ILLUSTRATIONS & RAY WALTERS COPYRIGHT, 1914; DY DOOD, MEAD AND COMPANY

SYNOPSIS.

--10---In the New York home of James Brood, Frederic, receives a wireless from him. Frederic tells Lydia Desmond, his flancee, that the message anmounces his father's marriage, and orders Mrs. Desmond, the housekeeper and Lydia's mother, to prepare the house for immediate home-coming. Brood and s bride arrive. She wins Frederic's liking at first meeting. Brood shows dislike and veiled bostility to his son. Lydia and Mrs. Brood met in the jade-room, where Lydia works as Brood's secretary. Mrs. Brood is startled by the appearance of Ranjab, Brood's Hindu servant. makes changes in the household and gains her husband's consent to send Mrs. Dessoond and Lydia away. She fascinates Frederic. She begins to fear Ranjab in his uncanny appearances and disappearances, and Frederic, remembering father's East Indian stories and firm be-Met in magic, fears unknown evil. Ranperforms feats of magic for Dawes and Riggs. Frederic's father, jealous, unjustly orders his son from the dinner table as drunk. Brood tells the story of Ranjab's life to his guests. "He killed a womwho was 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 drove from his home, through her, Yvonne, vonne plays with Brood, Frederic and ydia as with figures on a chess madly jealous, tells Lydia that rederic is not his son, and that he has brought him up to kill his happiness at the proper time with this knowledge. Prederic takes Lydia home through a seavy storm and spends the night at her nother's house. His wavering allegiance to her is strengthened by a day spent with her. Yvonne, over the phone rouses Frederic's infatuation for her again, Lydia nes to beg Brood not to tell Frederic of its unhappy parentage, but is turned from er purpose. Frederic, at dinner with Dawes and Riggs, is seized with an impulse of filial duty, and under a queer imression that he is influenced by Ranjab's will, hunts up his father, who gives him be cut direct.

CHAPTER XV.

A Mother Intervenes.

Long past midnight the telephone In the Desmond apartment rang sharp ly, insistently. Lydia, who had just fallen asleep, awoke with a start and sat bolt upright in her bed. A clammy perspiration broke out all over her body. She knew there had been a catastrophe.

She sat there chattering until she heard her mother's door open and then the click of the receiver as it was lifted from the book. Then she put her fingers to her ears and closed her toyen. The very worst had happened, abe was sure of it. The blow had fallen. The only thought that seared her brain was that she had failed him. failed him miserably in the crisis. Oh, if she could only reclaim that lost hour of indecision and cowardice!

The light in the hallway suddenly smote her in the face and she realized for the first time that her eyes were tightly closed as if to shut out some abhorrent sight.

"Lydia!" Her mother was standing In the open door "Oh, you are awake?" Mrs. Desmond stared in amazement at the girl's figure.

"What is it, mother? Tell me what

has happened? Is he-" "He wants to speak to you. He is

very queer-"

The girl sprang out of bed and hurried to the telephone.

"Don't go away, mother-stay here," she cried as she sped past the whiteclad figure in the doorway. Mrs. Desmond flattened herself against the wall and remained there as motionless as a statue, her somber gaze fixed on her "daughter's face.

is it, dear?" Her voice was high and

her body rigid.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," he was saying, "but I just had to call you If he forced them from his lips one Yvonne Brood Mrs. Desmond observed by one in a supreme effort at coher a high touch of color in her cheeks. ency.

mind. You did right. What is it?" ther spoke for a moment. "I want you to release me from my promise."

"You mean—the promise—but, Freddy. I can't release you. I love you. will be your wife, no matter what has Yvonne smiled slightly. happened, no matter-"

the other—the promise to say nothing not a milksop," she said, but despite to my father-"

"O-oh!" she sighed weakly, a vast wave of relief almost suffocating her.

"He has made it impossible for me to go on without-"

"Where are you, Frederic?" she eried, in sudden alarm "Oh, I'm all right. I shan't go home,

you may be sure of that. Tomorrow will be time enough."

"Where are you? I must know.

