BLACK IS WHITE

By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

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SYNOPSIS.

In the New York home of James Brood, his son, Frederic, receives a wireless from him. Frederic tells Lydia Desmond, his fiancée, that the message announces his father's marriage and orders Mrs. Desmond, the housekeeper and Lydia's mother, to prepare the house for an immediate home-coming. Brood and his bride arrive. She wins Frederic's liking at first meeting. Brood shows dislike and veiled hostility to his son. Lydia and Mrs. Brood met in the Bahamas, where Lydia works as Brood's secretary. Mrs. Brood is startled by the appearance of Ranjah, Brood's Hindu servant. She makes changes in the household and gains her husband's consent to send Mrs. Desmond and Lydia away. She fascinates Frederic. She begins to fear Ranjah in his uncanny appearances and disappearances, and Frederic, remembering his father's East Indian stories and firm belief in magic, fears unknown evil. Ranjah performs feats of magic for Dawes and figgs. Frederic's father, jealous, unjustly orders his son from the dinner table as drunk. Brood tells the story of Ranjah's life to his guests. "He killed a woman"—Mrs. Brood unfaithful to him. Yvonne plays with Frederic's infatuation for her. Her husband warns her that the thing must not go on. She tells him that he still loves his dead wife, whom he drives from home, through her, Yvonne. Yvonne plays with Brood, Frederic and Lydia as with figures on a chess board. Brood, madly jealous, tells Lydia that Frederic is not his son, and that he has brought him up to kill his happiness at the proper time with this knowledge. Frederic takes Lydia home through a heavy storm and spends the night at her mother's house.

CHAPTER XII—Continued.

"She was jealous. She admitted it, dear. If I don't mind, why should you incur—"

"Do you really believe she—she loves the governor enough to be as jealous at all that?" he exclaimed, a curious gleam in his eyes—an expression she did not like.

"Of course I think so," she cried emphatically. "What a question! Have you any reason to suspect that she does not love your father?"

"No—certainly not," he said in some confusion. Then, after a moment: "Are you quite sure this headache of yours is real, Lyddy? Isn't it an excuse to stay away from—from Yvonne, after what happened last night? Be honest, dear."

She was silent for a long time, weighing her answer. Was it best to be honest with him?

"I confess that it has something to do with it," she admitted. Lydia could not be anything but truthful.

"I thought so. It's—it's a rotten shame, Lyddy. That's why I want to talk to her. I want to reason with her. It's all so perfectly silly, this misunderstanding. You've just got to go on as you were before, Lyddy—just as if it hadn't happened. It—"

"I shall complete the work for your father, Freddy," she said quietly. "Two or three days more will see the end. After that, neither my services nor my presence will be required over there."

"You don't mean to say—" he began, unbelievingly.

"I can think of them just as well here as anywhere else. No; I shan't annoy Mrs. Brood, Freddy." It was on the tip of her tongue to say more, but she thought better of it.

"They're going abroad soon," he ventured. "At least, that's father's plan. Yvonne isn't so keen about it. She calls this being abroad, you know. Besides," he hurried on in his eagerness to excuse Yvonne, "she's tremendously fond of you. No end of times she's said you were the finest—" Her smile—an odd one, such as he had never seen on her lips before—checked his eager speech. He bridled. "Of course, if you don't choose to believe me, there's nothing more to be said. She meant it, however."

"I am sure she said it, Freddy," she hastened to declare. "Will she be pleased with our—our marriage?" It required a great deal of courage on her part to utter these words, but she was determined to bring the true situation home to him.

He did not even hesitate, and there was conviction in his voice as he replied, "It doesn't matter whether she's pleased or displeased. We're pleasing ourselves, are we not? There's no one else to consider, dear."

Her eyes were full upon his, and there was wonder in them. "Thank you—thank you, Freddy," she cried. "I—I knew you'd—" The sentence remained unfinished.

"Has there ever been a doubt in your mind?" he asked, uneasily, after a moment. He knew there had been misgivings and he was ready, in his self-abasement, to resent them if given the slightest opening. Guilt made him arrogant.

"No," she answered simply.

The answer was not what he expected. He flushed painfully.

"I thought perhaps you'd—you'd got a notion in your head that—" He, too, stopped for want of the right words to express himself without committing the egregious error of letting her see that it had been in his thoughts to accuse her of jealousy.

She waited for a moment. "That I might have got the notion in my head you did not love me any longer? Is that what you started to say?"

"Yes," he confessed, averting his eyes.

"I've been unhappy at times, Freddy, but that is all," she said, steadily. "You see, I know how honest you really are. I know it far better than you know it yourself."

