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The Jade God

By
MARY IMLAY TAYLOR

CHAPTER XV

"You—" Mark began to speak to him, but he stopped short. It was not worth while here; Burleson was right! He turned and walked away into the hall.

He would not think of Pam; that was over! It was like so many things in his life—he had been swept away by adverse current..

"That's over!" he thought bitterly making his way toward the door.

Then someone called his name. "Mark—Mark Grant!"

It was her voice and he stood still. The blood rushed back to his heart again and set it racing. She—

"Don't go—" she almost sobbed, caught herself and tried to speak firmly— "until I tell you—"

He bent his head, looking down at her.

"What can you tell me now?"

"That I'm still your friend!"

"How can you? You heard your uncle—it's true, too, the accusation and the sentence were—what they say."

"I know!" her voice broke. "Come in here—" she motioned to an alcove room— "I—I must ask you—"

"The jade god—tell me about it," she said quickly; "it means something—it meant something to you?"

* * *

"It meant everything. My uncle was a collector of curiosities; it was his fad—he was rich," Mark wet his dry lips. "They thought I coveted his money, but I didn't I could work. He was odd, crabbed, quarrelsome, but he was never unkind to me—we got on. I was with him that last day when he bought that jade god. It was in his pocket when I left him; somehow I never thought of it then as a thing that might clear me! He said he was going to give it to Mr. Burleson. I remember that now; your uncle was his friend and business associate, and, as you know, a collector, too. Your uncle has it, it must have been given to him after I left my uncle—before the murder—don't you see the point? That little thing would have made my alibi complete. Your uncle testified against me, and he stood so high, even then, that a word from him—" Mark's gesture expressed all the hopeless futility of his young battle to save himself.

* * *

"If Uncle Herbert knew—ah, I'm sure he would have told!" Pam exclaimed. "He's a violent tempered man, he's queer, but he's just. I think he didn't know."

"It's certain he won't tell now; I saw that in his face—when he smashed that green god."

"Oh, I can't think he knew!" she persisted.

Mark did not answer this; he stood looking at her silently. Like everything else in his life this was to end. But he wanted to remember her as she stood there. She looked so young and brave! She was brave to call herself his friend.

Even in the puzzle of her thoughts of her uncle she felt his eyes, they drew hers, she looked up like a child, tears misting, lips tremulous.

"Oh," she gasped; "I hated Landon — the coward!"

He smiled. Her hot tone championed him! she was his friend.

"You know everything now," he said gently, "I was going to tell you all but I couldn't—it's not true! you believe that?"

* * *

She nodded, speechless.

"It will never be cleared up, I'm afraid. There's only one thing to do; I've got to make a new life and a new name for myself. I'm going out west, as they say. I don't know how far—as far as I can, I fancy. I'd like to feel free, to draw long breaths of freedom; I've had fifteen years of—the other thing!"

"Oh, it's cruel," she murmured.

"I've got to go," he whispered at last.

She nodded, looking down, her lips drawn close together.

He drew his breath hard. "If I'd only come here like other men!" he groaned.

She smiled. "You couldn't," she said softly, "for you're not like anyone but yourself. I—you believe me, don't you, when I say I trust you? I know you're innocent."

"Pam, I love you!" he answered passionately. "There! I never meant to say it; I've no right to say it, but I've got to; I loved you that first day—you know it?"

She lifted her head at that. "I know!" she said softly, "I knew then."

* * *

He caught her in his arms and held her close. "If I wasn't innocent of that charge I couldn't touch you," he said, "I've no right to do it now, for I must go away. I didn't mean to tell you, but I'm beaten, I can't go without it. I've got this to remember when I'm alone—way off somewhere—trying to make good!"

She looked up, touching his shoulders with her strong little hands. "You're not going alone, Mark. I'm going with you."

"You?" he gasped, the wild joy of it set his heart beating in his throat. To take her with him — his wife! "Good God, Pam, I wish I could—I wish I could marry you today and carry you off!"

She clung to him, sobbing. "I'll go—tomorrow, if you're going," she said. "I'll show them that I believe in you!"

"Oh you angel! You'd ruin your life, marry an ex-convict—just to show your faith in him?"

"Just because I love him!" Pam said bravely. "Oh, Mark, I was so miserable just now—I'll be happy battling for you!"

* * *

He took her hands gently from his neck and held them in both his, looking at her with haggard eyes.

"Because I love you so much I can't let you do it, Pam. I'd be a coward to let you do it!"

"Why? I've a right to marry anyone I please!" She was a gallant little thing, ready to battle for him.

"No," he said gently, "not a convict! You don't know what it would be. We couldn't keep that record back. It'll follow me—look at Landon."

"Oh, Landon!" she cried contemptuously.

"There are many Landons. They'll point at me. I've got to face that, but I'd never ask the woman I love to face it. Pam, you'd be brave at first, but it would break you. Oh, I know! They'll call me a murdered, they'll talk of it. Because I adore you, I won't make you bear that; an ex-convict's wife, a man who isn't cleared; it would wear you down, break your heart!"

"I'm not afraid!" she sobbed, clinging to him. "I mean it — I'll go!"