How can I reach you by telephone-Goodnight, sweetheart, I've I've told, of voice, Mrs. Desmond." our mother I'm sorry. Good- before it has gone too far."

There was little comfort for her in the hope held out by her mother as they sat far into the night and discussed the possibilities of the day so near at hand. She could see nothing but disaster, and she could think of nothing but her own lamentable weakness in shrinking from the encounter that might have made the present situation impossible. She tried to make light of the situation, however, prophesying a calmer attitude for Frederic despairingly. after he had slept over his grievance. which, after all, she argued, was doubtless exaggerated. She promised to go with Lydia to see James Brood in the morning, and to plead with him to be merciful to the boy she was to marry, no matter what transpired. The girl at first insisted on going over to see him that night, notwithstanding the hour, and was dissuaded only after the most earnest opposition.

It was four o'clock before they went back to bed and long after five before either closed her eyes.

was the first to awake. She glanced that you are here with me. You see, at the little clock on her dressing-table | the crisis has come." and gave a great start of consternation. It was long past nine o'clock. While she was dressing, the little maid Brood," said Mrs. Desmond, deliberservant brought in her coffee and toast ately. and received instructions not to awaken Miss Lydia but to let her have her sleep out. A few minutes later she left the apartment and walked briskly around the corner to Brood's home.

Fearing that she might be too late. she walked so rapidly that she was quite out of breath when she entered the house. Mr. Riggs and Mr. Dawes were putting on their coats in the ball preparatory to their short morning constitutional. They greeted her effusively, and with one accord proceeded to divest themselves of the coats, announcing in one voice their intention to remain for a good, old-fashioned

"It's dear of you," she said, hurriedly, "but I must see Mr. Brood at Why not come over to my apartment this afternoon for a cup of

Mrs. Brood's voice interrupted her "What do you want, Mrs. Desmond?" came from the landing above. The visitor looked up with a start, not so much of surprise as uneasiness. There was something sharp, unfriendly in the low, level tones.

Evonne, fully dressed—a most unusual circumstance at that hour of the day-was leaning over the banister

"I came to see Mr. Brood on a very mportant-"

"Have you been sent over here by someone else?" demanded Mrs. Brood. "I have not seen Frederic," fell from her lips before she thought.

"I dare say you haven't," said the other with ominous clearness. "He has been here since seven this mornon the wire. I-I- His voice sounds ing, waiting for a chance to speak to his father in private."

> She was descending the stairs slowly, almost lazily, as she uttered the "They are together now?" gasped

Mrs. Desmond. may enjoy your long walk."

Mrs. Desmond followed her into the "Yes, Frederic-it is I-Lydia. What library. Yvonne closed the door almost in the face of Mr. Riggs, who had opened his mouth to accept the His voice came jerking over the invitation o tea, but who said he'd wire, sharp and querulous. She closed "be d-d" instead, so narrow was his ther eyes in anticipation of the blow, escape from having his nose banged. He emphasized the declaration by shaking his fist at the door.

The two women faced each other. up." The words were disjointed, as For the first time since she had know Her beautiful eyes were alive with an "Yes, yes-it's all right. I don't excitement she could not conceal. Net-

"You are accountable for this, Mrs. Brood," said Lydia Desmond's mother, sternly, accusingly. She expected a storm of indignant protest. Instead.

"It will not hurt my husband to "Oh, Lord, Lyddy-it isn't that! It's discover that Frederic is a man and her coolness there was a perceptible

note of anxiety in her voice. "You know, then, that they arethat they will quarrel?"

"I fancy it was in Frederic's mind to do so when he came here this morning. He was still in his evening clothes, Mrs. Desmond."

"Where are they now?" Yvonne, lightly.

