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The Girl Who Had No Chance

BY MARION RUBINCAM

WH OPENED EYES

Chapter 110

"Who is it?" she asked. "You should have a name." She was familiar enough now with the routine service of the well-run hotel.

"No name given," the boy answered. "I'll go ask it."

A moment later he came back. "Gentlemen not give his name."

"Then I'm not here," Ruth answered. "No, I suppose you're too happy to be sorry about anything or anyone," Tim answered. "Myra told me that too—that you said you were engaged to this Williams. She said before you were in love with someone because she thought I'd lose interest in you, and it always made me terribly jealous instead."

"This time I believe her though—because of his card and the flowers he sent you there on the table. You had roses last night—now you've got chrysanthemums. I suppose he married her."

Ruth looked at him for a long time. Should she tell him or not? What effect would it have if she said she loved Langley—would Tim go away then? Or would this sudden jealousy come up in him again?

She smiled cynically, but said nothing. "Of course I shouldn't have told her you fibbed about my being here. I got you to do it, made you do it. And I didn't have the nerve to say so to her. Everything Gaby said about me was probably right. She despises me. I despise myself, sometimes."

He went over to one of the big chairs and threw himself down into it. Ruth stood by the table, watching him curiously out of sympathy with him.

"It doesn't matter whether Myra was jealous or not," she said finally. "It's a mean nasty thing to feel. I felt it too, about her—years ago. But I haven't given her any reason to be jealous of me, so I can't say I am very sorry for her."

"No, I suppose you're too happy to feel sorry about anything or anyone," Tim answered. "Myra told me that too—that you said you were engaged to this Williams. She said before you were in love with someone because she thought I'd lose interest in you, and it always made me terribly jealous instead."

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AWAKE

Chapter 112

"I'll not forget this time," he said. "You've wakened me, you've put new ambition into me. I want to do something. I want to be something. I won't let Myra make me lazy again."

Ruth smiled a little. Once she would have thrilled to that speech, this time it left her cold and cynical.

"I hope you'll do something and be something," she answered, but her tones were formal and polite, they carried no conviction. "Also, for your peace of mind, that I'll forget me. Myra has had that effect on you twice before, I hope she will again."

"Forget you! Ruth, I don't want to forget you. If I don't remember you and all you've done and all you've meant to me, how can I be anything?"

"Now it's something by your own effort, I didn't say to whom. But Gaby was overjoyed she cried for you, Langley and came over and kissed me to congratulate me."

"Then you aren't?" Tim jumped to his feet.

"Wait! Sit down—," she paused until Tim sank again into the chair. "Somehow standing up there by the table, she felt all the advantage was hers."

"Langley Williams wants to marry me. But I haven't yet said I would. I think we would be very happy—we are interested in the same things, we are both ambitious, our combined incomes would make us fairly rich. I don't mean that again, so it won't matter. You'll forget easily, perhaps I'll forget in time. But I'm not as—I don't forget things so easily, and I was very much in love once."

"And you're going home to marry Langley Williams?"

"Yes!" Ruth said. He made a step again, and she drew back. "No!" she cried. "Oh, I don't know what I'm going to do."

But the light of jealousy was blazing in Tim's eyes. It was the old story over again—he forgot when she was not there but as soon as she was he felt her affection had left him entirely, as soon as she thought there was someone else, the love he once had come back. Or the sense of possession came back, and brought jealousy with it.

He reached Ruth before she could say anything or even move, and once more he put his arms tightly around her and kissed her with all the old passion, with all the fervor of those days years ago when they were really engaged and when all life opened out to them as a delightful adventure, to be embarked upon together.

She could not resist the tightness of his arms. But she was not afraid this time, and she was not fighting her own emotions and own love. She felt his arms against her cheeks and her hair and her own lips. Once she would have held him tightly too, and given herself up to his love and his caress.

"This time she felt nothing—not even a sense of wronging him. She simply felt the old friend had temporarily mad and was insisting on holding her too tight, and that his nearness and his kisses were very unpleasant. But she could not get away, so she could only submit."

