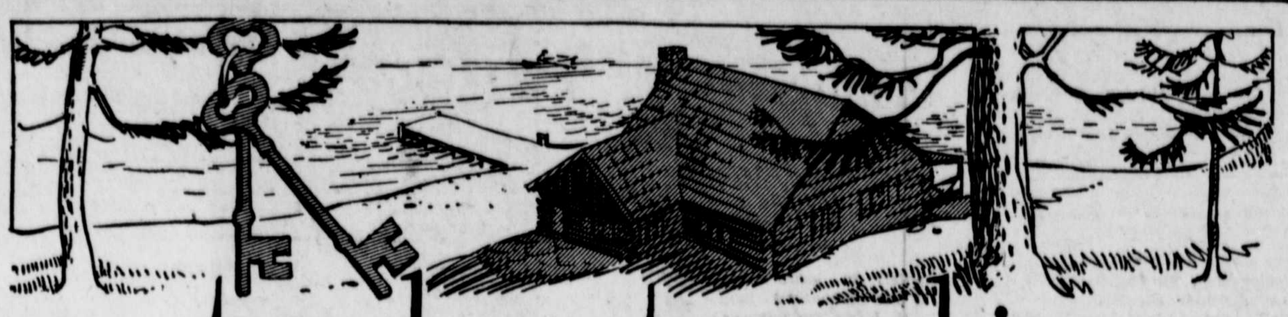

two keys to a cabin

BY LIDA LARRIMORE

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CHAPTER IX—Continued

—14—

"They've all been especially annoying, except Dad. Or maybe it has seemed so to me because John" Gay paused.

"Don't be afraid to speak of him to me."

"You're generous, Todd."

"Not very." He gave a short laugh, quickly stilled. "Perhaps I'm just trying to impress you with how well I'm taking it, to make you admire me."

"I do admire you. I have always. I feel toward you, now, just as I've felt any one of the hundreds of times I've climbed this slope since we were kids."

"How is that?"

"Oh, that it's fun to be with you, that I can say anything without being afraid you'll misunderstand. I don't wonder what you're thinking when you're silent, or watch your reaction to every move I make. I hoped, when we came through the grove, that you might be coasting. It was good of you to make us welcome."

"You're always welcome." He hesitated, then asked, "Is there—Has anything—?"

"Nothing of any importance—Just Aunt Flora. I was disappointed about something I hoped could happen. And last night—it was difficult."

"Don't worry about it."

"I won't any longer. This was just what I needed. Coasting, silly fun, exercise. Everyone has been so solemn all day. Being with you—"

"I?" He laughed with a note of embarrassment in his voice. "What have I done?"

"Just been natural, and allowed me to be. There's no strain in being with you."

"Not now," he said gravely, "but there was. You felt a sense of strain last summer, after our engagement had been announced, when you were trying to persuade yourself that you wanted to marry me—"

She was silent for a moment. Then—"Was that a difficult time for you? Forgive me for asking but I—It's strange, isn't it, that you should be the only one I can talk to? The others—"

"It was difficult," he said in reply to her question. "I went through hell."

"And you seemed so casual."

"I told you that night at the cabin," he said slowly. "I thought you wanted me to be casual. I was afraid that if I let you know how I felt it would irritate you. It was a relief to know, in spite of the fuss, in spite of having to ac[illegible] the fact that you loved John. I'm getting over you. I've done pretty well and I'm going to do better."

"Oh, are you?" she said so indignantly that they both laughed.

"I didn't mean that," she said, when the laughter was stilled. "I want you to be happy."

"I shall be, if you are. Or content, at any rate. Of course being here with you like this is a little disconcerting. I keep thinking—That's enough of that. I'm glad we've had this time together. You won't keep on trying to avoid me as you have done until now? We have something left. Oh, anything I may say will sound asinine, but we can be friends, can't we?"

"There's no question of that." Her voice was not quite steady. "After—all the years we've known each other, the fun we've had."

"I hope so. I don't want to lose you entirely. If there's ever anything—If you need me or—" He broke off with an embarrassed laugh. "Skip it. We'd better get back to the others. They're probably thinking things which aren't true. This slow-motion progress may appear a little incriminating when viewed from the heights."

She laughed and lengthened her stride to match his. The irritations of the day no longer lay like a weight on her spirits. It seemed incredible, now, as glowing from the exercise she climbed the slope at Todd's side, that she had allowed Aunt Flora to annoy her, that in her unreasonable disappointment she had flared up at John. She was eager to be with him again, to make her partial apology complete. As they approached the lake, she broke away from Todd and ran ahead.

