



SOULS FOR SALE

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Remember Steddon, a pretty, unsophisticated girl, is the daughter of a kindly but narrow-minded minister in a small mid-western town. Her father,

Rev. Doctor Steddon, violently opposed to what he considers "worldly" things, accepts motion pictures as the cause for much of the evil of the present day. Troubled with a cough, Remember goes to see

Dr. Bretherick, an elderly physician, who is astonished at the plight in which he finds her. Pressed by the doctor, Remember admits her unfortunate affair with

Elwood Farnaby, a poor boy, son of the town sot. As Remember and Dr. Bretherick discuss the problem a telephone message brings the news that Elwood has been killed in an accident. Dr. Bretherick accordingly persuades Remember to go West, her cough serving as a plausible excuse: to write home of meeting and marrying a pretended suitor

"Mr. Woodville" and later to write her parents announcing her "husband's" death before the birth of her expected child. Unable alone to bear her secret, Remember goes to her mother with it.

Her mother agrees with the plan of the town. Mem leaves town. On the train Mem incidentally meets Tom Holby, movie star, traveling with Robina Teele, leading lady in the movies, who are the cynosure of all eyes. The train comes to an abrupt halt, a disaster having been narrowly avoided, and the passengers get out and walk about.

At Tucson Mem meets Dr. Galbraith, a pastor, who knows her father and takes an interest in her. She miscalls Tom Holby "Mr. Woodville" in order to make her fancied suitor seem more real. While the Galbraiths are away, she writes them as well as her parents that she has married "Mr. Woodville" and that they are to live in Yuma—for which she buys a ticket.

Mem decides to kill off her imaginary husband by saying he died of thirst in the desert, meanwhile she starts off for another town to get a job as a servant. On the way she runs into the movie company of Tom Holby. Tom insists that she become an extra, and is most cordial to her. She finds herself in the movie game.

Remember Steddon comes West to avoid revealing the result of an unfortunate love affair to her father.

The Rev. Dr. Steddon, a clergyman of kind heart but narrow mind who attributes much of the evil of the world to the "movies" and constantly inveighs against them. Mem, her lover Elwood Farnaby having died in an accident, at the advice of Dr. Bretherick, gives her bad cough as an excuse to get to Arizona and from there writes home that she has met and married "Mr. Woodville," a wholly imaginary person. Later she writes again to say that her "husband" has died in the desert. She takes a job as a domestic to avoid being a burden on her parents. A fall prevents her becoming a mother. In Arizona she had met

Tom Holby, a leading man in a motion picture company, and through him gets the opportunity to play a part in a desert drama. With the company is

Robina Teele, a Star, fond of Holby and Leva Imaire, an extra woman. After her accident, Mem becomes friendly with

Mrs. Daek, a poor woman of Palm Springs, Arizona, and takes an interest in her bright little son,

Terry Daek, who has a great gift of mimicry. Inspired by a letter from Leva, Mem plans to go to Los Angeles to take a job in a film laboratory.

She gets a job in a film laboratory, but loses it. She meets a Mrs. Sturgs from her home town, who talks of the evils of the movies and says the stars are forced to sell their souls. Mem then learns her mother is coming to visit her. Mem is worried about her finances.

She sees a casting director, Arthur Tirrey, and abruptly offers herself to him in return for a job in the movies. He tells her the talk about "paying the price" is all rot. Meanwhile the attention of Mr. Bermond, head of the company, is diverted to her and he decides to give her a chance. Soon she finds herself posing with Claymore as her director, obeying his commands in a kind of stupor.

Now Go On With the Story

Then the lights went out and there was a wait while Mike ran along the gallery parallel, with tweezers in his gloved hands. When Mike was ready the camera man shouted: "Hit em! All right, Mr. Claymore!" Mr. Claymore called "Music, please!"



She felt a fool—the music, the lights, the director's voice—all was insanity.

And Mem found herself in a sea of blazing radiance tremulous with a shimmer of music.

She went back to the door and nodded when Claymore's "Are you ready?" penetrated the myth realm from far away. She heard him murmur: "Camera! Action!" and she heard his voice reciting an improvised libretto for her pantomime.

"You've come from your dark cell! The light blinds you! You begin to see the angry public, the cruel judge. You flinch. You fall back. 'They are going to sentence me to death!' 'They are hissing me because I loved too well!' 'But my little baby! They said I killed him! They can't know how I loved him! how I felt his little hands on my cheek, his lips at my breast! how I suffered when his cheek grew cold! O God! I prayed for his life even though it meant eternal shame! But he is gone! My lover is dead! What is this world to me!' Wring your hands! Look at the judge Draw yourself up! Defy him! That's it! Now let the tears come. My baby, I am coming to you! My baby!"

