

# PAID IN FULL

Novelized From Eugene Walter's Great Play

By JOHN W. HARDING

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### CHAPTER VIII.

ALTHOUGH Captain Williams had assured Mrs. Brooks that he would bear them no grudge because of her husband's attack upon him, he did not return again to the little flat, and it was some time before Mrs. Harris and Beth favored them with another visit. But this did not trouble the young couple a bit. Commencing on that night when he had insisted on taking his wife to a place of amusement, Joe's conduct toward her had undergone a complete change. Instead of returning home depressed and irritable he was nearly always in good humor and affectionately considerate. They needed no other company than their own and occasionally Jim's.

The happy transformation had been brought about by an unexpected bit of luck. As Joe explained it to his delighted wife, in his capacity of collector he had become very friendly with the manager of a concern which transacted business with the steamship company, and this gentleman had offered him \$10 a week to render, when required, certain little services in the matter of collections, which he was able to do without interfering to any extent with the duties the Latin-American line paid him for performing. It was just the amount of the advance he had asked for and which Captain Williams had refused to give him, and it represented the difference between very painful sparing and comparative ease. And that was not all. One thing leading to another, Joe was enabled now and then to earn an extra \$5 or \$10 from other sources.

With this prosperous turn in his affairs the self confidence and assurance that long had abandoned him under his repeated disappointments and failure to make headway returned. Morose surliness gave way to vim and energy. His old optimism had revived in most extravagant form. He began to be interested in the price of real estate and automobiles.

His wife, with the sobering recollection of the gulf between talk and achievement, of desire and possession, was careful to build no hopes upon these fabrics of vision, though she was too wise to seek to restrain the ardor of his imagination. She did, however, take with gratitude what the gods had given, pending the bestowal of possibly greater favors. The substantial addition to their means enabled her to hire a woman who (when she felt like it) did the dirtier work of the household that had been such a tax upon her. Little toilet necessities and accessories made their appearance. Brooks, when he had made an extra good week, insisted on lavishing his additional earnings upon her. New and suitable clothing restored her self respect and the pleasure that every woman feels or should feel in making herself attractive.

Mrs. Harris and Beth could not fail to notice the change, and it had a gradual but marked effect on their attitude toward Brooks, which became more civil and cordial. Emma declined to gratify their inquisitiveness beyond admitting that Joe was "getting on." To all leading questions she returned evasive answers, one reason being that deep resentment rankled in the heart of her husband for the lofty disdain under which he had suffered for so long and that he objected emphatically to the revelation of their private affairs to anybody, even to Jim. Besides, as he had pointed out, it would not be to their interest for the intelligence that he was doing outside work to reach Captain Williams' ears. He would either be dropped or so much would be given to him to do that there would be no time in which to devote his energies so lucratively elsewhere. The force of this could not fail to be seen by Mrs. Brooks, and, thus placed on her guard, she was all discretion.

Soon Joe was doing so well that they decided to take a larger flat and engage a regular servant.

Another piece of luck came to Joe, so unlooked for, in form so amazingly substantial, that it almost made Emma crazy with joy.

Looking out of the window about supper time and wishing that her husband would come, she noticed a cab drive up to the door and, to her surprise, saw her husband leap out of it. He bounded up the stairs two at a time, breathless with excitement, and emptied from his pockets on to the table a heap of notes and gold. Then he seized hold of her and forcibly walked her around the room.

Finally he sat her, panting and bewildered, in a chair and pushed the money toward her.

"There, little woman," he gasped, "that's for you, all of it—every penny of it! You know that three days ago when Jim started on that trip of inspection to our South American ports of call Williams went too and that they are to be gone for two or three months. Well, I'll give you a million

chances and you'll never come near guessing the decent thing Williams did. He recognized my services to the company at last by promoting me to head a new exchange and collection department with a salary of \$300 a month, the raise to date from six months back. Here's the six months' back pay—\$1,800."

