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Helen Topping Miller

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CHAPTER XV

The play was already being read when Stanley Daniels walked into the meeting of the Little Theatre group.

Lucy had begun it in her frail, sweet voice, but very promptly Marian Morgan had objected: "Let Sally read, Lucy. We can't

hear half that you say." Lucy colored and stammered, smiling her nervous smile, handing

over the book. stage, would I?" She tried to laugh away!" "I try to make my voice bigger, but it just won't be. Begin that

scene again, Mrs. Gallup." Sally read dramatically, " 'Muriel'-Muriel's the wife, isn't she? No, she's the polo player's wife. Where was I? Oh, yes-'Muriel: And what if I told you that I hated you. Boyd?' "

"You," Marian interrupted, "could do Muriel, Sally. Your voice suits that part.' "Where was .? Boyd lights a

eigarette'-who'll be Boyd?''---"Maybe Bill would." "He wouldn't. If we talked him

into it, just about the time the show was ready to go on, a wire would blow down or a turbine go wrong or something. Oh, here's Stanley. Hello. Stanley-listen to this part and see if you'd like to do it."

"But - there are several other plays," Lucy piped feebly. "They sent six on approval. You might like some of the others better."

'Go on, Sally," Marian prodded. 'We'll never get through at this

rate." Lucy held her breath while Staney Daniels took off his coat. She had maneuvered an empty chair and she glowed happily when he crossed he room and sat beside her.

"I don't like this play so much," he whispered. "I wish they'd read some of the others."

Sally's voice rose and fell dramatcally. Lucy sank into a happy iumbness. She was very tired, and he was unimportant to this group ind knew it, and she did not greatly are so long as Daniels was near. he wondered if he would walk home vith her, and nursed a jerk of panic or fear he wouldn't. They had so nuch to talk over-so much had appened at the mill-and here the -mall cold uncertainty that had tormented Lucy for days intruded

again. Had Daniels been a little odd at he mill-a trifle on the defensive? the hated harboring this uneasiness.

out it would not down. "I'm an awful fool!" Lucy scorned

She made herself stop thinking about it, made herself stop looking if the backs of his hands, lean and lender and stained with chemicals. lis cuffs were very clean. He was ilways clean, close-shaven, jaunty. she tried to listen to the play, but t was stupid and too sophisticated for a village audience, she decided.

Sally read gaily on. "Oh, listen-I love this! Muriel says, 'Why do we seem always to fall in love with the wrong people? Why does love to blundering through the world, Greg? Nothing else blunders-not death nor trouble-they go straight to the mark-but love gets itroil lost -finds itself in strange places where it was never meant to be.' I think that's a gorgeous line. Why don't we just decide on this play and send the others back?"

"It's so talky," 'Marian argued. "Muriel is a good part but that Pam-she's washy, I think. Nobody could make Pam appealing."

"You could. Especially in this

scene with Greg." "That weepy thing? You know I can't weep. And Pam is always surrendering. Maybe English women surrender so gracefully-but I couldn't. And we haven't anyone to play Greg.'

"Why not ask that new man? He's grand looking."

"He wouldn't be interested." Maran said, alonfly

"You mean," Lucy was thinking. 'you wouldn't be interested in having him."

The meeting ended at nine, after some squabbling, with no decision arrived at

"I must go," Sally said. "Bill's playing pool-he always loses and he'll get bored and mad after an hour of it. And we have such a ghastly long way to go."

Lucy was nervous as she put the plays back into the envelope. Stanley Daniels helped her on with her coat, but he said nothing about walking home Instead, he crossed the room and began talking to the others. Lucy's heart went down with a sick thump, though she made an effort at being " as they all

went down the at together. At the bottom she pave a little shiver and exclaimed | Br-r-r! Cold. I'm planned out." glad I haven't far to go." Withers' fips folded and unfold-

But Stanley Deniels had already hurried away, with a casual good

Lucy walked home rapidly along the dark little street. She had walked it all her life, she knew every bush, every post, every rut in the cinder path, windows were lighted and people up and about, but she quickened her walk into a run. But this was not from fear. It was not fear that made her snatch the front door, open, throw her hat into a chair, and rush to her own room She had to get there before misery overwhelmed her -

Her purse fell on the floor as she flung herself on the bed. Tears ran down and soaked the pillow, and her thin shoulders shook Nothing was any use! He didn't care-and who could blame him? This awful house -her awful clothes-ner coldrless personality. Even her voice was pale and uninteresting. He was sick of her-she had flung herself at him -oh, she had! No use denying it. A ragged sob tore past her lips

"What's the matter with you?" Her mother in her faded outing nightgown and curlers was at the