"Wait a minute!" he called.

She did not reply. A chorus of voices greeted her. She made laughing replies but her eyes flew to John. He rose, at her approach, from the pile of blankets on which he had been sitting with Ellen Janeway and her guest, little Julie Lelange from Charleston. His face brightened as his eyes met hers through the ruddy glow of the fire. She went to him, smiling.

CHAPTER X

—

Kitty Cameron lifted her eyes from a magazine as Gay spoke to her at the door of her dressing-room.

"Hello!" she said. "Have you just returned? Where's John?"

"Here." Gay drew him forward. "Yes, we've just returned."

"Hello, John! Come in. There's a photograph of the 'Gabriella' in 'Town and Country,' Gay. Todd has sold it to Tony Merrill."

"Has he?" Gay kissed her mother. "Whew, it's hot in here. May I raise a window?"

"Let me." John lifted a sash behind taffeta curtains, letting a stream of air into the softly lit, fragrant room. Lights bloomed through the dusk. A few stars shone. At an angle he saw a freighter moving slowly on the dark surface of the river below, trailing a brighter wash of churning foam.

"Br-r-r!" Kitty Cameron sat up and leaned forward to reach the fur coverlet folded at the foot of the chaise-longue. "You come in here glowing like mountain climbers and proceed to freeze me out."

"You invited us." Gay dropped into a chair beside the chaise-longue. "You're a hot-house blossom, Kitty. Where's Robert?"

"Playing hand-ball at the club." Gay's mother lay back against cushions, under the fur coverlet. "He's distressed about his waist-line. Sit down, John, but not in that chair. This is the only one Robert really trusts." She gestured. Peach-colored chiffon in a fan of tiny pleats fell back from her rounded arm. Her long, very deep blue eyes moved from John to Gay. "You must have enjoyed the country. I expected you yesterday. What have you done to make yourself look so blowsy, Gay? Your face is as red as a tomato."

"Couldn't you have said as red as a Christmas rose? You have no poetry in your soul. She looks as though she would have, doesn't she, John? Look at her. Peach-blossoms and spun-glass and as practical as a garden rake."

"Rake?" her mother queried, laughing. "I don't demand a great deal of filial respect but aren't you carrying matters a little too far?"

"Much too far," John said. His laughter mingled with the feminine laughter chiming in the dainty luxurious room. He relaxed in the chair, which looked fragile but was comfortable, and lit a cigarette.

"Thank heaven, there's a little chivalry left in the world." Kitty Cameron's sparkling glance rested upon John for a moment, then turned to Gay. "But you haven't answered my question. As a parent I demand to know what you've been up to. John's ears are purple."

"We drove in with the top down, or rather John drove, and we couldn't find ear-tabs or a tippet."

Kitty Cameron shuddered. "Haven't you any sense?"

"It was marvelous, except that John has a mania for speed which I've never suspected. I was certain we'd spend his last night here in a magistrate's office."

"Are you leaving tomorrow?"

"Tonight, Mrs. Cameron."

"Must you, John?" Gay's eyes clouded. The brightness dimmed out of her face.

"Must, Gay. I've overstayed my leave of absence by one day already."

"The late sleeper, then."

"Yes," he said, and was silent.

"Oh, that's really too bad." Kitty Cameron's expression was distressed. "I expected you to stay over the week-end, at least. If I'd had any idea—"

"What have you been up to, Mother?" Gay asked. "You've no idea how guilty you look."

"It's Robert." She sighed, then smiled. "I learned long ago that surprises are usually not appreciated."

"Has Robert planned a surprise for us?"

"He has made arrangements to take us for dinner and dancing at the Heron Club."

"That was dear of him," Gay said slowly, "but—"

"I told him he should consult you. Well, don't think of it again. Robert will be disappointed and what he'll say to the others—But that's his predicament."

"The others? Is it a party?"

"Ten, I believe. Tory Wales and her fiance and Peter and Connie Belmont and—"

Gay's eyes met John's in dismay.

"We should have stayed in the country," she said.

"Robert wanted to do something for you, Gay." Kitty Cameron's tone held a faint rebuke.

"I appreciate that. But John's last night—A party!"

"You've never shown any dislike for parties," her mother said mildly. "On the contrary— But you needn't. Robert was letting off steam. He was so incensed yesterday when your Aunt Flora was here. She has the ability to stir up antagonism in even Robert's genial soul."

