

"VALIANT" is the word for "CARRIE"



Illustrations from the Wesley Ruggles production for Paramount, featuring Gladys George and Artie Judge.

BY BARRY BENEFIELD

CHAPTER IX

We had a wire from Paul the next day, saying that he was looking for Lili, and another a few days later saying that he had found Lili and would be back with her the following Monday. Lili, Lili—not a word about Lady.

Maggie had called the Eipper's apartment house and learned that she had left the day before Paul got her letter. What her game was I couldn't be sure. I had a hunch about it, but I wasn't saying anything to Lady. She was going to be hard hit if it was what I feared. During the second week of her stay the two Burdons phoned her every day.

"They're lonely, and I've got to go back to them," she said. "I can't give my two Mats much except kindness, but they're not going to suffer for the lack of that." The following Saturday Young Mat drove up from Baltimore and took her back with him.

On Monday morning I was back on the job again and glad of it. In the afternoon, with many misgivings, I went to the Grand Central to meet the returned travelers. They were late getting off the train, and when I saw them at last they were in the clear. They were still a hundred feet away, but I said, "My God, she's done it." Though she wasn't touching him, she walked as one who possessed this man by her side.

Paul and I took her to her apartment. As we were leaving, Paul put his hands on her shoulders. "I'm depending on you, Lili," he said.

At the cottage that night he told me the story—or at least the story she'd told him. It seems she'd been lonely and got to brooding because she didn't have much work here, and decided suddenly to go to a small city, where living expenses would be light, and try her luck there. So she went to Jefferson City. She'd been there once (you bet she had!), and it was the only place, outside of St. Louis and New York, that she knew. She drifted around the streets there for awhile, but she didn't like the place couldn't like any place. Paul told me, "so she decided to get out of it, but she couldn't make up her mind where to go. She wandered into the post-office, and then remembered that she'd written me that mail could be addressed to her there. She called at the general delivery window, got my note, and came on to my hotel."

"She seemed half-starved, sick with loneliness, and sorry that she'd left New York. She was glad to see me. The look in her eyes got me, Aunt Carrie," he said. "I thought, 'if Franz had lived, she wouldn't be skulking around like a whipped dog.' She began to brighten up as soon as she saw me."

He lit a cigarette and began walking up and down. "And so," he said, "I brought her back. She needs me, Aunt Carrie, and no one else does."

I'd kept still as long as I could. "She needs you!" I burst out. "But what about Lady?"

"Lady?" He said it in that dull flat voice because he was wretched about her, and miserable and confused. I understood that later when I'd had time to think. But at the moment his saying her name as if he'd never heard it before was the last straw. I got to my feet and began walking up and down close to him.

"You don't seem to remember her, Paul. Lady is the little girl you gave a hand to down in Crebillon. She went with you in the dark then, and she's loved and worshipped you ever since. She's grown up now. She's a dark young woman with eyes that are dead these days except when one man's name is mentioned. She's a young woman with a high head and a high heart, and it's breaking for the love that's in it. You can hear it breaking when she laughs."

"No one needs you now, you say, except Lili Eipper. Lady needs you more than she's ever needed you before. You could at least keep yourself in the clear and be ready to go all out for her if she has a chance to get out of the mess you and your precious Lili put her in."

"But I've given my word, Aunt Carrie," he said. "Lili understands it that way."

"She would," I said. "So you're going to marry her? When is it to be?"

"There's been no talk of time. The whole thing is for Lili to decide."

"Lili!" My voice was rising and my heels were pounding the floor. "Do you know who Lili is? Do you know that she's served a two-year prison term that the criminal doctor she was convicted with is still in prison, and writing to her? That's why she was in Jefferson City—to see him!"

He stared at me for a second, then said quietly: "Of course I know. She told me that. But she didn't tell you. How did you find out, unless you hired someone to spy for you?"

At any other time the look would have shut me up, but nothing could stop me now. "Of course I did," I shouted at him. "Why not if that's the kind of woman she is?"

Paul sank wearily into a chair. "No wonder she hates people when they go digging around in her life hunting for things that will hurt her!"

"Paul," I said, "you're a man, so you couldn't be expected to know why a woman fights to hold her family together. But never mind. We're finished now—the three that were going to stand together, whatever happened, against the world. Everything I've hoped for—everything I thought we were living for—is gone."

He did then what any man does when faced by a hysterical woman. He got up and ran. "I'm going for a walk," he said.

At that last spark of my fury flared up. I said to his bowed back rushing out of the screen door, "You can go to hell and stay there for all I care."

(To be continued.)

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT

Notice is hereby given that an amendment to paragraph 5 of the Articles of Incorporation of German Bakeries, Inc., whose registered office is No. 90 Wyoming Ave., Forty Fort, Luzerne County, Pa., will be filed with the Department of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at Harrisburg, Pa., on Wednesday, October 21, 1936, under the Business Corporation Law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, approved May 5, 1935. The nature and character of the proposed amendment are as follows:

The number of shares of stock with nominal or par value is none.

The number of shares of stock without nominal or par value which may be issued by the corporation is 1000, the stated capital applicable to which shall be \$100,000.

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C. F. Terry, Secretary,
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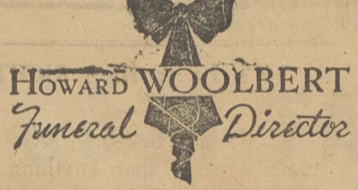
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