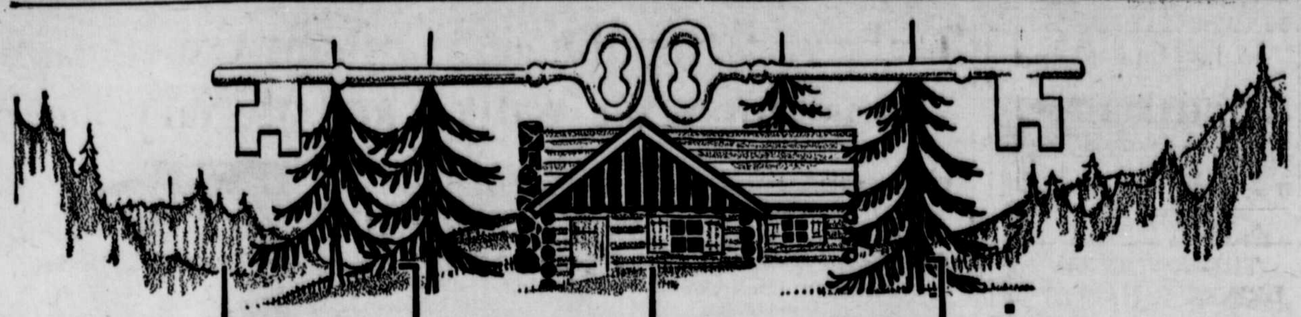

two keys to a cabin

BY LIDA LARRIMORE

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CHAPTER XI—Continued

—17—

John's smile thanked Gay. He eyed the check and took a bill from his wallet. Gay rose as he pulled back her chair. He cupped his hand beneath her elbow and they walked, circling tables where people, dining, glanced up as they passed, toward the arched door-way into the lobby.

"Are your things ready?" he asked. "Do you need to go up to your room?"

"Send a boy. I'll check out."

"I'll take care of that."

"No, John. Let me."

"You're my guest."

"But, darling—" Her eyes fell from his face. "All right," she said slowly.

From the divan on which she sat she watched him cross the lobby to the desk, holding himself stiffly, his shoulders erect. Though she saw only his back in the dark tweed suit, she knew how his face looked, a little grim, the jaw line pronounced, his dark eyes brooding. How silly of him. But how thoughtless of her, perhaps. She must be careful—She must remember—

When he came back to her, a bell-boy followed with her luggage. John took her loose fur coat from the boy, held it, apologized for hurrying her, but avoided her glance. They went out through a revolving door. Cold wind struck them with unanticipated force. She was blown in a staggering half-circle. He caught her. They stood on the pavement in the light washing out from the hotel. Their eyes met.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I thought—"

"You were right." His eyes were penitent, his slow smile self-reproachful. "I was showing off. Forgive me."

Gay laughed as John approached the open door of the second-floor sitting-room in Dr. Sargeant's home. Mary Adams' voice continued, then broke off as John called in from the hall.

"The last patient gone?" she asked, glancing up from needles that flashed through scarlet wool.

"I've padlocked the office door." He went to Gay, settled comfortably in a corner of the davenport and dropped down beside her. "Mary, do you think that professional ethics would permit me to cut the telephone wires?"

"I shouldn't hesitate," she replied briskly, and stabbed an amber needle through the rolled length of knit wool.

Mary folded her knitting and stabbed a needle through the bundle of wool. "There'll be a greater possibility of Miss Graham's liking me if I disappear tactfully now."

"Don't run away, Mary."

Her small brown face twinkled. "You aren't very convincing, John." She rose from the chair beneath the lamp. "You can have breakfast anytime you like," she said, smiling at Gay. "John has his pretty early."

"I'll have breakfast with John. Will you call me?"

"The children will probably attend to that. You've made a terrific impression on my son, Nat. He's a susceptible young man. Good-night."

"Good-night, Mrs. Adams. And thank you."

"I do like her," Gay said when Mary Adams had gone out and closed the door.

"Mary's very fine." John dropped down on the davenport again.

"She tells me that her husband is in Manila."

"Yes, for two years. Mary had a bad case of typhoid last summer and Dr. Sargeant thought it unwise for her to go with him. She's not very strong and the tropics are enervating. Those two kids are a handful."

"They're darlings. I helped her put them to bed. I want two boys and two girls."

"Do you?" His dark eyes were amused and tender. "Do you want children, Gay?"

"I've never thought of it especially; but now, after seeing Skippy and Nat, I'm sure I do."