Lucy burrowed deeper into the pil-

"Nothing's the matter!" she wailed. "Everything's the matter! "I wouldn't be any good on the Go away! Oh, for heaven's sake, go

Stanley Daniels walked rapidly He was definitely worried. He had returned to his room at Mrs. Gill's after the tense, upset day at the mill, to find a note on the hall table. Mrs Gill drew his attention to it eagury

"He left it here about an hour ago He said he'd come back He and he wanted to see you about seven-thirty '

Daniels tore the cheap gray en velope open. A defensive, appre ensive anger made his face burn · he read the few lines

domes I won't be here Tell him I had to go to a meeting

An important ineeting." "Maybe you better write a note, worried the landlady. "Maybe I'l get it wrong." She did not like of fending people-not when she ower money on a note

"No, I won't write any note Just tell him that I had another engage

But as he hurried along the frozen street he had a feeling that things impended. It did not surprise him when he walked into his own room to find Wallace Withers sitting there in the one comfortable chair

"Well, I waited, young feller," Wallace said. "I sent you word two or three times to come and see me. but you didn't take the trouble-sr-

came to see you." "So I see." Daniels strove for nonchalance. "I've been busy ntended coming but-" he hung up his overcoat carefully. "Was there something you wanted to see me

ahout?" Wallace Withers squared himself and fixed h hands in a pontifical

gesture. "Things have happened - you might say all that development I was talking to you about is about to come to a climax. The men who are in with me are ready to takedefinite steps. We figure we're ready



"And how am I supposed to co-operate?"

you." It was spoken pompously. Obviously. Daniels decided, the speech had been rehearsed.

Daniels' lips drew straight. His eyes moved away, grew guarded. "And how am I supposed to cooperate?"

Wallace Withers liked an effect. He waited a moment, put on an expression of suave importance. spread his fingers on the backs of his hands.

"I am about ready to start some -extensive operations. Lumberand pulp. From what I've heard from you I figured you might be ready to come along in with me. expect to buy the Morgan mill. If Virgie holds out-and she's a hard headed woman-we'll build a mill of our own, but I've got an idea that won't be necessary And I'm count.

ing on you." Uncertainty, fear even, was cold in Stanley Daniels' veins, but he !

"So-that's what you had in your mind? I wasn't ir resent at first

I thought it was au-well, a lot of windy talk But you had it all

ed like the lips of a turtle, "I don't waste time on windy talk," he said. "Not on young squirts like you I talked to you because I had something for you to do-and you did it!"

Stanley Daniels sprang up. "I did nothing! I'm not in this. I'm not interested."

ture for you-or no future at all. ways in this business-- I've got money in back of me and I'm not going to do any two-penny job of it. If you want to come along-all right. If you don't-"

"Then what?" Daniels' face was stiff and colorless

Wallace Withers grinned and was not a pleasant grin.

come in with me, there won't be any place for you to go." "She won't sell "

"She'll sell-or quit! Even if she don't sell-you won't have a job any "So-that's the racket! Either ! go in with you-wreck what I'm

doing-or you wreck me? That's a threat, is it?" "I don't aim to use words like that. I'm just giving you the best

a pretty good offer " "An offer of what? A business that isn't established - a pipe-

dream." "You might find out it was a pretty strong pipe You fellers." waxed oratorical, "you young men think you know everything That's your trouble You don't give any man past forty credit for having any

'I'll give you credit for plenty of sense-crook sense! I might have known what you were up to! You tricked me-got information out of me and now-

'And now you're sort of squirm ing, ain't you, boy? Well, you needn't squirm. Not if you keer your head and look out for number one I don't figure to talk-not to anybody. Of course, I could go to Virgie Morgan and tell her a mighty interestin' story But that won't be needful, if you keep your head-and anyway, I look for Virgie to be ready appreciation and along with it the to listen to reason by another

"Look berg, if you think I'm going to-

Withers ran his blums, secon-ton-

ing fingers through his hair. "I'm not going to argue with you, he said. "And if you think you can make me mad; you ain't getting any. where with it. It's been tried before. All you've got to do is quit your job by noon Saturday Virgie you've got a better offer-tell

going to quit." "And what if I don't?" Daniels was defiant

Withers shook down his too-short sleeves, picked up his hat.

"You will," he said dryly. He tramped down the stairs and Stanley Daniels heard the door

Daniels stood still for a long minute, lit a cigarette and let it go out, then snatched up his hat. The air of the room was suddenly stifling.

