

these, and a man finds himself fettered to a promise—and this!

His hand pointed contemptuously to the crowded table, the splendid gifts. It was odd, Kate thought, that the special gift on which her eyes fell, should be an open case containing a diamond star. On its card was written: "Presented by the bridegroom."

The bridegroom. This man; her lover—her own promised husband three years ago.

She lifted dull, dimmed eyes to his face, and scanned its every line. Noted how worn and thin he was; how brown and tanned. How much older and sterner, and oh—so cried her sore heart, how much dearer and more beloved for every sign of life's warfare and life's pain.

They stood there quite silent; eye seeking eye, and heart speaking dumbly to heart. Between them lay a gulf of suffering that nothing could bridge. Then the girl gave one long quivering sigh. It seemed to her that what had been her heart grew suddenly numb and cold. That all sense of pain, of feeling, of desire, had left her, and gone out of her life for ever.

She stooped and picked up the case that had fallen from her hand.

"I think," she said calmly, "you had better go back to the other room—to her."

"Do you tell me to do—that?" he cried bitterly.

"What else can you do? Your word is pledged. To-morrow is the day, is it not?"

He said nothing. He was looking at her, and from her to that table—and then desperately to the closed door. What could he do? What could he do? Was ever man placed in so hopeless and hateful a predicament.

He came close to her. "Kate, listen. I am like a prisoner seeing before him one last and only chance of escape. You are that chance. Without you—your love—"

But she silenced him with a gesture. "No, No. All that is over. You would not have promised yourself to another woman, you could not have

let matters go as far as this—if you had still loved me."

He groaned in spirit, recognizing the truth of her words as a woman, yet knowing himself excusable as a man.

For how should a girl know of the insidious temptings—the subtle flatterings—the hundred and one trifles light as air, that in their turn become as steel and fetter a man's will and enslave his senses? How should she ever guess.

"What is she like—this bride of yours?" asked Kate, suddenly. "I have not seen her. She has not been here once to-day. Perhaps she is too happy—she dies not care for this side of the—the"

"Don't!" he cried, fiercely. "I can't bear the word on your lips now. Oh, Kate—Kate is it too late? Think—all

our lives, yours and mine, spoilt for ever. However—"

"It was your own doing, Gerald—" she said gently. "No one forced you into this marriage. There could only have been one reason for it. You cared for this girl. I was no longer in your heart or in your life. Well—so it must remain. From to-morrow I will be no longer in that life or heart she has the sole and only right to possess."

"But, Kate—listen!" "No!" she cried, fiercely. "I won't listen. Don't force me. I will not snatch another woman's happiness from her hands—I will not spoil her life, as mine has been spoilt."

"This—this farce of to-morrow will spoil many lives, I fancy," he said, bitterly. "Kate, think a moment. I could speak to Doris—I could explain—"

"You said she loved you?"

His color faded, his lips quivered as they gave the fatal admission. "Yes, I know she does."

On the words almost the door was flung open a second time. A gay young voice cried out—

"Why, Jerry, what a time you've been. You could have counted every one of the presents, I should say!"

Kate drew suddenly away, and bent over the cases beneath her shaking fingers. Gerald Fortescue was idly staring at a silver claret jug.

The girl came in. Her pretty dress rustled softly. Her face was flushed, her eyes bright and eager, and full of joy and excitement. She paused midway in the room, and looked critically at the effect of the arrangement. Then she suddenly turned on another light. The result was dazzling. She gave a little cry of delight.

"There! What a show! Oh, how beautifully you've arranged everything, Miss Perrin. Mother said you had such wonderful taste. So it seems—hasn't she, Jerry? Did you ever think all that litter of parcels could turn out into a veritable fairy show like this?"

She was not looking at him, or at the downbent head of the girl; neither did she appear to notice their silence. Captain Fortescue suddenly walked to the further end of the room, and stood pretending to examine one of the pieces of Sheraton. But Kate lifted her head bravely, and gave one quick glance at the lovely face of the bride-elect.

"I am glad you are pleased, Miss Carisford," she said.

Her voice sounded cold and strange in her own ears. Her lips were stiff. But the other girl noticed nothing amiss. How should she, when her whole mind was full of the details and importance of the morrow.

"But I must call Edie in," she exclaimed. "My principal bridesmaid," she added softly to Kate. "I'm sure she'd love to see the things, though mother said we were on no account to disturb you, but you're nearly done, are you not?"

