

Two Can Sing

by James M. Cain

Did I get that call? I'm telling you I did.

I went to my dressing-room, talked around, and was so excited I couldn't even sit down. I wanted to go out there and do it all over again. It didn't seem two minutes before they called me, and I went down for the last act.

The Gilda and I did the stuff that starts it, and then went off, and Parma had it to himself for the "La Donna e Mobile." I think I've given you the idea by now that that dumb Italian is a pretty good tenor. He knocked them over with it, and by the time the Madalena came on, and the Gilda and I went out again for the quartet, we were in the home stretch of one of those performances you read about. So the quartet started. Well, you've heard the "Rigoletto" quartette a thousand times, but don't let anybody tell you it's a pushover. The first part goes a mile a minute, the second part slower than hell and if there's one thing harder to sing than a fast allegro it's a slow andante, and three times out of five something happens, and many times as you have heard it you haven't often heard it right. But we were right. Parma started it like a breeze, and the Madalena was right on top of him, and the Gilda and I were right on top of her, and we closed out the allegro with all four cylinders clicking and the show doing seventy. Parma laid it down nice on the andante, and we were right with him, and we brought it home just right. We were right on the end of the stick. Well, that stopped the show too. They clapped, and cheered, and clapped some more, and Schultz threw the stick on me to go on, and a fat chance I could. We had to give them some more. So after about a minute, Schultz played the cue for the andante, and Parma started again.

He started, and the Madalena came in, and the Gilda came in, and I came in. It seemed to me we got in there with it awful quick, but I was so excited by that time I hardly knew where I was, and I didn't pay much attention to it. And then all of a sudden I had this awful feeling that something was wrong.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Part Two

I want you to get it straight now, what happened. The andante is the same old tune "Bella figlia dell'amore" that you've heard all your life and could whistle in your sleep. The tenor sings it through once, then he goes up to a high B flat, holds it, comes down again, and sings it over again. The second time he sings it, the contralto comes in, then the soprano, then the baritone, and they're off into the real quartet. Well, our contralto, the Madalena, was an old-time operatic hack that had sung it a thousand times, but something got into her, and instead of waiting for Parma to finish that

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WHITE BRIGHT SWEET CLEAN

strain once, as he came in like he would on the repeat. And she pulled the Gilda in. And the Gilda pulled me in.

You remember what I told you about speed? Up there you've got no time to think. You hear your cue, and you come in, and heaven help you if you miss the boat. So there was Parma and there was the orchestra in one place in the score, and there were the Madalena, the Gilda, and me in another place in the score, and there was Schultz, trying like a wild man to straighten it out. Not a whisper from the audience, you understand. So long as you keep going and do your best, they'll give you a break, and even if you crack up and have to start over they'll give you a break—so long as you do your best. They all want to laugh, but they won't—so long as you keep your head down and sing.

But I didn't know then what was wrong. All I knew was that it was getting sorer by the second, and I started looking around for help. That was all they needed—that one little flash of the white feather—and they let out a roar.

You can think a lot of things in one beat of music. It flashed through my head and I had heard the bird at last. It flashed through my head, in some kind of dumb way, why I had heard it. I turned around and faced them. I must have looked sore. They roared again.

That whole big theater then was spinning around for me then like a cage with a squirrel in it, and me the squirrel. I had to know where I was at. I looked over, and tried to see Parma. And then, brother, and then once more, I committed the cardinal sin of all grand opera. I forgot to watch the conductor. I didn't know that he had killed his orchestra, killed his singers, brought the whole thing to a stop, and was wigwagging Parma to start it over. And here I came, bellowing out with my part:

"Taci, e mia sara la cura, La vendetta d'affrettar.

They howled. They let out a shriek you could hear in Harlem. Someone yelled "Bravo!" A hundred yelled "Bravo!" A million yelled "Bravo!"

I ran.

Next thing I knew I was by a stairway, holding on to the iron railing, almost twisting it out by the roots trying to keep myself from flying into a million pieces. The Gilda was beside me, yelling at me at the top of her lungs, and don't think a coloratura soprano can't put on a nice job of plain and fancy cussing when she gets sore. The stagehands were standing around, looking at me as though I was some leper that they didn't dare touch. Outside, Schultz was playing the introduction to the stuff between the contralto and the bass. He had had to skip five whole pages. I just stood there twisting at those iron bars.

"You go out there and finish this show, or I'll—"

"I can't."

"You've got to! You've simply got to. You went yellow! You went yellow out here, and you've got to go back and lick them! You've got to!"

"Let me alone!"

"But what are they going to do?" You can't let them down like that!"

"I don't care what they do!"

"Leonard, listen to me. They're out there. They're all out there—she, and your two kids—and you've got to finish it. You've got to do it!"

"I won't! I'll never go out there—"

They were playing my cue. She took hold of me, tried to pull me away from the stairs, tried to throw me on stage by main force. I hung on. I hung on to that iron like it was a life raft. The bass started singing my part. She looked at me and bit her lip. I saw two tears jump out of her eyes and run down her face. She turned around and left me.

I got to my dressing-room, locked the door, and then I cracked. No iron bars there to hold on to. I clenched my teeth, my fists, my toes, and it was no good. Here they came, those awful hysterical sobs I had heard coming out of Doris that day, and the more I fought them back, the worse they got. I knew the truth then, knew why Cecil had laughed at me that night in Rochester, why Horn had been so doubtful about me, and all the rest of it. I had smoke and nothing else. But you can't lick that racket with smoke. You've got to care about it; you can't get by on a little voice and a little music. You've got to dig up the heart to take it when it's tough, and the only way you can find the heart is to love it. I was just another Doris. I had everything but what it takes.

