

PAID IN FULL

Novelized From Eugene Walter's Great Play ... By ... JOHN W. HARDING

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.

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.

"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 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 villainess. 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.

The few chairs of rattan or rush was one, a large rocking chair, partially constructed of two small anchors, the fukes 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.

"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 Jimay 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."



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."

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He'd describe that heel as of 48 caliber.