Mrs. Desmond regarded her for a out. But I just wanted you to know "Den't be frightened, dear. It's got moment in perplexity. Then her eyes that I thought I loved you last night, inside," he said in a voice that should happiness. I can see that in her face, tended. to be that's all. It might as well be flashed dangerously. "I do not think as a son should love a father. I just have warned the younger man, it was in her big. wistful eyes. You-" nded now as later on. The last straw you missinderstood me, Mrs. Brood, wanted you to know it. He did so prophetic of disaster. Frederic was laid on tonight. Now, don't ask Where are Frederic and his father to not even look at me, Mrs. Desmond. had touched the open sore with that mestions. I'll see you in the morning. Tam not accustomed to that tone I don't believe he knew I was there. unhappy question. Not until this in-

said the other, succinctly. "You do ghost or some horrible thing that fas- it had been festering all these weeks. heart. I wouldn't part with it for all 11 told you and heard your dear not realize what this quarrel may cinated him. He did not utter a word, Now it was laid bare and smarted with the money in the world. When I look Forgive me for calling you up; mean, I insist on going up to them but stared at Frederic in that terrible, pain. Nothing could save Frederic at the dear, sweet, girlish face and her

listen to me! You must mond, as to leave this house instant- treated me like a dog all my life and growth that lay so near the surface. Oh!" He had hung up ly?" cited Tronne, angetty. Ten through. I she'n't even my good. It had been in James Brood's heart lieving.

between those two men, but I shall at received from you. I hope I'll never They were alone in his room. He you so it must have been the ether least remain here to assure Frederic see you again. If I ever have a son squared his shoulders. of my sympathy, to help him if I can, I'll not treat him as you've treated to offer him the shelter of my home." your son. By God, you don't deserve with her," he said defiantly. He waited born. Why was it that I never saw A spasm of alarm crossed Yvonne's the honor of being called father. You a moment for the response that did

ously. he will not stay in this house another her as--' Just then my husband found hour. He will go forth from it, curs- his voice. He sprang to his feet, and ing James Brood with all the hatred I've never seen such a look of rage. that his soul can possess. And now, I thought he was going to strike Fred-Mrs. Brood, shall I tell you what I eric and I think I screamed—just a think of you?"

sides, I've changed my mind. I'd like horrible the way he said it-'You foolyou to remain. I do not want to mystify you any further, Mrs. Desmond, in his face and cried out, unafraid, 'I'm but I now confess to you that I am losing my courage. Don't ask me to I'd rather be one than to be your son. tell you why, but-"

"I suppose it is the custom with to be proud of-a real father." those who play with fire. They shrink when it burns them."

Mrs. Brood looked at her steadily for a long time without speaking. The rebellious, sullen expression died out of her eyes. She sighed deeply, almost

"I am sorry you think ill of me, yet cannot blame you for considering me to be a-a-I'll not say it. Mrs. Desmond, I-I wish I had never come to this house."

"Permit me to echo your words." "You will never be able to understand me. And, after all, why should I care? You are nothing to me. You are merely a good woman who has

no real object in life. You-" "No real object in life?" "Precisely. Sit down. We will wait here together, if you please. I-I am Mrs. Desmond, utterly exhausted, worried. I think I rather like to feel

> "You know, of course, that he turned one wife out of this house, Mrs.

Something like terror leaped into the other's eyes. The watcher experienced an incomprehensible feeling of pity for her-she who had been despising her so flercely the instant before.

"He -- he will not turn me, out," murmured Yvonne, and suddenly began pacing the floor, her hands clinched.



"I'd Like You to Remain."

Stopping abruptly in front of the other woman, she exclaimed: "He made a great mistake in driving that other woman out. He is not likely to repeat it, Mrs. Desmond."

"Yes-I think he did make a mis-"Will you come into the library? take," said Mrs. Desmond, calmly. Good morning, gentlemen. I trust you "But he does not think so. He is a

man of iron. He is unbending." "He is a wonderful man-a great splendid man," cried Yvonne, flercely "It is I-Yvonne Lestrange-who proclaim it to the world. I cannot bear to see him suffer. I-"

"Then why do you-" Mrs. Brood flushed to the roots of her hair. "I do not want to appear unfair to my husband, but I declare to you, Mrs. Desmond, that Frederic is fully justified in the attitude he has taken this morning. His father humiliated him last night in a manner that made forbearance impossible. That much I must say for Frederic. And permit me to add, from my soul, that he is vastly more sinned against than sinning."