Then he released her, to look at her. She stood off, facing him with her straight, honest look, her cheeks red, her mouth slightly contemptuous.

"I'm almost glad you did that," she said. "It taught me something I wanted to know."

Tim probably did not hear her. His brown eyes, always so nice and shrewd and smiling, were alight with love and intense jealousy. He came and caught her again. She turned her head away, and she could hear him talking to her. But his words were indistinct.

He might have been saying he loved her. She hoped not. She didn't want to hear. She wasn't angry, she wasn't afraid, she was simply uncomfortable in the tightness of his arms and she wished he would let her go.

But Tim seemed to have lost the sensitiveness that he once had in such great measure. Her complete lack of response did not seem to affect him. He kept begging her to not to turn her head away.

After a little she gave a little shudder, purely because she was impatient and tired and because she wanted him to release her. Then he did let her go. And then her remark came back to him.

"Why are you almost mad? What did it teach you?" he asked.

Ruth backed away a few steps unconsciously, smoothing her hair.

"It told you," she answered quietly. "Langley asked me to marry him. I liked him; I loved him. But I couldn't get away from you—from the boy I knew years ago at home. Langley thought if I saw you again, after all the experiences we've been through separately, that I would get over the old feeling."

"I did, to a certain extent. At least I saw that I had gone far enough ahead to be discontented in the sort of home you could afford. Perhaps that's mercenary in me, perhaps it's only because I want so many of the beautiful things of life, and could not have them on \$10 a week."

But one thing still remained. "That was only the personal you. When you kissed me last night—I didn't know. When you kissed me tonight I didn't. I didn't even have you, I simply have no effect, no feeling of any sort for you. Naturally a kiss from someone I didn't like was distasteful to me. I'm over that—the last of the love I had for you. I don't love you—thank heaven for that."

And Ruth, who had been through as much as she could bear that day, turned and fled into the other room.

REALIZATION

Chapter 111

Next morning she looked through her mail eagerly.

There was no letter, there was no telegram. She began counting the hours—the message was sent at 10, he must have received it at midnight—she sent the regular telegram form. Perhaps it was not delivered until morning—

Then she would have gotten it by 7 o'clock—now it was 9. The place was not far away—she should get a message through in less time than that! She had received wires from the Committee in two hours.

There were several things to be done that morning. But when she came back for luncheon there was still no word. And through a conference with Mr. Cooper that afternoon, and a tea with Mrs. Cooper, and the always delightful Newell, she kept wondering whether word had arrived at her apartment.

She refused to stay to dinner and went back to her hotel. At the desk they said no telegram had been received. She went up to her room, her heart sinking. Perhaps Langley did not care so much after all!

At 7 Marie came to see whether she wanted dinner served in the living room or whether she would go downstairs. Then the bell sounded, and Ruth herself went to open it.

On the threshold stood Langley Williams.

Ruth never knew what happened to Marie. Probably that tactful little French girl withdrew smiling at the little scene she had witnessed. For Langley crossed the threshold with one stride, and Ruth was in his arms.

And she stayed there contentedly. But after a time she looked up, her eyes bright with a question. Langley let her go.


"But how did you get here? The train arrived in the morning!"

"You forgot the other line that runs to Philadelphia. I know it's slow, but I got a morning train—one hour after your message came. I don't mind telling you that you woke me up at five this morning. Little lady, I got a milk train, I think, changed at a junction, changed at another junction, forgot lunch, arrived in Philadelphia in time to miss one train, and waited over for the next one."

"And you haven't had any lunch?"

"Nor breakfast," Langley said cheerfully. "I spent the time in Philadelphia sending wires home."

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AWAKENING

Chapter 111

Finally she decided to tell the entire truth.

"Listen one moment, Tim," she began, still standing rigidly by the table and looking at the man sitting despondently in the chair. "This afternoon I told Myra that I couldn't possibly have any interest in you because I was engaged to be married. I didn't say to whom. But Gaby was overjoyed she cried for you, Langley and came over and kissed me to congratulate me."

