

PAID IN FULL

Novelized From Eugene Walter's Great Play

By JOHN W. HARDING

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CHAPTER IV.

THERE was a knock, the unlatched door opened, and James Smith walked in.

"Anybody at home?" he demanded briskly.

"Not a solitary living soul," Emma assured him. "Come in."

"Hello, Joe! You a dead one, too?" he said.

"Almost," replied Brooks, brightening up a little in spite of himself under the influence of his friend's good natured smile and cheeriness that positively emanated from him. "Just come up?"

"Yes, and I reckon in about time to help," he said, glancing at the clock on the table.

"Just in time," assented Emma, whose drooping spirits also began to rise under the diversion caused by his advent. "But first explain what you mean by not coming to dinner."

"I couldn't come, really. I tried my best, but I had to attend to such a lot of business that couldn't be put off that I was unable to get here in time. I hope you didn't wait long for me. I'm awfully sorry."

"You look it—I don't think," she scolded. "Go on; get busy if you're going to."

"All right," he answered, taking up a small pile of cups and saucers very gingerly. "Where do these go? If you left it to me, like as not I'd be putting a soup plate behind the door and slip a broom into the sideboard."

"They go right in here."

He stopped on the way to the sideboard and turned to Brooks.

"Seen the latest extra, Joe?" he inquired. "The Orinoco wasn't hardly scratched getting out of Rio Janeiro."

"You don't say!"

"Kind o' scraped over the bar. She'll only be a day late now."

"Do be careful with those cups, Jimmy," admonished Emma. "They're china."

"Don't you suppose I know that?"

"I mean real china," she emphasized.

"All china and Chinamen look alike to me. Here's the paper, Joe. You'll find all about the Orinoco on the inside page."

He drew it from his pocket, and as he did so one of the cups balanced on the saucers slipped off and smashed to bits on the carpet.

"Now, Jimmy, you certainly are going to get it," commented Joe, rising and taking the paper extended to him.

Smith looked appealingly at his hostess.

"Jimmy," she chided, assuming an expression of mock gravity, "how could you—my very best Sunday go to meeting china! How could you?"

"Not how could I—how did I?" he corrected, stooping and picking up the pieces. "You know, Emma, I've had better fingers ever since I was a little shaver, and I guess I always will have—in business and everything else."

"Why, how do you mean?"

"I've been clumsy all my life, that's all. Everything I've ever had in my hands that was worth much I've generally let slip and fall. Out in Colorado when I was a kid around Leadville they used to say that I sure would turn out to be a sawed off and hammered down, good for nothing man. So you see the way things have turned out. I've broken about even with that prophecy."

"How broken even?"

"Taking their side for the book, I win the first bet and lose the second. There ain't nothing sawed off and hammered down about me, is there?"

"I should say not," she said, with a merry laugh. "You've been pulled out like a piece of taffy."

"Then I win, but it was in doubt quite some time. Never really did start to grow until I was fifteen, and then I just eased out into my present altitude. But the second proposition—that good for nothing bet—I guess they win."

"Nonsense, Jimmy. How can you say such a thing? You're good for a whole lot."

"Emma," he declared solemnly, "there have been moments of financial stringency when that declaration seemed to be open to doubt."

"Jimmy, you're an idiot!" she laughed.

"Discovered!" he avowed, bowing ceremoniously.

Brooks, who had been reading the paper, threw it down angrily.

"D—n him!" he growled.

"Joe!" exclaimed his wife reproachfully.

"D—n who?" inquired Smith.

"Why, Williams," he replied.

"Lots have done that," said the superintendent. "But what's the matter now, Joe?"

"His luck," went on Brooks. "The Orinoco isn't scratched. If any one else owned a ship and she got into a muss like that the chances are a hundred to one that she'd have foundered—been a complete loss."

"That's right," assented Smith.

"But Williams—he don't lose her. He couldn't."

"I should think you'd be glad," remarked Emma. "She's a brand new ship, isn't she?"

"No, I'm not glad," he declared furiously, rising and walking about the room. "I'm tired of him, of his rotten old steamship line, of all of it—you hear? Of all of it."

"Joe, please!" she protested. "You know I—"

"I know you've slaved and bled with me long enough! Here I am—handling all the money of that line, ain't that so, Jimmy?"

"That's right," admitted the latter. "But what's the matter?"

"Matter? Isn't it matter enough that I should do all this for a mean, miserable living? I suffer and work, and work and suffer, for that nasty, niggardly salary and this beast, this wild animal of a Williams, keeps us all starving—yes, starving! Don't I deserve something a little better? Do you know what I could do? I could steal thousands, and no one would ever know it!"