It was Emma's turn to get up and wait when she had recovered somewhat from her astonishment. They decided at her suggestion to celebrate their good fortune forthwith by a banquet royal for two at one of the fashionable restaurants. Hastily she donned her prettiest costume, and they set out. Never had she been so vivacious, never more charming.

"Now," she said joyfully, "you'll be able to get a dress suit, and I can have a piano."

The lack of a piano always had been cause for regret. Then she began to consider how they might live more comfortably than they had been doing. Joe proposed that they should avoid the housekeeping and servant problems altogether by living in an apartment hotel. He thought this would be within their means if they furnished the apartment themselves. He did not think it would cost more than living in a flat. Emma fell in with this view with eager enthusiasm.

Investigation proved the plan a little more expensive than they had bargained for, but they had what appeared to Emma to be a fabulous sum of money on hand, and they found an apartment which so pleased them in a hotel where the arrangements appeared to be satisfactory that they decided to take it.

Then Emma, with a light heart and a full purse—which, however, did not remain long in its bulging condition—experienced for the first time the unalloyed felicity of shopping to her heart's content, and the tangible result of her peregrinations was a charmingly furnished nest, conspicuous among the objects in which was her coveted piano.

### CHAPTER IX.

AT the end of the first month passed in their new home Mrs. Brooks' joy in the sudden and great change in her husband's fortunes in the steamship company remained undiminished. Her mother, Mrs. Harris, had come to look upon him with great respect and to be rather proud of her son-in-law, who had belied her dire prognostications and upset all her firmly rooted ideas and convictions by rising in the world.

As to Brooks himself, the exuberance of his optimism had worn off considerably. He did not share to any extent in the light heartedness of his wife, who diffused happiness and rippled it in joyous music on the piano and in songs that had smoothed out the creases of care on her father's brow when she sang to him in the days of her girlhood. He had become more and more thoughtful, with lapses at unexpected times into absentmindedness. Moreover, of late, symptoms of his former ill humor and nervous irritability had reappeared.

"Goodness, Emma, one would hardly know you!" exclaimed Beth to her evening after dinner, to which Mrs. Brooks had invited her mother and sister. "Your dress is a dream, and at table you were positively radiant."

She had followed Emma into her bedroom and was gazing in admiration at her sparkling eyes and her cheeks rosy with health.

"I am happy," admitted Emma, putting her arm around her affectionately.

"Do you know, dearie, I'm just beginning to know who and what you are?"

Highly amused at the girl's patronizing manner and not at all inclined to take her seriously, Emma looked at her with assumed gravity.

"How's that, little sister?" she inquired.

"Please don't call me 'little sister,'" objected Beth. "You're always making fun of me."

"My dear Beth, it is you who are always making fun of yourself," Emma told her.

"Indeed I'm not!"

"Why not laugh and play and just be a girl—a real tomboy? After all, that's the thing. You are only eighteen, while I have reached years of discretion. I'm twenty-five, you know, and awfully staid and wise in consequence."

"You weren't a tomboy?"

"Oh, yes, I was until I fell in love. You were a wee bit of a little maid then, and after I fell in love I became a silly little goose like all girls in love, and then—"

"You married Joe?"

"Yes," said Emma seriously, "and that's why I want you to have such a good time now, while you can. Of course I hope you'll not have the hard pull that Joe and I have had—I mean when you are married—but one never can tell."

"Never mind the past now, Emma. Think how happy you are."

"I know. It is good to be living once again, but the best of it all is that Joe has succeeded. Even mother admits it. Think of it!"

Joe had been gone three days before she knew the good news. "When are they coming back? Not for a month anyway." "Joe says he doesn't know." "Isn't it funny that with all his luck he doesn't seem contented?" Emma became grave.

"He's worried, poor dear, and I can't make it out," she said. "Perhaps he's so anxious to succeed in his new position."