"I can readily believe that, Mrs

Brood." "This morning Frederic came into the breakfast room while we were having coffee. You look surprised. Yes. I was having breakfast with my husband. I knew that Frederic would come. That was my reason. When heard him in the hall I sent the servants out of the dining-room. He had spent the night with a friend. first words on entering the room were these-I shall never forget them: 'Last night I thought I loved you, father. but I have come home just to tell you "I think he has them on," said that I hate you. I can't stay in this house another day. I'm going to get

She heard the whir of "No," said the other quietly. "I sup- by to you. You don't deserve any to spare the boy,

face. "Do you really believe it will don't deserve to have a son. I wish come to that?" she demanded, nerv- to God I had never been obliged to call you father. I don't know what you "If what I fear should come to pass, did to my mother, but if you treated little scream, of course. I was so ter-"No, it isn't at all necessary. Be- rifled. But he only said-and it was you bastard!' And Frederic laughed glad you call me a bastard! By God. It would at least give me something "Good heaven!" fell from Mrs. Des-

mond's white lips. Yvonne seemed to have paused to catch her breath. Her breast heaved convulsively, the grip of her hands tightened on the arms of the chair. Suddenly she resumed her recital, but her voice was hoarse and tremulous.

"I was terribly frightened. I thought of calling out to Jones, but I-I had no voice! Ah, you have never seen two angry men waiting to spring at each other's throats, Mrs. Desmond. husband suddenly regained control of himself. He was very calm. 'Coma with me,' he said to Frederic. 'This is not the place to wash our filthy family linen. You say you want something to be proud of. Well, you shall have your wish. Come to my study. And they went away together, neither speaking a word to me-they did not even glance in my direction. They went up the stairs. I heard the door close behind them-away up there That was half an hour ago. I have been waiting, too-waiting as you are waiting now-to comfort Frederic when he comes out of that room a

Mrs. Desmond started up, an incredulous look in her eyes.

"You are taking his side? You are against your husband? Oh, now know the kind of woman you are. know--"

"Peace! You do not know the kind of woman I am. You never will know. Yes, I shall take sides with Frederic." "You do not love your husband!"

A strange, unfathomable smile came into Yvonne's face and stayed there. Mrs. Desmond experienced the same odd feeling she had had years ago on first seeing the Sphinx. She was suddenly confronted by an unsofvable mystery.

"He shall not drive me out of hi house, Mrs. Desmond," was her answer to the challenge.

A door slammed in the upper regions of the house. Both women started to their feet.

"It is over," breathed Yvonne, with a tremulous sigh. "We shall see how well they wer able to take care of themselves, Mrs.

Brood," said Mrs. Desmond in a low

"We shall see-yes," said the other mechanically. Suddenly she turned on the tall, accusing figure beside ber. "Go away! Go now! I command you to go. This is our affair, Mrs. Desmond. You are not needed here. You were too late, as you say. I beg of you, go!" She strode swiftly toward the door. As she was about to place her hand on the knob it was opened from the other side, and Ranjab stood before them,

"Sahib begs to be excused, Mrs. Des mond. He is just going out." "Going out?" cried Yvonne, who had

shrunk back into the room. "Yes, sabibah. You will please ex cuse, Mrs. Desmond. He regret very

Mrs. Desmond passed slowly through the door, which he held open for her As she passed by the Hindu she looked full into his dark, expressive eyes. and there was a question in hers. He did not speak, but she read the answer as if it were on a printed page. Her shoulders drooped.

She went back to Lydia.

CHAPTER XVI.

"To My Own Sweetheart."

When James Brood and Frederic left the dining-room nearly an hour prior to the departure of Mrs. Des mond, there was in the mind of each the resolution to make short work of the coming interview. Each knew that the time had arrived for the parting of the ways, and neither had the least desire to prolong the suspense.

The study door was closed. James Brood put his hand on the knob, but before turning it, faced the young man with an odd mixture of anger and pity in his eyes.

