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RUBY M. AYRES

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Giles Chitttenham swears to avenge the death of his young half-brother Rodney, driven to suicide by the notorious Julie Farrow who had spurned his love. He will make Julie love him, then throw her aside as she threw Rodney. He meets her in Switzerland, goes with her to the hotel on the St. Bernard Pass, and succeeds in winning her love. To his amazement, he discovers that he has fallen overwhelmingly in love with her himself! And he is married, to an American girl with whom he has nothing in common.

Then he discovers that this girl is not the same Julie Farrow who ruined Rodney, but her cousin of the same name. She scorns him when he confesses his love and his inability to marry her. They meet later in London, where she is going the pace that kills. Another man, Lawrence Schofield, wants to marry her, in spite of her wild life.

Through his friend Lombard, Giles Chitttenham meets the "other Julie," the notorious woman who had ruined Rodney's life. She tells him that she is going to die; the doctors have given her up as incurable and she is leaving England. She is worried about her cousin, the girl Chitttenham loves. That Julie—his Julie—is going in fast company, among them a common little American girl named Sadie Barrow.

And Sadie Barrow is Giles Chitttenham's wife. He did not know that she was in England. That night he meets her at a party at his mother's house. They pretend to be strangers.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

Julie swung round from the contemplation of her pale face beneath the brim of the green hat which she had picked up from the bed to try on.

"No," she said sharply. "I'm just going out. Say I am engaged."

"Very good, Miss."

The door closed quietly behind the maid, and Bim said a trifle maliciously:

"He will think you are afraid of him, Julie."

Julie's cheeks flushed.

"Afraid—!"

She made an impetuous rush to the door and opened it.

"Wait a moment—"

The maid, already half-way across the little passage, turned.

"Tell Mr. Chitttenham I will see him in five minutes," Julie said and went back to her bedroom.

Chitttenham was standing by the mantel-shelf looking at an impressionist photograph of Bim Lennox, but he turned at once when the door opened.

"Hullo!" Julie greeted him with a casual nod. "What in the world brings you here at such an early hour? I've only just crawled out of bed myself."

She spoke rather loudly and defiantly, and she deliberately left the door open behind her.

Chitttenham stepped past her and closed it, then he came back to where she stood.

"This has got to stop, Julie," he said without preamble.

Julie opened her eyes wide.

"Stop?" she echoed blankly. "What has got to stop? My getting up so late do you mean? My dear man—"

He interrupted ruthlessly.

"The whole of this miserable, damnable play-acting has got to stop. You're ruining yourself and me body and soul. Do you think I don't understand? Do you think I don't understand that you can take me in for one minute by all this—this childishness—?"

Before she could prevent him or move a step from him he caught her by the shoulders, roughly turning her round to the morning sunlight which streamed through the window. "Look at the scuff on your face? You'd have scorned to use the muck two months ago. Look at the life you're leading—when you left my mother's house last night—or rather early this morning—you were horribly drunk—"

Julie laughed in his face.

"Delightfully drunk!" she mocked him coolly. "But go on, go on! Don't let me spoil this soul-saving lecture. You're mistaken your vocation. You ought to have been a low-church parson instead of what you are—a coward and a cheat. . . . I can just picture you in a clerical collar, with all the old tabbies in the congregation—"

"Julie—!"

She wrenched herself free of him.

"I object to being called by my Christian name by you. I hate the name, anyway. You can keep it for my estimable cousin—she'll appreciate your caveiran attentions and I don't—"

"She's a braver woman than you are—"

Giles said savagely.

"Has she made a conquest of you already? Well, good luck to her, she's welcome. And if you've only come here to behave like a bully you'd better go—I've a lunch appointment—"

"With Schofield?"

"That's my affair."

"If he was a decent fellow he'd stop your nonsense. He'd never have allowed you to do what you did last night—"

"You flatter your sex. All the men in the world could not stop me from doing exactly as I please—"

They faced one another like deadly enemies, white and shaken. It was astonishing how suddenly the storm had arisen.