The laughter, the gaiety had gone out of her voice. John saw that her contentment was shattered. She glanced at him guardedly, wondering, he knew, what effect further discussion of their situation would have upon him. He smiled, but, studying her expression, he knew that he had failed to reassure her completely.

"I know how it irritates you to be questioned," she said, obviously choosing her approach with care. "But under the circumstances, Gay—"

"We have no definite plans."

"Then you won't be married this winter?"

"No," Gay said and was silent.

"But I thought— You told me—"

"That Dad was wangling a place for John in the research department at Johns Hopkins," Gay said evenly.

"Wasn't he successful? I should think that considering what his father did for the hospital, there should be no question of a refusal."

She laughed and lengthened her stride to match his.

"There will be an opening at the first of the year."

"But I am not free to accept it, Mrs. Cameron," John said. "I'm obligated until October."

"Couldn't some arrangement be made?"

"I'm afraid not." He knew that his voice expressed the resentment he felt. He had no reason to feel resentful, he told himself. Gay's mother had every right to make inquiries. But he had come to fear the effect upon Gay, upon himself, of further useless discussion. It was only by avoiding any reference to the future that they had maintained, these past two days in the country, a close and intimate companionship. It was his fault. The sense of inadequacy he felt was deeply humiliating. How could he make Gay's mother understand the nature of his obligation, the impossibility of buying his release? Buy his release? he thought bitterly. Permit Gay to buy it for him—

In the silence which followed his reply, he saw Kitty Cameron turn with a baffled expression to her daughter.

"But, Gay—" she began.

"Does it matter, Mother, except to John and to me?" Gay sat forward in her chair, her color heightened, her attitude defensive. "Other people have had to wait. John knows best what his obligations are. If I'm willing to—" She dropped back into the chair with a short mirthless laugh. "After all the fuss there's been, I can't understand why you try to rush us into marriage."

"I'm not trying to rush you into anything. I'm merely trying to find out, if I can, what you expect to do."

"Whatever I do needn't interfere with your plans, Mother. You've accepted the Davenports' invitation, haven't you?"

"Tentatively. But you wouldn't enjoy it, darling. A six weeks' cruise. No young people and the Davenports aren't stimulating company."

"Besides which, I haven't been invited. Go, of course, Mother. The Davenports are dull but you and Robert enjoy yourselves wherever you are."

"But what will you do?" Kitty Cameron's glance, a little embarrassed, he thought, turned to John. "I don't suppose all of this is very entertaining to John."

"Why not?" Gay folded her arms beneath her head. "I can go to Daytona with Aunt Flora."

"You couldn't, Gay!"

"No, I guess you're right. Well, I could go to Italy with Dad, though he doesn't really want me. When I'm with him he thinks he should do things to entertain me. He's much happier poking around in art museums and book-shops and cathedrals alone."

"David was born a bachelor," David Graham's former wife said without rancor, in indulgent extenuation. "He's always happier alone, though when I made that possible the heavens fell." Her attention returned to the subject under discussion. "I want to know that you are provided for, before I accept the Davenports' invitation definitely. You always have invitations."

"I'll visit Tory in Palm Beach. It's usually amusing there," she said with a forced gaiety which struck through John's heart in a stab of quivering pain. "I, in Palm Beach, John, in Maine. You and Robert, cruising with the Davenports. May we all survive!"

Kitty Cameron regarded her daughter thoughtfully, her brow beneath the soft waves of her amazing hair, puckered in lines of doubt. As she opened her lips to speak, the telephone rang. She took the instrument from the table beside the chaise-longue.

"Hello . . . Yes, darling," John heard her say. "Yes, they're here. John is leaving tonight . . . No, I had no idea . . . Of course I've told them . . . Wait a minute . . . It's Robert," she said. "What shall I tell him? Do you want to go to the Heron Club?"

"Shall we, John?" Gay's eyes met his, glancingly, clouded at what she read in his face.

"If you would like to, Gay."

The constraint in his voice ended her indecision. It was his fault, he thought miserably. He had destroyed their plans for the evening, the plans they had made driving in from the country this afternoon. In silence he saw her raise her head.

"We'll go," she said, too lightly, too quickly. "Tell Robert we'd love to, Kitty."

Kitty Cameron's lips parted as though she meant to speak. Then her brow cleared. Her shoulders under the peach-colored negligee made a faint shrugging motion. She spoke into the transmitter.

The orchestra made preliminary sounds, then swung smoothly, ingratiatingly, into a waltz. The blond, burly young Englishman leaned across the long table toward Gay.