He stared. "I wonder just how honest I am," he muttered. "I wonder what would happen if— But nothing can happen. Nothing ever will happen. Thank you, old girl, for saying what you said just now. It's—it's bully of you."

He got up and began pacing the floor. She leaned back in her chair, deliberately giving him time to straighten out his thoughts for himself. Wiser than she knew herself to be, she held back the warm, loving words of encouragement, of gratitude, of belief.

But she was not prepared for the impetuous appeal that followed. He threw himself down beside her and grasped her hands in his. His face seemed suddenly old and haggard, his eyes burned like coals of fire. Then, for the first time, she had an inkling of the great struggle that had been going on inside of him for weeks and weeks.

"Listen, Lyddy," he began, nervously, "will you marry me tomorrow? Are you willing to take the chance that I'll be able to support you, to earn enough—"

"Why, Freddy!" she cried, half starting up from the couch. She was dumfounded.

"Will you? Will you? I mean it," he went on, almost arrogantly.

He was very much in earnest, but alas, the fire, the passion of the importunate lover was missing. She shrank back into the corner of the couch, staring at him with puzzled eyes. Comprehension was slow in arriving. As he hurried on with his plea she began to see clearly; her sound, level brain grasped the significance of this sudden decision on his part.

"There's no use waiting, dear. I'll never be more capable of earning a living than I am right now. I can go into the office with Brooks any day and I—I think I can make good. God knows I can try hard enough. Brooks says he's got a place there for me in the bond department. It won't be much at first, but I can work into a pretty good—what's the matter? Don't you think I can do it? Have you no faith in me? Are you afraid to take a chance?"

She had smiled sadly—it seemed to him reprovingly. His cheek flushed.

"What has put all this into your head, Freddy, dear?" she asked shrewdly.

His eyes wavered. "I can't go on living as I have been for the past few months. I've just got to end it, Lyddy. You don't understand—you can't, and there isn't any use in trying to explain the—"

"I think I do understand, dear," she said, quietly, laying her hand on his. "I understand so completely that there isn't any use in your trying to explain. But don't you think you are a bit cowardly?"

"Cowardly?" he gasped, and then the blood rushed to his face.

"Is it quite fair to me—or to yourself?" He was silent. She waited for a moment and then went on resolutely. "I know just what it is that you are afraid of, Freddy. I shall marry you, of course. I love you more than anything else in all the world. But are you quite fair in asking me to marry you while you are still afraid, dear?"

"Before God, I love no one else but you," he cried, earnestly. "I know what it is you are thinking and I—I don't blame you. But I want you now—good God, you don't know how much I need you now; I want to begin a new life with you. I want to feel that you are with me—just you—strong and brave and enduring. I am adrift. I need you."

"If you insist, I will marry you to-

"Will You Marry Me Tomorrow?"

morrow, but you cannot—you will not ask it of me, will you?"

"But you know I love you," he cried. "There isn't any doubt in your mind, Lyddy. There is no one else, I tell you."

"I think I am just beginning to understand men," she remarked enigmatically.

He looked up sharply. "And to wonder why they call women the weaker sex, eh?"

"Yes," she said so seriously that the wry smile died on his lips. "I don't believe there are many women who would ask a man to be sorry for them. That's really what all this amounts to, isn't it, Freddy?"

"By jove!" he exclaimed, wonderingly.

He stood, a strong, self-willed, chivalrous man, and yet you think nothing of asking a woman to protect you against yourself. You are afraid to stand alone. Wait. Five minutes—yes, one minute before you asked it of me, Freddy dear, you were floundering in the darkness, uncertain, which way to turn. You were afraid of the things you could not see. You looked for some place in which to hide. The flash of light revealed a haven of refuge. So you asked me to—to marry you tomorrow." All through this indictment he held his hand tightly clasped tightly in both of hers. He was looking at her with a frank acknowledgement growing in his eyes.

"Are you ashamed of me, Lyddy?" he asked. It was confession.

"No," she said, meeting his gaze steadily. "I am a little disappointed, that's all. It is you who are ashamed."

"I am," said he, simply. "It wasn't fair."

"Love will endure. I am content to wait," she said, with a wistful smile.

"You will be my wife no matter what happens? You won't let this make any difference?"

"You are not angry with me?"

"Angry? Why should I be angry with you, Lyddy? For shaking some sense into me? For seeing through me with that wonderful, far-sighted brain of yours? Why, I could go down on my knees to you. I could—"

He clasped her in his arms and held her close. "You dear, dear Lyddy!"

