

PAID IN FULL

Novelized From Eugene Walter's Great Play

By JOHN W. HARDING

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CHAPTER XI.

FOR a long time Mrs. Brooks stood gazing in silence at her husband, her heart rent with conflicting emotions. Her happiness of the past few months, then, had been built upon the precarious foundation of speculation. Oh, the horror! Oh, the shame of it! On the very morrow the name she bore would be held up to disgrace and derision. He would be cast into prison. The misery of their struggles with poverty was as nothing compared with that of their sudden downfall.

Numbered though her heart was with the shock, shrunk by the terror of their ghastly position, it was yet not impervious to pity, and the hopeless wretchedness of her husband inspired it. She thought of how he had lavished his stealings upon her, how he appeared to be moved by the one desire to make her comfortable and happy.

She went to him and put her hand on his head, smoothing his hair.

"Oh, Joe! Oh, my boy!" she said brokenly. "How could you do it? Didn't you know sooner or later you'd be found out? Now I know why you've been interested in the races—you've been betting on the horses."

"I—I wanted to get the money back," he sobbed.

"But didn't you know you couldn't? Oh, why didn't you leave things as they were—the flat, the struggle and all that? Why did you bring me here and show me all this—this happiness—with money that you stole?"

His sobbing ceased, and he pushed her away and rose.

"That's right. You call me a thief! If there was one person in the world I thought I could turn to it's you, and you turn on me."

"Joe, you mustn't say that. I haven't turned on you. Only I can't help but think—"

"What? That man Williams drove me to taking money?"

"Drove you?"

"Yes, he did. He went away so I could take it. I expected you to stand by me. Do you know the hole I'm in? There are three central office men downstairs watching. If I make a move I'll be nabbed. It's all very well for you to stop and preach—you always were so d—d saintly—but what of me? That's the question—what of me?"

He thumped his breast violently.

She drew back, hurt by his reproaches.

"If I thought you were yourself I'd never forgive you for saying that to me," she declared.

"I'm not asking your forgiveness, nor your mother's, nor your sister's. What I want now is somebody to help me out. I don't want to go to jail. It would kill me."

"Do you think I want you to go to jail? Do you think I want the disgrace?"

"The disgrace—that's it! I knew that would come sooner or later, but I didn't think it would come from you. There's always somebody to hammer that into a fellow when he's down."

"I'm not trying to hammer anything into you. What I want to know is what can be done, what are we going to do?"

"I don't know—unless—"

"Unless we can get the money to pay back. There's Jimmy."

"That won't do. It's too much. He hasn't got it. Besides, it's too late. Williams means business. He wouldn't take the money. He's not that kind."

"Oh, if I only knew a way—if I could only help!"

She wrung her hands and sank hopelessly into a chair by the table.

Brooks paced the room restlessly, like a wild animal in a cage. Now and then he shot a peculiar, furtive glance in the direction of his wife. Finally he sat opposite to her, leaned toward her on the table and said in a low, intense voice:

"If anything is to be done it's got to be done tonight, Emma. Williams is the only man. You can square it with him."

"I can?"

"Yes, and no one but you."

"What can I do?"

He looked at her meaningly.

"He likes you."

Startled, she returned his gaze inquiringly.

"Yes, he does," he went on. "He always did. Women are his weak point. He's liked you for years. That's why he hangs around. I've seen it and heard what he said tonight about what he'd do for a girl like you. He meant that, Emma. He'll do anything you ask him if—if you go to him right."

Beginning to understand what he wanted of her, she rose slowly, incredulous horror in her eyes. He rose also and went toward her.

"He's home now," he urged eagerly. "You can go. No one will know but just Williams, you and me. And you can do more than that—you can make him give us money, more money, to keep on living like this, and there won't be any risk."

She recoiled from him, consumed with rage and shame, her eyes blazing.

"I hope I don't understand aright!" The words came in quivering gasps. "You mean me to go to his apartment tonight to see him—and—and—"

"No one will know the difference," he coaxed softly. "You can handle him all right. Besides, you know how far you can let a man go—all women know that."

"Oh, I can't believe I'm listening to you! A husband to ask a wife!"

She stopped, pressing her cheeks between her clinched hands, appalled at his infamy.

"Then you won't do it?" he cried angrily. "You won't come to the front? I suppose you don't think I ought to ask. Why shouldn't I? Who did I steal the money for? I did it because you made me!"

"That's a lie!"

"You know it's the truth. When I married you your father was to help me, and he died, and then you had to do your own work, and you whined and complained."

"That's another lie!"

