

**cleans
sinks
closets
drains —
kills rats,
mice bugs
destroys
dirt**

**COMFORT
LYE**

**Extra
Strong**



THE PLOTTERS

To begin with, they quarrelled.

Being thorough in all things, they quarrelled as thoroughly as they had loved. Then, with equal thoroughness they swept up the pieces—returned the presents, burned the letters, and tried to persuade themselves and their friends that the whole affair was washed out as utterly as if it had never happened. She stayed where she was, and he went to live in a different town.

That's the prologue.

The story commences when Doris, coming out of a theatre with her aunt, met Billy for the first time in two years.

Billy was not the man with whom she had quarrelled. Billy was merely an old and devoted chum. He and she had grown up together, and their friendship was of the quarrel-proof brand which neither absence nor proximity, letters nor the lack of them, can ever chill into indifference or warm into love. Billy had known all about the dead-and-gone episode, and Doris had listened with sisterly affection and unfeeling interest to most of Billy's love affairs. Love, in the old days, had been wont to attack Billy much as hay fever does its victims—nothing serious, but bad while it lasts.

Two years in the East had altered Billy very little indeed, to outward seeming. In the wide, carpeted passage between stalls and exit he bore down upon Doris and her aunt with all his old exuberance.

"Spotted you just at the end of the show," he explained, after the first flush of greetings. "I was upstairs, and, of course, when I saw you I dashed down right away, before you could give me the slip. And how are things going with you, old girl?"

Doris gave him a resume, which he punctuated with questions, even as of yore. Then, by chance, he mentioned a forbidden name, and her pretty face hardened, and she stopped him with an imperious gesture.

"Please don't speak of him, Billy,"

she said firmly. "I never want to think about him or remember him again."

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed Billy, his eyebrows almost vanishing into his hair. "Is it as bad as that still?"

"So far as I am concerned," said Doris implacably, "Derek has ceased to exist; and, above all things, I don't wish to be reminded of him. Nothing could possibly restore matters to their old footing, or make amends for his behavior. That incident is quite—quite closed!"

"But I say, Doris—" Billy began protestingly.

"Please, Billy!"

Billy subsided. The aunt, who never cared whose toes she trod on, put in her contribution.

"Sinful pride—that what it was!" she said. "Pride on both sides! You were a trifle worse than he, but not much. Great pity, as I've always said. He was a good boy. Nothing but ridiculous pride!"

"And you—what about you, Billy?" asked Doris hurriedly.

At the bottom of her heart she knew perfectly well that her aunt was right.

"Oh, top-hole!" said Billy enthusiastically, and shuffled and looked down his nose, very pink and pleased. "The fact is, I—well, I met the dearest girl in the world when I was in hospital down South, and we got engaged."

"Really? Oh, Billy, how glad I am!" exclaimed Doris sincerely.

Billy grew pinker and his smile broader. The aunt, scenting imminent rhapsodies, cut in with more alacrity than consideration.

"Do you think you can find us a taxi, Willie?" she asked. "We shall never get one if we wait much longer."

"Right you are, Miss Anne," said Billy cheerfully, and piloted the old lady to a seat. "Just sit down here until I come back."

It was at that moment Doris saw Derek.

He was coming down the passage, his tall head well in view above the few late-comers who straggled out in front of him. Before she could recover herself, his eyes had met hers and she knew that an encounter was inevitable. And he was accompanied by a girl.

That did it. All the old pride, strengthened by repression, flew up ready for battle. She gave one quick glance round, as if for help; then turned and followed Billy, overtaking him half way down the steps outside. In all his life he had never failed her yet. "Billy," she said desperately, "I want you to be a pal to me. I'm going to compromise you dreadfully."

"Pleasure's mine!" said Billy without hesitation.

You could never take Billy at a loss. He was a pearl beyond price in emergencies.

"Then we're engaged!" said Doris, finger on lips as in their school days' pranks.

She transferred her diamond ring—a recent birthday present from her father—to the third finger of her left hand, and went back—to run clean into Derek, rendering escape impossible. There was nothing for it but to make the best of a bad job. His companion had halted to straighten her hair before a chance mirror.

"Well?" said Derek.

He looked down at her with a queer, almost tender expression in his eyes. "You here!" Doris said foolishly.

She ignored his proffered hand, and saw him flush at the slight.

"Only for a day or two," he said. "You're looking very well." He caught sight of her left hand, and took it up quickly and examined the ring. "So you're engaged?" he said.

