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BROKEN

by RUBY M. AYRES

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE
Giles Chittenham sets out to make
Julie Farrow love him, intending to
throw her over in revenge for the
suicide of his brother Rodney, whom
Julie had cast off. He succeeds, but
finds that he has fallen desperately
in love with her himself. Then he
discovers that it was not this Julie
Farrow, but her cousin of the same
name, who had driven his brother to
death. But Giles is married, to an
American girl named Sadie Barrow,
with whom he has not lived for a long
time. Sadie unexpectedly turns up
in London, at a party at Giles' moth-
er's house, but both keep silent about
their marriage.

Julie, disillusioned, enters into the
wild night life of London to try to
drown her anguish. Lawrence Schof-
field wants to marry her. Lombard,
who had first introduced her to Chit-
tenham, demands money from Giles
with the threat that if he is not paid
he will tell Schofield that Chittenham
and Julie spent the night together on
the St. Bernard Pass. Later Julie con-
fesses to Chittenham that she loves
him.
At a spiritualist seance at Giles'
mother's house Sadie Barrow, his wife
suddenly goes blind. She calls to
him and he responds, revealing the
fact that she is his wife. Julie, who
has sent Schofield away because of
her love for Chittenham, goes home
in despair.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY
Julie moved with difficulty. She
was cold and aching in every limb.
She slipped off her wet clothes and
put on a warm dressing-gown, her
hands were shaking with cold.

She was pouring the water from the
kettle when a knock came on the front
door—a heavy knock that sounded
both urgent and insistent. Bim, per-
haps! Julie put the kettle down and
flew across the little hall. Bim, dear
Bim. Julie felt as if already half her
troubles were lifted from her as she
drew back the latch—then she gave a
little choking cry.
"You—!"
"Yes—you must let me come in,
Julie," Chittenham said, and without
a word Julie stood aside. She was
conscious instantly of something dif-
ferent—strange about him—something
that killed both the mingled hope and
anger that struggled for supremacy
in her heart. She felt that if she
went to his arms she would be repul-
sed—that if she showed him bitter
scorn it would leave him unmoved—
that nothing could touch him.
"I had to come—I'm sorry if you
are angry with me—but I had to come
—just to say good-bye—"
He turned and half raised his head,
looking at Julie. Then suddenly his
face changed—it was as if the strang-
eness were wiped out of it in a single
flash, giving place to such a look of
unutterable pain that Julie caught her
breath in an involuntary cry.
"To say good-bye—?"
"Yes—he took a quick step to-
wards her and then stopped—"Sadie
is blind," he said.
Julie stared at him, her eyes blank,
her lips parted; then after a long mo-
ment: "What do you mean?" she
whispered.
Chittenham made a little impatient
gesture.
"Just that—what I have said, she
is blind—apparently she has felt it
coming and been dreading it for mon-
ths. That is why she came from
America without telling me—she went
to see some German specialist—I
don't know yet what he told her, she
was too ill and frightened to be very
coherent. And then this fellow Chry-
er on top of it all—you heard what he
said about some one in the room never
seeing the sunshine again. Didn't he
speak of blindness—darkness—God
knows what! The fellow should be
locked up. Sadie took it to herself
of course, and the sudden shock fin-
ished it; perhaps it would have hap-
pened anyway, the doctor thinks so,
but even he cannot tell, he says she
may temporarily recover her sight—
if she doesn't—"
He stopped abruptly, and Julie said
in a shaking voice:
"How awful! How perfectly awful!"
So it was. She felt shocked, stun-
ned and yet it was quite impartially,
every other emotion was clouded over,
stified by those first words which
Chittenham had spoken to her.
"I had to come, just to say good-
bye."
What had he meant by that? Good-
bye! How could they ever say good-
bye after last night? He had said
then that they would never part again.

Chittenham went on:
"I was sure you would understand
what a difference it makes, I was
sure you would try to help me, Julie—
dear! You see, she hasn't any one
but me, you see, there are some things
it's impossible for a man to do when a
woman's ill, and frightened, I couldn't
leave her, how could I? You see—
you wouldn't wish it, would you? It
would be like—like trampling a wom-
an down to reach our happiness, a
blind woman, too, so defenceless—I
—"
He broke down hopelessly. What
could I say. What excuse or ex-
planation could he offer that would
sound plausible or justified?

