

IDLE RAINBOW

By Phoebe Sheldon

VI

It was some time after Rufus had rung the bell that he finally dropped the little brass knocker outside of Lindsay's door.

"Goodness," he said, whipping out a handkerchief. "I'd forgotten that Poppy lived up so high. Why don't you move down a flight or so?"

"Well," said Lindsay, "Poppy says the higher the cheaper in this kind of place for one thing, I've heard it's just the opposite in the door man apartments. The higher you go, the better the view, so presto, more rent. Poppy says that after a while you get a sort of system. Particular going down. Let your hand slide down the middle of the rail and then take one or two big jumps to the landing."

"I should think," said Rufus, "that you'd need a sort of system." He sat down in a chair by the window. Lindsay in the mirror saw him look at her appraisingly. Funny how Rufus just by looking at her made her heart jump a little. Wonder why he was so tied up with Julia. Well, she supposed, one just fell in love. Who it was couldn't be helped. But certainly it would do no harm to go around with him sometimes.

"I was thinking," said Rufus slowly, "that perhaps you'd seem enough of Fifth Avenue today. Why don't we do something that would make us feel elegant and prosperous, like tea at Sherry's?"

So that was where they went. It was very quiet here. Very dignified and calm. There was a green carpeted floor like moss-green grass, and tables with snowy cloths that reached to the floor. There was a heavy silver tea service and the fragrance of fresh flowers. Smartly gowned women rustled in and out and she could hear soft music somewhere in the background. Rufus sat looking at the menu as she said:

"Job hunting is messy. It makes you doubt the value of yourself. You begin to believe if you're not worth being hired maybe you're not as good as you think you are. Anyhow some sort of debasing psychology gets started and grows and grows as you get tired until by the time you're through, your spirits are very low. But now I feel quite like the person I was before I started the day's work."

Rufus smiled and said, "Yesterday you promised me the story of your life. I've been looking forward to it all day."

"In well versed in it today. I've written my age, color, background and education down so many times. But if you really want it I'll begin with mother and Aunt Spiddy. They came from Vermont and father came from the middle part of New York State from a little town you

probably never heard of. Father is a lawyer. This winter, since mother isn't very well, they've gone on a cruise. I was sent down here to stay with Aunt Spiddy and just barely escaped being with her all winter. I have a sneaking suspicion that she is just as glad to escape course."

"Of course," agreed Rufus with a smile. "And now about yourself?"

"Well, I grew and went to school at boarding school and four years at Mount Holyoke. And it seems June, that we all gathered forgotten me-nots along the brook and made great bunches of them and went through that hot commencement ceremony knowing that one phrase of our life was ended. And every hand we were told that we were the new generation, that the management of things was soon to be in our hands and that we were at last finished with education and the thought of the vastness of years and the things that ahead of us were rather terrifying. I all know that never again would things be the same, and they haven't been, and here I am down in the city with Poppy."

Rufus sat thoughtfully. "And you left out probably the most important things in your life. The first time you were kissed by the boy next door, and the boy who came to your sophomore hop and then Junior Prom. Weren't any of them important?"

Lindsay felt color on her smooth cheeks. "I guess they couldn't have been. Not very. I mean I don't even remember their last names."

"But isn't there any man in your life at all now?"

Rufus sighed. "No. Not really." He shook his head thoughtfully. "My life didn't run as smoothly as all that. Mother died when I was little. Then father, then the boy came. I was a sophomore when we went in. Of course I didn't get over, I was just too young for anything but a training camp. So that there was scarcely college at all; I mean coming back and finishing up very quickly and soberly without any of the fun you usually have. I took a few special courses in forestry and became interested in experiments to save the trees on the farm. And now the war and the depression make for a sober and serious background. I have a feeling I'd like to go back somewhere and laugh a little. Catch up on something I've missed. I don't just know what it is, but it's something you have, Lindsay, my dear. Something as heart warming as sunshine on a cold winter's day."

Lindsay sat quiet. He went on with his strange talk. There were things that Rufus had left out that were as prominently revealing as the things he said. Some of his chance remarks had a way of making her heart leap. She had a strange feeling that he wasn't very happy over Julia. At last she glanced at her watch and sighed. "I guess I'll have to go. You're sure about the theater?"

"Yes, I promised Julia to take her to dinner. But let's do this again, shall we? Washington Bridge and the Planetarium, and dozens of things you ought to see. Let us sandwich it in which your job hunting, because when you get a job you'll be far too busy."

Toby and Poppy were waiting when Lindsay came puffing up the stairs. When she explained that Rufus had a date, Toby thought of Joe Root, Joe was free and only too glad to join them. The four went all gayly up Broadway, stopped at a Mexican place for hot chile and arrived at the theater breathless, thirty seconds before the curtain went up. They felt very grand in Clayton's seats in the eighth row center.

(To be Continued)

THIMBLE THEATRE

Starring POPEYE

By E. C. Segar

Sweetpea, once a foundling, loved and adopted by Popeye, turns out to be a royal personage—the lawful King of Demonica, where we now find him installed in regal splendor. Popeye, Wimpy, Olive Oyl, Toar and Popeye's old Dad are with him—members of his court.

The neighboring country of Cuspidonia, ruled by King Caboose, is not at all friendly to Sweetpea or his friends.

Demonica is troubled by strange happenings, supposed to be the work of demons. Not only do cabbages suddenly disappear below the surface of the earth, but Popeye and his friends are in constant danger of similarly disappearing.

The people of Demonica and Cuspidonia have become so unfriendly that for some time they have been insulting each other across their borders, and something has to be done about it.

King Caboose decides to do it.

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To-Day's Popular Design
By Carol Aimes

647

CROCHET AND EMBROIDERY PILLOW CASE TRIM
DESIGN NO. 647

Miss Aimes receives at least 200 votes for each design before it is accepted for this column. Send us your votes. We print all the popular designs.

Dear Readers: Our designer spent last weekend in the country. She came home with a rough sketch of this floral spray in her note-book and one of the medallions in her handbag. We think she snipped it off Aunt Mary's lining but she declares, "I crocheted it myself." A dainty design for Christmas-gift pillow slips, sheets, runners, dresser and vanity sets and towels.

The pattern includes transfers and directions for making two pair of pillow slips, material requirements and all directions for finishing. Send 20 cents, coins preferred.

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