"Perhaps it would be better if we had nothing more to say to each other," he said, with an effort. "I have changed my mind. I cannot say the thing to you that I--"

"Has it got anything to do with Yvonne and me?" demanded Frederic ruthlessly, jumping at conclusions in

his new-found arrogance. Brood threw open the door. "Step awestruck way. I'm going to get out, after that reckless, deliberate thrust eyes look back into mine, I know that "Will you be so good, Mrs. Des- said Frederic, his voice rising. You've at the very core of the malignant she loved me."

pose I am too late to prevent trouble more consideration from me than I've | Hot word- were on Frederic's lips, to know that she couldn't have hurt |

not come. Brood was regarding him with eyes from which every spark of compassion had disappeared. "Well, tend to marry Lydia this very day."

Brood advanced a few steps toward him. In the subdued light of the room his features were not clearly distinguishable. His face was gray and shadowy; only the eyes were sharply. defined. They glowed like points of light, unflickering.

"I shall be sorry for Lydia," he said levelly.

"You needn't be," said Frederic hot-"She understands everything." "Have you told her that you love her

and no one else?" "Certainly!"

"Then you have lied to her." There was silence—tense silence.

Do you expect me to strike you for that?" came at last from Frederic's lips, low and menacing. "You have always considered yourself to be my son, haven't you?" pur-

sued Brood deliberately. "Can you say to me that you have behaved of late as a son should—"

"Wait! We'll settle that point right now. I did lose my head. Head, I say, not heart. I shan't attempt to explain -1 can't, for that matter. As for Yvonne-well, she's as good as gold. She understands me better than I understand myself. She knows that even honest men lose their heads sometimes. I can say to you now that I would sooner have cut my own throat than to do more than envy you the possession of one you do not deserve. I have considered myself your son. I have no apology to make for my-we'll call it infatuation. shall only admit that it has existed

and looked at the pure, lovely face, Iand that I have despaired. As God is my witness, I have never loved any one but Lydia. I have given her pain. and the amazing part of it is that I. can't help myself. Naturally, you can't understand what it all means. You are not a young man any longer. You cannot understand."

"Good God!" burst from Brood's lips. Then he laughed aloud-grotesquely.

"Yvonne is the most wonderful thing that has ever come into my life. adored her the instant I saw her. have felt sometimes that I knew her thousand years ago. I have felt that I loved her a thousand years ago." A calm seriousness now attended his speech, in direct contrast to the violent mood that had gone before. "I have thought of little else but her. I confess it to you. But through it all there has never been an instant in which'I did not worship Lydfk Desmond. 1-I do not pretend to account for it. It s beyond me."

Brood waited patiently to the end. "Your mother before you had a somewhat similar affliction," he said, still in the steady, repressed voice. "Perhaps it is a gift-a convenient giftthis ability to worship without effort."

"Better leave my mother out of it," said Frederic sarcastically. A look of wonder leaped to his eyes. "That's the first time you've condescended to acknowledge that I ever had

Brood's smile was deadly. "If you have anything more to say to me, you would better get it over with. Purge your soul of all the gall that embitters it. I grant you that privilege. Take your innings."

face. "Yes, I am entitled to my innings. I'll go back to what I said down stairs. I thought I loved and honored you last night. I would have forgiven everything if you had granted me a friendly-friendly, that's all-just a friendly word. You denied--"

"I suppose you want me to believe that it was love for me that brought you slinking to the theater," said the other ironically.

"I don't expect you to believe anything. I was lonely. I wanted to be with you and Yvonne. Can't you understand how lonely I've been all my life? Can't you understand how hungry I am for the affection that every other boy I've known has had from his parents? I've never asked you about my mother. I used to wonder a good deal. Every other boy had a mother. I never had one. I couldn't understand areno longer wonder. I know now that she must have hated you with all the strength of her soul. God, how she must have hated to feel the touch of your hands upon her body! Something tells me she left you, and if she did, I hope she afterwards found someone who-but no, I won't say it. Even now haven't the heart to hurt you by saying that." He stopped, choking up with the rush of bitter words. "Well, why don't you say something?"

"I'm giving you your innings. Go on?" said Brood softly.