"Yes," said Doris, and contrived a little smile and a lift of the eyebrows that tacitly inquired what he had expected. "I have been for some time. Are you surprised?"

"I hadn't heard," said Derek. "Well, you have my good wishes, both of you. I'm married now, you know!"

"Married!" said Doris.

"Sure. Quite a hoary Benedict by this time."

He turned to the girl at the mirror. She tucked a handkerchief into her vanity-bag, and came up to them. The light gleamed on her wedding ring.

"I've met an old friend, Madge. This is my wife, Miss Hamer."

He slipped his arm through the girl's with a surreptitious squeeze, and the girl looked from Doris' face to his

with keen, sweet blue eyes. Before she could speak, Billy reappeared.

"I've found a taxi—" he began; and stopped.

Derek was regarding him with dilated eyes.

"Ah, here's my fiancee!" Doris said coolly. "Billy, you and Derek used to know each other, didn't you?"

"Yes, in the old days," said Billy, playing up nobly.

Derek smiled. "I must congratulate you, Whyte," he said. "You've met my wife, too, I think?"

"Yes, I rather fancy I have," said Billy. "Quite a reunion—what?"

Here considerate Providence took a hand in the person of the aunt, whom they had forgotten. She pattered purposefully round the corner, inquiring after her taxi. The group broke up. Billy accompanied Doris and her aunt to the bottom of the steps.

"You're a brick, and I can never thank you," Doris whispered as the aunt bundled herself in. "You're sure—sure you didn't mind?"

"Not a bit," said Billy.

Quite illogically, Doris cried herself to sleep that night. She awoke thoroughly miserable, with red eyes and a remorseful conscience, the sole mitigation of her wretchedness being the reflection that she had saved her pride. This cold comfort upheld her until the afternoon, when the maid announced Derek.

She faced him from the window; he stood unsmiling at the other end of the room.

"What was the idea, Doris?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I fail to understand," said Doris coldly, her eyes hostile.

"Saying you were engaged to Whyte?"

"I don't see how my engagement concerns you."

"Considering that it doesn't exist, I think I have a right to inquire."

"You forfeited all rights long ago. My affairs are nothing to you now."

"On the contrary, they are everything to me."

Doris was white, and quivering with anger.

"I refuse to be insulted like this," she said. "I knew you were capable of a good deal, but I didn't dream that you could sink to such depths. You come to me straight from your wife—"

"Oh, Doris, we've been a pair of fools, you and I!" said Derek. "She isn't my wife."

"Not your wife?"

"No; any more than Billy Whyte's your fiancee."

"Then what made you tell me she was?"

"The same mad reason that possessed you to say that you were engaged to Billy. Pride—sinful pride, as Miss Anne used to call it." He laughed a little bitterly. "Madge rose to the occasion well, I must say, seeing that I sprang it on her without a moment's warning. But I shouldn't have done it if I hadn't thought you really were engaged."

Doris' sense of humor—always one of her saving graces—began to get the better of her.

"And I shouldn't have done it if I hadn't seen you with a girl," she said. "Then you're not—you're not—"

Derek came across the room.

"There's never been anyone else in my life except you," he said. "On my honor, I've never cared for another woman—never tried to. Oh, Doris, kid, is it too late to pick up the broken threads and mend them? Is it too late?"

Doris, suddenly beyond speech, shook her head and turned away. She felt his arm round her—felt both her hands caught in one of his.

"There's nobody else?" he whispered.

"No."

"Doris! Doris! Oh, my dearest, I don't deserve this. Can you ever forgive me for the past three years?"

"Don't! It was my fault—mine all along. I spoiled those three years for you."

"There wasn't a minute in them that could match with last night for wretchedness. When you'd gone home, I made Billy tell me what you'd said about me, and I thought then that I couldn't possibly stand a chance. I only came over because I was still hoping against hope."

"Did Billy tell you that he and I weren't engaged?"

"There was no need. I'd been with him and his wife all the evening."

"His wife?"

"The one I borrowed. They've only just finished their honeymoon. He says Miss Anne didn't give him a chance to tell you the whole story."

"Derek, what an idiot I've been! What you must have thought of me—all three of you!"

"Not a patch on what I think of myself. We've both been pretty foolish all this while, it seems to me. Don't you think it's about time we reformed?"

Doris agreed that it was. (The End.)

Obeying Orders.

Mike—"I heard you got a letter from your brother Denny."

Pat—"Indeed, I did."