In the parlor Mrs. Harris sat fanning herself, for it was a very warm day. She was dressed in a gown of summer finery that would have been more suitable to her had she been, say, fifteen years younger, and she



"I can't understand how a man can deliberately steal."

was engaged in her usual pleasant occupation of criticizing—or "knocking," as Joe called it.

Brooks was in dinner coat and bore other external evidences of his prosperity, which, however, was being purchased at considerable physical cost, for he had become thinner and was pale and haggard. The worry his new position occasioned him was plain to be seen, and he was in an excruciatingly surlily mood and as nervous as the proverbial cat.

"As I was saying to Joe," observed Mrs. Harris, turning to Emma and Beth, "for a hotel of this character the coffee is not what it might be. It's terribly bitter. Otherwise I liked the dinner. Yes, on the whole, I liked the dinner. But if I were you, Joe, I'd complain about your waiter."

"What's the matter with him?" asked Emma.

"Rather impertinent and—"

"That waiter suits me, and I haven't heard Emma kicking," cut in Joe.

But Mrs. Harris was not to be suppressed by any snubbing from him.

"Still," she persisted, "I think for the money you are paying here—"

"For the money I am paying here," he retorted, "I'm satisfied. It seems to me that that is all there is to it."

"Mother, dear, please don't find fault," urged Emma. "It is all so much better than it has been. I think you should be happy to see things as they are."

"So much better than Emma's had for so long," chimed in Beth.

Brooks scowled at her and, gathering up some more papers from the table, retreated with them to his chair and began to peruse them rather feverishly.

"I never read the papers any more," declared Mrs. Harris. "All they have are scandal, murders and men who steal money from their firms. My—I don't know what the world is coming to!"

"Wasn't it terrible about that man yesterday walking out of the bank with a small fortune?" said Beth.

"I can't understand how a man can deliberately steal," sniffed her mother, "especially when there isn't a chance on earth of getting away."

"He's the man who gave all the money to some woman, isn't he?" Emma wanted to know.

"Yes. He'll have plenty of time to think it over. The penitentiary isn't a bit too good for men like him."

"I felt so sorry for his wife, poor woman," remarked Beth. "She'll have to stand most of the trouble."

Brooks jumped up impatiently, biting his nails with annoyance.

"Where's the rest of this paper?" he demanded. "I want the part with the racing chart. It's marked 'Past Performances.'"

"Oh, I know—what Jim's calls the dope sheet," said Emma. "There it is."

Mrs. Harris looked horrified.

"Joe, you certainly aren't interested in races—horse races?" she interrogated.

"Yes, I am," he snapped. "I don't play 'em, but I like to look 'em over. What of it?"

"They're awful," declared Beth. "That's exactly why most men steal money."

"Well, dearie, Joe isn't stealing money or playing races, so don't get worried," commented Emma, a little testily. Mrs. Harris persisted.

"Captain Williams says that the race track ruins more young men and—"

quilted his wife, gazing at him in astonishment.

He turned his wan face toward her, and there was a look as of entreaty and apology in his eyes, under which the dark circles appeared to have deepened, as he replied:

"I'm tired and nervous. I think I'll walk down the street."

"Oh, but you've got to take us to the theater," Beth told him. "Mother hasn't seen the play at the Renaissance, and you can't get seats—not a single one—even from speculators. I promised to take her."

"Where do I come in?" Mrs. Harris answered for her:

"You just take us; call for us after the show and put us on a car."

"We simply can't miss this chance, can we, mamma?" said Beth. "You will take us and come for us, won't you, Joe?"

"Oh, I suppose so," he acquiesced, a little wearily.

At that moment the telephone bell rang, and Emma answered it.

"Yes, right up," she instructed the operator and, hanging up the receiver, turned with an eager smile.

"I've got a surprise for you," she said. "Guess who's calling? Some one who wasn't expected for a month."

"Jim," cried Beth.

"Jim's Smith, straight back from Guatemala."

