



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 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.

Mem and Claymore become more and more interested in each other. Out riding one day, Claymore makes physical advances to her. While they are parking a hold-up man approaches and demands their money.

Claymore, brooding deeply in his earnest soul, felt that he owed Mem some atonement. He meant it nobly, but it sounded crude when he checked the car in front of her little home and took her hand and said:

"If you will let me marry you, I'll see that my wife divorces me."

These divorces of convenience marked the new-fashioned way of accomplishing old-fashioned righteousness. He wanted to make her "an honest woman."

"No, thanks!" It was as uninspired as possible, but then it is not easy to make a brilliant answer to a stupid suggestion. She felt that she must improve on it a bit, but she helped it little when she added: "Just as much obliged. Good night!"

Two days later she began work with Tom Holby's company. Holby described the part she was to play, read her the big scenes.

People make love unconsciously at times and in the truest courtships never a word is spoken. Two souls travel mystic gardens together and come to deep understandings without the exchange of a syllabled thought. Mem was so wooed by Holby.

The orders had gone forth to rush



His heart sickened. She would be sliced to shreds.

the Holby picture to a conclusion. Big night-storm scenes had been scheduled for the final takes, and on the final morning the first scenes were begun promptly at nine. Kendrick promised to let the company go at three to rest for the all-night grind, but it was not until half past seven that the day's work was done.

At nine they went to the first of the sets. The Californian night was black and cold. The night in the story was one of tempest and battle. Tom Holby must run an automobile into a ditch and make a desperate war against four brutes who were instructed to put up a good fight.

Each bit of scenery through which she was to flash had been made ready the day before. Perforated rain pipes were reinforced by men who would play a fire hose or two upon the hapless actress. The gale was to be provided by an airplane propeller mounted on a truck.

Mem inspected the settings she was so briefly to adorn.

"Why do they build that fence around the wind machine?" she asked Kendrick.

"To keep people from walking into the propeller and getting chopped to mincemeat," said Kendrick.

After an hour preparation the army was ready for the battle.

A gentle rain fell from the pipes. The fire hose, aimed up in the air, added its volume. The wind machine set up its mad clatter. The water and the lightning filled it with shattering fire.

Then Mem was called forth. She clutched her cloak about her and thrust into the tempest. It was like driving through a slightly rarefied cataract. She hardly reached the pillar at the edge of the porch, clutched it for a moment, caught a quick breath, and flung down the steps. And that was that. All this preparation for one minute of action!

She was taken to a warm room and

wrapped in blankets while the next scene was prepared. She was supposed to have run a long distance between the last scene and this, and she must enter it wet.

At length she got her signal and went forward again, head down, into the wild storm.

During her absence a telephone pole and a tree had been brought down by the storm and photographed as they fell. It was her business now to clamber across the pole and push through the branches of the tree, and so fight her way out of the picture. The wind machine had been shifted several times. The wind man in his confusion forgot to notice that the property men had forgotten, in their confusion, to set up the fence before the propeller. It was after midnight now and everybody was numb with cold, drenched with the promiscuous rain, and a little irresponsible. Their working day was already fifteen hours old and it would last at least five hours more.

Tom Holby had been photographed in a climb up the wet sides of a ravine, and was half frozen in his soaked clothes, but he stayed to watch Mem through this scene.

She struggled with the maniac hurricane, stumbled and fell across the telephone pole, thrust aside the wires, lifted herself and breasted the wind again, drove into the wreck of the fallen tree. The branches whipped her wet flesh cruelly. The lightning just ahead of her blistered her vision like the white-hot irons driven into the eyes of Shakespeare's Prince Clarence. The wind blew her breath back into her lungs. If she had not gained a little support from one stout bough of the tree she could never have reached the margin of the picture.

Kendrick's heart was glad with triumph as he saw her pass out of the camera range. He called, "Cut!" and the camera men were jubilant as each of them shouted "O. K. for me!"

Then Kendrick heard screams of terror, wild howls of fear. He ran forward and saw the blinded little figure of Mem still pressing on straight into the blur of the airplane propeller.

His heart sickened. She would be sliced to shreds. She could not hear the yelled warnings in the noise of the machine.

The operator shut off his engine, but the propellers still swirled at a speed that made them only a whorl of light. The witnesses were paralyzed by the horror of the moment.

Tom Holby broke from a nightmare that outran the immediate beauty of the girl walking forward to a hideous fate. He ran and dived for her like a football tackler, hooked his left arm about her knees and flung her backward, thrusting his head beneath her, so that when she struck, her shoulders were upon his breast, her drenched hair fell across his face like seaweed.

She opened her eyes in a chaos of bewilderment. Just above her the flying propeller blades were glistening in the light of the sun arc.

They were still revolving when the wind machine man, leaping from the post where he had stood expecting her fate and his own eternal remorse, ran to lift her from the ground. Others helped up Tom Holby.

He had knocked himself unconscious when his head struck a rock in the road. His cheek was ripped and gushing blood.

He came to his senses at once and forced a ghastly laugh.

Mem screamed with fear for him. She had not yet realized her own escape. She was all pity for Tom Holby, and anxiety.

"It's nothing," he said. Then he staggered with dread of what Mem would have looked like now if he had waited an instant longer or missed his aim at her knees.

He drew her from the vortex of the propeller, which was subsiding with the dying snarl of a leopard that has missed its pounce.

The next day the company gathered to see the rushes of the night stuff.

Kendrick sighed, "That came near being a portrait of you walking out of this world."

Tom Holby did not speak, but he reached out and, seizing Mem's hand, wrung it with an eloquence beyond words. He seemed to be squeezing her heart with clinging hands.

She was consumed with an impatience to begin a new picture at once, and to be very busy with life and love, beauty and delight.

And yet, when Tom Holby, after they had left the lot, asked her to ride with him for a bit of air, told her he adored her and that she was adorable; when he courted her with deference and meekness and pleaded for a little kindness—her heart froze in her. She could not even accept a proffered beatitude.

She looked at him and thought—and said:

"Too many people love you, Tommy. You belong to the public, and you couldn't bring yourself down to really loving little me."

"Oh, but I could! I do!" he cried. "Damn my public! I don't care for anything but you."

"But I haven't had my public yet, and I love it. Just now the only love I can feel is acted love."

"Then let's have a rehearsal," he