman a-smokin' a cigar that wasn't lit, with his feet on the angelus."

"I'm very, very sorry, Mrs. Greeve," he said, "and so is Mr. Erroll. He and I bad a little talk today, and I am sure that he will be more careful here

"There is cigar holes burned into the carpet," insisted Mrs. Greeve, "and a mercy we wasn't all insinuated in our beds, one window pane broken and the gas a blue an' whistlin' streak with the curtains blowin' into it an' a strange cat on to that satin dozydo, the proof being the repugnant per

"All of which," said Selwyn, "Mr Erroll will make every possible amends for. He is very young, Mrs Greeve and very much ashamed, I am sure. So please don't make it too hard

She stood, little slippered feet planted sturdily in the first position in dancing, fat, bare arms protruding from the kimono, her work stained fingers linked together in front of ber. With a solled thumb she turned a ring on her third finger.

"I ain't a-goin' to be mean to no body," she said. "My gentlemen is always refined, even if they do sometimes forget theirselves when young and sporty. Mr. Erroll is now abed, sir, and asleep like a cherub, ice havin' been served three times with towels extra. Would you be good enough to mention the bill to him in the mornin' the grocer bein' sniffy?" And she handed the wadded and inky memorandum of damages to Selwyn, who pocketed it with a nod of assurance.

him to the door, "a lady here to see you twice, leavin' no name or intentions otherwise than business affairs of a pressin' nature." "A-lady?" be repeated, balting short

"Young and refined, allowin' for a

automobile veil." "She-she asked for me?" he repeat-

ed, astonished. "Yes, sir. She wanted to see your rooms. But havin' no orders, Captain Selwyn, although I must say she was that polite and ladylike and," added Mrs. Greeve irrelevantly, "a art rocker come for you, too, and another for Mr. Lansing, which I placed in your

"Oh," said Selwyn, laughing in relief, "it's all right, Mrs. Greeve. The lady who came is my sister, Mrs. Gerard, and whenever she comes you are to admit her, whether or not I am "She said she might come again,"

respective settin' rooms."

nodded Mrs. Greeve as he mounted the stairs. "Am I to show her up any time she comes?" "Certainly. Thank you," he called

He looked into Boots' room as he

passed. That gentleman, in bedroom costume of peculiar exotic gorgeousness, sat stuffing a pipe with shag and our eyes and see straight and steer poring over a mass of papers pertain- straight to the anchorage?" ing to the Westchester Air Line's property and prospective developments "Come in, Phil." he called out, "and

look at the dinky chair somebody sent

me." But Selwyn shook his head, "Come into my rooms when you're ready," he said and closed the door again, smiling and turning away toward his own quarters. As he lighted his pipe there came a hesitating knock at the door. He jerked his head sharply. The knock was repeated.

Chapter 9



ELWYN walked swiftly to the door, flung it open full width-and stood stock still.

And Mrs. Ruthven entered the room, partly closing the door behind her gloved hand still resting on the

For a moment they confronted one another, he tall, rigid, astounded; she pale, supple, relaxing a trifle against the half closed door behind her, which

yielded and closed with a low click. At the sound of the closing door he found his voice. It did not resemble his own voice either to himself or to her, but she answered his bewildered

"I don't know why I came. Is it so very drendful? Have I offended you? I did not suppose that men cared about

"But why on earth did you come?" he repeated. "Are you in trouble?" "I seem to be now," she said, with a tremulous laugh. "You are frighten-

ing me to death, Captain : .. iwyn."

Still dazed, he found the first chair t hand and dragged it toward her. She hesitated at the offer; then "Thank you," she said, passing before him. She laid her hand on the chair,

her muff, she smiled at him, and every nerve in him quivered with pity.

looked a moment at him and sank into

"World without end, amen." said. "Let the judgment of man pass." "The judgment of this man passes

Then it is simply the desire of the friendless for a friend, nothing else, oothing more subtle, nothing of of-

frontery, n-nothing worse Do you be "I don't understand.

