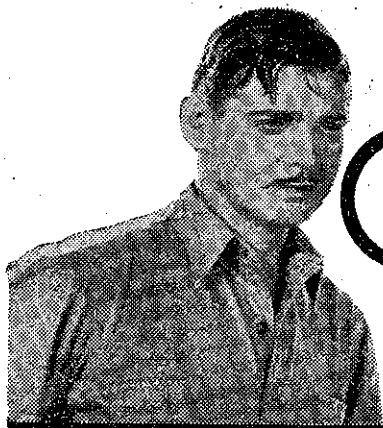




CHAINED

ADAPTED
FROM THE
METRO-GOLDWYN
MAYER PICTURE
by BEATRICE FABER



WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

Diane Lovering has been sent on a trip to Buenos Aires by her lover, Richard Field, forty-eight and wealthy. He wants her to forget the scene that ensued when his wife found out their relationship. At the ship's bar on the day of sailing she is accosted by Johnny Smith and Mike Bradley. Mike is obviously anxious to get to know her, but she resists his friendship, until they meet in the swimming bath, and begin a conversation.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

CHAPTER FOUR.

Midnight Moon.

Mike set his head in profile. "Look at me—really—I'm not such a 'boogie' man, am I?" he asked plaintively. "Just an honest open face—nothing striking about it but—"

He never finished the sentence or the thought for a water polo ball, in search of an objective, smacked him square in the face. Diane doubled up with convulsive laughter, nearly drowning herself at the same time.

"Come on," one of the kids said to his friend, "you and me'll stand him and her."

"It's a go," Mike yelled.

For fifteen minutes the tiles reverberated to their shrieks and screams as the game came to a furious finish. Fatigued with their efforts, they clung to the side of the pool, panting a little.

"How about that cocktail we should have had together last night," Mike asked. "Do we have one to-night?"

Diane curled her fingers over the rail on the side of the pool. She sensed the note of intimacy that had crept into their brief acquaintanceship. How had it happened? she asked herself helplessly. When and where had she dropped that barrier of unawareness? She took a tight rein on herself.

"When are you leaving this boat, Mr. Bradley?" she asked with what she hoped was an amused smile.

"Going all the way to Buenos Aires. I live there. Just been to New York for relaxation. How far do you go?" As he spoke, Mike took her hand and held it in a firm, tight grip. His eyes were looking directly into hers, and

there was a compelling undertone in his voice.

"All the way to Buenos Aires," Diane admitted with a sigh and a smile, though she was taut with panic as Mike moved closer.

"Isn't it—great—Dinah," he half-whispered. There had been a barely perceptible pause as he uttered the name, but it had caused Diane to cling weakly to the rail, while the smile slowly faded from her face.

Dinah! Out of the long ago dim past, the name rose before her and spelled itself out.

"Dinah!" she echoed him, all thought suspended.

"Yes—Dinah!" Mike repeated with telling emphasis.

The years rolled back and Diane was again a bewildered, thin-faced little girl, with her kind and understanding Uncle Jim as her only friend. Other little girls hadn't been allowed to play with her because of That Woman. Each successive mistress that her father brought home had always been labelled That Woman. Mama had divorced him, and rarely allowed Diane to go to his house. But in her occasional visits she had seen and wondered. Mama had died just when Diane was approaching womanhood, and death had claimed her father shortly thereafter, as violently as life had entertained him.

And through all those unnatural fears of childhood it was gay, merry Uncle Jim who had been companion to Diane, who had played children's games with her and taken long, fascinating walks with her—who, in fact, had dubbed her Dinah because, he had said, to her extreme delight, that it sounded like the clean, crisp tinkle of silver bells, just like Diane herself. No one else had ever called her that since then, and now Mike—Did he, too, hear the bells as Uncle Jim had?

"I know," he was saying, "the passenger list calls you Diane Lovering—but I call you Dinah."

Curiosity overcame her. "But why?" "Well—when I was a young lad of one and a half years, I had a rag doll named Dinah that I loved more dearly than anything else in the world. She

slept under my bed every night." His eyes twinkled at her mischievously. "But I'm not a year and a half old any more," he added.

Diane hardly knew whether to laugh or to burst out in hot indignation. Confused, she called, "Come on—we're playing a game."

"I'd forgotten that," Mike grinned, and plunged after her.

It was crowded in the bar that night. The endless coming and going of new patrons swelled the noise louder and louder. In an oasis of her own silence, Diane, unlike in a gray chiffon dress, sat at a table, sipping her sherry flip.

Mike's questing eye lighted on her and he walked up accusingly: "Here—what's the idea? At six-thirty, you said—you're fifteen minutes early."

"Am I?" Diane returned gaily. "Well, then—I'm an extraordinary woman."

Mike sat down, grumbling. "Ahead of time—ahead of everything."

"What are you having?"

Mike looked at her glass. "What's yours?"

"A sherry flip."

"What's the matter?" he demanded, "are you ill—seasick?"

Diane laughed. "Not in the least."

"But a sherry flip," Mike was openly aggrieved. "That's a drink for people with the gout and unsettled stomachs. They serve it in the old people's home on Christmas."

"But I happen to like it."

"It doesn't go with the rest of you, at all."

Diane touched her glass affectionately. "It's the nicest cocktail I know," she asserted with a mental nod to Richard.

"Well, I'm appointing myself a committee of one to show you a cocktail that is a cocktail." Mike summoned the waiter. "Two Daquaris—the way he made them last night, Jamaica rum—and go easy on the syrup."

"Really—none for me," Diane protested.

"I insist." Mike pointed to the sherry flip. "That's just soap and water, you know. No tang, no feeling