"Oh, you never said so in so many words, but I saw it—for four years around the house. I saw you sighing and moping because you didn't have enough to live on. Then there were that mother of yours and your sister—they never stopped. You tried to make yourself a martyr. Every moment of your life was a mute protest against your poverty—yes, it was, and you know it. Do you remember that night when you said you couldn't go to the theater because you didn't have clothes? That was the first time I took money. That's when I began."

"You knew I wouldn't have gone if I had known."

"But you did go—you kept on going, and I kept on stealing for you. God, how I've suffered for you, for the clothes on your back. Every night has been a nightmare. Now I'm going to jail, you know that. I'm going up there on the river for years because you won't do your part."

"I can't do what you want."

He became satanically persuasive again.

"Why can't you?" he urged. "Other women have for less reason—one to get control of a transcontinental railroad for her husband. I've risked everything for you. If you go there tonight I won't go to jail; I won't be hauled into court; no one will know but the three of us. No one will think the less of you. I've gone through to the limit for you; it's up to you to go through for me."

"Then if you go to jail you mean that I've sent you there?"

"Yes, and down in your heart you know you have."

Every instinct of her pure womanhood, every fiber of her flesh, revolted at this cynical exhibition of his villainy. She contemplated him with loathing.

"Now that I see you naked in all your nasty meanness, your contemptible viciousness, I wonder how I ever made the mistake of thinking you even half a man," she said.

This scathing denunciation made no impression on his deadened sense of honor and decency.

"You can't dodge the responsibility with fine speeches," he replied, shrugging his shoulders. "I've gone wrong for your sake. What are you going to do? Be square with me and take this chance—an easy chance—and you know you're safe."

She did not answer, but stood there, her face set in its expression of abhorrence and indignation, deliberating as to the best course to pursue toward this unspeakable villain to whom she was bound and who watched her with anxious, cringing men.

She addressed him finally in cold, harsh tones:

"Whatever I may do or promise to do, I promise simply because you blame me."

"Emma, I knew you'd—"

"Don't make the mistake that I care for you. Whatever I felt for you, and I thought it was love, you've assassinated in the last ten minutes. But I don't want you to go to jail pointing a finger of accusation at me."

"Then you'll be square—you'll help—you'll—"

"You understand that if I bargain with Captain Williams for your freedom I make the bargain."

"I know. I'll never ask."

"It will be my business alone."

"Yes, just yours."

"Is he home?"

"Yes, I think so. He said he was going there."

"Telephone and ask him if he can see me—now—alone."

He jumped to the instrument, but as his hand grasped the receiver he hesitated, and a flush suffused his white, drawn cheeks, brought there by the first true consciousness of the enormity of his crime. He looked around guiltily at his wife. She was standing rigid, her back toward him. He took down the receiver.

"Seven-six-eight-four Bryant," he called.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Jimmy Smith had told Emma and Joe that Captain Williams lived in a little south sea island nook moved into his flat and that it was dirty the description had done justice to the place in a general way. It was in a hotel not far from that in which the Brooks had so recently taken up their residence, and the living room was a curious combination of natural history museum and ship's cabin.

A wooden capstan in the center did duty for a round table, and on it, in addition to an electric reading lamp, an untidy litter of papers and magazines, some writing paper, envelopes, pens and ink, were a huge tin box of tobacco and a rack containing pipes of wood and meerschaum of all sizes, shapes and colors. Remarkable among

the few chairs of rattan or rush was one, a large rocking chair, partially constructed of two small anchors, the flukes forming the rockers. In a corner over a comfortable lounge was a canopy made of a piece of sail canvas supported by south sea island spears and decorated with leather shields, warclubs, boomerangs and other native weapons, together with necklaces and various ornaments of sharks' teeth. Covering the walls were stuffed fishes of weird shape. Over the entrance door was a ship's wheel and on the mantel a model of an old time trading schooner with all sails set. Among other objects on the mantel also was a faded daguerreotype showing Captain Williams as a young man, in uniform. On each side of the capstan was a dirty cuspidor. The carpet also was dirty and spotted, and dust had settled thickly everywhere. In this queer abode Williams lived alone, save for Sato, a Japanese valet, who had served him for many years.

The massive form of the captain himself, minus his coat, might have been described in the light of the lamp through the cloud of tobacco smoke that enveloped him as he sat reading a magazine some time after his departure from the home of Mr. and Mrs. Brooks. He was rather annoyed when the telephone bell rang and had not been expecting Smith would not have troubled to answer it. As it was, he swore a little and rose lazily to respond.

