

GYPSY GIRL

THE STORY OF AN IMPASSIONED ROMANCE

McDONALD FEADER




I'm not going to the theatre to-night."

CHAPTER 46

EVERYTHING that money could buy in this city of New York was Consuelo's for the asking. But money had lost its value and its meaning. A dollar was no longer a dollar; a thousand dollars a mere trifle. Occasionally she remembered how her pockets had hung with gold after dancing at a country fair before a few farmers, and how she had counted the spoils greedily. That, however, was so long ago it was not this famous dancer, but a poor little gypsy girl who was weaving a dream. The road between then and now was a long, long way, and sometimes it was even hard to remember that she had been a gypsy who wore full striped skirts and cheap jewelry and trod bare-foot over dusty ground and stole apples and plums and kisses with equal abandon. So it is when much happens that time loses perspective and a short period in actual days and weeks and months may be endless like a dream.

Among the inner circle it was Stewart and Consuelo now, quite taken for granted and one was not asked without the other. They quarreled less often and less violently. He was deeply infatuated with her, but at times awoke to a sense of her tyranny over him and would go off on a tangent of blonde-hunting, only to return repentant, fervently hoping that she had not found out about him. If she knew,

she kept her gypsy jealousy well hidden under the cloak of acquired refinement. She had the promised penthouse, but it only served to bring the snow closer to her. In fact, she had everything she wanted except one thing and neither Stewart nor New York could give her that. She told Douglas of it on one of his rare visits alone with her.

"Doug, do you ever get tired of the clock? Sometimes I think I'll go mad, insane mad, when someone says—it is time to get to the theatre or time to do this or that. I once was as free as the wind, and now I cannot call a minute of the day my own. It was a crazy man who put hands on the clocks and chained us like monkeys to them."

"Well, little chicken, getting tired of this? It's only gypsies and silly people like that who don't have to pay attention to the clock. Famous people, like Consuelo the dancer, must always be at a certain place at a certain time. For the first time, young lady, you are realizing how we poor slaving men are slaves to the clock. What would your dear public think if you weren't there when the curtain went up? Exclamations of surprise and delight, no, that's wrong; 'surprise and chagrin,' good word if you know what it means, issued from a thousand mouths when it was discovered that the gypsy was not among those present and—"

"Don't make fun of me, Douglas,

please don't! I'm awfully tired." "You see, you won't let me finish. You go the pace and then because you're tired and cross you take it out on me, the humblest of your admirers. You're falling into the habit of that old American custom of burning the candle at both ends. It means little chicken, that you overdo everything, nothing in half measure, sensibly." He paused. "Of course, I might go into this technicality, but then you wouldn't understand." The mockery left his voice. "Stewart is a fool to let you run around the way you do. Pretty soon you'll burn out like an electric light bulb—pooh!" "Now you are the crazy one with your talk! Tell me, Douglas, is it possible that we might go into the country and find a tree to lie under?"

"It's an offer," he shivered. "I'm sorry, not to-day! It's just your gypsy bravado that makes you say that. You really don't mean it, you know. My child, for miles and miles around about the ground is covered with snow and sleet and ice cubes and the trees are standing naked and cold and wishing for a georgette blouse or a pair of silk stockings—"

"Oh, stop! Stop!" She stirred the logs in the fireplace and stared at the flames. They did not speak. Presently she slid down from the chair and squatted cross-legged on the floor. She began to hum. After a moment words in Romany welled from her throat. The song dropped off as plaintively as it had begun.

"Now I am warm again." Silence between them. "Douglas, come sit on the floor with me and we will play a game, just you and I."

"Sold." He slipped down beside her. "All right, darling, I'll cut out the wise cracking—it is all I have to hide my broken heart under—you know, laugh while tears choke—et cetera—but you must not suspect how wretched I am."

She disregarded him. "This is not a fireplace, but an open campfire. You are not Doug, but Nobody. I am not the famous dancer, I, too, am Nobody. It is summer and the flowers are in bloom and the air is filled with the scent of pine and alder. Over there by the chair is a nice wide brook. Growing out of it are those big cupped leaves like umbrellas wrong side up and on one is sitting a frog, a little green frog, a very innocent frog—"

He interrupted: "Frogs are all innocent."

"But this one is especially innocent. He has never heard of drinking it straight or of imported liquor or of martinis or of the Follies, and above all, he knows nothing of a c'ock. We will not give him a name. He, too, is nobody, just the same as we. So there are the three of us—us Nobodies. It is night and the stars are big and bright like lovely little lanterns hanging in

the sky. And each little lantern rests on the doorstep of a friend. But they are friends who do not crowd in upon us, but nod and smile from a distance—nice kind friends, you see. The brook is singing a song more soft and more beautiful than a flute. We are very still. We do not speak, but just sit and drink in this beauty around us. We are in love. From the beginning of the earth we have loved—" Her voice trailed off.

