POOR DOCUMENT

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The Breaking Point

By Mary Roberts Rinehart

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"You ought to be ashamed, Jim," she (Continued From Yesterday)

Said. "You're simply worrying mother sick."

Well why?" he demanded defiantly.

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"I'm old enough to take care of myself."

"You ought to be taking care of her,
too."

He had looked rather crestfallen at
that, and before he went out he offered
a half-sheepish explanation.

"I'd tell them where I go," he said,
"but you'd think a pool-room was on
the direct road to hell. Take tonight,
now, I can't tell them about it, but it
wasn't sure that Nina was entirely hapmy. And, of course, there was Jim.

Jim was difficult. Sometimes he was a
man, and then again he was a boy, and
one never knew just which he was going to be. He was too old for discipling and too young to manage hanself.
He was spending almost all his evenings away from home now.

Elizabeth had waited up for him one
night, only a short time before, and
beckoning him into her room, had talked to him severely.

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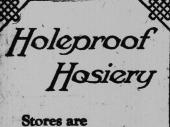
"I'd tell them where I go," he said,
"but you'd think a pool-room was on
the direct road to hell. Take tonight,
now, I can't tell them about it, but it
was all right. I met Wallie Sayre at
the club, and Leslie, before dinner, and
we got a fourth and played bridge.
Les telephoned Nina, and we had dinner. I swear we were going on playing, but somebody brought a chap
named Gregory for a cocktail. He
turned out to be a brother of Beverly
Carlysle, the actress, and he took us
around to the theatre and gave us a
box. Not a thing wrong with it, was
there?"

"Where did you go from there?" she
persisted, inexorably. It's half-past
one."

"Went around and met her. She's a

"Went around and met her. She's a queen, Elizabeth. But do you know what would happen if I told them? They'd have a fit."

She felt rather helpless, because she knew he was right, from his own standpoint.



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baking powder.

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"It know. I'm surprised at Les, Jim."

"Oh, Les. He just trailed along, He's all right."

She kissed him and he went out, leaving her to lie awake for a long time. She would have had all her world and here yet here and better at the color of the mountains priven her soul. She, didn't want anybody's bread and butter spilled on the carpet.

So the days went on, and the web slowly wove itself into its complicated pattern. Bassett speeding west, and David in his quiet room; Jim Wheeler and Leslie Ward seeking amusement, and finding it in the littered dressing room of a woman star at a locat theat the attention of a woman star at a locat theat the little question being whispered behad hands, figuratively, of course—the village was entirely well bred; Gregory colling round to see Bassett, and turning away with the information that he here was dressed with extreme care, and took her place in the waiting-room. She was dressed with extreme care, and sow precisely of the house, and took her place in the waiting-room. She was dressed with extreme care, and she carried a parasol. With it, while she waited, she drilled small, mere in, and go into his office. When will ease was dressed with extreme care, and she carried a parasol. With it, while she waited, she fright in an unconcious desire of a carry bad here were in, and go into his office. When were was an unconscious desire to see Diek while she waited, she fright from him that never again could he concept the concept of the propose its erved. On the day, then, that David first work was the first thing; after that, while she waited, she fright is an order than the propose of the part of the propose its event of the propose its

"I don't want to keep you, if you're busy," she said, avoiding his eyes. "It you are in a hurry——"
"This is my business," he said patiently. And waited.

"I wonder if you are going to under "Dick," she exclaimed. "Is anything wrong?"

"I wonder if you are going to understand me, when I do begin?"
"You sound alarmingly ominous." He looked at his watch and got up. "I'll smiled at her, and she had a moment take a look at Uncle David, and then

smiled at her, and she had a moment take a look at Uncle David, and then of panic. "You don't look like a young lady with anything eating at her damask cheek. Or however it goes."

"Doctor Livingstone," she said suddenly, "people are saying something about you that you ought to know."

He stared at her, amazed and incred-He stared at her, amazed and incredulcus.

"About me? What can they say? That's absurd."

"I felt you ought to know. Of course I don't believe it. Not for a moment. But you know. what this town is."

"I' know it's a very good town," he said steadily. "However, lets have it. I dare say it is not very serious."

She was uneasy enough by this time and rather frightened when she had finished. For he sat, quiet and rather pale, not looking at her at all, but gazing fixedly at an old daguerreotype of David that stood on his desk. One that Lucy had shown him one day and that he had preempted. David at the age of eight, in a small black velvet suit and with very thin legs.

"I thought you ought to know," she justified herself, nervously.

Dick got up.

"Yes," he said. "I ought to know, of course. Thank you."

When she had gone he went back and stood before the picture again. From Clare's first words he had a stricken

"What about them at all. David and Lucy's reluctance to discuss his father; the long days in the cabin, with David helping him to reconstruct his past; the spring, and that slow progress which now he felt, somehow, had been an escape.

He ate very little dinner, and Lucy's sense of dread increased. When, after the meal, she took religion for a moment it was only a temporary reprieve. She did not how from what. She heard him, some time about her at all, but gazing fixedly at an old daguerreotype of David that stood on his desk. One that Lucy had shown him one day and that and with very thin legs.

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"Yes, Dick."

