

## VOICE DIVINE

Enid Loved Alec, But It Was a Solid Sort of Affection, Not Romance, But Romance, Close at Hand, She Found, Was a Little Disappointing.

By URSULA BLOOM.

They had been engaged for a year. There was no reason why they should not have married immediately, yet somehow Enid held out. She was twenty-two, and had lived all her life in the little country village, and she wanted to see life with a capital L. Somewhere, she believed, there was glitter and glamour—there might even be an amazingly wonderful Mr. Right, a phantom person, someone she had never met.

Naturally Alec could not understand her attitude. He loved Enid, and he had no glamorous ideas that did not include her. Enid loved him, too, but all women see mirages in the desert of life, and Enid was pursuing this one—this fanciful love.

"Let's be married at Christmas!" Alec begged; but she put him off.

"At Easter, when spring is here, and the buds are bursting," she promised.

And now Easter had come, and the marriage was no nearer.

"I'll be going to stay with my aunt in London," she told him. "Let me have that first, and I'll be buying trousseau frocks and fripperies, and after that we'll be married."

"But shall we be?" he asked.

"Yes, I promise."

All the same he wondered. He had given her a portable wireless set at Christmas. It was a thing that she had wanted for months, and had wheedled him into buying it for her, and almost immediately afterwards he regretted it. Enid was an imaginative young woman; she wove dreams about things and persons, and she immediately wove the loveliest dream of all about one of the announcers. She called him "Voice divine."

"He is probably old and ugly," Alec told her, "and has pimples."

All the same he knew that Enid was thinking that he looked as gleaming Mr. Right might have looked—glamorous and alluring. Night after night she listened to the voice.

"I'm wrong," she told herself, "I do love Alec; but it is the solid sort of affection, and not the love I want to mete out to him. If only I could have had a romance—one of the romances outside the village—one of those story-book love affairs. . . ."

Perhaps Alec understood it. It is always difficult for a man to understand a woman, but perhaps he realized that Enid was not a flirt really. With her it was just the true woman hunger for the spun-glass prize which is out of reach.

He saw her off to London. Next day he found life lonely, and he became overwhelmed with the horror that perhaps in the gay city she might meet the man who would give her the very romance that she craved. Three days later his worst fears were affirmed. She wrote a letter, a little penitent letter, and she begged him to forgive her, only she had to confess. She had written to the announcer with the voice divine, and had told him how often she had listened to him, and asked if she could possibly see him.

"Alec, I had to," she wrote, "and now I feel all ashamed, for I know what you will think of me. . . ."

And Alec, turning round in his bungalow, kicked the portable violently. Why had he ever bought the wretched thing? Why, indeed?

The announcer would be the sort of young man with whom he could not compete. Alec was a son of the soil. For generations his family had run their little farm, and the announcer was probably one of those sleek young men, one of those round-about-town people, in spite of his voice divine.

"Damn him," said Alec to himself. "If she'd been lonely in London, she'd have come back here willing to settle down. And now this is what happens."

All day long as he went about the fields, and fed the chickens and watched the men, he was turning the problem over in his mind, and when night came he had decided on a course of action. It was very simple, but then he was a very simple man. He also would write to the announcer with the voice divine.

He wrote and told him the truth, told him about Enid, who wanted romance, and who, if she did not find it, would return to the village and settle down, and find the real romance of people who live happily ever after. Alec never doubted but that the announcer would meet her, he never doubted but that he would be young and handsome.

"You have got everything I have not got," he wrote, "and your meeting Enid probably will make all the difference to our two lives. . . ."

Then he posted the letter in a hurry

for he felt that if he waited he might hesitate about it, and it was better to get it done with.

Two days later Enid received a letter. Mr. Cyril Dunn, the announcer, asked if she would meet him at the Oriental Cafe in Newcastle Street for tea. She could hardly believe her luck. Yet, as she dressed in her best clothes and added the last touch of powder to her nose, she wondered if this were fair to Alec. She wondered if, after all, it were not a little late to be meeting Mr. Right, and whether the memory of the little farm at home were not pricking within her.