(To Be Continued)

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ISSUE 13—1945

'PRESSURE COOKING' ON IWO

Having cooked the enemy's goose a pair of Marines takes time out to cook up some coffee on a natural stove provided by vapor from a hot sulphur pit on Iwo Jima. The Marine, right, prepares to dish out the java for his pal. Pipe under cup was installed by Japs, who used vapor as steam bath.

Modern Etiquette

By Roberta Lee

1. If a woman is staying alone at a hotel may she wear full evening dress?

2. When should the coffee be poured, if it is served in some room outside of the diningroom?

3. Is it obligatory for a godparent to send a gift to the baby?

4. If a man has escorted a girl to a dance, what does it indicate if he chooses another girl as his partner for the first dance?

5. What is the most appropriate gift that a bridegroom can give his bride?

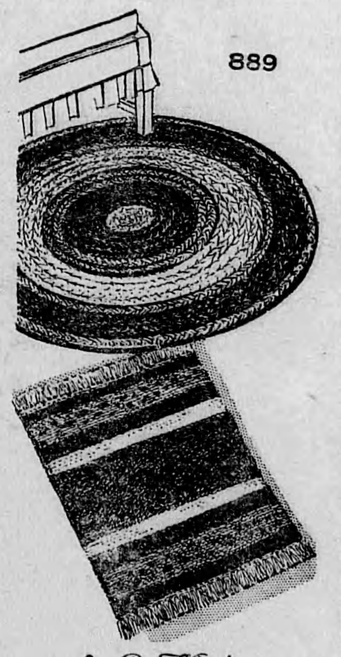
6. What is a good rule for a man to follow as to when to wear full evening dress?

1. Not unless she has an escort. Otherwise she should wear a modest in conspicuous dress. 2. The coffee is poured into tiny cups before bringing it in, then served from a large tray. 3. Yes; this gift may be sent upon receipt of the invitation to act as godparent, or on the day of the christening. 4. It indicates that he does not know his duty, which is that he should always dance the first number with the girl whom he is escorting. 5. Some article of jewelry, usually suitable for her to wear on her wedding day. 6. Full evening dress should be worn at any formal evening affair.

Huskies Follow Norsemen Home

Since the official closing of the training school of the Royal Norwegian Air Force in the Huntsville and Gravenhurst districts of Ontario, Norse airmen have been going overseas in groups. Another chapter in the story was written when the Canadian National Railways' Maritime Express left Montreal for the Atlantic seaboard the other day. In a special ice-cold express car were 16 crates containing 16 huskie dogs and three Canadan-born pups. Along with them were sleighs, bags and harness.

Benjamin Franklin discovered the existence of positive and negative electricity.



by Laura Wheeler

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Help The Red Cross
"SALADA" TEA

CHRONICLES of GINGER FARM

By Gwendoline P. Clarke

* * * * *

Was there ever a time when we had so much reason to be thankful for weather conditions? Just think of those mountains of snow that lined highways, byways, and banked almost every farm building in the country. Now it has all gone and without leaving any serious flood conditions in its wake. Day after day I look around and marvel —and this chronicle records the phenomena. One week I write of snow-blocked roads, the next of robins warbling, daffodils budding, pussy-willows bursting, yes, and even of swamp frogs singing. Never, since we started farming, have we known spring to come so suddenly or so early.

* * *

I have been specially glad to have better road conditions because you see I have been on my annual job of canvassing for the Red Cross. At least that is what I am supposed to be doing but everywhere I go I generally combine canvassing with a nice little visit. One place I called last week the farmer had a horse to sell and I had to see it so I could tell Partner about it. As a matter of fact I looked, not at one horse, but five, and had I been the farmer it would have been a real grief to part with any of them. At another farm there was a new dog, and was he ever a beauty! Just the kind I have always wanted but never had—an English collie with long pointed nose—just like Lassie of movie fame. This fellow paced around the kitchen table just as Lassie paced back and forth in her cage—you see he was a year old and the place where I visited had been his home only for two days. But he was quite happy. He spoke for his supper, shook hands, played "dead dog", jumped up on a chair, and sat down when he was told. If only I could have brought him home with me.

* * *

At two more farms I visited with baby chickens. But I wasn't so anxious to adopt them as we shall have plenty of our own in a day or two.

Another call resulted in a discussion on consolidated school areas and at yet another farm I was asked to sample oatmeal cookies fresh from the oven—which wasn't any hardship at all. And of course with each visit the Red Cross was enriched. No need to tell anyone these days what the Red Cross is nor how it functions. I just say "I am collecting for the Red Cross" and that's all there is to it.

Unfortunately all my canvassing was not with farm folk whose main interest was in their chickens and livestock. There was also stark tragedy. One farmer gave me a really generous contribution. Half an hour later he received word that his nineteen-year-old son had been killed in action. Truly, war comes home to us in all its grim reality when it strikes in one's own neighbourhood. Our own son and this boy and his brothers had practically grown up together. For every victory there is a price and we never know where, and from whom, the price will be exacted.

* *

But we must not end on a sad note—"hope springs eternal in the human breast". Some day, you know—and may it be soon—we are going to turn on our radios and we shall hear "Germany has capitulated—the reign of Nazism is over." And on that day we shall hope, once again, for "peace in our time".

Disarmingly innocent but full of feminine guile, Pattern 4552 has the new flare sleeves, flirty skirt ruffle; easy on-and-off button front.

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