Neither spoke for many minutes. It was she who broke the silence.

"You must promise one thing, Frederic. For my sake, avoid a quarrel with your father. I could not bear that. You will promise, dear? You must."

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"Promise me you will wait. He is going away in a couple of weeks. When he returns—later on—next fall—"

"Oh, if it really distresses you, Lyddy, I'll—"

"It does distress me. I want your promise."

"Oh, so my part," he said, resignedly. "And next fall will see us married, so—"

The telephone bell in the hall was ringing. Frederic released Lydia's hand and sat up rather stiffly, as one who suddenly suspects that he is being spied upon. The significance of the movement did not escape Lydia. She laughed mirthlessly.

"I will see who it is," she said, and arose. Two red spots appeared in his cheeks. Then it was that she realized he had been waiting all along for the bell to ring; he had been expecting a summons.

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"Will you stay here for luncheon, Frederic? And this afternoon we will go to— Oh, is there a concert or a recital—"

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"Yes, Mrs. Brood, I will call him to the 'phone."

CHAPTER XIII.

Two Women.

Frederic had the feeling that he slunk to the telephone. The girl handed the receiver to him and he met her confident, untroubled gaze for a second. Instead of returning to the sitting-room where she could have heard everything that he said, she went into her own room down the hall and closed the door. He was not conscious of any intention to temporize, but it was significant that he did not speak until the door closed behind her. Afterwards he realized and was ashamed.

Almost the first words that Yvonne uttered were of a nature to puzzle and irritate him, although they bore directly upon his own previously formed resolution. Her voice, husky and low, seemed strangely plaintive and listless to him.

"Have you and Lydia made any plans for the afternoon?" she inquired. He made haste to declare their intention to attend a concert. "I am glad you are going to do that," she went on. "You will stay for luncheon with Lydia?"

"Yes. She's trying to pick up that thing of Fevereilli's—the one we heard last night." There was silence at the other end of the wire. "Are you there?"

"I will be home for dinner, of course. You—you don't need me for anything, do you?"

"No," she said. Then, with a low laugh: "You may be excused for the day, my son. Your father and I have been discussing the trip abroad."

"I thought you—you were opposed to going."

"I've changed my mind. As a matter of fact, I've changed my heart."

"You speak in riddles."

She was silent for a long time. "Frederic, I want you to do something for me. Will you try to convince Lydia that I meant no offense last night when I—"

"She understands all that perfectly, Yvonne."

"No, she doesn't. A woman wouldn't understand."

"In what way?"

There was a pause. "No woman likes to be regarded as a fool," she said at last, apparently after careful reflection. "Oh, yes; there is some-

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"Certainly not. Your father and I. I was about to suggest that you dine with Lydia—or better still, ask her over here to share your dinner with you."

He was scowling. "Where are you going?"

"Going? Oh, dining. I see. Well," slowly, deliberately, "we thought it would be great fun to dine alone at Delmonico's and see a play afterward."

"What play are you going to see?" he cut in. She mentioned a Belasco production. "Well, I hope you enjoy it, Yvonne. By the way, how is the governor today? In a good humor?"

There was no response. He waited for a moment and then called out: "Are you there?"

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When Lydia rejoined him in the sitting-room he was standing at the window, staring across the courtyard far below.

Are you going?" she asked, steadily.

He turned toward her, conscious of the telltale scowl that was passing from his brow. It did not occur to him to resent her abrupt, uncompromising question. As a matter of fact, it seemed quite natural that she should put to him questions of that way, flatly, incisively. He considered himself, in a way, to be on trial.

"No, I'm not," he replied. "You did not expect me to forget, did you?" He was uncomfortable under her honest, inquiring gaze. A sullen anger against himself took possession of him. He despised himself for the feeling of loneliness and homesickness that suddenly came over him.

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After luncheon, like two happy children they rushed off to the concert, and it was not until they were on their way home at five o'clock that his enthusiasm began to wane. She was quick to detect the change. He became moody, preoccupied; his part of the conversation was kept up with an effort that lacked all the spontaneity of his earlier and more engaging flights.

Lydia went far back in her calculations and attributed his mood to the promise she had exacted in regard to his attitude toward his father. It occurred to her that he was smarting under the restraint that his promise involved. She realized now, more than ever before, that there could be no delay, no faltering on her part. She would have to see James Brood at once. She would have to go down on her knees to him.

"I feel rather guilty, Freddy," she said, as they approached the house. "Mr. Brood will think it strange that I should plead a headache and yet run off to a concert and enjoy myself when he is so eager to finish the journal—especially as he is to sail so soon. I ought to see him, don't you think so? Perhaps there is something I can do tonight that will make up for the lost time." She was plainly nervous.