He tried to take her hand, but she
drew it sharply away. She felt that
she could bear anything, be brave
over everything, if only he would not
touch her. He was right in what he
said. Of course he was right. Sadie
was his wife, and his place was to
stand by her. No man could do less,
she herself would despise him if he
did less, and yet—behind everything
a panic-stricken cry was trying to
make itself heard in her heart:
"What about me? What about
me?"

Then, as if in answer to the un-
spoken cry, Chittenham was beside
her—so close to her that for a wild
moment she thought he must be going
to take her in his arms, and her heart
almost stood still, and then went
racing on again so violently that it seem-
ed to be choking her. And she look-
ed up desperately, meeting his eyes
fixed upon her with such a look of
love and longing in them that it was
more than she could bear. She put
out her hands appealingly.
"Go away, please go away," she
whispered.

"Julie." He caught her hands in
his. "Forgive me, Julie. Say you
forgive me, that you don't hate me,
that you understand."
"What do I want you to do? Why,
nothing. There is nothing we can do
we must just go on. I always knew
it would be like this, even last night.
There's nothing we can do. I shall
marry Lawrence Schofield, I suppose,
if he will take me back again—"
"Julie—don't be cruel—"
"I am not so cruel as you are. I
never wanted you to come into my
life. It was you who followed me." With
a smothered sob she turned to
rush past him to the door. But Chit-
tenham was too quick for her, he
reached the door before she did, bar-
ring her way.
"Let me go—let me go."
She beat at him with impotent hands
the tears raining down her face. "Oh
let me go, let me go—"
"Not like this, Julie; we can't part
like this—oh, my dear, dear child—"
She was in his arms, her face hid-
den on his shoulder, his lips against
her hair, while he whispered over and
over again how much he loved her,
how only she filled his heart. But
what could he do? If only she would
tell him what he could do? But Julie
had no answer, and presently her bit-
ter sobbing ceased, and she lay quietly
in his arms. It was she who spoke
first, after a long silence.
"I'm sorry I cried, it was silly! And
so useless. After all, it's no more
than I expected—I always knew if I
let myself care for any one it would
be like this—"
She drew away from
him. "I think you had better go be-
fore I make another scene for you to
remember me by."

She wiped her eyes and tried to
smile.
"It's all right—please go now—"
She averted her eyes. "Please go
now, and please never come back a-
gain."
It was what Chittenham had want-
ed her to say, with all a man's dislike
of scenes and suffering, he had hoped
that she would refuse to listen to him
and send him away, but now that she
had done so, he knew it was not what
he had wanted, after all. He had
wanted her to keep him against his
better judgment; he had clung to the
belief that she would try to keep him
from Sadie, for whom he had not feel-
ing but the merest pity—a pity that
was not, and never could be, akin to
love.

With Julie sobbing in his arms it
had seemed impossible ever to let her
go—he loved her so much—no woman
had ever before stirred his heart and
his imagination—no woman ever
would. If they never met again it
would be the same always; she was
his, they were made for each other.
He thought of his wife as she had
been when he left her an hour ago,
frantic with fear, crying and sobbing;
it made him shudder to remember the a
way she had clung to him, begging
him not to leave her.
"After all, you're my husband, and
I've got nobody else in the world. I
know I haven't been as nice to you
as I might have been, but don't leave
me now I'm blind, don't leave me,
Giles. Oh, my God, what will become
of me?"

