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crept, and soon reached the enclosed yard. A door opened out of it, but it was locked.

The wall was rather high, but an iron hook afforded foothold. Doris took advantage of this, and was soon on the other side of the wall.

The street was very quiet. Every house was close curtained.

Doris Armer stood a few seconds, taking stock of the house she had left and its surroundings; and, as she looked, the light in the room upon the leads went out.

She flew, as one possessed, down the street, round the corner, nor did she pause until she had put a good mile between herself and possible pursuers. Once or twice in her mad career she fancied she heard running footsteps, but this, possibly was imagination.

At length her breath gave out, and she was forced to rest a while. She found herself in a dull square, the name of which she could just decipher as Charlotte Square. What district of London she was in, Doris had not the faintest idea.

Later on she found the square was situated in Barnsbury, and was one of those old squares that have seen better days.

The question she now had to decide was, where should she go? She had sufficient money in her purse to keep her for a week or two.

Opposite her was a house with a card in the window: "Bed-sitting room to let." She would walk about till the morning, and then become tenant of the apartment—that is, if the landlady would accept a lodger who brought neither luggage nor references. First, however, she must buy a hat.

People were astir early in this curiously dismal neighbourhood. Doris breakfasted at a coffee-stall, and bought herself a plain black hat at one of those odd shops that manage to exist no one knows how.

Thus equipped, she returned to Charlotte Square, and rang the bell of No. 17.

A frowsy-looking woman appeared, and in a marvellously short time Doris Armer found herself the tenant of the third floor front.

No questions were asked, so Doris was not obliged to invent a plausible story. All that Mrs Dobbs required was a week's rent in advance, and with this demand Doris instantly complied.

Now, at any rate, she had a roof over her head for a week, and during this time she could arrange her plans.

The perils she had escaped had made her cautious. As she sat gazing out into the dusty, sad-looking square, with its stunted trees, beneath the branches of which grimy children played, her thoughts were very bitter.

Should she go to her father, and tell him all that had happened? He had been mainly responsible for the havoc her marriage with Armer had made of her life.

She had no intention of returning to her old home. In fact, she was not at all certain that her father had not let it, and was now living a bachelor's life at his club.

All was chaos in her mind, and mystery. Why had the man called "Philip" rescued her? Was it sheer accident that had brought him to the lonely house in the woods? Or was it all part of some deep plot, the meaning of which she could not even guess?

After hours of thought, she at last decided to see her father. Whether or not she should tell him of her horrible discovery, circumstances must decide.

One point was clear. She must work for her living. Should she write to Miss Dalty? She could go back to the quiet, little hospital any day.

And then, suddenly, she recalled Paul Weston's offer of friendship. He would keep her secret. He would advise her what to do. He could get her work in a London hospital; or, better still, he could procure private patients.

And to this latter course the girl inclined, as being the better means of keeping her secret.

For she could not give her husband away. Thief—despicable as he was in every way—he was still her husband.

The wall of silence that she had set up between them could now never be broken. Were she once to open her lips she did not know what the result might be. She could not trust herself.

In this frame of mind, Doris arrived at her old home. How well she remembered the day she left it for the last time! She saw herself a bride, her white robes and veil floating round her. She saw herself standing before the altar—

A sob-broke from her throat. She was still so young! Long years of dreariness lay before her!

Her hand was on the bell, when a voice she knew only too well struck upon her ears. The smoking-room window stood open. The voice that reached her was her husband's!

All thought of entering her old home vanished. She stood on the terrace, rooted to the spot. Her father's portly form resposed in the huge easy-

chair in which he spent so many idle hours.

"No, my dear Armer, she isn't here. I think it was a bit ill-advised on your part to shut Doris up as a semi-lunatic. She's an extraordinarily high-spirited girl, anyhow. Of course, she couldn't stand the restraint, and bolted. She'll turn up, you may be certain. A silent wife, you say?" Walter Thobury laughed jovially.

"By George, my boy, there's many a fellow would be glad if his wife became silent! What do I advise you to do? Wait and see!" He laughed again. "And if you won't do that, set a detective on. But I say, Armer, don't do anything to create a scandal! You see, I'm going to be married again; to the wealthy widow—Mrs Storrington. It would annoy her terribly to have any nasty gossip. You understand, I'm sure, Roger."

"Oh, yes, I understand! You don't care what happens to your only child so long as you live softly. But I care! I love my wife, and I shall never rest until she is mine once more. And, understand, I shall take every step possible to find out, without any regard for either your or Mrs Storrington's feelings. Good-night!"

Roger Armer stepped over the sill. He brushed past the shrubs behind which Doris shrank. She had only to hold out her hand, and she could touch him.

But instead of doing this she clenched her hands firmly, and her mind uttered words her lips dared not speak.

"Hypocrite! Cruel, mean hypocrite! To say you love me—that you want me! You shall never find me, Roger Armer!"

For an hour she remained where she was. Nor did she stir till a car rolled up to the door, out of which stepped an over-dressed florid woman, accompanied by another of the same type. She saw her father advance, and kiss the stouter of the two.

"Welcome, my dear, to your future home," Walter Thobury said.

Doris turned away. This was Mrs Storrington!

"There is no home anywhere for me!" Doris sobbed brokenly.

"I'VE BURNED BY BOATS BEHIND ME."

Two days later, Doris Armer entered a tea-shop in the West End. It was a very quiet little place, where she was not likely to encounter any of the smart folks she had entertained so lavishly in her old home.

She had written to Paul Weston, and asked him to meet her here at four o'clock. Punctually, on the stroke of the hour, Paul appeared.

He held out his hand, his eyes fixed on the face of the girl he had loved so well.

He was horrified at the change a few months had made in Doris Armer.

"You sent for me. I am here." That was all he said, but Doris knew that at any rate one loyal friend was left to her.

He sat down in a cosy corner, partially screened from the rest of the room, and ordered a dainty tea.

The girl's face was white and pinched. She looked half starved, and, indeed, though not perhaps quite that, Doris had often gone short of food.

Paul Weston's heart ached for this victim of an ill-assorted marriage.

"Paul," Doris said presently, "I can't tell you all that has happened to me. You won't mind if I withhold some portions of a very sad and strange story?"

He shook his head.

"I only want to hear anything you would care to tell me," he said simply. "I heard—" He hesitated. "People will talk you know—that your husband had sent you away for your health."

A bitter smile curved the perfect lips. "Is that what they say?"

"Yes."

Doris paused. How much should she tell this old friend? How much dare she tell without exposing her husband's cruelty and hypocrisy.

"He took me away because he said I was mad! He shut me up!" She shuddered.

Paul Weston's face grew dark. His lips set in a stern line.

"He did that?" he muttered, below his breath. "He dared do that to you?"

"Yes. But," Doris hurried on, "you see, I brought it on myself."

"You. How?"

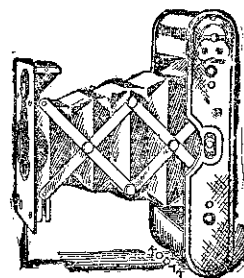
"By keeping my vow of silence. He swore that he would make me speak. I resolved that nothing should make me break my vow."

There was a low, passionate note in the sweet voice that made Weston look closely at her. Was it possible that she had grown to care for a man who had treated her so brutally?

"I escaped," she said abruptly. "And I am here."

"How did you escape? It is a difficult matter to escape from a private asylum."

(Continued on page 4.)



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