

# Your Guarantee

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## The Hidden Hour

BY J. B. HARRIS-BURLAND

CHAPTER IV.—(Cont'd.)

It was a beautiful room—this bedroom that her husband had furnished for her in the first flush of his success. The thick carpet and curtains were grey, and all the furniture was modern black lacquer covered with little Chinese scenes and figures in gold. The ceiling was a pale grey and all the woodwork had been painted a deep orange. The dressing-table sparkled with gold and crystal. A bright log fire was burning in the grate, as though some servant had only just attended to it. The walls had been painted a pale reddish yellow, that relieved the sombreness of the grey and black. The man who had designed it had said that it was "all darkness and flame." And later on Ruth had said to herself, "The flames have died out and only the darkness remains."

The same thought might have occurred to her again, as she looked round the room, if she had not had so much else to think about. As a matter of fact she was looking for some place where she could hide her torn coat and her ruined hat—some spot that would not be too obviously a hiding-place. She was afraid to put the things away in a trunk. There was just a remote chance that she had already aroused her husband's suspicions, that he might even ask to see the hat and the coat—come up to her room after her and ask to see them. Then she would have to pretend that there had been nothing to conceal.

She went to one of the big lacquered wardrobes and hung the coat in a corner of it. Then she placed the hat in a drawer and, walking to the dressing-table, looked at herself in the mirror. Her face was pale, and she did not care to look at her own eyes. The picture that she saw was not in the least like the picture which Merrington had painted. This was not the face of a woman who was in love but of a woman who was afraid—of a guilty, worthless creature who had broken the laws of God in her heart and gone near to breaking the laws of man.

Ruth Bradley hated herself as she saw that face in the glass. She was sorry for the man she loved—the man who loved her. She was even sorry for her husband, whom she could never love. Perhaps after all there had been some truth in what those people had said in the train. Perhaps her husband was ill—very ill with some secret malady of which she knew nothing. And perhaps, sick in body and mind, overworked, and always knowing that she did not love him, he might have come very near to hating her.

"A worthless woman," she said to herself as she regarded that portrait in the mirror—a calm, clear-cut revelation of some Ruth Bradley that she had never seen before. She powdered her face and tidied her hair with trembling fingers. Then she turned away from the dressing-table and stood by the fire. She was afraid to go downstairs and meet her husband. That was the truth of it. She had never expected to meet him until the following morning, when it would have been so much easier for her to

explain why she had gone to the theatre in a morning dress and why she had not taken the car, and why—oh, there were a dozen things.

She was afraid, and yet at the same time she was conscious of a feeling of repentance. She could not picture herself cringing before her husband and telling him the truth. That would have been ridiculous, and the shock of the confession might well kill him, if he were very ill. But she knew now that the great "romance" of her life would never bring her any happiness. She would never love anyone but John Merrington, but her love would be a secret that she would hug to her and hold close to her heart, as Cleopatra held the viper. However long her husband lived, she would never leave him, and he should never know the truth. She would be a loyal wife to him, as she had been a loyal wife to him during all the years of their marriage—passionate words of the last month.

Duty! Loyalty! What a revulsion of feeling from the love that had staggered her with its intensity! What a swinging back of the pendulum!

There was a knocking on the door and the handle turned. She waited for someone to speak, but no one spoke.

"All right, Alec," she exclaimed. "You can come in."

She unlocked the door and opened it. Her husband entered the room.

CHAPTER V.

"You have been a long time taking off your hat and coat," said Sir Alexander Bradley.

"Yes, Alec, I'm very tired."

"You were not coming down to the library, eh?"

"Oh, yes—I was just coming." She paused and laughed. "I just wanted to tidy myself up a bit; I've been roughing it, you know."

"Roughing it? What do you mean?"

"I've been to the theatre—upper circle—took a cab both ways."

Sir Alexander stroked his chin thoughtfully. "H'm, I see," he said after a pause. "So that's why you are not in an evening frock?"

"Yes. One could hardly dress for the upper circle."

"Come downstairs. I want to smoke."

"Oh, you can smoke here, Alec."

"No, thank you! I do not do that kind of thing."

Ruth switched off the lights and walked slowly down the stairs. Her husband followed her, but he did not speak until they were in the library.

Then he said, "I wasn't able to go to the house after all."

"Did you dine in town?" queried Ruth, seating herself in an easy chair.

Sir Alexander nodded. He took up his cigar and stood there with his hands behind him. For nearly a minute there was silence, and then Ruth said, "Do you want to see me about anything of importance?"