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THE REAL CHANGE

Chapter 113

She stood there until she heard the door close, and then she hurried. Then she guessed Tim had gone. She walked into the living room then, and stood looking at that blank closed door.

Tim had gone—this time forever. And she wasn't sorry, except for the illusion that died that night.

Tim had gone—she would never see him again. She would never see Myra again. She would go back to Marktown and keep her work there, she would be a success—so much she felt. Tim would go on with his work in the city—and would not be a success. Somehow, it wasn't in him. She couldn't tell why, she simply knew it. She was sure Gabrielle Carrez had summed up the whole affair very well indeed.

Once more she went into her own room and summoned Marie. Then she undressed and slipped into the lovely clinging white gown that she and Marie took down her hair and braided it for the night.

"Anything else, Madame?" she asked.

Ruth shook her head.

"No, Marie. You've been very nice to me since I've stayed here."

The maid smiled.

"Madame has been very generous. But I like to serve Madame—I do it for the pleasure of it, not for Madame's money."

Ruth sat in the chair before the dressing table and smiled a little wistfully at the Frenchwoman.

"If you find pleasure in serving me," she said, "you want to come home with me as my maid? I'm going back in a week if I can get through all my business. And I'll need a maid."

She did not know why she said that. After all, what would she do with Marie in the big, old-fashioned, ugly house in Marktown? But Marie represented the most human and kindly thing she had met in New York—always excepting Gaby.

But Marie shook her head.

"No, Madame," she said. "I like the city. It is noise, it is excitement. It has music, it has movies, it has crowds that laugh on the streets, this hotel is noisy. The chances are in the city, Madame!"

"Are you sure, Ruth, that you want to go away without waiting for the answer and walked into the living room again."

Somehow Marie's refusal to go with her annoyed her. Yet what would she have done with her? Could not picture her in her mother's house—then she realized that unconsciously all along, she had been thinking of a white house on top of a hill, a spacious old farmhouse remodeled into the acme of today's comfort, a place of large windows and sloping lawns and great trees a place where the cool breezes swept the piazzas, and where one could sit and watch, far down the valley, the thriving town that was growing.

She stopped and started at her own thoughts. How had such a house come to her mind? Where was there such a place? She only knew one farm on a hill—that was the old house Langley had purchased cheaply. And it had none of the little luxuries she delighted in. It was a great bare, rambling farmhouse—

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about the work I dropped, and trying to reach you by long distance phone."

"I've been out," Ruth answered. "You poor boy, you must be starved!"

"It ought to be a proof of my love—starving all day to reach you."

She looked up into his gray eyes, smiling merrily now. How could she ever have thought eyes of another color attractive? And the long thick yellow hair that was so becoming.

Suddenly Ruth put her arms around his neck.

"Please kiss me again," she begged. "I'm so glad you've come! Like to have you kiss me!"

After a time Langley began to laugh.

"Do you know, dearest, I expected that telegram—only I expected it a little sooner. Don't you see, we both outgrew the old loves. They only made us ready for this—the real love. Only we both happen to be very romantic, and we neither of us could see that the first love was dead—dead and forever buried. Ruth, do you really love me now?"

Ruth nodded her head. Her blue eyes lit up with the soft glow that only love can bring.

"I love you," she answered, "now and always. I think I have been in love with you for a long time, Langley. Wasn't I stupid not to know it?"

He held her more closely for an instant.

"It doesn't matter, if you know it now. We've all the future, you see."

"Yes, Ruth answered. "All the future."

"Langley," she began after a minute. "I want to tell you—Tim kissed me the other night. I tried to get away—then just once I let him. I thought it—suppose I felt I was in love. Then last night he tried to again—and I hated it. And I hated him for doing it. Langley, I haven't been in love with Tim for ages. Gaby says it's only an illusion of the old love. But I know—now."

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With fingers. Truly!

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Tim was on his feet again. He

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CLEVELAND, June 13—Tom Gully, who was released by Cleveland Indians to the Lakeland (Fla.) team, hit safely in 34 consecutive games, establishing a record in the Florida state league, according to special despatches received here.

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