"Hello! Yes, this is Captain Williams," he said in his usual stentorian voice. "What, Brooks? I won't talk with you over the phone—no—what? Mrs. Brooks? What, here? Well, well! Yes, I'm at home—yes. Right away, you say? Yes, I'll wait."

Williams could hardly believe what he had heard. He turned it over in his mind for fully three minutes figuring out just what it could mean.

"Going to send his wife here! What a skunk he is!" he grunted.

He ambled to the telephone again and instructed the hotel clerk that if any visitors called to see him they were to be shown right up. From there he went to the door of an adjoining room and roared for his valet.

"Any beer on ice?" he demanded when the Japanese, who evidently had been asleep, presented himself.

"Yes, saar."

"Got limes and rum—the kind I brought up from the West Indies?"

"Yes, saar."

"Plenty ice?"

"Yes, saar."

"That's all."

He could not get over the wonder Brooks' telephone communication had caused him.

"Told her he'd got a raise of pay, eh? What a skunk he is! And what a fine girl she is!"

He gazed abstractedly at the model of the schooner on the mantel opposite to him and became buried in thought so deep that he actually stopped smoking and let his pipe go out. Presently he roused himself, fished a sheet of writing paper from among the reading matter on the capstan table and wrote something upon it, after which he folded the paper carefully and hid it between the leaves of a magazine.

Then he shouted again for his valet.

"Sato," he ordered, "bring my slippers and smoking jacket. There's a lady coming to see me."

The man grinned knowingly.

"You might as well take a walk, Sato."

"Yes, saar."

"And you needn't come back right away."

"No, saar."

"Here's a couple of dollars for you. Take 'em and get to bizness out of here. Sabe?"

"Yes, saar."

"And stay out," he recommended as the Japanese prepared to obey.

When the valet had vanished the captain took a survey of his domain rather anxiously.

"It's a little dirty—a little dirty—but it'll have to do," he muttered.

There was a knock at the door. Williams wreathed his physiognomy in the most amiable smile of which it was capable, felt his tie to assure himself that it had not slipped round toward his left ear, as it had a bad habit of doing when not hauled taut and clamped in place, and went to let his visitor in.

The caller, however, was only Smith.

"Come in, but make your business short," was Williams' blunt greeting. "I'm expecting an important visitor."

"All right, captain," responded Smith tranquilly, entering and helping himself to a chair.

"Have a pipe?" invited the host, pushing the tobacco tin toward him.

"Too hot," was the laconic declination.

"Well, how did you leave the Brooks family?"

"She knows."

"You tell her?"

"No; Joe did."

"Didn't think he had the nerve?"

"He hasn't."

"How's that?"

"It was because he lost it that he told her. Busted right out the moment the door was closed on you."

"Did they have a row?"

"Don't know. She took it like a major and asked me to leave 'em alone."

"That's natural."

"Have you got the exact figures?"

"What figures?"

"Of how much he took."

"I guess so—to the penny," said Williams, reaching for a memorandum book and consulting it. "It was just \$16,860 three days ago."

"Any more now?"

"Not that I know of. Guess that covers it."

Smith shook his head moodily.

"That's too bad—too bad," he murmured.

"That's right, it is too bad," agreed the captain.

Smith thought for a minute, looked straight at the captain, who was regarding him curiously and said firmly and more quickly than his employer had ever heard him speak before:

"Williams, I don't think it'll take three minutes for you and me to come to an understanding about Brooks."

"What about him?"

"I want to square this thing for him."

"Where do you come in, Smith?"

"In plain words, Williams, that's my business. But I want to square it."

"How do you think you can square it, Smith?"

As Jimmy prepared to answer the question he fell back into his old familiar drawl.

"Well, Williams," he said, "you ain't got any callous on your fingers from handing out coin to the folks who've worked for you, but I've always been treated about right."

"You were always worth treating right, Smith."

"Thanks."

"Always found you a fair man—doing things you said you'd do in a fair way."

"I ain't never been much of a spendthrift, Williams. I've saved and been a little lucky in investing the little I've had. I can raise about \$14,000 by noon tomorrow, and I'll give you my note for the rest, with security—I mean collateral."

"So it ain't none of my business why you do this?"

"Exactly."

"Smith, I don't think you can square this little matter for Brooks."

"Don't think my note's good, eh?"

"Tain't that. You couldn't square this, Smith, if you had a million right in your clothes this minute."

"Why not?"

"To tell the truth, I'm going to open negotiations with another party."

"That so?"

"Mrs. Brooks."

"How?"