Joe's eyes widened, and the little color in it faded from his face. He was very much startled by this unexpected visit, but kept sufficient control over himself not to make the fact too apparent.

"Is Captain Williams with him?" inquired Mrs. Harris.

"I don't know," answered Emma. "I wonder what brings him back? He wasn't expected for a month or six weeks."

"I suppose the captain's with him," surmised Beth.

Her mother expressed the hope that he was.

"So do I," said Emma. "I want to thank him for Joe's raise."

"You'll do nothing of the kind!" exploded Brooks furiously. "I want you all to understand here and now that my business is my business. I don't want it discussed with either Smith or Williams. What I've got is got, and it is nobody's affair but mine. Now, if any of you have got anything to say about me or what I do, say it to me or shut up."

"Joe, how can you?" reproached his wife, taken completely aback by this savage and uncalled for display of anger.

"Well, I declare!" ejaculated Mrs. Harris, bridling up. "I've never been talked to so in all my life and—"

The doorbell rang, and she subsided, sinking back in her chair and fanning her red face vigorously.

Mrs. Brooks opened the door, and Jim's smile revealed with his winsome smile, his face tanned brown by the sun of the tropics.

"Welcome home, little stranger!" exclaimed Emma heartily.

"Hello, Emma! How are you?" he said, taking her outstretched hand.

"Ladies, I salute you. The prodigal has returned from the distant land of chili con carnal and fat ladies wearing mantillas to receive his overdose of American grub."

"Look at him! He's as brown as an Indian!" laughed Beth, giving him a cordial handshake.

"Where's Captain Williams?" asked Mrs. Harris.

"All in due time, when I spin my yarn," drawled Jim.

He went over to Brooks and shook hands with him.

"Glad to see you, Joe," he said.

"Thank you, Jim. Same to you. You look immense."

"I'm better than that. Now, if you folks will sit down I'll tell you the story of my wonderful adventures, lying only when necessary to protect my unsullied reputation. How is that, Beth, unsullied reputation? Pretty good, eh?"

"But Captain Williams and the story?" urged Emma.

"What I want to know," observed her mother, "is, Did the captain come with you?"

"So do I," said Brooks, with hardly concealed anxiety.

"Well, you know it took me two months to do all this, and you can't expect me to tell this story as if it was a journey in the subway."

"Jim, you're exasperating," remonstrated Emma.

"I was saying— Say, Emma, you look all right in that dress," he broke off, contemplating her with admiration. She stamped her foot imperiously.

"Never mind me. Talk!"

"And please say something," added Beth.

"Stung!" he laughed. "Thank you, Beth! Well, you know cap and I were going to make a trip at every port of call the Latin-American company has, but when we got to Guatemala we found out that a couple of those dons down there, being out of jobs, had concluded to pass the time away by pulling off one of their monthly revolutions, and, among other things, were getting very gay with our property."

"You mean war?" demanded Beth, deeply interested.

"Not according to Hoyle. This game was just for conversation. Anyway, things looked a little bad, so we stayed there until one of the dons threatened to put us in jail and burn up our warehouses. We were delayed a couple of weeks, and one morning the army of forty-two generals and three privates saw the United States cruiser

Brooklyn steam into port all painted up, with a lot of peevish bluejackets on board, looking for trouble. So they postponed their change of government indefinitely. We had been delayed so long by them fellows—"

"Jim," objected Beth. "Don't call them 'them fellows.'"

"Not!"

"No. Say 'those fellows.'"

"Well, Beth, I've known those greasers down there for fourteen years as 'them fellows,' and if I called them anything else I'm afraid I'd have to be introduced again."

"But Captain Williams?" insisted Mrs. Harris.

"Yes, where is he?" said Brooks.

"Well, we decided to come home. Captain left on the steamer by the way of New Orleans, and a couple of days later I came direct to New York."

"Then he is here?" said Mrs. Harris in a tone of gratification.

"I suppose he is, unless he was shipwrecked on the way."

