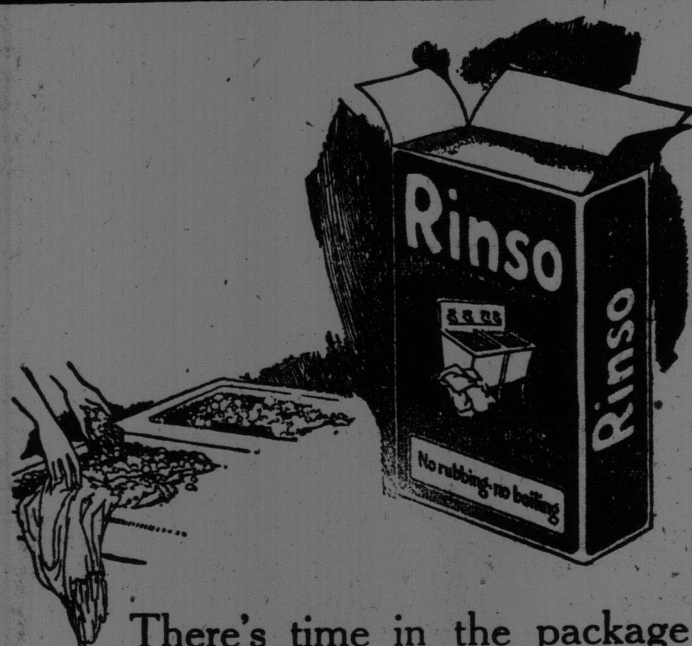


The Breaking Point

By Mary Roberts Rinehart

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(Continued from Yesterday.)
"You think that now. And don't believe I'm not sorry. I am. I hate not playing the game, as you say. But don't think for a moment that you'll be on caring when you know I don't. That doesn't happen. That's all."
"Do you know what I think?" he burst out. "I think you're still mad about Livingstone. I think you are so mad about him that you don't know it yourself."
But she only smiled her cold smile and went on with her knitting. After that he got himself in hand, and—perhaps he still had some hope. It was certain that she had not flinched at Dick's name—told her very earnestly



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that he only wanted her happiness. He didn't want her unless she wanted him. He would always love her.

"Not always," she said, with tragically cold certainty. Men are not like women; they forget."
She wondered, after he had gone, what had made her say that.

She did not tell the family that night. They were full of their own concerns: Nina's coming maternity, the wrapping of packages behind closed doors; the final trimming of the tree in the library. Leslie had started the phonograph, and it was playing, "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht!"

Still night, holy night, and only in her was there a stillness that was not holy.

They hung up their stockings valiantly as usual, making a little ceremony of it, and being careful not to think about Jim's missing one. Indeed, they made rather a function of it, and Leslie demanded one of Nina's baby socks and pinned it up.

"I'm starting a bank account for the little beggar," he said, and dropped a gold piece into the tin. "Next year, old girl—"

He put his arm around Nina. It seemed to him that life was doing considerably better than he deserved by him, and he felt very humble and contrite. He felt in his pocket for the square jeweler's box that lay there.

After that they left Walter Wheeler to play his usual part at such times, and went upstairs. He filled the stockings bravely, an orange in each toe, a box of candy, a toy for old times' sake, and then the little knickerbocker he had been gathering together for days and hiding in his desk. After all, there were no fewer stockings this year than last.

Instead of Jim's there was the tiny one for Nina's baby. That was the way things went. He took away, but also he gave.

He sat back in his deep chair, and looked up at the stockings, ludicrously bulging. After all, if he believed that He gave, and took away, then he must believe that Jim was where he had tried to think him, filling a joyous, active place in some boyish heaven.

After a while he got up and went to his desk, and for a long time he wrote steadily.

"Dearest: You will find this in your stocking in the morning, when you get up for the early service. And I want

you to think over it in church. It is filled with my love and with anxiety. Life is not so very long, little daughter, and it has no time to waste in anger or in bitterness. A little work, a little sleep, a little love, and it is all over."

"Will you think of this today?" He locked up the house, and went slowly up to bed.

Elizabeth found the letter the next morning. She stood in the black room, with the ashes of last night's fire still smoking, and the stockings overhead not festive in the gray light, but looking forlorn and abandoned. Suddenly her eyes, dry and fiercely burning for so long were wet with tears. It was true. It was true. A little work, a little sleep, a little love. Not the great love, perhaps, not the only love of a man's life. Not the love of yesterday, but of today and tomorrow.

All the fierce repression of the last weeks was gone; she began to suffer. She saw him coming home, perhaps high with hope, that whatever she knew she would understand and forgive. And she saw herself falling him, cold and shape retaining!