"She's coming up here to see me soon. Maybe she and me can come to some mutually pleasant arrangement that will keep Brooks out of jail."

"When is she coming?"

"The captain puffed at his pipe and scrutinized Smith's face closely as he replied:

"Expect her any moment."

"How do you know?"

"Telephoned."

If Williams expected to see any sign in his visitor of the utter amazement, the profound consternation, the imparting of this information caused, he was doomed to disappointment. Smith remained as unreadable as the sphinx. But it was sixty seconds before he spoke.

"I suppose that's a hint for me to be on my way?" he interrogated.

"That's about the meaning I meant to convey," admitted the captain, without circumlocution.

Jimmy rose slowly, took his hat and went toward the door. Before he reached it he turned.

"Williams," he said, "you know I've known Emma—Mrs. Brooks—ever since she was in short clothes and used to come down to the office to go home with her daddy."

"So I've heard."

"She's always been able to look into my face with them big blue eyes and smile. Some time—some day—if I get back—I'm going to make it my business to see her."

"All right."

"And if she shouldn't happen to look up into my face and smile I'm going to find you, Williams, and I'm coming beelied."

The captain puffed his pipe placidly.

"What style heels might you be wearing now, Smith?" he inquired, with great deliberation.

"Well," answered the always deliberate Jimmy, "if you should consult the particular shoemaker who furnishes them he'd describe that heel as of 45 caliber."

"Good night, Smith," said the captain dryly.

Smith did not reply.

Williams gazed in the direction of the door after his superintendent had closed it. There was an enigmatical smile on his face. It slowly died away, and his pugnacious underjaw protruded ominously. Reaching round to his hip pocket, he brought out a re-



BIANCA WEST IN "PAID IN FULL" AT THE LYRIC THEATRE ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9.

voiver. It was a formidable looking weapon, with a long barrel. He broke the breach, examined the cartridges and replaced it in his pocket.

"Darned if he wouldn't do it, too," he muttered.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A DIFFERENCE IN SIDES.

But the Young Rebel Couldn't Break His Habit.

Among the prisoners taken during the Civil War by the Northern men was a young fellow who made the lives of the boys in blue miserable by constantly crowing over their defeat at the battle of Chickamauga.

"Maybe we didn't eat you up at Chickamauga," he would say to every one with whom he came in contact, until the soldiers could stand it no longer, and reported the matter to headquarters.

He was summoned before Gen. Grant, who arraigned him for his conduct, and gave him his choice of swearing allegiance to the Union or going to a Northern prison. After considering the matter for a time the young fellow decided to swear allegiance to the Union. He took the oath and was then dismissed. He started away, but stopped as he reached the door.

"Say," he said.

"Well," said Grant, as he turned indifferently from the desk, having dismissed the matter from his mind.

"I was just thinking," the young rebel replied, "they sure did give us hell at Chickamauga."

IT WAS CATCHING.

A kindergarten teacher tells the following story of one of her little pupils. The rules require that when a child reports illness in the family, the teacher shall find out whether the illness is contagious or not, and when one of the little boys reported that "his mamma was sick" he was sent home to find out the nature of the illness. He soon returned with the information: "Mamma says it ain't catching."

"That won't do," replied the teacher. "You must go home and find out, and then come and tell me just what the matter is with your mamma. Pretty soon the boy came back and said: 'Teacher, it's all right. Mamma says it's a boy, and it ain't catching.'"

COUNTRY BILLIARDS.

Story that Will Be Appreciated by Knights of the Cue.

Calvin Demarest, the amateur billiard champion, described at a dinner in Chicago some poor billiard tables. "One summer in the country," he said, "another man and I were overtaken by a storm and had to go into a tavern for shelter. The rain fell steadily. We had three or four long hours before us. Time began to hang heavily on our hands.

"Landlord," said I, 'do you happen to have a billiard table?'

"Sure," said the landlord. 'Sure. Just step this way, gents.'

"He proudly threw open the door of a dark, stuffy room. We saw an antiquated table with a patched cloth, and in the corner was a rack of crooked cues.

"Any balls?" said I.

"Sure," said the landlord, and he unlocked a closet and laid on the table three white balls, all alike—there was no spot, you know.

"But, see here," I remonstrated, 'how do you tell these balls apart?'

"Oh, that's all right, said he. 'You soon get to know 'em by their shape.'—Washington Star.

THE REASON WHY.

First Guest—Won't you join me in requesting young Squalls to recite?

Second Guest—But I don't like recitations.

First Guest—Neither do I. But if the young beggar doesn't recite, he'll starve.

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