"Very nearly," said Kate. "And you won't mind if I call my friend?"

"Certainly not." The girl swept off again, all soft silk rustling, and feminine charm. A pretty, dainty, tender, half-spoilt creature. One whose path had been of rose-leaves, to whom life had seemed a fairy vision of concurrent joys.

Kate watched her, and all the color and softness died out of her own face. She at least had known another side to life and girlhood. She was facing its bitterness and accepting its renunciations even now. Nervously her hands went on with their work. Doris had left the door ajar. The sound of her voice was clear and distinct as she spoke to her friend.

The silent figure in the corner still stood absorbed and silent. He was nerving himself to face an ordeal. A harder and more terrible one than that of Rorke's Drift or Mafeking—than glint of steel or hiss of bullet, the ordeal which sets a man's soul to fight against the tempting of his own desires, and shows him those desires as foes to honor.

The door opened again; the bride-to-be returned with her friend. Behind her came her mother—half



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: We have been asked by the publishers of *SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURE* to act as judges in their contest and see that prizes are all awarded fairly. This we will gladly do guaranteeing each contestant absolute fair treatment. Signed Frank D. Lovering, Asst. U. S. Nat'l Bank Examiner; Henry A. Castle, Ex-Postmaster, St. Paul and Ex-Auditor U. S. Postal Dept., Washington, D. C.; Judge J. R. Blackwell, St. Paul, Minn.

In case of tie we will write each person so tied asking them to make as few words as possible from the letters included in the name of our paper, "SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURE," using each letter of the name twice and only twice, and no one word more than once, each letter left over counting as one word. To the one tied in the counting who gives us the fewest words as above will be awarded first prize. This practically eliminates all question of tie, but if there should by any possibility be a tie in this the prize will be divided equally between those so tied. Subscription without counts is 25 cents per year, additional counts after you have three entered as per our terms in paragraph "condition" above may be entered at 25 cents each. This contest is not to be confused with the guessing or estimating contests. Our contest is a test of skill in planning and counting and the best man wins. Nobody connected with our paper will be allowed to compete. Contest closes December 31, but get your counts in at once. See about time prize above.

Approved by the Post-Office Department at Washington, D. C., March 14, 1907.

If this chart gets destroyed another printed on heavy paper will be sent upon receipt of 2c stamp for postage. The receipt of our paper will be our acknowledgement of your payment and count.

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PRIZE WINNERS IN PAST CONTESTS

ONLY 50 CENTS FOR A FARM.—I herewith acknowledge the receipt of the deed and abstract for the 40 acres of land which I received from you as a prize in the Farm and Piano Dot contest. I have made a personal examination of the land, and find it to be about four and one-half miles from the town of Clear Lake in the County of Pope, Wisconsin. It is in a good farming or grazing district and the land in that vicinity is selling from \$7.00 to \$15.00 per acre. A great many of my friends have asked me about my good luck and I told them how I came to get it, and gentlemen, I certainly am sincere in offering my thanks for the same. Can you say that you do exactly as you advertise.

Yours very truly,

(GEO. E. DEAN, Minneapolis, Minn.)

40 ACRE FARM FOR \$200. (6 COUNTS.)—I have to-day received yours of Sept. 10th with deed to 40 acres of land in Wisconsin, being one of the prizes awarded in the Mail Order dot contest, and also Abstract of Title showing a perfect title with all taxes and encumbrances paid to date. I thank you very kindly for you have done exactly as you advertised. Have been offered \$200 for the 40 acres. Shall I sell it for that price or is it worth more? Yours very truly,

OLE S. JORDET, Sacred Heart, Minn.

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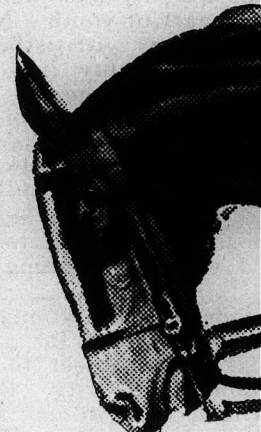
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My count is: (1).....(2).....(3).....

NAME.....

P. O. State.....

tearful, wholly proud and Doris was an ugly child parents idolised her. The silver cloud wore a heavy that mother-heart. But been denied nothing in all and cherished life, and wh openly and frankly declar of the heroic young soldi seemed so cold and distan —well, the heroic young been left in no doubt as That he—or any man—co to the charms of this lov fly never entered the heads



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