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not operate in the territory guarded by their two natural enemies, PAINT and VARNISH.

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shut away, not big enough nor woman enough to meet him half way. She saw him fighting his losing battle alone, protecting David but never himself; carrying Lucy to her quiet grave; sitting alone in his office, while the village walked by and stared at the windows; she saw him, gaining harbor after storm, and finding no anchorage there.

She turned and went, half blindly, into the empty street.

She thought he was at the early service. She did not see him, but she had once again the thing that had seemed lost forever, the warm sense of his thought of her.

David was beaten; most tragic defeat of all, beaten by those he had loved and faithfully served.

He did not rise on Christmas morning, and Dick, visiting him after an almost untasted breakfast, found him still in his bed, and questioned him anxiously.

"I'm all right," he asserted. "I'm tired, Dick, that's all. Tired of fighting. You're young. You can carry it on, and win. But I'll never see it. They're stronger than we are."

(To be continued)

FLOOD OF "HARD STUFF" NEARS NEW YORK LINE
Ottawa Dispatches Say Rum Runners Plan Big Movement.

Toronto, June 7.—Dispatches from Ottawa declared that cargoes of Canadian beer and whiskey were moving toward the international boundary on their way to New York state, as a result of the repeal of the New York state prohibition enforcement law.

Canadian officials stationed along the border reported that rum runners were actively engaged in plans to flood New York with Dominion "hard stuff."

With the coming of summer weather, the liquor smugglers' trade is beginning to boom again. Repeal of the enforcement law has brought new blood and new capital into the business and the dispatch declares it appears that unprecedented quantities of illegal beverages will soon be moving south.

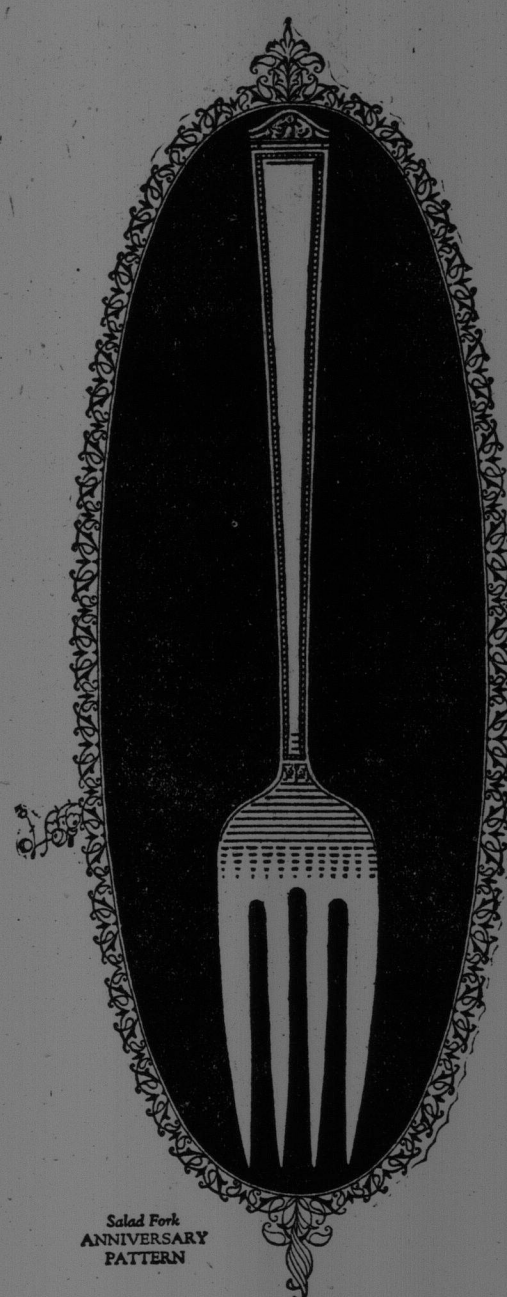
INSURED KANSAS LAW STUDENTS GET \$250 BLM IF THEY FLUNK!
Lawrence, Kan., June 7.—A student "insurance" company has made its appearance on the campus of the University of Kansas, issuing a policy which insures a student from "financial loss and mental anguish caused when a student falls short along the highway of precedent or sinks in the mire of procedure or loses his way in the Labyrinth of pleading."

he finally made out that the company's terms were something like this: Each student who accepts a "policy" will pay \$8 for every month that he sits

at the feet of the teachers in the school of law. If a flunk compels him to withdraw at the end of the semester he will receive a scholastic death benefit

of \$250. If he fails to pass the bar examination after receiving his LL. B., he will receive \$200 as balm for his wounds.

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