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Clare's first words he had a stricken "W

ou and

Naturesends awarning of Pyorrheableeding gums. Only one person out of five past forty escapes. Thousands younger

FOR THE GUMS

Clare's first words he had a stricken conviction that the thing was true. That as Mrs. Cook Morgan's visitor from Wyoming had insisted, Henry Livingstone had never married, never had a son He stood and gazed at the picture. His world had collapsed about him, but he was steady and very erect. "David, David!" he thought. "Why did you do it? And what am I? And who?"

"What about?" she asked with her heart hammering.
"About me." He stood above her and looked down, still with the tenderness with which he always regarded her, but with resolution in his very attitude. "First of all, I'll tell you something. Then I'll ask you to tell me all you can." "What about?" she asked with her

She yearned over him as he told her, for all her terror. His voice, for all who?"

But whatever David had done, his motive had been right. Dick would have to start with that. If David had built for him a false identity, it was because there was a reason, then Something shameful, something he was to be "Dick!" was all she could "Dick!" was all she could

> almost terrible steadiness, "to ask a girl to take my name. I want to know if I have a name to offer her. I have you see, only two alternatives to believe about myself. Either I am Henry Livingstone's illegitimate son, and in that case I have no right to my name, or to offer it to any one, or I am"—he made a despairing gesture was smuggled out of the mountains and given an identity that makes me a living lie."
> Always she had known that this might come sometime, but always, too, she had seen David bearing the brunt

> of it. He could bear it. It was not of her doing or of her approving. For years the danger of discovery had hung over her like a cloud. "Do you know which?" he persisted. "Yes, Dick." "Would you have the unbelievable She got up, a taut little figure with a dignity born of her fear and har love for him. ruelty not to tell me?"

"I shall not betray David's confidence," she said. "Long ago I warned him that this time would come. I was never in favor of keeping you in ignorance. But it is David's problem, and cannot take the responsibility of tell-He knew her determination, and her bstinate loyalty. But he was fairly

"You know that if you don't tell me, I shall go to David." "If you go now you will kill him."
"It's as bad as that, is it?" he asked grimly. "Then there is something shameful behind it, is there?"
"No. no. Dick. Not that. And)

want you always to remember this: What David did was out of love for you. He has made many sacrifices for you. First he saved your life, and then he made you what you are. And

then he made you what you are. And he has had a great pride in it. Don't destroy his work of years."

Her voice broke and she turned to go out, her chin quivering, but half-way to the door he called to her. "Aunt Lucy," he said quietly.

She heard him behind her, felt his strong arms as he turned her about. He drew her to him and, stooping, kissed her cheek.

"You're right," he said. Always right. I'll not worry him with it. My word of honor. When the times comes he'll tell me, and until it comes. I'll

word of honor. When the times comes he'll tell me, and until it comes, I'll wait. And I love you both. Don't ever forget that,"

He kissed her again and let her go. But long after David had pat his prayer-book away that night, and after the nurse had rustled down the stairs to the night supper on the dining-room table, Lucy lay awake and listened to Dick's slow pacing of his bedroom floor.

He was very gentle with David from that time on, and tried to return to his old lighted-hearted ways. On the day David was to have his first broiled sweetbread he caught the nurse outside,

borrowed her cap and apron and carried in the tray himself.

"I hope your food is to your taste, Doctor David," he said, in a high falsetto which set the nurse giggling in the hall. "I may not be much of a nurse, but I can cook." nurse, but I can cook."

Even Lucy was deceived at times. He went his customary round, sent out the monthly bills, opened and answered David's mail, bore the double burden of David's work and his own-ungrudgingly, but off guard he was grave and abstracted. He began to look very thin, too, and Lucy often heard him pacing the floor at night. She thought that he seldom, or never, went to the Wheelers.'

went to the Wheelers,'
And so passed the tenth day of Da



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But that was long months after. Not until the pattern was completed was he to recognize his own work in it.

The truth was that he was not too happy at home. Nina's smart little house on the Ridgely Road had at first kept her busy. She had spent unlimited time with decorators, had studied and rejected innumerable water-color sketches of interiors, had haunted auction room; and bid recklessly on things she felt at the moment she could not do without, later on to have to wheedle Leslie into straightening her bank balance. Thought, too, and considerable energy had gone into training and outfitting her servants, and still more into inducing them to wear the expensive uniforms she provided.

But what she made, so successfully, was a house rather than a home. There was a times indeed when Leslie heren was a times indeed when leslie heren was over, restlesses would seize her, and she would want to run in to the theatre, or make was to run in to the theatre, or make a call. If he refused, she narsed a grievance all evening.

And he did not like her friends. It came to the place where, when he knew one of the gay evenings was on, he would stay in town, playing billfards at his club, or occasionally wander into a theatre, where he stood or sat at the louse yesterday voted 65 to 15 to abolish corporal punishment in this state in the handling of county prisoners.

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MUST STOP BEATING OF

PRISONERS IN FLORIDA

Tallahassee, Fla., April 19.—The house yesterday voted 65 to 15 to abolish corporal punishment in this state in the head of the play with synical, rather unhappy eyes.

(To be continued)

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