



MANHATTAN NIGHT

by William Alton Wolff

SYNOPSIS.

As Peter Wayne sits on the chilly roof of a building in the East Fifties, waiting to be admitted to the penthouse apartment of the Thayers, where Inspector Connolly and Assistant District Attorney Barclay were questioning Martha Thayer about the murder of her husband, Tack, Peter reviews the last few months. He had known Tack Thayer at Yale. Peter went West after his graduation and for several years did chemical research in the laboratories of a big industrial corporation. Then he stumbled across an alloy that made a lighter airplane engine than any one had ever dreamed feasible, sold his patents for cash and a royalty that staggered him, and headed for Manhattan, where he met Martha Thayer. As he sits outside the penthouse he recalls their first meeting.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

INSTALLMENT III.

It wasn't easy for Peter afterward, even very soon afterward, to recall the impression Martha made on him at sight. He didn't though, think of her, at first as being beautiful. She was a sullen, graceful girl; he did think, even then, that she had a distinction, both of mind and body, that no woman in that room could match. It wasn't strange that he didn't see her beauty; she was hiding it, almost deliberately; it couldn't shine through her sullen, brooding look. He was to come to know, later, that her beauty always did depend upon her mood, and her mood, just then, was bitter, and savage, and discontented. She wore a very plain black evening dress; her wrap was slipping from her shoulders as she walked toward the bar. Her arms and shoulders and hands attracted Peter; they were what drew his eyes, rather than her face. They were lovely; there was a marvelous grace about them. He had a way of judging people by their hands, anyway; he was always enormously influenced in his first quick, instinctive reactions toward new people by the way their hands looked, and how they used them.

Martha's hands weren't dainty, or small, or fragile; they looked as if she could and did use them vigorously. But they were beautifully shaped, and she had long, sensitive, plastic fingers. She didn't make gestures; the way she employed her hands and her fingers to accentuate what she said was something much subtler and much more delicate than that. "Tack's tight again," said Betty Rogers. That made Peter realize that this girl hadn't come in alone; he became aware, with a silly feeling of resentment, of the big, good-looking chap who followed her.

"Tack?" said Peter, inquiringly—but with a vague stirring of memory.

"Tack Thayer — you must have known him. She was Martha Cameron."

That placed the boy for Peter, and he looked at him more closely. What he saw was rather shocking. Tack had begun, Peter thought, to go to seed, and he was too young, and much too fine an animal for that. There was no disputing the fact, though. It was manifest in the pouchy look under his eyes, in the sagging of the muscles of his jaw, in the slack, weary look of his hands. As Peter sat on the roof, looking at the mist on the river, he hated remembering that impression Tack had given him at Emma's. But facts are stubborn things, especially when, like Peter, you have been trained to look at them scientifically, with neither passion nor prejudice.

Nearly every one in Emma's bar that morning spoke to the Thayers. But Tack was too far gone to notice, and Martha, though she wasn't rude, was obviously indifferent. She nodded to Zahn, though; that struck Peter as odd. He seemed to matter more to her than any one there; she smiled at him, and her smile lit up her face for a moment, and brought

beauty, real beauty, into it for the first time. Then she and Tack found stools at the bar, and Tack began at once to drink, hard and fast.

Martha, though, only took an occasional, absent-minded sip from her glass. There was a purposeful look about her, Peter thought; as if she were waiting for something to happen, or, more probably for some one to appear. All at once she turned and looked at the door, and following her eyes, Peter saw a man who'd just come in; a tall, dark, scowling boy, with a weak mouth.

"I thought so," said Betty. "There's the boy friend. Stop watching Martha Thayer, Peter. She'd eat you for breakfast, lamb."

Peter grinned, but he didn't stop watching Martha. Not that she knew that; her eyes were all for the newcomer.

"That's Evan Ross, going over to them," said Betty. "Damn it, I wish Martha'd snap out of it. Tack's going to crown Evan some day."