"She must have loved you once or she wouldn't have married you. She must have loved you or I wouldn't be here in this world. She-" "Ha!" came sharply from Brood's

stiff lips. "-didn't find you out until it was too late. She was lovely, I know. She

"What's this?" demanded Brood, startled. "What are you saying?"

"Oh, I've got her portrait-an old I shall never forget the look in James stant had James Brood admitted to photograph. For a month I've carried you that I can't stick to my promise. "I am no longer your housekeeper," Broodstace. It was as if he saw a himself that there was a sore and that it here in this pocket-case, over my

"Her portrait?" said Brood, unbe-

"Yes and I have only to look at it It-"

way 'round. She's dead now, I know. "I suppose you think I am in love but she didn't die for years after I was her? Why was I kept up there in that

damnable village--" "Where did you get that photograph?" demanded Brood hoarsely. it may interest you to know that I in- "Where, I say! What damned, interfering fool-"

"I wouldn't be too hasty, if I were you," said Frederic, a note of triumph in his voice. "Yvonne gave it to me. I made her promise to say nothing to you about it. She-"

"Yvonne found it? Yvonne? And gave it to you? What trick of fate is this? But—ah, it may not be a portrait of your-your mother. Some old photograph-"

"No, it is my mother. Yvonne saw the resemblance at once and brought it to me. And it may interest you to know that she advised me to treasure it all my life because it would always tell me how lovely and sweet my mother was-the mother I have never

"I insist on seeing that picture." said Brood, with deadly intensity. "No," said Frederic, folding his arms tightly across his breast, "You

didn't deserve her then and you-" "You don't know what you are saying, boy!"

"Ah, don't I? Well, I've got just a little bit of my mother safe here over my heart-a little faded card, that's all -and you shall not rob me of that. Last night I was sorry for you. I had the feeling that somehow you have always been unhappy over something that happened in the past that my mother was responsible for. And yet when I took out this photograph, this tiny bit of old cardboard-see, it is so small that it can be carried in my waistcoat pocket-when I took it out



Shall Be Sorry for Lydia," He Sald Levelly.

by heaven, I knew she was not to

"Have you finished?" asked Brood.

wiping his brow. It was dripping. "Except to repeat that I am through with you forever. I've had all that I can endure and I'm through. My greatest regret is that I didn't get out A spasm of pain crossed Frederic's long ago. But like a fool-a weak fool. kept on hoping that you'd change and that there were better days ahead for me. I kept on hoping that you'd be a real father to me. Good Lord. what a libel on the name!" He laughed raucously. "I'm sick of calling you father. You did me an honor downstairs by calling me 'bastard.' You had no right to call me that, but, by heaven, if it were not for this bit of cardboard here over my heart, I'd laugh in your face and be happy to shout from the housetops that I am no son of yours. But there's no such luck as that! I've only to look at my mother's innocent, soulful face to-" "Stop!" shouted Brood in an awful

voice. His clenched hands were raised

above his head. "The time has come

for me to tell you the truth about this

innocent mother of yours. Luck is

with you. I am not your father. You "Wait! If you are going to tell me that my mother was not a good woman, I want to go on record in advance of anything you may say, as being glad that I am her son no matter who my father was. I am glad that she loved me because I was her child, and if you are not my father then I still have the joy of knowing that she loved some one man well enough to-" He broke off the bitter sentence and with nervous fingers drew a small leather case from his waistcoat pocket. "Before you go any farther, take one look at her face. It will make you

into-" He was holding the window curtains apart, and a stream of light fell upon the lovely face, so small that Brood was obliged to come quite close to be able to see it. His eyes were dis-

ashamed of yourself. Can you stand

there and lie about her after looking

"It is not Matilde-it is like her but- Yes, yes, it is Matilde! I must be losing my mind to have thought-" He wiped his brow. "But, good God, ft was startling-positively uncanny." He spoke as to himself, apparently forgetting that he had a listener.

"Well, can you lie about her now?" demanded Frederic.

Brood was still staring as if faccinated at the tiny photograph. "But I have never seen that picture before. She never had one so small as that

(TO BE CONTENUEDA