He pounded down the stairs.

ford Wills. -the heel, the interloper! A surge of fury burned through Daniels' body, then chilled, leaving him with a weight of cold nausea at the pit of his stomach. He found himself thinking of Lucy. Of her gentle eyes and her mothering ways and her lonely and afraid.

(Chapter XVI Next Week)

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IN ONE COLUMN of the newspepers we may read all about the enforceed curtailment of the manufacture motor cars. In another we get the details of the inconvenience of enforced shorter hours in which we "Virgie," drawled the old man, are allowed to purchase gasoline. In might figure different. And you still another column we read all about better be interested. It means a fu- the drowning accidents that have occurred over the weekend. If we were you might say I mean to go a long to ask you which of these three columns doesn't belong in the same group as the other two, chances are you would say that it would be the one about the drowning accidents that would be the odd one. We aren't so sure that reply would be correct. During the last twenty five or thirty years we have spent all kinds of it money on cars, on gas and on oil and other accessories for them. Again we "Way I look at it-if you don't have provided our millions for paved roads for these cars to run on. It was all very nice. We've become familiar with almost*every beauty spot in Ontarlo and all because of these motor cars. But while we dug up these millions for cars and for paved roads we neglected to dig up even a few thousands for decent swimming pools for our boys and girls to learn to swim in. Had we spent a little less for cars and roads and a little more for swimming pools chances are many of these drowning accidents would never have advice I know. And I'm making you occurred. Or again notice how easy it is to dig up \$1.65 for 5 gallons of gas but try to collect a few dollars to organize a girls' softball team for instance, and see where you land. Cars are alright, getting out in the fresh air is necessary, becoming better acquainted with the beauty spots of the province is all to the good, but boys and girls are still worth more than them all put together. Perhaps some day we may learn to value them at their true worth.

IT WAS EIGHT years ago last week that we first started writing a newspaper column. We had no license to write at all. We had been interested in the manufacture of bread ever since we were sixteen years of age and it might be difficult to think of another business farther removed from that of writing for publication. However, we liked to write and it soon became a habit not unlike shaving every morning or of winding up the clock, or putting out the cat. Last week's Herald contained a word of statement was made that they didn't always agree with our opinion and mentioned particularly that we had stated that we would welcome a return to unwrapped bread. We get more kick out of anyone disagreeing with us than we would if they handed us a pat on the back. That is one reason that this war is being fought in order that we may all have an opinion of our own and that we can state that opinion without fear of being shot. However, we would like to explain our stand in regard to the wrapping of her anything you please-but you're bread. All flour contains certain bacteria which withstands baking temperature, in fact during the time that the bread is in the oven this particular bacteria is merely getting its toes warmed up as it can withstand double baking temperature. Bacteria needs fresh air just as much as you and I do, and when bread is enclosed in an air-tight wrapper conditions are somewhat similar for this bacteria to that of being confined in an incubator. The result is of course that the flavor of the bread is affected, and if left too long we have what is known as ropey bread. The odor of the bread is In the parlor, with the asparagus | changed from that of the nutty wheat ferns, the everlasting rummy game like flavor to that of an odor similar went on. Three salesmen were play- to a mousey, peach-fuzz flavor, and is ing, slapping down cards, laughing it ever nauseating. Wrapped bread loudly. The fourth player was Bran- does seem like a sanitary way of handling bread, and it does keep moist Daniels stared, swore, went out longer when wrapped. However, unquickly. So-he was spying was he til somebody invents a wrapper that is more porous and that will allow the entrance of some fresh air we will be sticking up for unwrapped bread.

teresting visits and visitors these last few weeks. Usually these visits and visitors are announced in loyalty. Suddenly he felt young and the personal columns. However, the visits and visitors that we have in mind have been kept very quiet. Of course we have reference to the Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt visit, then the Duke of Kent's visit to Canada and as though that wasn't enough there was the visit to the Old Country of Prime Minister Mackenzie King. Most of these visits were kept quiet until after they had at least landed in the country visited and all on account of the war. Now a group of ten Canadian journalists are either going or have gone to England and among them none other than our friend Hugh Templin of the Fergus News-Record, writer of those interesting articles that have been appearing in the Herald each week about the Royal Canadian Air Force. These journalists are going at the invitation of the British Council who ask that "ten working journalists spend three weeks in Britain to see the preparations for the defence of the Island." Their expenses are being paid by the British government. We mentioned in this column a few weeks ago that Hugh Templin gets around a good bit, but at that time we didn't have a trip of this kind in mind. We'll be interested in Hugh's accounts of what he sees over there and so will a good many others. Some fellows have all the luck. Or as somebody has stated "Opportunity comes to those best pre-

THERE HAVE been a good many in-