Some one from another table asked Betty to dance just then, and that stirred up the rest of Peter's crowd to activity so that, pretty soon, he was left alone. He could have found some one to dance with, but he was glad of a chance to set, quietly, and watch the group at the bar. Ross had joined the Thayers, now; joined Martha, rather, for they both ignored Tack, and, though he tried, once or twice, to break into their talk, Martha silenced him, pretty sharply, each time.

He didn't seem to resent that at first, but then, abruptly, in the way of a drunken man, he did. He sent his newly filled glass flying, with a sudden gesture, so that Martha had to draw back to save her dress. Then he slid down from his stool, and stood, glaring at them.

"I'm going home," he announced, so loudly that for a moment every one stopped talking to stare, and there was one of those beastly silences in which an angry voice lingers in the air of a room as smoke does after a shot. Then the talk broke out again. "All right, Tack," Martha said quietly.

"You coming?" "Not now, no. Go ahead if you want to, Tack. I'll get home all right."

Tack stood there, swaying a little, baffled, too drunk to know what to do next. Ross, Peter saw, was watching him with wary, hostile eyes, and lips tightly compressed.

"Well—all right—" said Tack, after a moment, and turned away. He lurched as he walked, and his uncertain progress toward the door brought him toward Peter's table. Peter looked away; he found himself feeling sorry for Tack, though he wasn't, as a rule, one to waste much sympathy on men who drank more than they could carry. But, to Peter's surprise, Tack didn't pass him, but stopped; he could feel him looking at him, until it became easier to face him than to keep his eyes averted.

"Hello," said Tack, thickly. "I know you! Wait—I got it! Peter Wayne—Sheff., weren't you? It's a long time I don't see you. How the hell are you, Pete?"

"Fine," said Peter. "I didn't think you'd know me. How're they breaking for you, Tack?"

"Fair to rotten—" His voice broke, with the appalling suggestion of coming tears you hear, sometimes, in the voice of a man who's been drinking hard for days. "Here—come along."

He reached for Peter's arm and pulled him to his feet.

"Look out—what goes on?" said Peter, laughing and trying to pull away. But, though Tack might be going to seed, there was enough of him left to handle Peter. Even so Peter might have put up an argument if he'd guessed what the other meant to do. As it was, though, he was over at the bar before he knew what was afoot. He saw Martha's angry eyes, and her tight, scornful young lips.

"Out o' the game," said Tack. "Puttin' in sub—substitute. May I—I present Mr. Wayne, Mrs. Thayer? Knew him N'Haven. An—oh, yes—Mr. Ross, Mr. Wayne." He lowered his voice. "Have to watch Ross, Pete. He's a regular son of a female dog, Ross is."

"Tack—you beast!" said Martha. "Will you go home—if you're going?" "Home?" said Tack. "Sure. I got home. Who says I haven't? American home—bul-bulwark o' nation! Vive la France!"

And then he went, without another word.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Wayne," said Martha. "Take Tack's stool and have a drink, won't you?" And, so low that only Peter could hear: "Please!"

Peter stayed, of course. Any one hearing the urgent, pleading note in her voice must have stayed. A drink appeared before him, but neither he nor Martha were giving the Prohibition people anything to worry about that morning; both had other things to think about.

"Get me some cigarets, please, Evan," said Martha.

"Oh, wait!" he said. "The girl'll be around in a minute—"

"But I want some now," said Martha, gently. Peter offered his, but she shook her head. "Thanks, no. Evan knows my brand." Ross went off, rather sulkily, and Martha grinned at Peter, like a mischievous smile. "I wanted to get rid of him," she explained.

"Oh!" said Peter, rather flatly. She was looking at him. He'd never known anything quite like that queer, swift appraisal. It lasted only a few seconds; then she nodded.

"I think we're going to be friends," she said. "I was looking at you, when you were sitting over there alone, and I was wishing I knew you. You see—I haven't—I can't explain, now, but I need some one, quite terribly, to do something for me, and there just isn't time for us to make friends first. We can do all that later, can't we?"