"Well, yes—important to me at any rate. I'm beginning to feel that things cannot go on very well as they are. You have always been indifferent to me, but now you seem to hate me. I've seen it in your eyes more than once—hated."

"Oh, no, Alec. It's wicked to talk like that."

"I am speaking the truth. Ever since I destroyed that rotten portrait of you you have been quite different."

Ruth tried to smile. "Oh, well, Alec," she said, "you did behave abominably."

"Yes, I lost my temper; I was not feeling very well that morning. The portrait irritated me."

"You said it was the portrait of a bad woman. Very likely you're right."

"I did not speak the truth. I did not tell you exactly what was in my mind, Ruth. The portrait showed me a woman who was in love." He paused and laughed. "In love—and I know well enough that you are not in love with me."

Ruth clasped her knees with her hands. She knew that her husband was conducting a cross-examination. She had listened to him, more than once, when he had been trying to get the truth out of a witness. He never blustered or bullied. He was always quiet and gentle and sympathetic—just like this.

"So you think I am in love with someone else, Alec?" she laughed. "Oh, how absurd!"

He looked at her for a few moments without speaking. Then he said, "You

# About the House

THE BORROWER.

Judith's door opened cautiously, and Sarah Fell stood apologetically in the doorway. How pretty she was with her golden hair and her arms full of jade crepe de Chine! "Oh, you're studying!" she exclaimed. "I won't interrupt you but a moment. I just wanted to ask you which you'd have this made up with if you were I, silver or black? Or would you use both?"

"True said silver, Connie said black, and Mary said both," observed Judith dryly. "Sarah, don't you ever get tired of borrowing?"

"Of borrowing! Why, Judy, I never borrowed a cent in my life!"

"I'm not talking about money. Why don't you decide something for yourself? Really it's heaps more fun. Oh, you're a wheedler, and it's awfully hard to resist you, but somebody's got to do it for your own good. So I decline to answer your question."

"Why, Judith!" Sarah exclaimed.

"I mean it. We're all in a conspiracy to help you rob yourself, but I'm going to get out. Try standing on your own feet, Sarah, and see how good it feels!"

"But Professor Baker said one of the requisites of success is willingness to learn from others!" Sarah exclaimed triumphantly.

"I know he did. But that doesn't mean you should go round borrowing other people's brains to avoid using your own," Judith retorted.

"Nonsense!" Sarah replied lightly. "Go back to your old calculus. If my gown is spoiled, it will be your fault!"

A week later Sarah was summoned to the dean's office. "Miss Fell," the dean said, "I am afraid your report is going to be a shock to you this term, so I called you in to talk it over with you."

She waited till Sarah, white of face, had read the card twice. Then, "Do you understand?" the dean asked.

The girl shook her head.

"It is because you are trying to live upon borrowed capital. We could not be sure of it at first, so we waited, giving you the benefit of every doubt. Think it over. How many papers have you written, how many problems have you solved, how many even unimportant things have you decided without help from others?"

"Why, I—I didn't suppose—I

thought—" Suddenly as in a dream Sarah saw Judith's clear eyes challenging her and heard Judith's voice: "Try standing on your own feet, Sarah, and see how good it feels!"

A DRESSING STOOL.

"By the time I comb my hair in the afternoon I'm just too tired to primp before a mirror," admitted a busy country mother. "So I do it in the quickest possible way and trust to luck regarding the appearance of the back of my collar and hair."

Many times my tired and aching feet have tended to hasten my afternoon toilet and have reminded me of my hard-working friend. So it was with surprise and interest that I recently saw in front of her dressing-table a rejuvenated piano stool brought down from her attic, where it had remained in useless oblivion since superseded at the piano by a more ambitious bench.

"I cannot tell you what a comfort it is," she explained. "I'm only provoked to think that I did not get it down sooner. I sit here in comfort and arrange my hair as carefully as I choose. Then I swing round and scrutinize results from all angles."

"No more scolding-locks for mother! Daughter is so delighted with this one improvement that she donated the cretonne cover."

Even if vanity does not prompt a more careful toilet, every mother will appreciate the comfort this arrangement offers for tired feet. If the attic does not harbor one of these old swivel piano stools, one can be bought at second-hand very cheaply. And incidentally let me add that such a stool is exceedingly handy in the kitchen as well.

A PRETTY APRON FOR "MOTHER'S HELPER."