"He'd work you to death if he thought it would serve his purpose," said Frederic, gloomily, and back of that sentence lay the thought that made it absolutely imperative for her to act without delay.

"I will go in for a few minutes," she said, at the foot of the steps. "Are you not coming, too?"

He had stopped. "Not just now, Lyddy. I think I'll run up to Tom's flat and smoke a pipe with him. Thanks, old girl, for the happy day we've had. You don't mind if I leave you here?"

Her heart gave a great throb of relief. It was best to have him out of the way for the time being.

"Well—so long," he said, diffidently. "So long, Lyddy."

"So long," she repeated, dropping into his manner of speech without thinking. There was a smothering sensation in his breast.

He looked back as he strode off in the direction from which they had come. She was at the top of the steps, her fingers on the electric button. He wondered why her face was so white. He had always thought of it as being full of color, rich, soft and warm.

Inside in the darkness, unseen, he clasped tightly in both of hers. He was looking at her with a frank acknowledgement growing in his eyes.

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"No, I Shall Never Be an American."

and not without misgivings. "I should like to believe it," she said, concomittantly.

"Ah, but you doubt it. I see. Well, I do not blame you. I have given you much pain, much distress. When I am far away you will be glad—you will be happy. Is that not so?"

"But you are coming back," said Lydia, with a frank smile, not meant to be unfriendly.

Yvonne's face clouded. "Oh, yes, shall come back. Why not? Is this not my home?"

"You may call it your home, Mrs. Brood," said Lydia, "but are you quite sure your thoughts always abide here? I mean in the United States, of course."

Yvonne had looked up at her quickly. "Oh, I see. No, I shall never be an American." Then she abruptly changed the subject. "You have had a nice day with Frederic? You have been happy, both of you?"

"Yes—very happy, Mrs. Brood," said the girl, simply.

"I am glad. You must always be happy, you two. It is my greatest wish."

Lydia hesitated for a moment. "Frederic asked me to be his wife tomorrow," she said, and her heart began to thump queerly. She felt that she was approaching a crisis of some sort.

"Tomorrow?" fell from Yvonne's lips. The word was drawn out as if in one long breath. Then, to Lydia's astonishment, an extraordinary change came over the speaker. "Yes, yes, it should be—it must be tomorrow. Poor boy—poor boy! You will marry, yes, and go away at once, al—" Her voice was almost shrill in its intensity, her eyes were wide and eager and anxious.

"I— Oh, Mrs. Brood, is it for the best?" cried Lydia. "Is it the best thing for Frederic to do? I—I fear you might object. I am sure his father will refuse permission—"

"But you love each other—that is enough. Why ask the consent of anyone? Yes, yes, it is for the best. I know—oh, you cannot realize how well I know. You must not hesitate." The woman was trembling in her eagerness. Lydia's astonishment gave way to perplexity.

"What do you mean? Why are you so serious—so intent on this—"

"Frederic has no money," pursued Yvonne, as if she had not heard Lydia's words. "But that must not deter you. It must not stand in the way. I shall find a way, yes, I shall find a way. I—"

"But you know that you would provide for him—for us?" exclaimed Lydia.

"There is a way, there is a way," said the other, fixing her eyes appealingly on the girl's face, to which the flush of anger was slowly mounting.

"His father will not help him—if that is what you are counting upon, Mrs. Brood," said the girl coldly.

"I know. He will not help him, no."

Lydia started. "What do you know about—what has Mr. Brood said to you?" Her heart was cold with apprehension. "Why are you going away next week? What has happened?"

Brood's wife was regarding her with narrowing eyes. "Oh, I see. You think that my husband suspects that Frederic is too deeply interested in his beautiful stepmother, is that not so? Poof! It has nothing to do with it." Her eyes were sullen, full of resentment now. She was collecting herself.

The girl's eyes expressed the disdain that suddenly took the place of apprehension in her thoughts. A sharp retort leaped to her lips, but she suppressed it.

"Mr. Brood does not like Frederic," she said instead, and could have cut out her tongue the instant the words were uttered. Yvonne's eyes were glittering with a light that she had never seen in them before. Afterwards she described it to herself as baleful.

"So!" He has spoken ill—evil—of his son to you?" she said, almost in a monotone. "He has hated him for years—is not that so? I am not the original cause, al—e? It began long ago—long, long ago?"

"Oh, I beg of you, Mrs. Brood—" began Lydia, shrinking back in dismay.