"Yes," said Peter. He thought that was pretty inadequate, but Martha told him later that it wasn't, at all; that it just made her feel he knew her enough to know when to be monosyllabic.

"Good," she said. "Then—will you take me home? Now? If Tack really has gone home and I turn up with Evan there'll be a frightful row."

She slipped down from her stool and took his arm, and they started for the door. They met Ross, coming back, as they passed through, and Peter saw that while he did look annoyed, he wasn't at all surprised.

"I'm leaving," said Martha. "Give me the cigarets, please. Thanks. Go back and pay the check—and stay a while, will you? I'll call you in the morning. Good night."

Ross nodded, after a moment.

"All right. Good night," he said. He went on back to the bar. He was used to Martha, Peter supposed. Peter wasn't, and she went to his head. There was something thrilling and exciting about her; about her voice, and the way she moved, and her way of issuing commands. He turned to the check room for his things, and when he looked around Martha was talking to Benny, the fat man who stood by the elevator door and separated the sheep who had to put up with the dancing room from the goats who were privileged to enter the bar.

Peter had never liked that man's looks, and he liked them less just then. Have you ever found yourself short of cash in such a place, and been obliged to arrange to cash a cheque or have something charged? The man was looking at Martha then as Peter would have been prepared to have him look at him in such an event. But the elevator came up just then, and they went down, and found a taxi.

"This is the other thing I want you to do for me," Martha said, in the cab. "Take this, please—"

She slipped a bracelet into his hand, a lovely, costly thing of diamonds and emeralds he'd noticed earlier, with a little surprise that she should be wearing it in a place like Emma's.

(To Be Continued.)

Like President's Wife

New York.—Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in New York after a week's motor trip about the state, told this one:

On the outskirts of Binghamton several days ago, driving her blue roadster, she stopped to buy some gasoline.

The attendant, as the purchase was completed, gazed at her for a moment and said: "Did anyone ever tell you that you look just like Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt?"

"Oh, lots of times," Mrs. Roosevelt replied.

Muscles Used to Think In Addition to Brain

Washington.—New evidence that people "think" with their muscles as well as their brains, and that therefore complete relaxation helps relieve such things as fear, worry and emotional straight, was presented to the American Neurological Ass'n. Dr. Edmund Jacobson of the University of Chicago described experiments that showed when people think about performing an act with some particular part of the body, the muscles in that part register a small, but measurable electric current on a delicate machine.

Japan has 768 trade unions, 101 of which are in the transport industry. The total number of trade unionists is 370,123.

ORANGE PEKOE BLEND

"SALADA"

TEA

"Fresh from the Gardens"

News Flashes From Germany

Berlin.—An illustration of how economic difficulties can stimulate ingenuity was recently furnished in Stuttgart by the Institute for Acoustic and Caloric Research, a branch of the Stuttgart Polytechnic. For a long time the institute had felt the need for a building of its own, but the necessary funds were unfortunately not forthcoming. The specialists of the institute, however, finally hit on a happy solution to the difficulty by designing an edifice constructed entirely of samples presented gratis by the building industry. The new Institute Building, the fruits of this bright idea, has now been completed and consists of 105 various kinds of mural construction materials, twenty-five different sorts of ceilings, thirty varieties of floors and six distinct specimens of roofing. Thus, the Polytechnic was not only able to save a considerable sum in building materials, but incidentally, a first rate opportunity has been created for examining the samples under conditions especially favorable to analysis by experts. In fact, the manufacturers of the materials used could hardly suggest a fairer test for their products.

SMOKE SIGNAL DETECTS FIRES.