4472. Figured percale in white and blue is here portrayed. The style is easy to develop and easy to adjust. The straps may be fastened to the belt with buttons or snap fasteners. The Pattern is cut in 5 Sizes: 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14 years. A 12-year size requires 2 yards of 27-inch material. Pattern mailed to any address on receipt of 15c in silver or stamps, by the Wilson Publishing Co., 78 West Adelaide Street. Allow two weeks for receipt of pattern.

THIS DOUGH WON'T STICK.

The other day I saw my aunt kneading bread on a cloth-covered breadboard. I had never seen this done before, so I asked her reason for using the cloth. The answer was that the cloth prevents the soft dough from sticking and it can be worked up much softer than on a floured board in the ordinary way. She said it was also splendid when cutting doughnuts, as they stick so easily to a floured board, and to be good should be very soft.

The idea is not original, as she once saw the doughboards covered with cloth in a big doughnut factory. The cloth cover is best made from a large-size flour sack, which is sewn into a tube to fit the doughboard; or set tapes to a square a little larger than the doughboard and tie these so that the cloth will be smooth and stay in place.—Louise E.

CLEANING OILCLOTH.

Oilcloth should never be scrubbed. If this is done the paint will quickly be worn off. It should first be carefully washed with a soft brush, to remove all the dust and dirt, and then wiped with a large, soft cloth wrung out in tepid (not hot) water. If it is very dirty it may be necessary to use a little soft soap, but this should be done rarely, and on no account should soda be used. When it is dry wipe over with a cloth or sponge dipped in skim milk, which will brighten and preserve the colors and give it a polish. After sponging with the milk dry with a cloth.

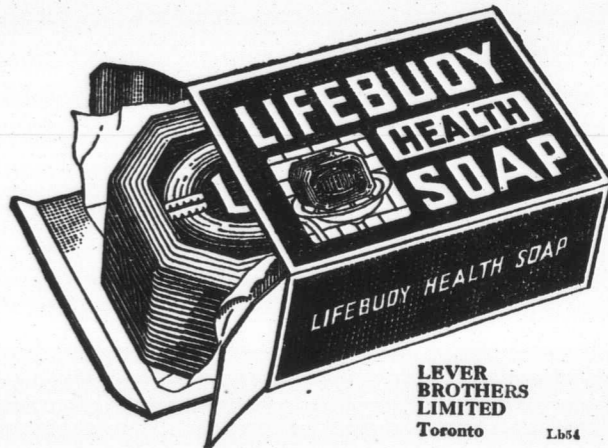
WRITE INTERESTING LETTERS.

Before I acquired the habit of making notes before writing my letters, they were, I am afraid, rather short and uninteresting. Very often while I was working I would think of some bit of news that I would like to tell "so and so," but by the time I was



No woman should have wrinkles or sagging skin before she is sixty. Lifebuoy keeps the skin young

The health odour vanishes quickly after use.



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ready to write a letter to them I had forgotten many of the things I wished to tell them. Now, for a day or so before I write my letters I carry a paper in my pocket and from time to time, as I am about my work I jot down brief notes on different subjects which I wish to write about. This enables me to write much longer letters and to make them more interesting. One of my correspondents laughingly told me recently that my letters were "as good as a newspaper."—G. T.

TO CLEAN THE MOP.

If you use any of the patented woolly mops now on the market, whether for floors, walls or furniture, keep an old whisk broom hanging near the outside door in order to give your dry mops their daily cleaning. Brushing removes the bits of lint and dust much more quickly and with less damage to the mop than the old-fashioned method of banging it on the porch rail.

The lowest priced tea is not the cheapest. A pound of "SALADA" yields more cups to the pound, and so much more satisfaction than ordinary tea, that it is really the most economical to use.



Cheap If They Cling Long. Wife—"These clinging gowns are rather inexpensive." Hubby—"If they cling long enough no doubt they are."

Minard's Liniment Heals Cuts.

The long-familiar colored globes in chemists' windows were first displayed by the Moorish druggists of Arabia and Spain.

A strong hive of bees will number 60,000 insects. A queen bee is supposed to lay about a million and a half eggs during her lifetime.

Nutritious Bananas. The producing power of the banana is forty-four times as great as that of the potato. The dried fruit is readily converted into nutritious flour; it may be also manufactured into sausages; beer can be made from it; while the skin can be turned into cloth, and the juice made to do service either as ink or vinegar.

The first astrological issue of Old Moore's Almanac was published in 1697.

The first negro was brought to the U.S. in 1619.



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