The picture before her faded. "No, I am wrong. That was someone else—not me, not you, I'm not going to the theatre to-night." "You're nutty. You've got to go!" "No, no, this is not me, but Nobody. I'm not going to the theatre to-night." "And why?" "Because I have suddenly gotten my freedom—the word stayed with her. "I have gotten my freedom. Freedom,

that is the thing. I am no longer a monkey swinging on the hands of the clock. I go where I please, when I please and how I please!" "Great! However, Miss Nobody, if you are as free as that, I must be, too. Kiss me." They kissed. "You understand that this kiss is not meant for you?" "Now you're spoiling it. I thought we

were playing a game." "So we are. That kiss was not meant for Nobody, but for Somebody." She laughed. "Now let's get on a boat and sail the seven seas and never come back." She was gay. "Miss Consuelo—an alien voice intruded—"it's time for your bath. Mr. Stewart phoned that he would be early." (TO BE CONTINUED)

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The Mother Who had Blanket on Arm

Incident Used by Writer of Letter to Emphasize the Value of Sick Children's Hospital.

To the Editor of The Advance, Timmins.

Dear Sir:—I see by the paper that the Hospital for Sick Children in To-

ronto is now sending out its annual appeal for funds to enable it to carry on successfully for the next 12 months. This brings back to my mind the last time I had occasion to be in that institution. An incident impressed it very vividly on my mind.

A bewildered, sad-faced woman preceded me down the low, wide stone stairs leading to the front door of the hospital. A blanket hung over her arm. "Ah yes," I said to myself, "that signifies only one thing. She has left her child here for treatment. The poor thing!" I wondered if I should try to

comfort her, or if anything I might say would only make her feel worse. I overtook her as I debated, just in time to steady her as she stumbled on the last step. It came naturally enough that we should drop on a hall bench; and there, seeing my sympathy, she brought forth her desperately tragic story in broken sentences:

It was wash day. She had just stepped out of the kitchen into the diningroom to take off the tablecloth that she had decided, at the last minute, to add to the wash. There was a sound of some heavy object striking the floor, a swish of falling water, a childish scream of fright and pain. In a split second, a bright sunny morning had become a nightmare of unbelievable horror. Her three-year-old child had pulled over her a huge pot of boiling water. Her little body was terribly scalded. Her face had miraculously escaped. "Will she live, will she live," sobbed the distracted mother. Touching the blanket on her arm, she said, "I can take this blanket home that we brought her in, but I have to leave her, my baby, with strangers. I want to hold her in my own arms and soothe her, poor frightened little one!"

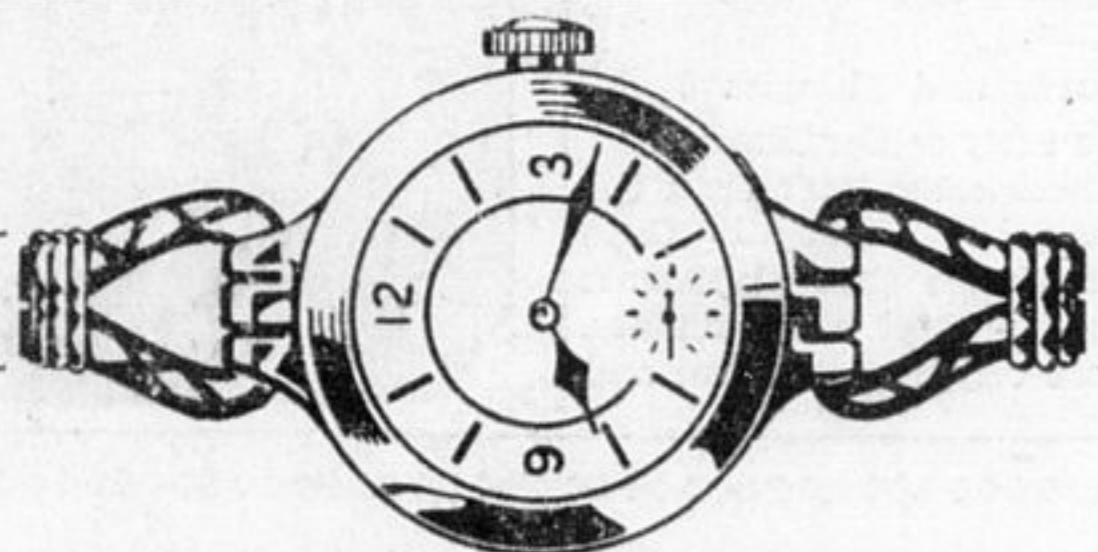
I hesitated as to whether I should tell her of my hospital experience, but, although terrible for me at the time, I knew it was nothing compared with hers, so I forced back my tears and, holding her hand in mine, I told her how very good the nurses and doctors had been to my small son when I had brought him to them at the age of seven with a broken leg to mend. "They will be so tender with the baby and nothing will be left undone," I assured her, "not only to save the little life but to prevent ugly scarring." We left the hospital together and, parting at the corner, she thanked me sincerely for my sympathy. I think I had managed to comfort her a little, at least.

Each day for weeks, I telephoned the hospital to learn how the child was. For many days its life hung by a thread but they would not let it go. At last one morning I was joyfully told it would recover. I have since had the pleasure of seeing this little one, who is now a happy, laughing school girl.

This is my remembrance of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

Yes, I'm sending the hospital my gift of money to-day, the largest I can spare, and I do trust others will do so, too, for I think it is worthy of help from everyone.

—A Mother of Four.
MAY BE RECOUNT OF THE BALLOTS AT NORTH BAY
At North Bay last week the mayoralty contest resulted in the election of Mayor W. G. Bulbrook by a majority of 27 over D. G. Stevens. Mr. Stevens is now contemplating application for a recount. His supporters consider that 27 of a majority is hardly a stable one in a vote of 3897, and that a few errors in a few polls would make a big difference, perhaps.



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