Still she was early at the cafe, and stood near the entrance waiting. He would arrive in a big car, and he had told her that he would be wearing a white carnation in his button-hole. Eagerly she scanned the crowds for the glimpse of a white carnation. There was none. People came and went; taxis drew up and slithered off again; a gentle wind sprang up and cooled the hot street. He was very late.

She was beginning to feel the first sting of disappointment when he turned the corner. A tall, stooping, rather shabby man of middle age, wearing an old mackintosh, and walking with a stick. He was lame, but in his button-hole there flowered a white carnation.

Somehow she had not thought of his being like this. She hesitated, and he, hesitating too, recognized her.

"I'm from the broadcasting station," he said, and stood there waiting. His voice was exquisite though, close to a little metallic. She pulled herself together with a jerk.

"It was good of you to ask me to tea," she said.

Romance . . . romance with a lame, rather tired man, who had not taken much trouble with himself, and whose mackintosh was a little torn and very dusty! Still he ordered the very tea that she liked best, and sat down opposite to her with a bright smile.

"I suppose I'm not like what you expected. Funny how you get to know a voice, and imagine what the owner is like, and then, when you see them—"

"Yes," she assented. "I thought of you as being quite different."

"Perhaps it is a pity we met?" and he laughed; then he said: "Tell me about yourself, about your home, where you live and all that sort of thing?"

She told him, and somehow the words came quickly, and with a new, rather sweet meaning. Home, a little farm in the dip of the hill with a garden full of flowers. She told him how she was to be married almost at once, and, describing Alec, she saw an attraction which had never been so bright before.

While they were talking, a couple passed by the table. She looked up and caught a glimpse of a shining young man in an immaculate suit, with dark eyes and sleek hair. Her companion nodded to him.

"Oh! . . ." she said, for her heart had missed a beat. The dark eyes of the young man had looked her through and through.

"Only my cousin," he said, "please don't let him interrupt the story."

She turned for an instant to see the swing doors close on the heels of the young man and shut him and his companion out into the street. "Now, if he had been the announcer," she thought. "If he had been Cyril Dunn." But she pulled herself together with a jerk and went on with her story. It was a live and vivid romance!

They finished tea, and he paid the bill, and outside the swing doors they said good-bye. They would not be meeting again. He was charming, but they had so little in common. He did not understand her life, and she found that he could talk about little that she understood. He lived in lodgings he had told her, got up late, and went to bed early. He did not dance because of his leg, which had been damaged in the War. He did not go about much, for people bored him. He had his work, and his work interested him only.

Enid, arriving back at her aunt's, sat down to write Alec a letter.

"Let's be married at once," she wrote. "I've been a little ninny—still I suppose we all make mistakes. Until today, when I was talking about you, I did not know how much you meant to me!"

And Alec, receiving the letter, felt his heart turn over with joy, and put up the banns at once. He went round the farm with his lips pursed into a whistle. Life was good.

In a London hotel two men were talking.

"And when I saw you come in, Cyril," said the lame man, "I had a fit. What were you playing at?"

"Well, as it was myself she wrote to, I thought I'd have a look at her. After all she was my romance, and if that poor chap she is engaged to hadn't written to me, I'd have met her myself instead of sending you."

His cousin sighed wearily.

"Well, I bored her all right; that was what you wanted wasn't it?"

## Active!



Norman Parrish of the Los Angeles Athletic Club breaks world's record for the rope climb, then pops up the rope again with a pal on his back. Good exercise.

The announcer nodded. "Poor devils," he said as he fingered the envelope again, and then: "no, lucky devils. They've got the most precious thing in all the world—true romance."—Pearson's Weekly.

## Attadale, in the West Highlands

A black and glossy float, opaque and still, The loch, at furthest ebb supine in sleep, Reversing, mirrored in its luminous deep The calm grey skies; the solemn spurs of hill; Heather, and corn, the wisps of loitering haze; The wee white cots, black-hatted, plumed with smoke; The braes beyond—and when the ripple awoke, They wavered with the jarred and wavering glaze. The air was hushed and dreamy Evermore A noise of running water whispered near. A straggling crow called high and thin. A bird Trilled from the birch-leaves. Round the shingled shore, Yellow with weed, there wandered, vague and clear, Strange vowels, mysterious gutturals, idly heard. —William Ernest Henley, Poems.