Mike—"Was there anything important in the letter?"

Pat—"Well, I didn't open it, for on the outside of the envelope was printed, 'Please return in five days.' So I sent it back."

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Wooden Submarines.

Who built the original submarine?

The idea was first suggested by a British seaman in 1578, but it remained for a Dutchman named Van Drebbel, to build a boat able to travel under the water for a short distance.

Van Drebbel constructed two submarines about the year 1620, which were launched on the Thames. They were built of wood, strengthened inside with iron bands, and covered externally with tightly-stretched hides soaked in grease.

The larger one pulled twelve oars, which passed through holes in her sides. The holes were made watertight by leather sleeves attached both to the oars and the vessel's side. According to one account of the balance between flotation and submersion was so fine that she could be kept below water by the oars alone, presumably used in the same way as the diving fins of a modern submarine.

Van Drebbel also invented what he called a "certain Quintessence," or chemical liquor, by which he was enabled to renew the air in his boat when it had become vitiated. It is even said that King James I, cautious as he was, ventured on a submarine trip in Van Drebbel's under-water boat.

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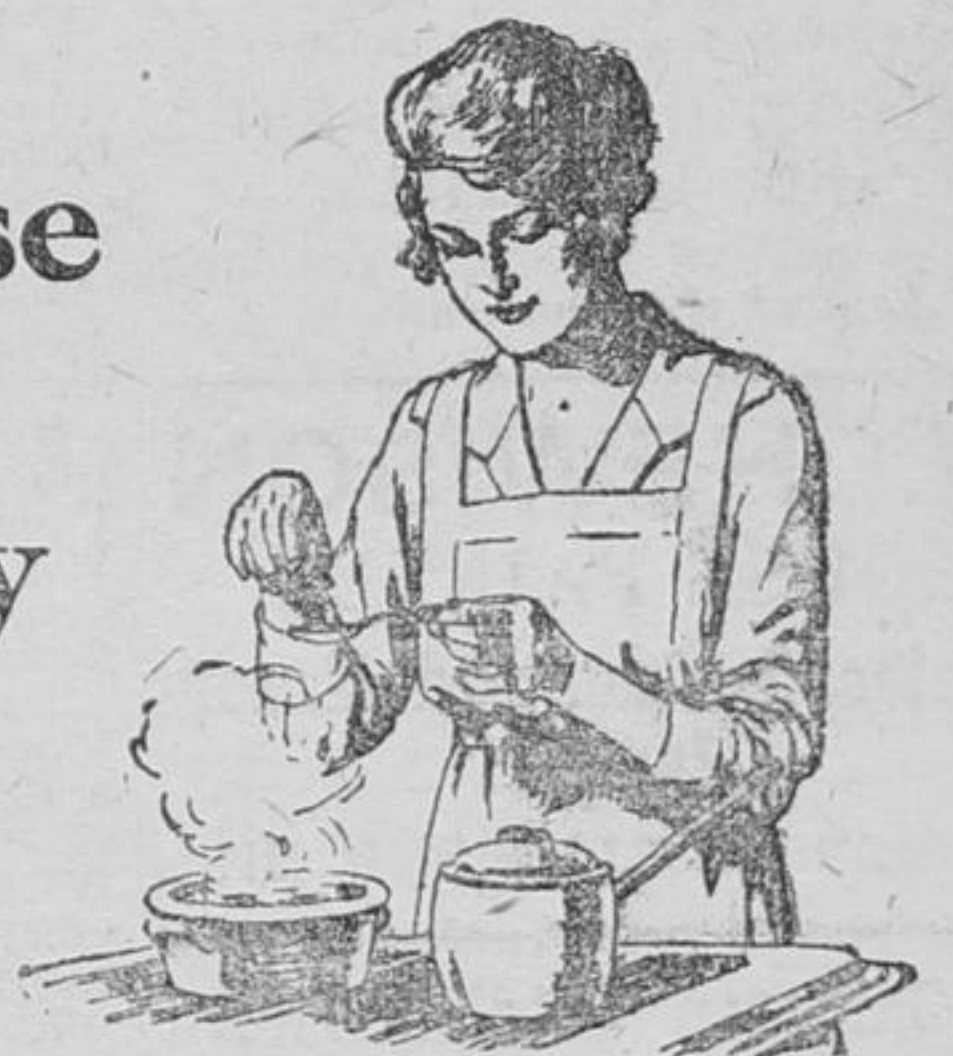
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