"This is my dance, I think," he said with a slightly formal inclination of his head.

The sandy-haired young man whom John had not met before this evening intervened. "My dance, Gay. You promised."

"Gay saves her waltzes for me," Robert Cameron said from the end of the table. "She doesn't trust my foot-work in anything more modern."

"What it is to be popular!" Tory Wales sighed in laughing derision.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

'Back Door That Sticks' Can Be Easily Repaired

Damp weather is most often the cause of sticking doors. Absorption of moisture results in the swelling of the framework and door and frequently causes the paint or varnish to soften and become sticky.

If the door has an even margin along the top and bottom edges and if the hinges are firm it will be necessary to plane either the hinge or lock edge. Usually it is best to plane the hinge edge, as the hinges are more easily removed and remortised than the lock. Care should be taken not to plane off too much wood, however.

If a door is too tight on the hinge edge and binds against the hinge jamb the hinges will loosen unless the condition is promptly remedied.

Where the door has plenty of clearance on the lock side and the pin seems to move slightly when the door is closed, loosen both hinges at the frame and insert cardboard under the jamb leaves along the outer edges. If upon tightening the hinges and closing the door the margins are more uniform and the pins do not move the repairs should be permanent.

When the door has sprung inward or outward at the hinge edge as a result of warping it will be almost impossible to close it without exerting considerable pressure against the bulging part. This difficulty is generally overcome by putting on an additional hinge midway between the other two to hold the door straight.

HOW TO SEW

by Ruth Wyeth Spears

DO YOU need a screen to keep drafts from a child's bed? Or perhaps you would like to have a good-looking one to cut off the view from the dining room into the kitchen or from a bedroom into a bathroom? Well, here is an idea for that screen. Buy four well-seasoned boards each 1 foot wide; 1 inch thick and as long as the height you wish the screen to be; also 9 hinges of the 1-inch butt type used for cupboard doors. Next, select a smart chintz to cover your boards. To estimate the amount of chintz, multiply the height of the screen by three and then add ¼-yard. Now, just follow the directions in the sketch and you will have your screen in no time.

And, by the way, if you are interested in making a collection of fabric toys, complete directions for the Rag Baby on the floor are in Sewing Book No. 2. The Sleepy Time doll on the bed and the Bandanna doll on the shelf are in Book 4; the Stocking Cat is in Book 3. You will also find full directions for the crocheted rug in Book No. 3. Directions for the lamp shades are in Book No. 1. Send 10 cents in coin for each book desired. If you order four books I will include patterns and directions for three of my Favorite Early American quilts, FREE. The Kaleidoscope; the Whirl Wind and the Ann Rutledge. Send order to:

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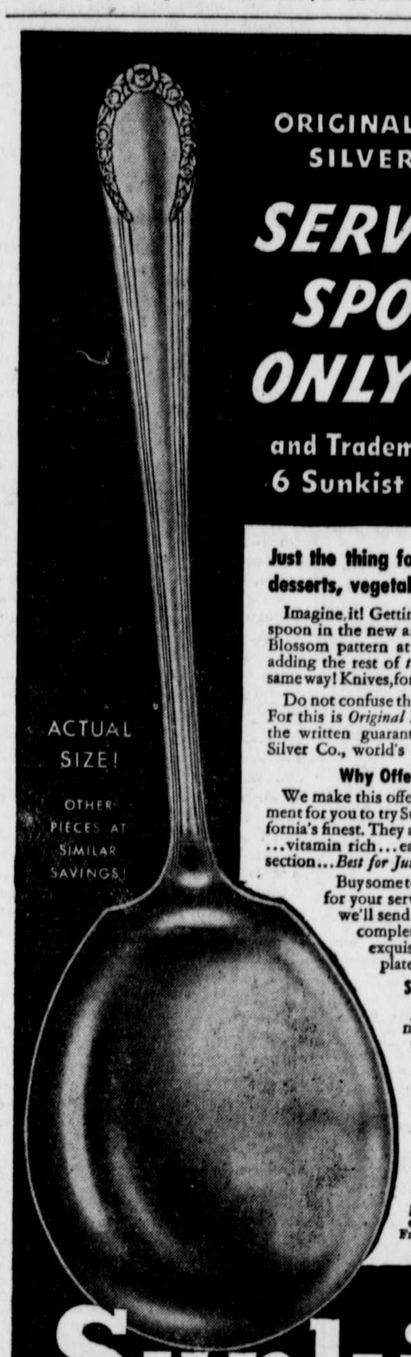

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