"But you haven't told us anything about the war," Beth reminded him. "Was it exciting?"

"Well, as the only things that were shot off were several hundred mouths and as I'm a bad hand at repeating conversations I will have to leave the details to your imaginations."

"I consider that a most uninteresting story," pouted Beth, "and, besides, you're keeping us from the theater."

"All going?" queried Smith.

"No, just Beth and me," explained Mrs. Harris. "Emma and Joe have seen the play, and we've got the last two seats."

Emma accompanied her mother and sister to her bedroom to help them don their hats.

When the door had closed upon them Smith's attitude changed entirely. The smile vanished from his face, and he went over to Brooks and placed both hands on his shoulders.

"Joe, you're found out," he announced.

"How found out?" demanded Brooks, jumping up and facing him, very white.

"The money you've taken."

"If you say I've taken money, you're a liar!" retorted Brooks, with an attempt at fierce indignation. But the words came falteringly between his blue, parched lips.

"Joe, Joe," rebuked his friend sternly, "this ain't no time to fust with me. I'm your friend, and you need one now, boy. Besides, there's Emma to think of."

"I don't know what you mean," he protested in a choking voice.

"That story of a revolution was a lie," explained Smith. "Williams has been home three days. He has had the books looked over at night. I've reason to think he went away simply to give you a free rein and get even with you for what you said to him that night at the flat. Joe, we've got to pull together now, and you've got to be on the square with me."

Brooks sank limply into a chair and covered his face with his hands.

"What shall I do?" he moaned.

"Sit tight and saw wood."

"But they'll send me to jail, won't they?"

"You took that chance, Joe, boy. But we will have to fight and fight hard to get you out of it. You can't run away. You're watched," interrupted his friend. "Detectives are downstairs, and if you make a false



"I'm your friend, and you need one now, boy."

move they'll nab you and spoil every chance."

"Jim, I'm done; I know I'm done!" he almost whimpered, plunged again into the bottommost depth of despair.

"Keep your nerve. What have you told Emma?"

"She doesn't know."

"Of course she doesn't. I mean, where did you say you got all the money?"

"I told her my salary was raised, and some back pay—"

"I'm on. Now brace up. You look all in. Here come the ladies."

"They are ready, Joe," announced Mrs. Brooks.

"Come on, my boy, and take the family to the show," ordered Mrs. Harris.

"I'm ready," he replied, pulling himself together with great effort. "Jim, wait till I come back."

Emma and Smith accompanied them to the elevator.

"Hurry back, Joe," was Emma's injunction to her husband as the car disappeared from view.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Point to Lightning.

When a native of Quito sees a flash of lightning he reverently removes his hat.

True Missionary Spirit. Speaking at a recent meeting of the Colonial and Continental Church society, in London, the bishop of North Queensland said: "I spoke at Oxford the other day, and asked for men to help me in our great work. Eight of the finest young graduates volunteered to go back to the bush with me. Then I searched for a leader, and turned to Ireland, the home of missionaries. I sent a telegram to Rev. E. H. Crozier, vicar of St. George's, Dublin, asking him if he would give up his rich living, worth £500 a year net, and come and be the leader of my band of recruits in the bush at £50 a year. The answer I received was: 'Yes, the Lord being my help.'"

### Real Diamonds.

Mrs. McBride—It was awfully thoughtful of Uncle George to give me what he did for a wedding present.

Girl Friend—Why, what did he give you?

"Haven't you heard? Why, you see, the other guests sent plated ware and paste jewelry mostly, but Uncle George gave me real diamonds—just think of it! a whole ton of Lehigh coal to begin housekeeping with!"

### Lincoln's Freedom from Can't.

One of the delightful things about Lincoln was his freedom from can't. He never set out to "set an example." He lived his life simply and naturally, thought out and spoke the thought that was in him, did the work he found to do and let his example shift for itself. By consequence it is one of the great examples, one of the great inspirations, of human history.

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