

UNFAITHFUL TO HIS TRUST

A Stirring Tale of Love and Duty

BY E. M. WICKES

This Story Will Shortly Appear at Your Favorite Theatre as a Moving Picture Play
With Alice Joyce in the Leading Role—Enquire From the Manager About it.



Her father gratified her secret wish by introducing her to Floyd.

IN the middle of her shopping tour Eugenia, discovering that her supply of cash had become exhausted, instructed her chauffeur to drive to The Baldwin Bank, of which her father was the president. Just inside the bank she encountered her father talking to Grant Floyd, the handsome District Attorney. Her father introduced her to Floyd, and in doing so he gratified one of her secret wishes. She had heard a great deal about him, but never could bring herself to ask her father to invite him to the house.

"To most folks you must be a veritable goblin man," she smiled, addressing Floyd ten minutes later, as she stood ready to enter her auto.

"What gives you that idea?" he asked, apparently amused at her remark.

"You seem to be always bent on sending people to jail."

"Oh, I see. But some one has to do it in order to protect society. And surely you wouldn't condemn a man for doing his duty."

"Hardly. I suppose duty is duty."

"Yes; and not infrequently a very painful affair."

"If we continue to discuss the matter we might evolve into sociologists and neglect other duties; but we won't, for I'm going to go, and I expect to see you on the day father invited you."

When her father returned from business that evening she had every intention of questioning him concerning Floyd, but his worried expression as he dropped into a chair drove all inquiries from her mind.

"What seems to be the trouble, Daddy?" she asked, taking a seat on the arm of his chair.

The old banker's brow became a row of troubled furrows.

"Joyes, the cashier, persuaded me to endorse some notes to-day, which I fear are going to cause trouble. They are short time notes, and I doubt if we will be able to meet them."

"And is there no way you could raise the money, if necessary?"

"Ordinarily I could, but I fear crookedness on Joyes's part, and I can't just place my hands on the evidence. If anything should leak out there'll be a quick investigation, as Floyd deposited fifteen thousand dollars in the bank to-day."

Eugenia caught her breath as she recalled the words of the district attorney.

"And what do you intend to do, Daddy?"

"I don't know. I'm all at sea. If Joyes is caught in any crooked deal they'll probably hold me responsible for him."

"And take you from me to send you to jail?" she asked, horrified at the thought. "Oh, no, not you, Daddy. You would not harm any one."

"With men, girl, duty is duty. And Floyd would prosecute me as quick as any one else. And who could blame him?"

During the following three weeks, however, nothing transpired to justify the old banker's fears. In the meantime Floyd called several times, and at each visit he and Eugenia appeared to be drawn closer to each other. His ideals dovetailed with most of hers, and the books and plays that appealed to him interested her also. They found much in common, so much so, that the hours spent together glided by all too quickly.

One evening, about a month after their first meeting, Eugenia sat in a large arm chair waiting for Floyd to call to escort her to a musical. Dressed in a white decollete gown with a little flower at her bodice, she was a paragon

"Suppose I keep it a secret?"

"Then I shall spend a miserable week," he sighed.

"But, tell me you will miss me."

"I think so."

He imprisoned her fluttering hand between his palms, and told his love.



"Not certain?"

She looked up, her lips trembling.

"I shall miss you—very much. But you're selfish, like all lovers in books."

She rose, and stepped to the side of the chair. He came over, imprisoned her fluttering hand between his palms, and told his love.

"I love you, dear," he breathed, "and without you the world would turn into a tiresome and painful treadmill. Long, long ago I met you in dreams, and I worshipped and loved you. And you—you love me, too, don't you?"

She replied with a nod, and offered little resistance as he drew her to his breast and pressed a kiss upon her upturned lips. Her father's approach at that moment put an end to the happy tableau.

"Youth will be youth," the old banker laughed good-naturedly. "I didn't know you were here or I wouldn't have intruded."

"No intrusion whatever,"

of beauty, and she experienced a queer, happy feeling at her consciousness of being beautiful—happy for his sake.

