

The Girl Who Had No Chance

By MARION RUBINCAM

NEW SHADOWS Chapter 66

The boom grew bigger and bigger. Ruth found herself swamped under the amount of business she had to attend to. As far as her real estate work went she hired one of the young men of the town and put him in to handle the details.

threw up her hands and talked about extravagance. "Phone for a machine," she told her secretary when she reached the office. "I've got to get over to the flats today. You'd better come along. I'll have some notes to dictate."

As they went over in the hired car, she opened the morning's mail, giving suggestion for answers to the girl, who tried to jot them down in short-hand as the car jumped over the rough roadway.

She had various ideas of things to be done in the building of the first block of houses, too, which were taken down in shorthand to be made up later into a report for the Civic Committee. Out on the flats—as they called these fields and the newly built-up part—she met Langley and a few members of the Committee.

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to the house or not. Her mother met her at the top of the stairs, a portly figure of tragedy. "You've come in time Ruth," she said solemnly and led the way down the hall to Duncan O'Neil's bedroom.

Ruth entered the room trembling. Her father was lying in bed, his eyes closed, so still that Ruth thought he was dead. Dr. Lane was sitting near him. Mrs. O'Neil stood by the door and the girl went across the room and, not knowing what she was doing, she knelt down by the bedside.

She looked at the little man she had always loved so. Duncan O'Neil made only a tiny head under the bedclothes; his body, small enough always seemed to have shrunk so much in the last few months.

ed almost as lifeless as the morning when Ruth rushed home at her mother's summons. But the big soul in the little body was outward bound, and even as inexperienced an eye as Ruth's could see that.

But affairs returned more or less to normal. There were no boarders in the house now, their noise and their presence had always annoyed the sensitive nerves of the man, and now that he was ill the whole place was kept quiet for him. The nurse stayed on some weeks.

"Though I don't see as she's any good and she costs \$25 a week," Mrs. O'Neil was apt to grumble. "She is useful, and Dr. Lane wants her, and I can manage the money," Ruth answered.

But by and by even she could be dispensed with, and Mrs. O'Neil could take her place. Meantime the autumn had come and winter had set in. The building of the cottages was delayed by bad weather, but some progress was made. By Spring, the whole "addition" was to go through on a big scale. The cottages now under way were able to help house the very builders who were to construct the model factory town.

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The girl had to stop reading for a moment. She thought she had stifled her love for this man until Myra's letters brought it up again. And always the letters brought it up in a new form. One letter had come when they were engaged, when Ruth felt like an outsider, and bitterly resented the fact that her home necessarily had made her lose the chance to keep Myra's love. She was indeed, love hungry when she read that letter.

But she had taught herself repression, and she stifled or tried to stifle, these thoughts and went on with the letter. "There's not much to tell. We live near 125th Street and there's a lot of movies near. We go often to pass the evening and I hire someone to watch the baby. There's a theatre near here and real vaudeville too, and we go sometimes."

Other letters from Myra followed. Suddenly she seemed either to have developed a sudden love for her former chum, or suddenly to have a great deal of leisure on her hands. And gradually the letters ceased to make Ruth feel bad. After a time, they even began to bore her a little. Myra never said anything that was interesting to read.

and your sour included. Better drop the sanitarium idea for a time. "Well, but in two weeks I can get a couple of hundred dollars when we go over the books at the office. Riley says it may amount to more."

"I'm afraid you'll be in a sanitarium next." "Ruth laughed. "Anyway, it's a busy life," she decided. "Myra says there's no chance in a small town, that all the fun and opportunity is in the big city."

"Surely you don't agree?" "Well, there's a big chance for me here. But I had to make it. Only there's no music no theatres, no cultured people. Look at the club members."

Yet a few days afterwards Ruth opened a letter in a strange hand writing. It was a formal little card inviting "Miss Ruth O'Neil" to a dinner to be given at "The Oaks" the following week.

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Langley once. They were watching the concrete work for a new factory that was to go up, and that only leaves me two to play in, and if I spend them running about with that rich crowd, my old friends here will say I'm a snob and that I'm cutting them."

The Trousseau. What a commotion there is in the home when daughter is having her trousseau made, and what excitement as the great day approaches!

OUTWARD BOUND Chapter 67

It was Langley's words. "Steady Ruth, steady," that kept the girl in the quiet tone, the note of command in it gave her just the strength she needed to get her over the one moment of shock.

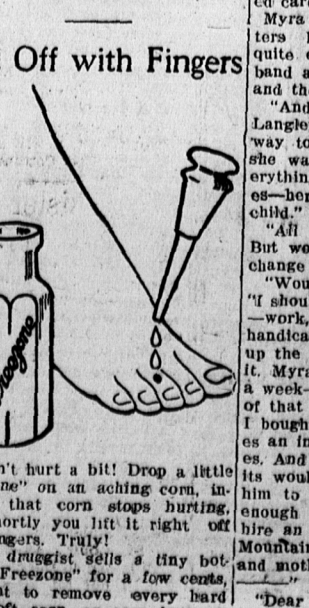
"I thought you meant he was dead," she said. "My dear my dear, I'm so sorry I didn't understand. But you must know the truth now. I don't know how long it will be—"

MYRA'S IDEAS Chapter 68

Duncan O'Neil recovered. That cora, soft cora, or corn between his feet in bed, and he look-out soreness of irritation.

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