To be continued

South Rustico and Vicinity

Mr. John Dolron, Cymbrria, visited in Moncton, N. B., recently.

Mr. Lawrence Durant, South Rustico, spent a week visiting friends and relatives in Charlottetown and Indian River.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Doucette, Rusticoville, who have been working in Montreal for the past winter, have returned home.

Mrs. Joseph R. Gallant, Oyster Bed Bridge, who has been a patient at the Charlottetown Hospital, has fully recovered from her illness.

Edgar DeRoche, R.C.A.F., and his wife, Summerside, paid a flying visit to relatives at South Rustico, over the weekend of April 27th.

Mr. Edward Blanchard, formerly of South Rustico, now of the Income Tax Office, Charlottetown, has returned from a business trip to the Magdalen Islands.

Friends of Mr. Cyril Gallant, Oyster Bed Bridge, will be pleased to know that he is recovering from a successful operation in the Neurological Hospital, Halifax, N. S.

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Following the ceremony a reception was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hudson Bowley, Charlottetown, after which the bride and groom left by car for points of interest in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

On their return they will reside in North Lake, P.E.I.

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DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Mountain pools
6. A bench hook
11. On foot
12. Body of water
13. Common-place
14. Gone by (archaic)
15. Dancer's cymbals
16. Gain a victory
18. Humor
19. Chinese measure
20. Fermented juice of grape (pl.)
22. Close to
23. That which forms a border
25. Sacred
27. Unit of work
28. Not good
29. Location
31. Crowd together
34. Jewish month
35. Small, ornamental mat
37. Indefinite article
38. Veterinary (abbr.)
40. Babylonian god
41. A fixed habit
42. Silk scarf (Ecol.)
44. Eat away
46. Vexes

DOWN

1. Tell tales
2. Frightened
3. To make muddy
4. In no manner
5. Boiling slowly
6. Hoisting device
7. Equip
8. Arm
9. Servile
10. Attractive
17. Low pasture (Eng.)
20. Telegraphed
21. Sheltered from the sun
24. Obtain
26. Strange
28. Pellets of lead
29. Relishes
30. Ancient Spanish peninsula
31. Hasten
32. Praised
33. Comes in
36. Fat
39. High

DAILY CRYPTOQUOTE—Here's how to work it:

AXYDLBAAXR
Is LONG FELLOW

One letter simply stands for another. In this example A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

A Cryptogram Quotation

SNXX IEUUKZ CZNKAPL CSNKE
MC KIGDGK DAP IEAUNAK-JKEOKS

Saturday's Cryptogram: WHAT SHE WILLS TO DO OR SAY SEEMS WISEST—MILTON.

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- "Cargo King" 155 Hp. Most powerful engine ever built for Mercury Trucks! This O.H.V. engine develops 155 Hp., has piston displacement of 317 cu. in., compression ratio of 7.0:1—saves up to 14% on gas through High-Compression—Low-Friction design. Series M-8 only.

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42. Silk scarf (Ecol.)
44. Eat away
46. Vexes

DOWN

1. Tell tales
2. Frightened
3. To make muddy
4. In no manner
5. Boiling slowly
6. Hoisting device
7. Equip
8. Arm
9. Servile
10. Attractive
17. Low pasture (Eng.)
20. Telegraphed
21. Sheltered from the sun
24. Obtain
26. Strange
28. Pellets of lead
29. Relishes
30. Ancient Spanish peninsula
31. Hasten
32. Praised
33. Comes in
36. Fat
39. High

DAILY CRYPTOQUOTE—Here's how to work it:

AXYDLBAAXR
Is LONG FELLOW

One letter simply stands for another. In this example A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

A Cryptogram Quotation

SNXX IEUUKZ CZNKAPL CSNKE
MC KIGDGK DAP IEAUNAK-JKEOKS

Saturday's Cryptogram: WHAT SHE WILLS TO DO OR SAY SEEMS WISEST—MILTON.

Hunter-Garrett Wedding

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cox, Charlottetown, was the scene of a quiet but pretty wedding Saturday afternoon, April 5th when Rev. H.H. Bell united in marriage Doreen Emma, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Freeman Garrett, formerly of North Lake, P.E.I., and Harold Martin Hunter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Martin James Hunter, Parrsboro, N.S. The double ring service was used.

The winsome bride, wore a lovely blue suit with navy accessories. Miss Doris Bowley of Charlottetown was bridesmaid, wearing a beautiful tan suit with yellow accessories. The groom was attended by Mr. George MacGregor, Charlottetown.

Following the ceremony a reception was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hudson Bowley, Charlottetown, after which the bride and groom left by car for points of interest in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

On their return they will reside in North Lake, P.E.I.

Post-Nuptial Shower

A very enjoyable evening was

held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hudson Bowley, Charlottetown, after which the bride and groom left by car for points of interest in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

On their return they will reside in North Lake, P.E.I.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Mountain pools
6. A bench hook
11. On foot
12. Body of water
13. Common-place
14. Gone by (archaic)
15. Dancer's cymbals
16. Gain a victory
18. Humor
19. Chinese measure
20. Fermented juice of grape (pl.)
22. Close to
23. That which forms a border
25. Sacred
27. Unit of work
28. Not good
29. Location
31. Crowd together
34. Jewish month
35. Small, ornamental mat
37. Indefinite article
38. Veterinary (abbr.)
40. Babylonian god
41. A fixed habit
42. Silk scarf (Ecol.)
44. Eat away
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