

Beauty's Daughter

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

• • • Kathleen Norris
WNU Service.

CHAPTER XI—Continued

"All right, Serena," she said half aloud, apostrophizing the dim light that shone in the window she knew to be Serena's window. "All right—wait for him to telephone. He will. He said five minutes ago that he'd empty the ashtrays and lock the doors, and that always means he's going to telephone you. Let him tell you he's had a talk with Vicky, and she was surprisingly sensible, and say, 'Ah, lover, then maybe we can begin to play tomorrow!'"

"But from now on it's my will against your admirable little-girl innocence, Serena. He'll never get free of me, for I'll never consent to it. He'll never marry you while I live, and I'm not going to die! I'm going to be right here, and after a while you'll give in because there's nothing else for you to do. You belong to him now—and I know it, while he was telling me how strong you were, how controlled you were! You're his now—you've had all you're going to have from him—the rest is all mine! I'm the wife, and my children are the children, and I can wait. I'll know it all, and I'll keep still—I'll be pitted, and women will hint things to me, and I'll keep still!"

"You take your day, Serena—go ahead! Take a year, take two years. Flatter him, and meet him for lunch, and take his presents, and hate me. Hate me because I won't give you your way. But in the end I'll win!"

Victoria and Violet Keats sat on the Hardisty lawn on a hot spring afternoon and discussed, with limitations, their husbands and children, their homes, servants, and friends, their lives generally. The long Saturday had been spent by Violet and her own quartette, of youngsters with the Hardisty troop; now it was late afternoon, and the problem of getting Kate, Duna, Bunt, and Babs Keats amicably separated from Gwen, Kenty, Sue, Dicky, Bobs, and Madeleine Hardisty was like an uneasy undercurrent to the women's talk.

"I suppose you couldn't leave them all with us, Vi?"

"What, all four of them?" Violet ejaculated. "I couldn't leave one. Mother's birthday tomorrow."

"I'd forgotten that—although I sent her flowers."

"Did you really think to send her flowers, Vic?"

"I did, and a book."

"You're charming, and she really loves you, and always has," Violet said, touched into a rare display of feeling. "I don't know why you worry so about this baby of yours."

"He may be just slow, Duna was terribly slow; he didn't walk until he was nineteen months old."

Vic looked down at the yearling baby in her lap.

"Marty's not slow," she said gently. "It's more than that, Vi. My own boy!"

The last was murmured to the child, who looked up at her with smiling blue eyes. Small and relaxed and secure, he lay in her arms. He never fretted, he did not seem sick, but this littlest of the Hardistys had only been loaned to her for a while, and his mother knew it.

"Quentin think so?" Mrs. Keats asked abruptly. "You've had another opinion?"

"Knows so," Victoria spoke mildly, but her whole body was torn with a sigh.

Violet was silent.

"Isn't it strange?—this little fellow means more to Quentin than any of the others did. He's always loved them as soon as they got interesting, but only this one from the very start!"

"All men are like that," Violet put into the pause.

"Martin he adores. It's strange," Vic mused. "He'll come home night after night and sit holding him. He used to say Marty understood him; he doesn't say that now, he doesn't say anything."

"I feel so badly for Quentin," Vicky presently continued.

"For Quentin?" Mrs. Keats' tone was sharp and quick. She apparently reconsidered what else she might have added, and when she spoke again her tone was milder. "I feel sorry for you, my dear," she said. "I think you're a remarkable woman, Vicky."

"Oh, thank you!" Vicky answered gratefully, with a little flush.

"And so does everyone else," Violet persisted. "And sometimes there is someone I'd like to talk to!" she added, significantly.

Vic's eyes laughed, but there was a glint of warning in them, too.

"Because I adore Quentin—we both do," Violet proceeded further. "We both do," she repeated, trying to open a door.

"Quent's a genius," Vic said simply, closing it once and for all. "How'd he like Germany, Vic?"

"The woman asked, abandoning the subject."

"He had a remarkable experience. He stayed with the Von Hoffmans and almost worked himself to death. But he said it was a wonderful experience."

"He got home last week, you said?"

"Last Saturday. He looks thin, older, somehow," Victoria said. "Ah, here they all come!"

Panting, breathless, exhausted, the children now emerged from cover and flung themselves about on the lawn. They ranged from Kate Keats and Gwen, sixteen years old apiece, to Madeleine Hardisty, who was four. Brown, tall, handsome children in white shirts and tan shorts, they glowed, sparkled, shone with the beauty of bright eyes and clear skin, flashing teeth and tumbled masses of rich soft hair, firm young legs and arms. They had had luncheon on the lawn today; had had two swims of indeterminate length. Now Susan's brilliant thought was that the Keatses should stay to supper, and that they should make it a picnic. Victoria considered this temperately.

"But Aunt Vi says that tomorrow's your Gran's birthday."

"But couldn't we go home on the train after dinner? Duna'd take us; he could take us the way he did the circus day?" Kate Keats pleaded eagerly.