"Joe!" she ejaculated, greatly shocked.

"Oh, I'm not going to do it; but, with all this responsibility, when I ask for money I don't get it—not a dollar. You do, Jimmy; you're single and you can quit. And then Williams—what does he do? Comes around here to my wife with my mother-in-law—d—n him—and rubs it in."

Emma looked at him pleadingly.

"Joe, you mustn't. Captain Williams means well, but—"

He turned upon her savagely.

"That's it—he means well. He means well when he was a south Pacific trader. He meant well when he treated his crew like dogs. He meant well when he'd kill a sailor with as much thought as a spider kills a fly. He meant well when he cheated natives, murdered men, smuggled Chinamen into this country, sunk vessels for insurance. He meant well when he came east, bought the Latin-American company and put your father out of business, and now—now that he has his money, his millions maybe, he means well when he refuses to give his men a fair share of what they produce. Means well? Yes, he does—no!"

"Joe, are you crazy?" demanded his wife, alarmed and a little angry at his outburst.

"Well, there's a whole lot of truth in what Joe says," put in Smith conciliatingly. "You see, Williams did start out as a captain of a south Pacific trader, but, like most of them fellows, I guess he stole a good deal more than he traded. He had the reputation of being the strongest man on the coast or in the tropics—could break a man's arm with as much ease as you'd snap a straw. He's harsh, Williams is—harsh! When he came east he got control of the Latin-American. He loved money, and he got it—most any way he could. Yes, Joe ought to have more, that's sure. He ought to have more."

"You know I should," went on Brooks, somewhat mollified by his friend's acquiescence and support and drawing a bulky pocketbook from the inside pocket of his waistcoat. "I've got control of all the money of the company. That's my job. Why, here, this alone is the afternoon collections, too late to put in the safe, nearly \$3,000, more than twice as much as I get in a year. I could take it all and then not be caught or at least not for months, but—"

"Why, Joe, I'm surprised!" his wife broke in.

"Of course Joe wouldn't take a cent that don't belong to him," said Smith. "I know that. Williams does too. So I guess he figures him safe and don't see the least bit of use in paying him more."

"But I won't stand it!" Brooks declared, waxing wrath again and flinging himself in his chair. "Why do you get raises, Jimmy? You've been advanced time and time again."

"Lord, I don't know," he replied. "I just tell the old fellow that I calculate I'm worth more money. 'Come across or we separate,' I say, and so far he's always come."

"I was so glad to hear of your last good luck," remarked Emma sincerely. A look of regret came over Smith's face.

"I only wish Joe had got it instead of me," he said.

Brooks jumped to his feet.

"You don't need to wish that, Smith," he cried excitedly. "I'm no object of charity—no, I ain't. And you're like all the rest of the capitalist crowd—grind, grind, grind. Well, look out, there's going to be a smashup—you understand? A smashup, and you all go—millionaires, toadies and—well, that's all I've got to say."

He snatched his hat from a hook in the hall and went out without another word, slamming the front door behind him so heavily that the glasses on the sideboard rattled.

Emma gazed at Smith in blank dismay.

"I can't understand Joe," she said, shaking her head in worry and perplexity. "He's growing so morose and discontented."

"It's funny, ain't it," observed Smith reflectively. "Joe's just rushed out, filled up to the throat with anarchy, socialism, smashups and all that stuff, almost ready to throw a bomb."

"Nonsense!"

"He is, yet if Williams had raised him today \$10 a week he would have been a firm believer in capital and the way it works."

She sighed, took a seat opposite to him at the table and with great earnestness started in to question him.

"Jimmy," she began, "tell me honestly—why doesn't Joe get on?"

"I really don't know," he averred. "I'm afraid you do," Emma insisted.

"Honest, I don't. I've been so busy getting along myself that I haven't paid much attention to any one else."

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"Jimmy," she began, "tell me honestly—why doesn't Joe get on?"

"I really don't know," he averred. "I'm afraid you do," Emma insisted.

"Honest, I don't. I've been so busy getting along myself that I haven't paid much attention to any one else."

He paused and gazed up at the ceiling, engrossed in thought.

"You know, Emma," he went on suddenly, turning toward her. "This getting along business is a funny game. Such a lot depends on what a man means when he gets along. Some get along when they have got a lot of money, some when they have a wife and a home and a bunch of kids, some when they are able to pick pockets and fool the coppers. Getting along and why you do or why you don't depends a good deal on where you want to get."

