

take it now. He'll not take property from me after he's made love to my wife. I'll give him credit for that."

She looked at him with an odd kind of objectivity. It struck her that whatever it was that had convinced her once that she loved him was merely a foreshadowing of her love for Rev. It was the difference between a pinchbeck gem, glittering and brilliant but made of glass, and the real jewel.

Lucien flicked ashes onto the carpet. "Oh, well, it doesn't matter really. I felt rather a fool. A man expects certain things of his wife. I lost my temper. Now," he said kindly, "you'd better forget all this. I intend to."

"Lucien," she said suddenly, "where were you when Rev found me in the storehouse?"

He smiled and shook his head. "Not near enough to hear your fine and noble scene."

"Someone unlocked the door and then just . . . disappeared."

"I didn't, if that's what you mean. Why should I? Don't be childish. It was that little fool Glendora. Or old Uncle Jethro, he's in his dotage. One of them locked you in there simply because the keys were on the outside of the door and then got scared when we were all looking for you."

Maude called from the hall, "Open the door, Lucien. My hands are full."

Lucien sprang up from his chair, opened the door and Maude came in, carrying a tray. "Here's some supper. And here's a toddy. Now drink that and — Cousin Sarah, what was in your coffee yesterday morning?"

"Opium," Sarah said wearily. Maude's eyes widened. "Opium! Why, there's no opium on the place —"

"Oh, yes," Lucien said, "Sarah brought some with her. She knew we were short of medicines. It disappeared."

"But—but it might have killed her!" Maude began, with the effect of Vesuvius beginning to erupt, and stopped as Lolotte swirled into the room like a spitting cat.

"You told Rev that I killed Emile. Him I put something in your coffee. Him that I locked you in the storehouse. Hate me. You know Lucien's still in love with me! You know he only married you for money, you hate me —"

Maude put out an arm and flung her small, flaring hands away. She gave Lolotte an ice-cold look. "You say about Emile?"

"Oh, you don't think any Yankee either! Everybody in the house that —" Lolotte stopped when drawn breath.

Lucien said, "What does every house know, Lolotte?"

There was a moment of silence, the murmur of the frogs and the singing of locusts outside seemed to fill the room.

Finally Lucien said, "Lolotte, truth. Did you find some opium and try to give it to Sarah?"

Lolotte's eyes flared. "Opium? I heard of any opium or — On some bottles here on the table. But I thought Cousin Sarah had been from Paris. Cologne and stuff to face and — Don't look at me, Lucien. Of course I came here to help as soon as I could, and looked at she'd brought with her. I found her contract too. I opened it, of course I not? And I read it." Her dark eyes shined in them; she flashed a glance at Sarah. "Do you know that if Lucien — happens to him in the war House everything he's got goes to Cousin Sarah a thing to any of us! It wasn't fair. You've got to change it."

"Why, now, Lolotte," Lucien said, "I hope I'll not be killed."

"Oh, Lucien —" She ran to him. "You see that that's all Cousin Sarah from you? She wants a husband and why, she just snatched you — and then you to agree to that contract and — caught his arm. "Lucien, you must do

Sarah said, "Lolotte, how many people you told about our marriage contract?" "It doesn't matter," Lucien said. "It is that why you gave Sarah that opium?" "Why—but I didn't —" Maude said, "Cousin Sarah's got the money here. God knows when, if ever, she'll get her father's money. Good heavenly day, if you mean that Lolotte tried to kill Sarah—what earthly good would it do anybody?"

"I've got to leave tomorrow," Lolotte said. "Lolotte, if you shot Emile —"

"I didn't —"

"Nobody's going to let you or . . . charged with murder."

"But I didn't! Those dueling pistols been cleaning them. I left them in the And then—that night—well, there on the porch. It wasn't where I all. So I—I just picked it up and hid it."

Maude said, "Lolotte, is that why one of us shot Emile?"

"Well—yes." Her face was drawn. "I thought so right away, the minute I saw the pistol case. So I thought—well, I did it. Emile got what he deserved."

"But who took the pistols? Who shot Cousin Sarah could have done it. I could have done it. She had some kind of quarrel with Emile that afternoon. Why, Sarah could have got mad and shot Emile that night."

"And how did she get hold of my pistols?" Lucien asked softly.

"I—there they were in plain sight. As if I could have taken them." Lolotte looked toward Maude. "Why—why, I know you killed him. Cousin Maude. George killed him. Why—why, may I say did it himself. Emile," she said with a misal of the whole situation. "Emile . . . matter?"



A real man-pleaser meal: spicy London broil, pink new potatoes, and a salad he'll love—raw mushrooms and celery.

Cooking time limited

a quick meal with plenty in its flavor

By LOUELLA G. SHOUER

A half hour is all the time this steak dinner takes to prepare, but the elements of surprise and delight are here! The London broil, for instance, with a barbecue sauce requiring no cooking—just mixing. And the dessert—fresh strawberries with a sauce of puréed frozen raspberries and slivered almonds—a really happy ending.

While the dinner is cooking and the brown-and-serve salt sticks are heating, there's plenty of time to make the salad.

Here's to a quick, easy success!

Ruby Strawberries

1 package (10-ounce) frozen raspberries
1 cup sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice

2 pints or 1 quart strawberries
1 cup toasted slivered almonds

These raspberries enough to fill 10-ounce sauce or food mill.

MENU Barbecued London Broil
New Potatoes
Mushroom-and-Celery Salad
Salt Sticks
Ruby Strawberries
Coffee

Barbecued London Broil

2-2½-pound trimmed flank steak
Meat tenderizer
¾ cup canned tomato sauce
¼ cup molasses
3 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons and 1 teaspoon vinegar
1 tablespoon salad oil

1 tablespoon instant minced onion
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1½ teaspoons prepared mustard
1½ teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
Dash of cayenne

Treat the meat with tenderizer according to directions on the jar. Mix all remaining ingredients for the sauce. Lay the flank steak in the broiler pan rather than on the rack. Preheat broiler. Pour sauce over beef. Broil about 2" from heat—5 minutes—basting with sauce once. Turn beef over. Broil 5 minutes more for rare, 7 for medium, basting now and then. Carve into thin slices crosswise against the grain, a little on the diagonal. Put on platter with sauce for serving. The potatoes can go right on the platter too. Makes 4 servings.

Mushroom-and-Celery Salad

½ pound mushrooms
1 cup chopped or sliced celery
2 tablespoons diced green or red sweet pepper