She heard his voice wailing and trembling like the vox humans stop the village organist used to pull out for the sake of pathos. It was maudlin, unforgivably cheap and trashy, yet it was the truth for her, as for millions of other girls. It was trite because it had broken so many hearts.

She felt a fool, a guilty fool. The music, the lights, the director's voice—all, all was insanity. But it swept her heartstrings with an Aeolian thrill and they sang with a mad despair.

But Mem had been schooled all her life to keep her hands down and to avoid flourish, to take short steps and to keep her waist and hips stolid. Though the fashions of the day gave her short, loose skirts, no corsets, free arms, she might as well have been handcuffed and hobbled and fastened in iron stays, for all the freedom she used.

Claymore made her run, with longer and longer stride, bend and touch the floor, fling her arms aloft, take the steps of a Spanish dancer and a Spanish vixen. But she was unbelievably inept.

"I wish I had the courage and the kindness to give you a Belasco training," he said. "You know he testified in court that when he trained Mrs. Leslie Carter for her big war-horse roles, he had to break her muscle-bound condition first. He threw her down stairs, throttled her, beat her head against the wall, and chased her about the room. She told me herself that she learned the Declaration of Independence by heart and spent hours and hours repeating it as glibly as she could. Every time she missed an articulation she went back to the beginning and recited it all over again—hundreds and hundreds of times. That's how she learned to deliver great tirades with a breathless rush, yet made every syllable distinct. That's how she learned how to charge about the stage like a lioness.

"To be a great actress is no easy job. You've got to work like a fiend or you'll get nowhere. You've got to exercise your arms and legs and your voice and your soul. If you will, you've got a big future. If you won't you'll slump along playing small parts till you lose your bloom of youth, then you'll slip into character parts and go out like an old candle."

The upshot of this ordeal by fire was that Mem was recognized as a star yet to be made—if, indeed, her nebulous ambitions should ever be condensed into solid achievement.

Claymore felt that she had a future. He told her so. But he told her that a period of hard labor lay between her and that paradise.

There was an exceedingly curious method of getting acquainted. Teacher and student became as much involved in each other's souls as Abelard and Heloise at their first sessions.

in his automobile. It was quicker than the street car, but it seemed far quicker than that. They chattered volubly of art theories and practices. They did not realize how long the car stood in front of her bungalow before Mem got out, or how long he waited after she got out, talking, talking, before he bade her the final good night.

Her mother realized it, peering through the curtains, and Leva exclaimed:

"Good Lord! The minx has the director eating out of her hand already. She'll get on!"

She met Tom Holby on the lot one day. He had been asked to come over and talk of a possible contract with the Bermond Company. He greeted Mem with effusive enthusiasm, and she warmed at the pride of his recognition. Then she felt a little twinge of conscience—an intuition that she had no right to be so glad to see Mr. Holby, since now she fancied, she belonged to Mr. Claymore.

One day when a little scene was being filmed in which Mem was the only actress, the rest of the company being excused for a change of costume, a visitor from overseas was brought upon the set, a great French general.

The publicity man suggested that the general might like to be photographed on the scene. He laughed and came forward with a boyish eagerness. When the picture appeared in newspaper supplements about the world it was stated in each of the captions that the great warrior had said, "Remember Steddon is the prettiest girl in America."

More amazing yet, Mem first learned of this astounding tribute from her astounded father.

The news came in a letter from the man Mem and her mother loved and dreaded. As Mrs. Steddon's fingers opened the envelope in the awkwardness of guilt, two pictures fell to the floor. They were in the brown rotogravure of the Sunday supplements and presented Mem standing at the side of the French general. Both stated that he had called this promising member of the Bermond Company "the prettiest girl in America."

Mem and her mother gathered themselves together as if they had been dazed by a rip of lightning from the blue and waited for the thunderbolt to smash the world about them. They read the letter together. It began without any "Dear Wife" or "Dear Daughter." It began:

The inclosed clippings were sent to me by members of my congregation who were sojourning, one in New York and one in Chicago. It is hard for me to doubt the witness of my eyes, but it is almost harder to believe that the wife of my bosom and the daughter reared in the shelter of our home could have fallen so low so suddenly. Before I write more I want to hear the truth from both of you, if you can and will tell it.

The Reverend Doctor Steddon was something more than a father to his daughter, something more than a husband to his wife; he was also the high priest of their religion.

But Mrs. Steddon had grown up with her husband and had seen his tempers goad him to too many mistakes. She was merely angry at him now for a burst of wrath, while Mem cowered before him as an inspired prophet.

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