"I'd be awfully jealous of them." He drew her close to him. "I have to touch you to be sure you're here. Downstairs in the office I couldn't make myself believe it. But you are, aren't you? This is—you."

"Darling! John!"

"This afternoon," he said after a moment, "when I came in and there wasn't a letter from you, I was— I thought—"

"What did you think?"

"What I always think; that you'd forgotten me, changed your mind—"

"Idiot!" She laughed softly. "I couldn't hold out any longer. Three days ago I flew from Palm Beach to New York."

"Flew? Literally?"

"Literally. What's the matter?" she asked in alarm. "You look—"

"You mustn't go flying around in the heavens, Gay. That will be one more thing for me to worry about. Suppose something had happened—"

"But nothing did happen. We reached New York safely and uneventfully."

"I like it here." Her eyes moved around the warm comfortably-furnished room. "I like Mrs. Adams and Abbie and the children. How long may I stay?"

"As long as you like. But—" He hesitated.

"What, John?"

"I called Mother tonight. She's expecting us in Rockland tomorrow. I'm free for the afternoon and evening."

"But I can come back here with you tomorrow night?"

"I think Mother will expect you to stay with her for a day or two."

"You—can't?"

"I can run out at night after office-hours and back early in the morning. It isn't far." His eyes searched her face. "You don't mind, Gay?"

"You've never told me," she said hesitantly. "What does your mother think of this—of us?"

"She was surprised, of course," he said guardedly. "But she's gotten accustomed to the idea. She loved your sending flowers for her birthday."

"Yes, she wrote me. I remember the date because I helped you buy a birthday present for her in New York."

"It was sweet of you to remember. She's eager to meet you. My sisters, too. And Granny. Granny's all for romance."

"I don't think I'll feel strange with her. Your mother, I mean. She's Uncle John's sister."

He was silent.

"Is she like Uncle John was, friendly and wise and amusing? I have imagined her being that way."

"Mother is rather reticent," John said slowly. "She's never gotten over my father's death. And then her life hasn't been easy. My father died when I was twelve years old. He left very little. She made a great many sacrifices to send me to college and medical school. She worshiped my father. We, Sarah and Debby and I, have been her whole life since his death. You won't be offended if she seems a little—reserved?"

There was silence for a moment. Then Gay said, "Can't we spend tomorrow afternoon and evening with her and then come back here?"

"I'm afraid she would be offended, but if you don't want to go . . ."

"I want to do what is courteous, but I'd rather be with you."

"I'll come at night. If you were here I couldn't be with you during the day."

"But I like it here. It's friendly and impersonal. With your family—" She made a helpless gesture. "Oh, you know how it was in New York. We quarreled. People got in the way. We weren't happy unless we were alone."

His bright pleading glance darkened.

"We can't ignore Mother and my sisters."

She sat for a moment, silent, looking down at her hands. Then she lifted her head. "I know. It's going to be all right. Don't look so despondent, darling."

"Of course it is." His face brightened. "You're more adaptable than I am and the situation is less complicated."

"I'm not timid about meeting people, usually. There isn't much of the shrinking violet in my temperament. How shall I act to make the proper impression?"

"Just be yourself, Gay."

"With no—modifications?" Mischief glinted in blue sparkles between her thick dark lashes.

"Certainly not." His voice was indignant. "You're so sweet and gay and generous, really generous. Or perhaps I mean tolerant. More than I am—"

"I haven't much character. I can't seem to get agitated about most of the things that people think are important."

"That isn't a lack of character. It's poise, self-confidence, knowing what you want and how to get it."

"I know what I want, but getting it isn't so easy."

He dropped his head to kiss the soft hollow at the base of her throat. "Mother will love you," he said.

"I hope so." With her hands on his face she lifted his head. "But if she doesn't, it isn't especially important, is it? It doesn't matter, does it? Does it, John?"

His head dropped against her breast. Her arms went around him, holding him close.

"No — No, darling," he said. "Nothing matters except that you're here."

CHAPTER XII

—

Gay roused, opened her eyes, sat up in the high-posted bed. A blast of air from the open window struck her like the stinging needles of a shower. She slid back into the warm hollow her body had made and pulled the covers up under her chin. But the blast of air had wakened her as effectively as though, literally, it had been an ice-cold shower. Her eyes were wide open, her senses alert. No hope of drowsing off into sleep again.

She lay looking up at the ceiling where bars of sunlight striped the dim ivory-toned paper and miniature rainbows, reflections from glass stoppers in scent bottles on the bureau, moved quiveringly. The storm was over, then, the blizzard which John had predicted. He would be here tonight if the roads were cleared. But that would be—How many hours away?