## Ramblings

It takes up to twenty-four sheep to provide enough gut to string one first-class lawn-tennis racket.

One American University has 103 different slang words for intoxication, although the United States is "dry" by law.

Two leather flowers, about as big as a sixpenny-vice, attached to the ends of shoelaces, are a fashion novelty from Paris.

London has seventy-seven ancient City guilds, of whom only thirty-one have halls of their own, the other forty-six having to borrow or hire.

Many priceless records of the Great War are beginning to fade so badly that they may soon become unreadable. This is due to the use of the typewriter.

The smallest workable engine in the world has been constructed by a German clockmaker. No bigger than a coffee-bean, it represents years of patient work.

There are now about 200 women licensed as air-pilots in England, five of whom hold B certificates, which entitle them to take fare-paying passengers.

The food consumed by the animals in the London Zoo last year included 145 cwt. of monkey-nuts, 2,104 pints of shrimps, 4,600 bunches of carrots, and 224,904 bananas.

Girls of to-day are extraordinarily good and much more alert and alive than their mothers were, in the opinion of the principal of London's oldest college for women, Queen's.

When the inhabitants of Trinidad, the British island in the West Indies, were recently given the right to divorce, they sent a delegation to London to protest against having this privilege.

Mannequins employed by big London dressmakers range in age from six to sixty. The youngest may receive as much as \$5.25 for a "parade" lasting a quarter of an hour.

Stowaways in British vessels are liable to a maximum penalty under the Merchant Shipping Act of a fine not exceeding \$100 or four weeks' imprisonment with or without hard labor.

The record non-stop freight train run on British railways is stated to belong to the L.M.S. Railway, who have a goods train which travels 191 miles between London and Liverpool without a stop.

Although aliens entering or leaving Gt. Britain are carefully checked, last year twenty-one foreigners out of a total of 11,739 came in on excursion tickets without passports and failed to leave again.

No scholars under seventeen will take part in tugs of war, girls under eighteen will be banned from the long jump, and cross-country runs for boys under seventeen will be limited to three miles, if the recommendations of the recent London conference on athletics for school children are carried out.

## A FRIEND

A friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out.

Income tax has to be paid by 4,000,000 people in Gt. Britain; in 1931 only 2,500,000 persons paid.

## Lace Fashion Revives Trade In Denmark

### First Diesel Motorboat Still Going—Other Notes

With lace triumphantly recovering its rights in the realm of fashion there is a marked revival of the old lace industry which for centuries has centered round Tonder in southern Jutland. Sales are brisk in the cities and prices lower than in by gone days, manufactured threads being cheaper than the hand-spun thread of the seventeenth century. But the modern version of Tonder lace is coarser than the expensive cobweblike weaves of which King Christian V wrote in his diary under 1619 date, "I paid for linen and laces 889 rigsdaler" (about \$440). In 1767 the Mayor of Tonder declared the lace industry more important commercially than farming. These days are not expected to return, but lace making is being revived at many Danish schools of needlework and its specimens find favor with the public.

### Million Miles of Service

It was from the Copenhagen dockyards of Burmeister & Wain that the first large Diesel motorboat Selandia was launched in 1912. She is still going strong after twenty years of service, during which she has covered over 1,000,000 miles. The cylinders have been replaced once in the last twelve years and the vessel maintains its original average speed of 10.9 to 11.0 knots. A milestone in marine engineering, Selandia is the prototype of motor-propelled shipping, about half of the world's motorships being equipped to-day with Diesel engines of its particular model.

### Co-operative Market Hall

Co-operation, the corner stone of Denmark's prosperity, continues to bring together small groups of men engaged in similar activities. The latest development is the initiative taken by the Co-operative Agricultural Union of Denmark, the Co-operative Union of Danish Smallholders, the National Fruit Growers Union and the Central Union of the Twelve Men Societies, jointly to erect a large central market in Copenhagen to promote the marketing of Danish fruit. The fruit is to be uniformly sorted and packed and it is proposed to build the new market hall close to the existing vegetable market for the convenience of prospective customers.