Try to. "Do you mean that you have differed

"Him?" She laughed. "Oh. owas taiking of real people, not of myths. And real people are not very friendly to me always, not that they are disagreeable, you understand, only a trifle overcordial, and my most intimate friend kisses me a little too frequently. By the way, she has quite succumbed to you, I bear."

"Who do you mean?"

"Why. Rosamund." He said something under his breath and looked at her impatiently

"Didn't you know it?" she asked miling

"Know what?" "That Rosamund is quite crazy about you. There's no use scowling and squar ing your chin. Oh, I ought to know what that indicates. I've watched you do it often enough, but the fact is that the handsomest and smartest woman in town is forever dinning your perfections into my ears."

He drew up a chair, seated himself very deliberately and spoke, his un-

lighted pipe in his left hand: "The girl 1 left-the girl who left me-was a modest, clean thinking. clean minded girl, who also had a brain to use and employed it. Whatever conclusion that girl arrived at concerning the importance of marringe vows is no longer my business. But the moment she confronts me again, offering friendship, then I may use a friend's privilege, as I do. And so I tell you that loosely fashionable badinage bores me. And another matter-privileged by the friendship you acknowledge-forces me to ask you a question, and I ask it, point blank, Why have you again permitted Gerald

to play cards for stakes at your house after promising you would not do so?" The color receded from her face, and her gloved fingers tightened on the arms of ber chair.

"That is one reason I came," she "You could have written." "I say it was one reason. The orb

er I have already given you-because

1—I felt that you were friendly."
"I am. Go on Please explain about Gerald. "Are you sure," raising her dark

eyes, "that you mean to be kind?" "Yes, sure," he said barshly. "You are a little rough with me

a-almost insolent." "I-I have to be. Good God, Alixe! Do you think this is nothing to me, this wretched mess we have made of life? Do you think my roughness and abruptness come from anything but pity-pity for us both, I tell you? Do you think I can remain unmoved looking on the atroclous punishment you have inflicted on yourself-tethered to-to that-for life-the poison of the contact showing in your altered voice and manner, in the things you laugh at, in the things you live for. "And Mr. Gerard, too, if he in the twisted, misshapen ideals that your friends set up on a heap of nuggets for you to worship? Even if we've passed through the sea of mire. can't we at least clear the filth from

> She had covered her pallid face with her muff. He bent forward, his hand

> on the arm of ber chair. Her gloved hand, moving at random. encountered his and closed on it convulsive.

"Do you understand?" he repeated

"Y-es, Phil."

Head still sinking, face covered with the silvery fur, the tremors from her body set her hand quivering on his. Heartsick, he forbore to ask for the explanation. He knew the real answer anyway, whatever she might say, and he understood that any game in that house was Ruthven's game and the guests his guests and that Gerald was

only one of the younger men who had

been wrung dry in that house. No doubt at all that Ruthven needed the money. He had been picked up by a big, hard eyed woman who had al most forgotten how to laugh until she found him furtively muzzling her diamond laden fingers. So when she discovered that he could sit up and beg and roll over at a nod she let him follow her, and since then he had become indispensable and had curied up on many a soft and silken knee and had sought and fetched and carried for many a pretty woman what she herself did not care to touch even with white gloved fingers.

What had she expected when she married him? Only innocent ignorance of the set be ornamented could ac

count for the horror of her distillusion What splendors had she dreamed of from the outside? What flashing and infernal signal had beckoned her to enter? What mute eyes had promised? What silent smile invited? All skulls seem to grin, but the world has yet to

"Philip?" "Yes, Alixe."

hear them laugh.

"I did my best, w-without offending Gerald. Can you believe me?" "I know you did. Don't mind what I

"N-no, not now. You do believe me. don't you?" "Thank you. And, Pail, I will try

"You must." "I will. It is good to be here. must not come again, must I?"

to s-steer straight-because you ask

"Not again, Alixe."