The pathos of her was heart-break-
ing. Sadie, who had always been so
independent, so free, to be clinging
to him like this, imploring him not to
leave her. She was his wife, he was
pledged to her by honor. And yet
now that Julie had told him to go—
he broke out passionately.
"How can you think of marrying
Schofield? What happiness would it
be for you if you don't love him—"
"I don't expect to be happy," Julie
laughed shakely. "Anyway, it can-
not matter to you any longer. Please
go away and leave me."
"Julie!" he said pleadingly.
She said nothing. She hardly seem-
ed to be listening, and he let his arms
fall from about her.
"I shall see you to-morrow,"
Still no answer, and after a moment
he went out into the little hall and
opened the front door.
He was so sure she would call to
him, perhaps run after him. He was so
sure that in a moment she would be
in his arms, her lips crushed against his
—he counted the seconds feverishly by
his heart-beats.
But Julie did not move, and she
gave no sign.
Chittenham looked back.
"Julie!"
He waited a moment, but the sil-
ence remained unbroken, and he went
out of the flat, shutting the door be-
hind him.
It seemed to Julie that she stood
for hours, leaning against the wall, her
body so tired that it was too much
effort even to move over to the fire
and a comfortable chair. Her head
ached miserably. With a supreme
effort she dragged herself across the
room to the fire. It had burnt down,
and she replenished it with shaking
hands. She felt as if already a life-
time had passed since Chittenham
came to the flat, and yet only a mo-
ment ago he had been there with her
so close that she had put to put out
her hand to touch him, and now he
had gone, back to Sadie, back to his
wife!

"I will never willingly see him a-
gain," Julie told herself passionately.
"He has deceived me twice. I will
never forgive him as long as I live."
She got up almost violently as thou-
gh driven by the sudden reaction of
thought.
She would send at once to Schofield.
She would not lose a moment.
She went to the 'phone and called
his number, but it was only after a
long time that the hotel people could
give her any news of him.
He was out at the moment, they
said, but he was certainly returning
that night.
There was a little pause—then:
"Mr. Schofield is leaving London
early to-morrow morning."
"Leaving—"
Julie felt as if her last anchor had
been torn from her—the waves of mis-
ery and utter loneliness seemed to
beat up afresh all round her. The
voice at the other end of the 'phone
asked politely if a message could be
taken.
"No—oh, no, thank you."
Julie hung up the receiver and turned
away. Lawrence was leaving
London, leaving her!—she was seized
with exaggerated panic. What was
to become of her? Even Bim was
weary of her, there was no place for
her in the world. But Lawrence had
loved her, must surely still love her.
She remembered the despair in his
eyes when she told him she would not
marry him.
If she could only see him for a mo-
ment she was confident that every-
thing would be all right—to see him,
just to see him! She felt like a child
left alone in the dark, straining every
nerve to get to the one person who
can take away dread and the desolate
sense of loneliness.
She took off her loose gown and
dressed again with shaking fingers,
she was still very cold, but her face
and head felt burning.
She would put herself beyond Chit-
tenham's reach, to-morrow when he
came he should find it too late.
If Lawrence would take her away
to-night she would go with him. She
was tired of hoping for things that
never came true, afraid of a love that
brought with it only pain. She went
out into the wet, chilly night and took
a taxi. She drove straight to the

hotel where Lawrence was staying.
No, he was not in yet, and they could
not say at what hour he would be re-
turning. It was past nine then.
"I'll wait a little while and see if
Mr. Schofield returns," Julie said.
The minutes ticked away, and later
she supposed that she must have fall-
en into a stupor, out of which she was
roused with a start to the sound of
a chiming clock. Julie walked across
to the porter.
"I cannot wait any longer, I will
leave a note for Mr. Schofield."
(Continued Next Week)

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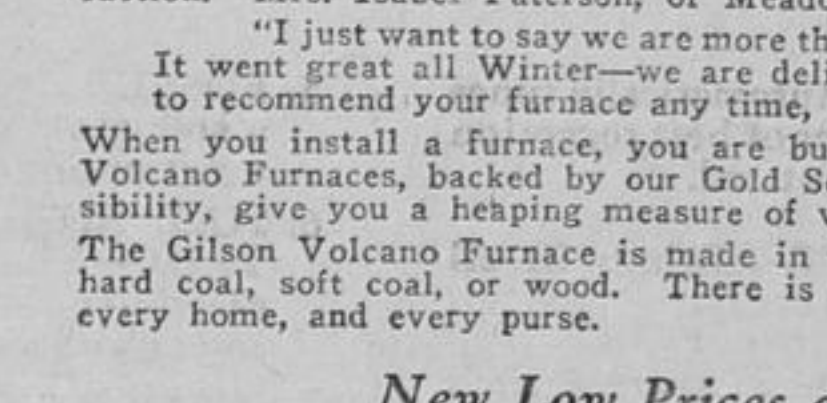
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