Floyd entered at the appointed time, and his eyes glowed with pride as he stood in mute admiration.

"If I possessed the soul of a poet and the eye of an artist I would pay you a compliment, but, as I don't, I must express my admiration by looks."

What he had said meant more to her than a thousand eulogistic platitudes from others.

"To-morrow," he remarked, walking to the side of her chair, "I am going away on business for a week. Do you think you will miss me?"

She looked up, and smiled playfully.

"Must I really tell you?"

"Not unless your heart prompts you."

Floyd returned. "I was just going to look you up to find your views on the subject."

The old banker thought for a moment.

"Since her mother died," he finally said, "Gene has been a world of comfort to me, and naturally I don't like to see her go; but in time I suppose I would have to, and I don't believe she could have made a better selection. Take her, Grant, and be happy."

As the two men clasped hands Eugenia rushed forward and threw her arms about her father's neck.

"I'll always love you, too, Daddy," she cried.

During the ensuing week, in spite of Floyd's absence, she was as happy as a beautiful girl blessed with an ideal lover could be. On the evening of the day Floyd was to return she was seated in the reading room, when her father suddenly staggered into the room and dropped wearily into a chair. With a cry of alarm she sprang to his side and implored him to tell her his troubles.

"The worst has come!" he moaned.

"The worst—you mean the bank?"

He nodded dejectedly.

"The bank is wrecked," he said. "The notes Joyes had me endorse were worthless. The people heard about it and started a run on the bank. There was a riot outside, and the police had to club the mob back. It was frightful, girl, frightful! I gave all I had, but that could not stem the tide. I'm ruined! And what's worse, Floyd's fortune has been swept away!"

Eugenia stared wild-eyed for a moment, unable to comprehend fully the calamity. At that moment Floyd entered.

"I suppose you've heard all about it," the old banker sighed, trembling like a man with the ague.

Floyd nodded and looked at Eugenia. "Perhaps it is not as bad as he imagines."

"There's no hope," the banker mumbled. "And worst of all, your money has been swept away."

"Don't worry about me," Floyd responded. "If you can adjust matters for the others I think everything will turn out all right."

"Thanks, you're generous," the banker replied, the tears dimming his sight. "Just let me rest here for a while, and perhaps I may feel better later."

Eugenia kissed her father in a comforting manner and then proceeded to another room with Floyd.

"When I first heard of the crash I felt sick all over," Floyd whispered, as they stood in an adjoining room, "knowing the torture you two must be suffering. I couldn't have felt any worse had my own father been at the head of the bank."

Eugenia kissed him for his sympathy, and was about to make some response when a servant knocked, and then entered with a message for Floyd, an urgent summons to the office. He bade her to be of good cheer, kissed her, and departed.

For the next five days Eugenia lived in a state of terror. The town papers from the first had clamored for an indictment and a speedy trial, and every time she heard a foot-step on the porch she pictured the sheriff coming for her father. She had sent word to Floyd not to call until the case had been disposed of, fearing that the papers might misconstrue his visits.

An indictment was finally returned against the banker and the cashier. The people of the town, to a great extent, sympathized with her father, having full faith in his honesty, but they felt that he should pay for his neglect, which had allowed his subordinate to prove unfaithful to his trust. Eugenia found a small grain of comfort in this sympathy, but it did not eliminate the possibility of her father's going to prison. And the most poignant part was that Floyd would be the prosecutor. Vividly and painfully his remark relative to duty returned.

Three days prior to the trial she received a note from Joyes, who had been incarcerated, while her father had been released on bail. Joyes wrote to the effect that he had been informed that Floyd had prepared an unusually strong case as the result of having been one of the victims, and that the attorney intended to make capital of it for the coming election. Joyes urged her to use her influence to take Floyd from the case, even if she had to induce him to resign, for without him the case would fall flat.

After reading the note Eugenia tore it into shreds and scorned the idea of Floyd's treachery. The thought clung to her, however, in spite of her efforts to banish it, and to satisfy her tortured mind she decided to pay him a visit.

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She uttered a scream and fell backward.