"You are free to speak your thoughts to me. I shall not be offended. What has he said to you about Frederic—and me?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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The Proudest Moment.

"Oh, no! A fellow's proudest moment was not the time he came out on top in his first scrap with "the kid next door." Nor was it the first time he "saw" Mary Jane home from the party. Nor again was it when she "named the day."

It wasn't when he made his biggest business deal; got his largest raise; became a partner in the concern and was paying an income tax.

And while this, too, was a proud moment, this proudest of all was not when the first-born came, nor was it when the youngster first lisped "dada."

All those were big moments, moments most every fellow remembers long and happily, but the real proudest moment was the first time when—

He wore his first pair of long pants!

Skulls as Drinking Cups.

The old Scandinavian sakes represents as among the delights of the immediate the felicity of feasting and drinking to drunkenness from the skulls of the foes they had vanquished on earth. Mandeville goes further, and represents the Quebres as imposing the dead bodies of their parents to the fowls of the air until nothing but the skeletons remained, and preserving the skulls to be used as drinking cups.

Great City's Sewage.

Every 24 hours there is poured into the Harlem river 90,000,000 gallons of New York city's sewage. Into the North river 312,000,000 gallons and into the East river 244,000,000 gallons.

Parachute for Aviators.

Among the parachutes designed for an aviator is one consisting of wings and a balloon-shaped canopy, worn folded around the body and opening automatically if he falls.

YOUR OWN DRUGGIST WILL TELL YOU Try Sterling Five Minute Cough Cure. Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur. Hyomei. No cutting. Just breathe it. Sold by druggists everywhere, or mail 25c. Booklet Free. Mentha Cure Remedy Co., Chicago.

Marriage is a form of speculation in which the women participate on equal terms with the men.

And many a man finds it difficult to make a living because he is practically a dead one.

Most particular women use Red Cross Ball Blue. American made. Sure to please. At all good grocers. Adv.

Cheer up, girls! Leap year is only eight months away.

Rescue

Your Best Home wants, business, improving, selling, trading quickly accomplished through the wonderful moving picture power of Classified Advertising.

Educator Shoe Boosters tell the truth about Educator Shoes for boys, women, children. $1.35 to $5.50. Be sure EDUCATOR is branded on sole—without it you haven't the genuine. Write for booklet "Dollars and Sense."

RICE & HUTCHINS, Inc. 18 High St. Boston, Mass.

EDUCATOR SHOE

Don't let your feet get into the habit of being cured. It is not worth while.

When you feel it coming on plunge at once into some task that will take all your time and energy. It is better not to run away from certain things than to let them irritate you. Such martyrdom is usually unnecessary and bad for you all round.

Handed Him One.

Bill—Did you say the father of the girl he wanted to marry handed him one?

Jill—He certainly did. He gave the daughter away at the altar, you know.

EARLY RIVAL OF NEW YORK

Eastern Metropolis of the United States Might Have Been in Staten Island.

We are reminded that New York came mighty near being on Staten Island by the announcement that the famous Cubberly cottage, with all its furnishings, has been donated to the public by its owner, Dr. Nathaniel Britton. The structure is one of the finest examples of the so-called "colonial" architecture extant, and it is in an excellent state of preservation. It has been satisfactorily determined that it was built not later than 1680, and most of its furnishings antedate that year. It was in all probability a fiber rural residence at the time of its completion than any on Manhattan island. Now it stands at the intersection of New Dorp lane and Cedar Grove avenue. At the time when the builders put on the last brush of paint and told the Cubberlys to move in it was surrounded by tributary acres constituting a splendid estate, and the Dutch aristocrats of New Amsterdam, across the upper bay, followed the example of the original Cubberly promptly in establishing themselves upon the salubrious and picturesque hills of Staten Island. The Cubberly cottage was but the pioneer among many. In fact, as his torical records show, the new settlement on Staten Island grew so rapidly at that time that some people thought it might outgrow New Amsterdam. The Cubberly cottage came into the possession of the Brittons in the year 1695, when it was deeded to Nathaniel Britton, an ancestor of the owner who has given it to the public as a historical relic. The cottage, with all its contents, will be kept open to the public under the charge of the Staten Island Association of Arts and Science.

Run Away From "Nerves."

No one can help feeling nervous at times in this age of rush and racket, but it is quite possible to put on the brake, as it were, and not let the nerves run away with us.

If people fret you, it is not necessary to be rude to them. Try instead to avoid them.

Don't read books that irritate you. Books are plentiful, therefore put away the offending volume and choose another.

If a noise at night worries you, don't let it continue to do so. Get up and see to the matter and put it right.