

Some people sleep at home, work down town and do their actual living on street cars. This story began on a street car. It ended in the lives of two other people. And by this time the same street car has been the scene of other stories

THE MATCH-BREAKERS

BY INEZ HAYNES GILLMORE

SHE noticed him with a thrill of blurred recognition, the moment she entered the car. But he, apparently, did not see her until she had seated herself. He stared for an immeasurable part of a second. Then his whole face broke into a smile charged electrically with delight. He pulled off his hat with a swift, vigorous gesture. With his head bare, he looked appallingly alien.

This is the formulae of her thoughts for an infinitesimal interval:

"Oh, dear, I haven't the remotest idea who he is. I know I've never seen him before in my life. I'm sure I'd remember a man that looked like that. I won't bow. I'll simply glare at him until he slinks out of the car. But I can't cut a man with a whole crowd standing round to watch the massacre. Maybe he's made a mistake.

"I will bow. But suppose he's calculating on my not daring to throw him down—before people—suppose he takes advantage of my kindness to come over and talk with me. I won't bow."

She bowed.

"I know as well as I know anything that I never met him in my life. I never saw such a girl as I am for seeing people that look like somebody I can't remember. Perhaps he did it just as an experiment to see if I would. Perhaps he thinks I'm the kind of girl that—Perhaps this feather is too long—New York hats always look so queer in Boston. But I have always thought if there was anything that could be said to my credit—it was that I looked like a lady.

"I'm sorry I bowed.

"Probably I have met him somewhere. Where was the last place I went before going to New York—oh, I know, that evening at the Gordons'—there were slathers of new men there. That's where I met him. Wouldn't it have been awful if I'd cut him! I wonder if the dot on my veil has worked onto the end of my nose. I'll get his name in a moment.

"I'm glad I bowed."

She stole a sideways glance in his direction when her sixth sense told her he was looking away.

NO, it was impossible that he could be a mere vulgar villain. He had all the stigmata of the thoroughbred. He had a long, sinewy body that broadened into shoulders that cut off the whole view from the window at his side. He had the kind of chin outline that she particularly liked—cleft, too, not dented. The hand that grasped a bag full of golf sticks was

slender, muscular, full of character. There had been in his eyes, when he bowed, that straightforward, pleasant look that much traveling had led her to believe was characteristic of American men alone.

Of course after that she stared straight ahead.

It was a magnificent day—a wild March wind rampaging through the mildness of late April. They sped up Boylston Street. The green vistas of Commonwealth Avenue and of Beacon Street flittered by. Then came the rumpled Charles, beating from under Harvard Bridge to where, on Beacon Hill, the houses piled up to the golden dome of the State House.

"Now let me think of the men I met at the Gordons'—there was the one that had the walrus mustache—the one that looked like a peanut—the one with the fuzzy English accent—the pink-looking one with the mauve eyelashes. Then there was that nice Western boy who told me I was easy to look at. Oh, I know! This one must have come with that crowd of real men who stopped at the door in the automobile with Charley Gordon. Charley Gordon insisted on dragging them in. They

side presently. She knew the exact moment when he arose. She did not move an eyelash as she felt him drawing nearer.

"Have you seen the Robinsons lately?" he asked, pleasantly, as he seated himself at her side.

Oh, it was at the Robinsons' that he had met her then. That was a different thing. It was as if he had been marked "sterling." There was never any "seconds" at the Robinsons'.

"Not for two weeks, I think," she said, with her prettiest air of graciousness. "How are they all?"

His face grew serious. "Then you haven't heard?"

"Heard?" She turned directly to him and her eyes went wide with alarm.

"Of Mrs. Robinson's accident? Please don't look like that!" He went on reassuringly: "She's not dangerously hurt. She was thrown from an automobile two or three nights ago—she's all right now—there were no bones broken."

"How dreadful!" Her soft brows gathered into a furry plexus. "Are you quite sure she's all right? Have you seen her?"

"No. But I called last night. And they assured me that she was quite herself again; that she had, in fact, taken a short drive in the afternoon."

SHE gnawed perplexedly at her under lip. "I can't see why they didn't tell me. But I have just this moment returned from New York. I suppose they wouldn't alarm me unnecessarily while I was there and they haven't had a moment since. There was an important letter, taking me away the moment I got into the house."

This was half reverie and he did not say anything. But his look was sympathetic. His face was even nicer, she thought, in its serious aspect.

"It would be awful to have anything happen to Mrs. Robinson," she went on. "She's such a dear. And such a wonderful woman, too. Wherever she is things happen—don't you think so? And

you always meet such charming people in her house."

"I have—certainly," he acquiesced with enthusiasm.

"What car are you taking?" he asked as they both arose at Harvard Square.

"An Arlington car. But I want to run into the station and telephone first."