"Oh, no, it's too much of an imposition, Vic!" Violet said.

"It's no imposition at all," Vicky assured her. She looked up over



"All Right, Serena," She Said Half Aloud.

the baby's head and her eyes widened, although she did not smile. "Here's Quentin!" she added.

There was a general swarm of children toward him, accompanied by the usual deafening uproar, and Quentin came up to the women with the younger members of his family hanging on him like limpets. Violet Keats thought he looked older indeed; there were touches of silver on his Indian-brown temples, and he seemed quieter, somehow; more like the old remembered Quentin; she liked the expression of his face. He as genuinely happy to see her; kissed her in the old brotherly fashion; they had not seen each other since his return from a three months' visit to Germany. Violet questioned him about it, and he sat holding the delicate little Martin very gently in his big hands, and sometimes kissing the top of the baby's dark fluffy little head. The question of the Keatses remaining was presently raised.

"Next year—gosh, I can drive Uncle Quent," Duna Keats said manfully. "But gosh, Dad doesn't want me to until I get a license."

"But look here, Vicky," Quentin said, with his face brightening. "I've got to go to San Francisco and see a patient tonight; a woman we operated on this afternoon. I told them I'd be in about ten. Why not let me drive these roughnecks in with me, if their mother's willing?"

The ensuing wild pandemonium of the lawn in the spring sunset presently resolved itself into definite picnic plans. The children were to use the grill behind the old cow yard.

"Good to get home, Quentin?" Violet asked.

"Yes," he said quietly, unsmilingly. "It's good to get home."

"Well," Violet said, stirring, "I have to go. I must get started. You're sure my youngsters won't be horribly in the way tonight, Quentin?"

"In the way? Love to have 'em. I'll drop them at the house sometime after nine."

"I'll go in with you, Vi, and see you off," Victoria stretched her arms for the baby. "You come along with your mother, Mister," she said. "Nurse has something to say to you, young man!"

She called over her shoulder to Quentin.

"Coming?"

"I thought I'd sit here and have a smoke. It's so peaceful, Vic!"

"Oh, and stop at the barn before you come in, and see Moogy's puppies. Claus had some story about the little brown one. I told him you'd come out!"

Smiling, he turned the corner of the barn. A woman was standing there waiting for him. Serena.

CHAPTER XII

She was in pale blue, the broad straw hat that dipped about her face and lent an almost too picturesque beauty to her appearance had a childish blue ribbon about it; the pale scallops of the frail blue gown swept the young spring grass. Serena's eyes were at their bluest, too, grave loving, reproachful.

"Lover, I had to see you," she said. "Was this terribly stupid of me? I had to see you."

Quentin had involuntarily glanced back toward the garden and the house. He and she were sheltered by a dozen intervening hedges and trees and angles of fence. He looked at her unsmilingly.

"I don't quite like it," he said deliberately.

"Why, I went to see Victoria and her mother often while you were gone, why shouldn't I?" the woman said, in a sort of proud impatience. "Don't look so serious; nothing happened! Darling, I had to see you. You know that I have to see you?"

He looked at her without speaking.

"What is it, dear?" she asked tenderly. "What have I done?"

Quentin Hardisty spoke quickly, almost with his professional manner:

"You've done nothing, of course. Don't take that tone—don't speak like that."

"Oh, but I will speak like that," Serena persisted lovingly. "Surely I have the right just to ask you what I've done, Quentin, how I've offended you?"

"You haven't offended me at all. I wrote you months ago—before I went to Germany—"

"I know you wrote me," the woman said, as he hesitated frowning and confused. "Why did you write me that hideous letter, Quentin? I only began it; I couldn't finish it. It's burned."

"I'm horribly sorry, of course," Quentin said gruffly, awkwardly in the silence.

"Sorry!" the rich sweet voice echoed. "But what are you sorry about, dearest dearest? Remember what you told me in the beginning, that you had been twice married without ever knowing what real love was, lover, that you and Vicky had acknowledged that, had married with your eyes wide open. Remember?"

"We can't talk about this here," Quentin interrupted, in a hard, cold voice.

"Where can we, then?" Serena asked, with a touch of steel in her own tone. "You got back a week ago today, I've not seen you until now. What about tonight? Can you come over about ten? Spencer's tired; he'll be in bed."

"I've got to go up to San Francisco tonight, I've a patient at the Dante hospital."

"Then I'll go with you."

"You can't. The Keats children are all here; I'm taking them in."

"Then I'll go in and drive back with you."

"I think Kenty's planning to do that."

"Kenty! As if you couldn't put him off! Ah, lover," Serena pleaded, coming close to him, pressing his arms with her own soft arm and hand, "tell me what's wrong, tell me what I've done."

"I tried to tell you in that letter," Quentin said, looking down into the tear-misted blue eyes raised to his own. "It's a horribly hard thing to say, I—I think we both feel it. It's all been a—it's the sort of thing that can't—"

Serena drew off a little, still looking into his eyes.