Chitttenham was not a committed man, but by his own love for Julie he

measured her love for him, an unhappy love that would give neither of them rest or peace, and could not bring happiness, and realizing this he suddenly broke out passionately:

"Oh, my dear, it's not worthy of you or of our love. Must you make it harder for us both than it already is? . . . Do you think it's nothing to me to see you as you were last night—to . . ."

The tender sincerity of his voice almost broke her down. She swayed a little and caught at a chair back, but when Chitttenham would have gone to her she waved him furiously away.

"Don't touch me. Don't come near me."

For a moment she struggled hard for self-control, then she was erect once more and facing him defiantly.

"You said when I came in, that this must stop. Well, I agree, and so we'll just settle it now once and for all. And will you please understand, Mr. Chitttenham, that you and I are nothing whatever to one another, and never have been. If you want to hear the truth I even rather dislike you. However foolish you once thought me . . . Oh, I'm not shirking the memory, if you are—"

she broke out as he would have spoken.

"I am quite willing to admit that for one night, just for a few hours—I let you think I rather liked you. Don't blame me for that. It was the snow and the wind, and being up there so far away from every one. . . . In the morning it had all gone, and as I said then, we had come back to earth again." Her voice was studiously cold and quiet, almost expressionless.

"You will make your name a by-word, even amongst these—these ridiculous people you call your friends."

"And that, of course, will break my heart, if it is not already broken," Julie sneered. "It matters so much what people like Doris Gardener and Sadie Barrow say. . . . They haven't any vices themselves, have they?"

"At least Sadie does not drink," Chitttenham interrupted unthinkingly.

He saw the sudden look of angry surprise that flashed into Julie's eyes.

"You seem to have found out a great deal about Sadie in a short time," she said sharply.

"One does not have to be either very quick or very inquisitive to find out such a thing," Giles answered.

"As a matter of fact I find her very charming," he added with an almost childish desire to sting her.

But Julie calmly agreed.

"So do I. She and I have a great deal in common. Chiefly our dislike of your noble sex."

"Schofield always excepted, I suppose."

Julie laughed.

"Lawrence Schofield certainly excepted. He is a great friend of mine—he is rich, and moreover he is anxious to marry me—"

"You don't care two straws about the man."

"On the contrary, I care a great many straws. Not that it is any business of yours—"

"It is my business when the woman I love talks of rushing into a ridiculous marriage."

"The woman you love," Julie's face flamed.

"How infinitely touching! and what a pity you are not free to marry me yourself. Think of the divine bliss we should experience—think of the happy-ever-after ending—"

Julie slipped past him and opened the door.

"Please go," she said.

Bim spoke from the narrow hall rather nervously:

"Julie, dear—Mr. Schofield has just driven up—"

"I'm coming at once."

There was an eloquent silence after the door had slammed behind her, then Bim half shrugged her shoulders and went into the sitting-room where Giles stood staring out of the window.

"Don't be too angry with her, Mr. Chitttenham," she said. "I am so sorry, so dreadfully sorry."

He turned and looked at her.

"It's all my fault," he broke out agitatedly. "And there's nothing I can do to put it right—nothing."

The telephone rang suddenly and Bim went across the room to answer it.

"Yes? . . . No, Bim Lennox speaking. Oh—yes, Miss Barrow. No, she's just gone out. Can I give her a message? Oh . . . yes, very well—to-morrow afternoon at four."

Bim hung up the receiver and turned.

"There was a little angry frown between her level brows."

"Do you believe in spiritualism, Mr. Chitttenham?" she asked.

"No."

"Nor do I, but it seems all the fashion just now. There is to be a seance or whatever you call it at your mother's house to-morrow afternoon. That was Miss Barrow phoning She's an ardent believer—"

"She never used . . ." Giles began, then stopped.