She glanced at her watch, then plunged her arm under the blankets and quilts. She should get up immediately. Mrs. Houghton had told her to sleep as long as she liked. But there was no servant except the dour angular woman they called Huldah and she didn't want to make extra work.

She must get up. The household was stirring. She heard footsteps along the hall, Debby's lovely young voice raised in spirited discussion,

"What did you think?"

the scrape of a shovel on the pavement outside. Summoning all her courage, she threw back the covers, huddled her dressing-gown about her shoulders, slipped her feet into satin mules and dashed across the room to lower the window.

If John were here, she wouldn't mind. Gay assembled fresh underwear and toilet articles in preparation for a dash to the bath-room. She hadn't anticipated being marooned here three days without him. She had anticipated none of the contingencies which had arisen, nothing beyond seeing him, being with him again. He would come tonight, surely, and take her back into Portland. There was only today to get through. Feeling more cheerful, she opened the door, made a quick survey of the situation, then hurried along the hall and down two steps to the bath-room.

When she returned to the bedroom, partially clothed beneath her dressing-gown, she found Debby there.

"Good-morning." Debby turned from one of the front windows that over-looked the street. She was a vivid, restless, appealing young thing, Gay thought, dark like John, with dark eyes and crisply curling dark hair, standing slender and straight in the dress of dull red wool, her hands in the pockets of the jacket.

"Good-morning," Gay said, smiling.

"You should have waited." Debby's voice was lovely, low, with contralto cadences, spirited, alive. "I meant to come in and lower the window." She picked up Gay's dressing-gown as it fell to the floor. "This is beautiful, but you must be frozen. And that nightgown. Nothing but satin and lace."

"I've never been in Maine in the winter before." Gay opened the door of the wardrobe. "That's obvious from the clothes I brought, isn't it?" she asked, laughing.

"Wear this gray one." Debby stood beside her, interested in the contents of the wardrobe. "It's angora, isn't it?" Her slender, olive-skinned hand touched the soft material appreciatively.

"That's the warmest." Gay took the dress from the hanger.

"You'll need it." Debby went to perch in the deep sill of the window. "You can't keep this old house warm. It's as draughty as a barn and there aren't enough radiators."

"It's a marvelous house, Debby." Gay's head emerged through the neckline of the gray angora dress. "I should think you'd be awfully proud of it."

Debby's dark eyes flashed. "I hate it," she said. "When I have a house of my own, there isn't going to be one old thing in it."

"You like modern furnishings and decorations?" Gay drew on gray woolen stockings, laced gray suede oxfords, crossed the lacings around her ankles.

"Do I!"

"You'd be interested in my mother's apartment in New York. It's modern."

"John told me. It's a pent-house, isn't it? I don't suppose I'll ever get to New York," she added gloomily. "I can't persuade Mother to go to Boston even."

"Would you like to live in Boston?"

"I'd like to live anywhere but here. Portland would do. But you can't pry Mother away."

"This is her home," Gay said, interested in John's younger sister, sympathizing with her restlessness, thinking how unlike John she was in temperament, though, physically, there was a resemblance.

"I suppose it was fun to live here once," Debby went on, sensing, Gay thought, her sympathy and interest. "A long time ago, I mean, when the men went on voyages and brought things back from China and India. Sometimes the women went, too. My great-grandmother who I was named for did. I'd have liked that."

"But," Debby continued regretfully, "as they say on the radio, 'Time marches on.' The place is a back-water, now, and no mistake. There's no fun, except in summer. You can't make Mother leave, though. She's had plenty of chances to sell the house. We could get enough for it, even in the condition it's in, to live comfortably somewhere. The summer people are all crazy about it, heaven knows why. John thinks—" She broke off with an apologetic laugh. "I certainly am running on. It's fun to have someone to talk to. You're even better looking than your pictures, Gay."

"Thank you," Gay turned from the mirror, smiling.

"I used to watch for pictures of you after John went to your debutante party. They have the swank magazines at the beauty-shop and Miss Sophie let me cut them out to send to John. I thought he liked you pretty well, then, and Uncle John told Mother—"

A clock in the hall struck a series of strangling notes. Debby slid down from the sill.

"It struck nine, didn't it? Then it's half past eight and I've got to scram. I wish I could stay with you."

"I wish you could."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Explorer Sees Wealth In Antarctic Regions

Vilhjalmur Stefansson, noted Arctic explorer, believes that the United States is wise to acquire territorial rights in the Antarctic.

The vast "down under" continent, he said, may prove to be a valuable source of petroleum, radium and food and that in the near future it would become valuable for long-range weather forecasting.

