

SOULS FOR SALE

by RUPERT HUGHES
ILLUSTRATED BY DONALD RILEY

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 snot. 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 doctor. Mem leaves town. On the train Mem accidentally meets Tom Holby, movie star, traveling with Robina Teale, 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

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 place 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 Teale, a Star, fond of Holby and Leva Lemaire, an extra woman. After her accident, Mem becomes friendly with

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

Terry Dack, 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. Sturges 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.

Mem's father reads a publicity story calling her "the prettiest girl in America" and writes a letter of protest to his wife and daughter. Mem's fame begins to spread, and Claymore, the director, takes an unusual interest in her. He is infatuated with Mem but tries to be aloof and professional to hide the fact from the company.

Now Go On With the Story

He never said anything, however, that he might not have said before a



"Sorry to interrupt you, folks, but I need your money."

crowd. He never tried to hold her hand or snatch a kiss or men an embrace. Mem was constantly set quivering with expectancy that he would make some advance, some gesture of endearment, yet always unable to decide just what she would do if he did. But he didn't.

The picture and its final retakes were finished on a Saturday afternoon. There was an evening's idleness ahead. Claymore asked Mem to take a drive in his car, a long farewell flight about the familiar and the unvisited roads. She accepted meekly. Something told her that this drive was important to her fate. Something was always telling her something. Nine times out of ten it was false, but she forgot the failures and recalled the coincidences.

Nobody had yet asked Mem for her self-respect as an initiation fee or an initiation rite. She was paid a weekly wage based upon her ability, her experience, and her usefulness. She was paid in coin of the realm.

Her price would rise and fall according to the general market for moving pictures and her specific value. Her emotions and her beauty were commodities, and Steddon stock would be quoted on the Soul Exchange as the demand for it increased or diminished.

Claymore had been chaperoned by the company and his own reverence for discipline. But now she was outside his authority. Both were outside Bermond inclosure. And they were as helpless together as any other twain whom nothing restrains or separates in the undertow of passion. They were two emotional people without a barrier.

Among the countless things said about the hows and whys of women's surrenders one motive seems to have been too much ignored, though it must have exerted a vast influence as women go more and more into the worlds of business, of art, and of

freedom with only themselves for their guardians.

Good sportsmanship, a hatred of smugery, a contempt for too careful self-protection, a disgust for a holier-than-thou self-esteem—these are amiable attitudes of mind that make for popularity. To be a miser of one's graces, a hypochondriacal coddler of one's virtues, is to be unloved and unlovable.

So many a man will gamble, break a law, risk his career, his health, his life, get drunk, steal, slay and play the fool rather than face the reproach that he is a molycoddle a Puritan, a prig, a Miss Nancy, a coward, a Pharisee.

And many a woman who would not yield for love or luxury must have consented for fear of seeming to be overproud, stingy, cold, prudish, disobeying, superhuman, subnormal, un-sportsmanlike.

Mem had been swept once beyond the moorings by a summer storm of devotion to young Farnaby her first love. Now she was to feel her anchors cut adrift by the gracious gesture of good fellowship with a colleague.

The Ocean Drive stretched along a forest of palms like huge coconuts dark against the gaudy west. The automobiles of every make were so many that they were almost one long automobile, or at least a chain on which they slid as black beads. Their lights were coming out now like early stars pricking a twilight sky. For miles and miles the highway mounted and writhed along the steep slopes of precipices, hugging the rocks to let pass car after car with lamps flashing in front of blurred passengers.

In almost every "bay" where there was a bit of space a motor had stopped and drawn close to the cliffside in the dark, each car a wheeled solitude, a love boat at anchor in a stream of cars ignoring and ignored.

There was a strange influence in this recurrent mystery. Everywhere lovers were hiding themselves in conspicuous concealment. Mem felt disgust at the first dozen, amusement or contempt for the next fifty, tolerance for the next, and—

Claymore did not speak of them or of anything else. He was too busy twirling the wheel and gauging the little distances between the edge of the cliff and the cars that whizzed past.

Halfway up the canon his headlight ransacked a black cove and found no motor in possession of the estuary of night. And here, to Mem's dumb astonishment, he abruptly checked his car, swung in off the road against the wall of rubble, and stopped short with a sigh of exaggerated fatigue.

"Well," he groaned, "this is a drive! I'll rest a bit if you don't mind. Pretty here, eh?"

From their cavern of gloom they looked across a fathomless ravine to a mountain on which the risen moon poured a silent Niagra. In the dozing radiance a creamy shaft of yucca stood, a candle blown out in a deserted cathedral.

The night air was of a strange gentleness, and the cars that shot past threw no light into their retreat.

There was a long, long silence that filled Mem with a terror she could not quite fail to enjoy. She could not tell whether she heard her own heartbeats or his, but excitement was

that had brought them so swiftly to this remote seclusion.

Claymore was dumb so long that Mem had time to cease to be afraid of what he would say, and to begin to wish that he would get it said, so that she could know what her answer would be.

She felt a baffling uncertainty of herself. She could not imagine what she might do or say. She had not had much experience of men, but enough to know that before long he would initiate the immemorial procedure that starts with an arm adventuring about a waist and a voyage after a kiss.

She told herself that the only right and proper thing to do would be to resist, protest, forbid, and prevent at any cost the profanation of her sacred integrity. If necessary, she must fight, scratch, scream, escape, run away, appeal for help to any passer-by, or, as a last resort leap over the cliff and die for honor's sake.

But who was that She and who was that Herself that told each other so many things?

Herself told She that Mr. Claymore could not be treated as an ordinary ruffian, an insolent, outrageous knave, a fiend. He had treated her with most delicate courtesy from the first, he had given her his admiration, his praise, his devotion, his mute but evident affection.

If he loved her and revealed his love, she could hardly reward his patient chivalry with prompt ingratitude and violence and fear. That would make her the insulter, not him.

She must be very gentle with him and ask him kindly to forbear and not to spoil the pleasant friendship that she had prized.

If Mr. Claymore should propose marriage, that would make his carcases acceptable according to some canons, though not to all. But he

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