Fires in large public buildings, huge department stores, and on ships have caused such damage that research into methods whereby fire can be immediately detected has long been carried on. A new invention which, it is claimed, will go far toward solving this problem has been perfected by Dr. B. Lange of the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Fibrine Chemistry in Berlin. Acting on the old adage, "No fire without smoke," Dr. Lange's researches concentrated upon producing an apparatus which would immediately register all evidences of smoke and, at the same time, bring the fire extinguishers into operation. Big ocean liners, like the Europa and Bremen have long been fitted with smoke signals which, by optical signs indicated to the central fire station on the ship where the outbreak occurred, and made counter-measures immediately possible. But such apparatus needed constant supervision and was often superseded by other methods, such as alarm signals. Dr. Lange's new method, it is reported, combines the use of optical signals with alarms, sirens sounding on the first outbreak of smoke. His apparatus, so finely adjusted that it registers even the lighting of a match, is so great an improvement on the older mechanisms that it is to be installed on the Caribia and the Cordillera, the newest Hamburg-American liners.

STAR GAZING 300 YEARS AGO.

Interesting finds relating to Johann Kepler, the famous seventeenth century astronomer, were recently displayed at a meeting of the Bavarian Academy of the Sciences. These discoveries divide themselves naturally into two parts, the one consisting of letters and documents, the other of Kepler's interpretation of the events of his day from the study of the skies. The letters and documents were found among the archives of Duke Frederick of Wurtemberg in the Stuttgart Museum by Professor Walter von Dyck. They consist of a correspondence between Kepler and the Duke concerning the new planetarium which the latter intended to have made. It was to serve as the principal attraction in the Duke's art chamber, at the same time propagate the Copernician theory of the universe and illustrate Kepler's own hypothesis regarding the planets. An antiquarian in Stuttgart supplied

the other discovery through the help of Professor Max Caspar. It is a treatise of Kepler's, in which he ventures upon some theories as to the influence of the stars on the lower world and "on the meaning of comets, on past and future eclipses and other unusual things." This forms an addition to the Kepler prognostications and calendars already published. The astronomer was then at the height of his fame, for his great "Harmonice Mundi" had only recently appeared, in 1619. In this treatise he seeks to pronounce on "the weather in the natural as well as in the political world for the coming year." This was an important time in European history—the beginning of the Thirty Years War—and Kepler seeks to advise all and sundry, from potatoes to common people, as to what should be done. The treatise is particularly valuable as a cultural picture of Europe in the seventeenth century.

COLONIES CALL TO GERMANS.

German interest in colonial questions, which did not abate when the country lost its colonies after the last war, has greatly increased of late with what is felt here as the growing possibility that some of these territories may be returned to Germany in the form of mandates. In such circumstances, the recent exhibition, "The Call of the Premial Forest," appealed to both this desire and to the art lover. For under this title, German artists who had lived in the German African colonies in pre-war days organized an exhibition of their works. In landscape, native life and animal kingdom they found abundant wealth of material for their canvases. The German desire for the restoration of their lost colonies was voiced on this occasion by Dr. Schnee, former Governor of German East Africa, who expressed the hope that German youth would again be able to satisfy its longing for adventure.

New Ore Found in Congo

Brussels.—The Independent Belge says that important new mineral deposits have been found in the Belgian Congo, including tin, cassiterite and gold. Owing to the crisis, employees of the mining companies and others have turned to prospecting with most satisfactory results.

Tin deposits have been found in the region of the Lualaba River, and it is estimated that thirty to forty thousand tons of alluvial tin can be exploited at prices much lower than those in Bolivia, Nigeria and the Malay peninsula. The presence of these alluvial deposits, say geologists, show that there are rich deposits on the course of the river, the territory resembling the Katanga in geological formation.

Cassiterite, a semi-precious mineral, has been found in the proportion of two to four kilograms per cubic meter of water in the streams in the neighborhood of Lokandu.

Prospectors also have found gold in Northern Katanga, where it is estimated that from 1,500 to 2,000 kilograms can be extracted annually from these new veins.

Depression to the Fore

He was telling the Negro minister that he had "got religion."

"Dat's fine, brothah, but is you sure you is going to lay aside sin?"

"Yessut, ah's done it already."

"An' is you gwine support de church and help de widows an' o'phans?"

"Ready right now."

"An' is you gwine to pay up all yoh debts?"

"Wait a minute, Pahson! You ain't talking religion now—you're talkin' bizness!"

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