### Aviation Aids Explorer

The hitherto arduous task of mapping out arctic regions is greatly simplified by the advent of aviation. When Dr. Lange Koch sets out to Greenland next summer to continue his investigation of the outline of East Greenland he will be accompanied by two large hydroplanes, aboard which the surveyors will be able to do in a few hours what previously would have taken them years. The main point to be ascertained is the distance between the coast and the inland ice. Dr. Koch's expedition two years ago discovered an extensive ice-free area north of the Musk Ox Firth, and two Norwegian explorers who crossed the inland ice last summer also found land where it was supposed that ice reigned supreme.

### Building Takes Spurt

In the annals of Copenhagen building activities 1931 was a record year which left far behind even the exceptionally high 1930 record. Out of 8500 residences erected in 1931, 6896 were raised by private builders, 1108 by building societies, and 518 by the municipality. The municipality has also assisted financially in the construction of 1574 residences.

### Practical Aquarium

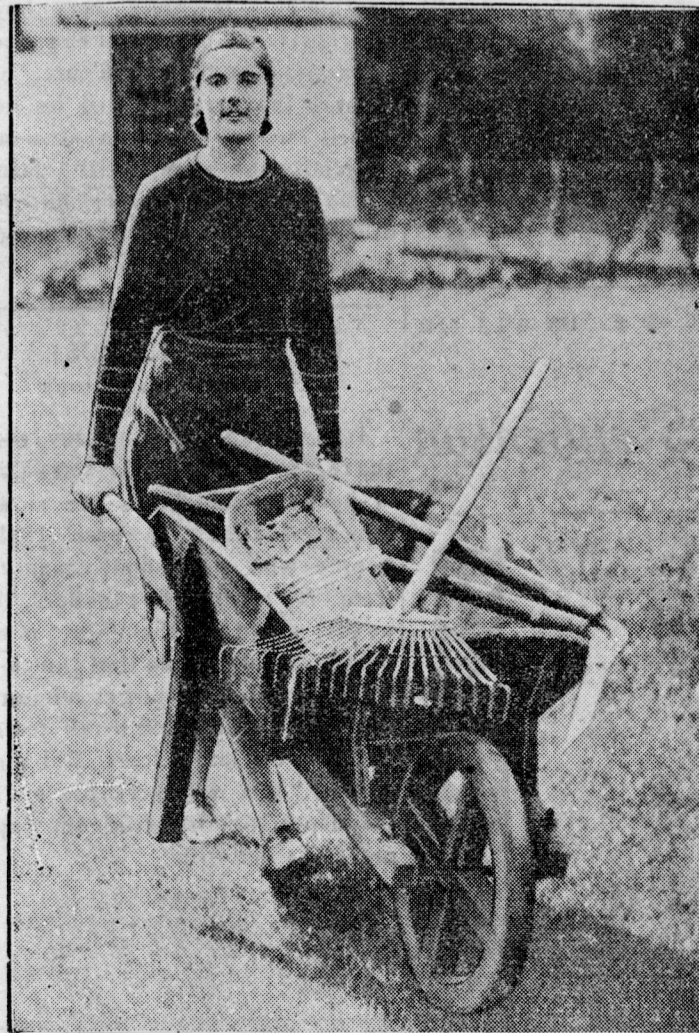
An aquarium to-day is no longer a mere dazzling toy revealing unsuspected vistas of strange and fascinating fish and weird seaweed. The Danish Aquarium Society of Copenhagen is planning to equip the city with a large aquarium for the purpose of studying marine botany and fish of the northern seas especially from the point of view of their marketable qualities. At present Gotenborg is the only Scandinavian city which can boast of a public aquarium.—The Christian Science Monitor.

### New Plays at Oberammergau

Oberammergau.—Although the next Passion Play may not be presented for seven or eight years, Oberammergau villagers will keep in form by presenting two modern Biblical plays this summer. The performances will run from July 16 to August 21.

There is an ill-breeding to which, whatever our rank and nature, we are almost equally sensitive—the ill-breeding that comes from want of consideration of others.—Bulwer Lytton.

## A Tennis Enthusiast At Home



Kathleen Stammers of St. Albans, England, believes in keeping fit. When she's not winning tennis matches, the rake and barrow supplies setting up exercises.