"And you, Jimmy?" she questioned.

"Have you been getting along?"

"Oh, yes, I guess so. I ain't got a whole lot to kick about; perhaps a little less, maybe a little more, than Joe. But the great idea is not to get sore. Joe's all right. Maybe he's just being prepared for a better living. When it comes he'll appreciate it more."

"Somehow I don't seem to understand him as I used to," she confessed.

"There's been a change that worries me—that worries me greatly."

Three sharp rings of the bell put an end to further conversation, and she rose, disappointed, and pushed the button.

"That's mother's ring," she said. "Please help me to bring some chairs from the parlor. We can't go there because everything's covered up and in disorder. They're papering the room. I shouldn't wonder if Captain Williams were with them. He takes mamma and Beth out in his new auto and has brought them around here quite frequently of late."

"Does he ever take you for a ride?"

"He asks me to go, but I won't."

"Why not?"

"That's just what I can't tell. There is something about the man that is repulsive—he looks at me so strangely. And then I know just how he has treated Joe, and—"

"And what?"

"I don't like him—that's all."

"That's enough, it seems to me. After all, I guess he figures all to the bad with women—decent women."

"Mamma and Beth like him."

"Well, your mother never did shine up to me more'n the law allowed, and as for Beth, she's a nice enough girl, but her education hurts her, I think."

"Tush! Here they are."

And the little woman hurried into the hall to open the door for them.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN broad minded Mrs. Brooks observed to her husband that she did not understand her mother any more than her mother understood her she had expressed exactly the mental relation in which they stood toward each other. Mrs. Harris was one of those women occasionally to be met with who continue to treat their grownup sons, and especially their grownup daughters, as children and feel it incumbent upon them—nay, consider it their bounden duty—to interfere with advice and comment in the natural progress of domestic sophistication of their young wedded offspring. Moreover, she was a woman wholly lacking in tact and depth of mind and possessed to an exaggerated degree that "quicksand of reason," vanity.

Mrs. Harris and Miss Beth Harris were out for a ride with Captain Williams, who accompanied them, and all were in automobile tennie. Her mother and sister greeted Emma effusively. Their escort extended his hand, but Mrs. Brooks was too much occupied for once in responding to her parent's embraces to notice it. He stalked in with rude familiarity without removing his automobile cap, upon which he had pushed up his goggles and found himself face to face with Smith.

"Hello! You here?" he said by way of greeting, greatly surprised to see his superintendent there on that above all nights.

"Ya-as," replied Jimmy. "I'm here again."

"Ought to take a berth here," grunted his employer, looking round for the most comfortable chair and installing himself in it. "You're always around."

"Much as possible," admitted Smith tranquilly, remaining standing. "How do you find your new car?"

"Good enough. Cost \$5,000—ought to be good—ought to be."

Mrs. Harris and Beth bustled in, throwing open their automobile coats and disclosing very handsome gowns that contrasted strangely with Emma's poor little cotton frock.

"Why, good evening, Jimmy!" cried Mrs. Harris. "Where's Joe?"

"Gone out for a walk, I guess," he answered. "Howdy, Beth?"

"Very well, thank you, Mr. Smith," responded that young person somewhat frigidly.

"Mr. Smith?" he echoed, looking at her curiously.

The girl raised her eyebrows and affected surprise.

"Isn't that right?" she inquired.

"Yes—Smith is the name," he replied.

"It ain't that I've forgot it—no—only to remind you that the first one—Jimmy—ain't been changed."

"No, dearie; Jimmy wouldn't know what it meant to be mistreated," observed Mrs. Harris with an intonation of disdain.

"Me neither," put in Williams, "but a man's got to get used to it."

"Have you got used to it, captain?" asked Emma.

"Yes and no. I never had it given to me until I came east—always used to be Cap'n Bill or something on that order—but with eastern airs and a bit of prosperity your old ways have got to change."

Mrs. Harris had been gazing about her deprecatingly. She wanted to know why they should stay in the dining room. Emma explained that they had succeeded in inducing the janitor

to have the sitting room papered and that it was all upset.

"This ain't bad," commented Captain Williams. "It's real cozy, and you can see a woman's had a hand in the arrangement."

"But it's a little bit of a stuffy four roomed flat," objected Beth, turning

to have the sitting room papered and that it was all upset.

"This ain't bad," commented Captain Williams. "It's real cozy, and you can see a woman's had a hand in the arrangement."

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