"It's all nonsense," he protested angrily. "A pack of charlatans duping a lot of silly women."

"Julie is going, too. They have got hold of some wonderful new medium."

"Bim's voice was quietly sarcastic. "They have invited me, but it's not the sort of thing I care about."

Chitttenham frowned.

"It's not the sort of thing any healthy-minded person would care about anyway, and—"

he paused. It was impossible to tell Bim that his mother had declared she would not have Julie in her house again. "I hope you will try and dissuade Miss Farrow from going," he added.

Bim shrugged her shoulders.

"You might as well ask me to try and stop Niagara," she said hopelessly. "Once Julie has made up her mind nothing will change it."

Bim went with him to the door, but after they had said good-bye he hesitated and came back.

"Miss Lennox—don't leave her if you can help it."

"No."

"You see—"

He flushed, and stopped, only to flounder on again. "You see, it's all my fault—all my cursed stupidity."

"I know," Julie told me.

"She told you?"

"Yes."

"And I suppose you think what do you think?"

Bim smiled.

"It would be so easy for me to say that I think you behaved like a knave—so easy to rail at you, but I don't want to. I think life is so tragic—nothing ever seems to go quite right for any of us, does it?—at least that is my experience. We can only just go on—hoping that something will turn up to straighten things out, and it so seldom does. I often wonder if it isn't because we lack courage."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean courage to face facts and see things as they really are—"

She looked away from him. "Mr. Chitttenham, you know Julie doesn't really hate you—"

She laughed rather sadly.

"I suppose I ought not to have told you that, but I can't bear to see her as she is now, so reckless, so broken—"

She stopped, afraid she had said too much, and for a moment there was a profound silence, then Chitttenham held out his hand again.

"Thank you," he said.

As Chitttenham walked away from the flat he made up his mind to do one thing. He would ask Sadie to divorce him.

If Julie still loved him . . . in his heart he was sure that she did, and nothing else mattered.

He had promised to lunch with his mother, but in his eagerness he forgot about it, and went straight to the hotel where Sadie was staying.

She was out and they did not know when she would be back. Giles left a message asking her to ring him up.

He waited till six o'clock and rang up Julie's flat.

Bim Lennox answered the telephone.

"No, Julie is not in. She rang just now to say she was dining out and not coming home to change. I think she is with Mr. Schofield still."

Giles hung the receiver and turned away. He was powerless, and yet he knew that he could never be content to let things remain as they were. He must see Julie again, somehow.

Some one tapped at his door.

"Mr. Lombard to see you sir."

"Confound! . . . Oh, well, show him up."

Lombard seemed nervous and apologetic. "I say—" he broke out suddenly. "I'm in the devil of a fix—"

Chitttenham looked up.

"Money?"

"How did you know?"

(Continued Next Week)

Newtonbrook

A Halloween masquerade social under the auspices of the Y. P. S. will be held on Wednesday evening, October 29 at 8 o'clock. A good time is assured. Everybody welcome.

The Y. P. S. will not meet on Monday evening on account of the Halloween social on Wednesday evening.

A miscellaneous show will be held at the home of Miss Janet Riddell next Tuesday evening, October 28th, for the bazaar which is being held on November 4th under the auspices of the Polly Anna Club. The proceeds of the bazaar is in aid of the church re-decoration fund. You are cordially invited to the shower on Tuesday night. Come and help the good work along.

The W. M. S. held their Thank-Offering meeting at the home of Mrs. W. T. Wells on Tuesday afternoon with a good attendance. Miss Louise McCully, of Korea, gave a very inspiring and helpful address. The November meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. Arnold Douglas.

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FIRE DESTROYED UXBRIDGE TOWNSHIP BARN

Fire during the high wind last Saturday, October 18th, completely destroyed the barn of Joseph Copper, of Garibaldi on the second concession of Uxbridge township. The contents including some live stock were a total loss. The fire was plainly visible at many points throughout Markham township. The cause is reported as unknown.

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