"You mean that you're going to punish me, for loving you, Quentin? You're going to make me feel sorry that I loved you so generously, gave you everything I could give? You're going to make me wish that I was calculating and wise, like other women? Are you going to fail me now?"

"It isn't a question of failing you, Sina. It's that—well, I know we're both sorry for the whole thing," Quentin persisted miserably.

Serena was regarding him with narrowed eyes; her breast moved visibly on constrained breath.

"You mean for me to go on quietly living with Spencer," she said, in a level voice, "and for you to go back to Vicky. You mean that you think, knowing what she might some day know, Vic will forgive you, and everything will be lovely?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

They're Not All Professors— Those Absent-Minded Ones

Absent-mindedness isn't confined to the professors, says the Commentator.

The late Dwight W. Morrow once telephoned his secretary from Philadelphia, to inquire, "What am I in Philadelphia for?" Secretary Henry A. Wallace, when he was in Czechoslovakia, packed his passport in a trunk that was shipped to London, while he set off in the opposite direction.

And J. David Stern, publisher of the New York Post and Philadelphia Record, was hurrying along

the street when he met a friend. "Come on and have lunch with me," the friend said.

"If we go nearby," Stern said. "I'm late as it is."

They entered the nearest restaurant and sat down. Stern complained that he didn't know what was the matter with him, he didn't seem to be hungry.

"Beg pardon, sir," the waiter said, "but it's no wonder, sir. You just finished your lunch about ten minutes ago."

Clouds Pass By

The clouds I feared and worried about, and concerning which I wanted so much precious strength, lost their frown and revealed themselves as my friends. Other clouds never arrived—they were purely imaginary, or they melted away before they reached my threshold.—J. H. Jowett.

Helper of Humanity

He who helps a child helps humanity with a distinctness, with an immediateness, which no other help given to human creatures in any other stage of their human life can possibly give again.—Phillips Brooks.

A Great Motto

ONE of America's great business organizations has adopted a motto for the guidance of its people—a little five-letter word with a big meaning. It has been cut in huge granite letters over the entrance of a recently constructed building used as a training school. It is made the theme of many employee discussions. It hangs over the desk of company executives. The word is THINK.

Educators, philosophers, preachers throughout the ages have written and talked about it. Rodin gave the world a famous statue called "The Thinker." "Think" is a significant word. It represents the only means by which human progress can be accomplished. It annoys people who have lazy minds, because thinking means mental effort. Practically all the accidents in life simply because they don't think. Others give great inventions to the world because they do think.—The Pick-Up.

A Safety Tip FOR YOUR WEEK-END TRIP



TAPPING RUBBER TREES ON FIRESTONE PLANTATIONS IN LIBERIA

From the Firestone plantations in Liberia comes an ever-increasing supply of the world's finest rubber. Money saved here and in manufacturing and distribution enable Firestone to sell a safer, first-quality tire at lower prices.

Here's Why FIRESTONE STANDARD TIRES GIVE YOU MORE FOR YOUR MONEY

DON'T take chances on your Week End trip. Protect yourself and family by equipping your car with a set of new first-quality Firestone Standard Tires. Firestone builds extra quality and extra safety into these tires and sells them at lower prices because Firestone controls rubber and cotton supplies at their sources, manufactures with greater efficiency and distributes at lower cost.

YOU GET EXTRA PROTECTION AGAINST BLOWOUTS—eight extra pounds of rubber are added to every 100 pounds of cord because every fiber of every cord in every ply is saturated with liquid rubber by the Firestone patented Gum-Dipping Process. This counteracts the internal friction and heat that ordinarily cause blowouts.

YOU GET EXTRA PROTECTION AGAINST PUNCTURES—because there are two extra layers of Gum-Dipped cords under the tread.

YOU GET EXTRA PROTECTION AGAINST SKIDDING—because the tread is scientifically designed.

YOU GET LONGER NON-SKID MILEAGE—because of the extra-tough, long-wearing tread.

You need all of these features to make your car tire-safe on your Week End trip. Firestone gives them to you at lower cost. Join the Firestone SAVE A LIFE Campaign today by equipping your car with a set of new Firestone Standard Tires—today's top tire value.

DON'T RISK YOUR LIFE ON SMOOTH WORN TIRES!

DO YOU KNOW

THAT last year highway accidents cost the lives of more than 38,000 men, women and children?

THAT a million more were injured?

THAT more than 40,000 of these deaths and injuries were caused directly by punctures, blowouts and skidding due to smooth, worn, unsafe tires?



At right is section cut from a new Firestone Tire. Note the thick, non-skid tread protection against skidding, blowouts and punctures. Come in and see by actual demonstration.

At left is a section cut from a smooth, worn tire, with non-skid protection worn off. Tires in this condition are liable to punctures, blowouts and skidding.

JOIN THE **Firestone** Save a Life CAMPAIGN To-Day

Listen to the Voice of Firestone Monday evenings over Nationwide N. B. C. Red Network