"On your own. What do I care?"
I didn't know. They say"—

What?" he asked sharply. "A rumor-I beard it-others speak

"What have you heard?" "That-that you might marry

"Well, you can nail that lie," he said "Then it is not true?"

"True! Do you think I'd take that chance again, even if I felt free to do "Free!" she faltered. "But you are

"I am not," he said flercely. "No man is free to marry twice under such conditions. It's a jest at decency and a slap in the face of civilization! I'm done for-finished. I had my chance and I failed. Do you think I consider myself free to try again, with the chance of further bespattering my family?"

"Wait until you really love," she

said tremulously.

free, Phill"

He laughed incredulously. "I am glad that it is not true. I am glad," she said. "Oh, Phil, Phil, for a single one of the chances we had again and again and again! And we did not know-we did not know! And

ret-there were moments' Dry ilpped be looked at her, and dry of eye and lip she raised ber bend and stared at him, through him, far be-youd at the twir ghosts floating under the tropic stars locked fast to their

first embrace. Then she rose, blindly, covering her face with her hands, and he stumbled to his feet, shrinking back from her-because dead fires were flickering again, and the ashes of dead roses stirred above the scented embers and the magic of all the east was descending like a vell upon them, and the phantom of the past drew nearer, smiling, wide armed, crowned with living blosson

The tide rose, swaying here where she stood. Her hands fell from her face. Between them the grave they had dug seemed almost filled with flowers now, was filling fast, and across it they looked at one another as though stunned. Then his face paled. and he stepped back, staring at her from stern eyes.

"Phil," she faltered, bewildered by the mirage, "is it only a bad dream, after all?" And as the false magic glowed into blinding splendor to engulf them, "Oh, boy, boy, is it bell or beaven where we've fallen?" There came a loud rapping at the

"Phil," she wrote, "I am a little frightened. Do you suppose Boots suspected who it was? I must have been perfectly mad to go to your rooms that night, and we both were-to leave the door unlocked with the chance of somebody walking in. But, Phil, how could I know it was the fashion for your friends to bang like that and then

come in without the excuse of a response from you? "I have been so worried, so auxious, hoping from day to day that you would write to reassure me that Boots did not recognize me with my back turned

to him and my muff across my eyes. "But scared and humiliated as I am I realize that it was well that he knocked. Even as I write to you here in my own room, behind locked doors. I am burning with the shame of it.

"But I am not that kind of woman. Phil. Truly, truly I am not. When the foolish impulse seized me I had no clear idea of what I wanted except to see you and learn for myself what you thought about Gerald's playing at my house after I had promised not to let

"Of course I understood what I risk-

ed in going. I realized what common interpretation might be put upon what I was doing. But, ugly as it might appear to anybody except you, my motive, you see, must have been quite innocent, else I should have gone about it in a very different manner. "I wanted to see you; that is abso-

lutely all. I was lonely for a word.

even a harsh one from the sort of

man you are. I wanted you to believe it was in spite of me that Gerald came and played that night. "He came without my knowledge. I did not know he was invited. And when he appeared I did everything to prevent him from playing. You will never know what took place, what I

submitted to. "I am trying to be truthful, Phil. I want to lay my heart bare for you, but there are things a woman cannot wholly confess. Believe me, I did what I

"I remember what you said about an anchorage. I am trying to clear these haunted eyes of mine and steer clear of phantoms for the honor of what we once were to each other before the world. But steering a ghost ship through endless tempests is hard labor, Phil, so be a little kind, a little more than patient, if my hand grows tired at the wheel.

"What do you think of me? Asking you shows how much I care. Dread of your opinion has turned me coward until this last page. What do you think of me? I am perfectly miserable about Boots, but that is partly fright, though I know I am safe enough with such a man. But what sets my cheeks blazing so that I cannot bear to face my own eyes in the mirror is the fear of what you must think of me in the still, secret places of that heart of which I never, never under-ALIXE.

It was a week before he sent his reply, although he wrote many answers, ch in turn revised, corrected, copied ad recopied, only to be destroyed in a snd. But at last be forced him-Continued on page 2.