He said the value of the Antarctic could not be ascertained because no one could look into the future.

"Who would have known a hundred years ago that Canada some day would become an important source of radium?" Stefansson asked. "Benjamin Franklin was a wise man, and he was smart enough to make a good-sized fortune. But he knew about petroleum in western Pennsylvania and, despite his wisdom, he could not conceive its commercial value."

He said moves by the United States to acquire Arctic regions might seem ridiculous at present, but that in the future the lands would be valuable.

"When we bought the Danish West Indies, now called the Virgin Islands," Stefansson said, "we gave Denmark all our rights in Greenland. Now it is known that the territory which was ours in Greenland was worth many times more than the Virgin islands."

He predicted that weather observations in the Antarctic would make it possible to determine weather conditions in Australia a year or two in advance.

The Washington MERRY-GO-ROUND

DREW PEARSON & ROBERT ALLEN

WNU SERVICE

Washington, D. C.

HITLER AND U. S.

From diplomatic information it is possible to get a general idea of what the immediate future will bring forth in Europe if Hitler takes England, as he seems sure to do in the next month.

FIRST, he will want to buy U. S. cotton and grain in large quantities—in fact, he will be willing to take most of our surplus—but he will want a huge loan from the United States government to do it. This will be called reconstruction financing, and it will be tempting bait to farming and business groups.

SECOND, it is more than likely that Hitler will offer to freeze the armaments of Europe and the United States on the basis of their present armed strength.

This also will be tempting to a tax-ridden American public. The United States always has favored disarmament, and several times has proposed freezing armaments. However, this was when France and England had an army and navy, and when this country was protected by them in South America.

Today, Hitler's reported plan would leave the United States with less than 250,000 men, Germany with about 3,000,000. In other words, Latin America would be open to attack at any time, and the United States would be powerless to prevent it.

Nevertheless, Hitler's plans would have strong appeal in the United States, especially if accompanied by the usual Nazi propaganda stating that Hitler had only the kindliest ideas about the United States and cherished absolutely no designs for any part of her soil.

Note—This was the propaganda Germany dropped from airplanes on France before the tanks came. It told how France and Germany had no basic quarrel, could live in peace indefinitely.

• • •

HITLER'S SECRET GAS

All the evidence gathered by military agents abroad now points to the probability that Hitler's secret plan for conquering Britain is poison gas.

It is significant that so far, Hitler has not used gas. Even more significant is the fact that he has been storing it up in huge reserves. French and British intelligence officers have sent back reports that alarming quantities are now manufactured and ready for use. Whether any new and more deadly form of gas has been perfected, they do not know.

One reason Hitler did not use gas in attacking France and Belgium was that his army was moving too fast. His tanks and armored cars were penetrating into the enemy lines so rapidly that they would have caught up with their own gas. It would have hampered Nazi operations rather than aided them.

But in England it will be different. For the English channel lies between Germany and her victim. There will be no danger of the gas seeping back to Nazi invaders until they actually land troops.

And so far all evidence indicates that before attempting to land troops, Hitler will subject England to a rain of bombs such as the world never has seen before.

Only after Hitler has gassed and bombed England to the verge of surrender will the Nazi attack by sea begin.

• • •

U. S. WAR PRODUCTION

One very real worry among some of Roosevelt's friends is that after all the hullabaloo over national defnse, October may come around with not many more airplanes or tanks constructed.

This, they know, would be disastrous to the country, but also from a purely political viewpoint it would mean the defeat of President Roosevelt or any other Democratic candidate at the polls in November.

This possibility has caused shaking of heads even among several cabinet members who have seen how slowly other projects moved in the past. They know that with the nation voting the biggest national defense budget in peacetime history, and with the President himself emphasizing its urgency, the country is going to expect results and expect them fast.

• • •

CAPITAL CHAFF

Summer heat has come to Washington, but not the new fiscal year. Result: No electric fans for the state department. The building has just had its wiring changed from direct to alternating current, but the money for new fans is not available until the new fiscal year.

White House press conferences are drawing between 150 and 200 newsmen these days.

U. S. Ambassador Steinhart looks in vain for a day of rest in Moscow. The Soviets have outlawed Sunday; they take one day of rest every six days. But it usually coincides with a week-day in Washington when the state department is at work—and its cables keep Steinhart at work.

SEC Commissioner Leon Henderson went back to his class reunion at Swarthmore college, where 20 years ago they called him "Dub." The class parade was headed by a sign reading, "Wall Street—Don't Be Afraid of Henderson—We Knew Him When He Was 'Dub'."

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