

(Continued from Page 41)

really all you wanted, he seemed to say. Aren't you the timid one!

She leaned toward the open door and hesitated. She could get out now, say good-by and never see him again. If he came calling around for Harriet Oakes, he'd find twelve feminine names on the mailboxes, and not a Harriet among them. Now was the time to stop, if she wanted to stop. And this was the first attractive, prosperous, quick-witted man she'd met in four years.

"Unless," she said, "you'd like to come up with me for a cigarette?"

"Love to," he cried gladly, and things were in swift, confusing motion again.

The driver was paid and tipped, the young man's coat and brief case were gathered up, she ran beside him through the rain to the entrance way, she fumbled for her key, they were going upstairs—she abandoned her letters in the incriminatingly labeled mailbox; there wouldn't be anything interesting, anyway—they were in her wide, low-beamed top-floor living room, and the rain was beating against the windowpanes in a quiet, imperative, exciting way. Romantic and glamorous weather, and now she had a man. She switched on the lights.

"Well, aren't you pretty!" he said admiringly, looking around. Green walls and a wide, low divan—forty dollars secondhand, and twenty more to be reupholstered in beige; broad casement windows overlooking the dark, rainy street; a dark red carpet; lamps with pale green shades on low tables; crystal ash trays; a tapa cloth hanging on one wall; two of Harriet's sketches on another. He went over to look at them. "So you draw," he said, reading the signature aloud. He raised his dark eyebrows at her in ironical surprise, seeming to say, "So it is your real name! Or do you draw?"

"Only a little," she said carelessly. "Put your things anywhere."

Her hands were shaking when she took off her hat; she couldn't do anything with her hair, her hands were so nervous, and she was so aware of his watchful eyes on her. *Burn, O courage, with a steady flame,* she thought, but it didn't; it wavered and flickered and then went out like a candle in the rain. She was scared again. *Mother was right,* she thought. *Working like this, I'll be able to prove all the copy-book axioms firsthand in a month. And probably come out of it a wreck.*

He threw his coat and hat on a chair, propped his brief case against the leg of it, and sat down himself on the divan. "Well, darling," he said with great cheerfulness, "it's nice to be indoors on a rainy night. What about that cigarette? Wait on me like a barem, will you? I feel too comfortable to move."

She sat carefully down in the chair farthest from the divan. But no conversation came to fill the silence. He was regarding her with a steady dark gaze, faintly amused again, waiting for her to entertain him. He didn't make any effort himself about it. And there was something vaguely humiliating, vaguely shameful, about that. And she couldn't think of anything to say.

Meeting him in the usual way, at a party, or as the brother or the friend of a friend, she could have talked about the friend or the party; or knowing his busi-

ness, she could have talked about his business; or even knowing his real name, she might have found mutual acquaintances somewhere out in the dark, rainy world, and everything would have been all right. But what did you talk about to a man whose name, friends and business you didn't know? She turned on the little radio at her elbow, and music came after a while, faint and sweet against a background of static. She changed the station and got a noisy rumba that blended with the static. "Nice?" she said, for something to say.

"Do you like dancing?"

She felt an immense wave of relief. Finally he had said something entirely on his own initiative. Maybe things would go all right, after all. "I love it." "Shall we try this?" He stood up.

Putting her right hand in his, her left hand flat against his shoulder—in so convenient a position for holding him off, if necessary—she thought, *Thank heaven for rumbas, impersonal as the gavotte, but modern; accommodating to conversation but active enough not to require it.* And he turned out to be good.

The thick carpet wasn't too much of a handicap, and they did quick turns and quick reverses and all the complicated steps they knew for four energetic and exciting minutes, until the music came to an end and they were hot, perspiring and happy with accomplishment.

"You're good," he said, panting slightly, sitting down on the divan again. "I haven't danced in an age."

"Why not? Don't you like it?" She got the box of cigarettes from the desk and returned with it. "You're good."

"I don't have time," he sighed. "There's never time for everything you want to do."

"Isn't that true," she agreed, and decided it was safe to sit down on the divan with him. It was long; the whole middle cushion was between them. He put an ash tray there. "Business keeps you busy?"

"You can say that again. And again." He sighed once more. "I haven't been dancing in four months, at least. And I haven't had dinner at home for a week. And I'm sick of sandwiches for lunch—my desk gets all crumbly, and Mrs. Horner hates to recopy letters just because they've got a speck of butter on the corner."

"Is she your secretary?"

"M'm-m-m."

Wouldn't it be like that! she thought. *A guy like this would have a secretary who's already married.* The world was badly put together.

"But," he said, turning with a quick smile, "let's not talk about business."

"What shall we talk about, then?"

"About you. About us, as they say. About what a romantic place this is, all cozy and warm with the rain outside."

She knew now what a shy horse felt like, and "shy" was the word for it. A quick, timid leaping away, mental in her case, but no less fearful for that. "Well, I don't know," she said, and avoided a stammer by main force of will. "You've said everything there is to be said about that already."

"I haven't said the half. All I've said was I liked your hat. I like that funny necklace too—what's it made of?" He

(Continued on Page 49)

THE PANCAKE SUPPER



"MMM-M"
Folks sho' goes fo' my dee-licious Down South PANCAKES!"



Get both for variety... the Red Box for Pancakes or Waffles, the Yellow Box for Buckwheats!

seriously!
the ripe,
of finest
by speedy
And then,
d, Chunk-
always get

te
le.

se health
as a source
ries of Vita-
phosphorus
Del Monte
es found in