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**BOTH OVER 21**

By Samuel Hopkins Adams

The wind, blessedly resuming speed, drowned out the obtrusive noise. The girl seemed satisfied. Her quiet scrutiny of him seemed now to hold an element of almost impersonal inquiry. "Why did you say you were sorry?"

"What did she want him to say? 'I don't know, I thought—' 'I've been kissed by men before.' 'Yes, but—' 'I know what you mean.' She lifted her eyes to his frankly. "The answer is No; it wasn't the same."

"Once I nearly got engaged to a girl on less than that."

"This restored her poise as well as amusing her. "You don't have to get engaged to me."

"It wouldn't possibly occur to that I might like to?"

"Planned romance, a la Metzger?" (The name made him shudder.)

"How do you know I mightn't go romantic on my own?"

"I'd rather like that. For nine days."

"And after that—the dark?"

"You're making a swell start. Yes. Interlude without aftermath."

"Lex-Lohengrin was right. It is a Wondertrip. I'm not looking forward a bit to its being over."

"Why think about it?... I've got to go back."

"After the nine days, you mean?"

A faint shadow of trouble darkened her radiance. "Yes, That, too. But I meant now. Coming with me?" As they neared the exit, she paused. "This is our place now," she whispered and held his face to hers for the fraction of a breathless second.

Rising stiffly from the back of his abraded neck, in the refuge of the lifeboat's canvased interior, Mr. Metzger caressed his camera. "Some footage!" he murmured.

Waking early on the morning of landing, Malda reviewed the previous day's episode with doubt. She had never intended to go so far with the wonderguest. Glamour aside, who was he, after all? An amiable and amusing young unknown who without a tremor alluded to himself as a man-about-town, bragged of having entry to New York's best houses, claimed to have won a blue at the horse show with a ridiculously named entry not to be found in the stud book (she had instituted some research in the ship's library), and was expounding a new and pretty awful style in men's clothing—why, the whole thing was preposterous. Besides, he was quite unlike any of the men with whom she had hitherto been thrown. So what? Did that set him beyond the pale? Tradition said that it did. Instinct contradicted tradition.

All very well, but how far could instinct be trusted? Not too far, if yesterday's evidence proved anything. Reverting to that passage at arms, the girl felt momentarily ashamed. Or did she only feel that she ought to feel ashamed? There was no doubt that she had experienced a definite enlightenment about herself. "Cold storage chicken." One of the youths of her own set had once stigmatized her thus. She had been ready to accept that characterization, perhaps even to be a bit set up over it. To be able to claim immunity from "that sort of thing" lent a certain distinction, even though the speculation as to whether she might not be subnormal in that respect was wholly self-flattering. Subnormal? Walls Kane had effectually dissipated any doubts on that point!

Footsteps along the passageway brought her to the window. A glowingly white figure leaning on the rail impinged upon her vision. Always white. It was beginning to get on her nerves. If it weren't for that she could like him so much better. Too much, perhaps. Oh, well; only a week more. These abrupt and explosive attractions were always superficial, evanescent... So she had understood.

"Hello!" He whirled. His face lighted up. (Whatever he is, he has charm—thought Malda.) "Are you up?"

"Not really. Why are you?"

"Didn't sleep too well. Besides, there's a Spanish ship on a reef to port."

"Oh, I want to see!"

"Come out."

"I'm not dressed. Do you think anyone would be horrified if I appeared in my bathrobe?"

"I shouldn't. Nobody else is around."

In a moment she was beside him, looking small and childish and wholly adorable, and slipped an arm into his, peering out at the stranded vessel. "What happened to her?"

"Lost her bearings, they say. Blundered ahead in the dark—and that's the end of her Wondertrip."

"Handing me an allegory, Wally dear?"

"I've been doing some heavy thinking."

Her arm moved in his. "Oh, let's not go in for that."

"About you," he persisted. "And me. In fact, us. And the prospect of my finding myself pretty much interested in you, Miss 'M. McCabe."

"Why not. For nine days."

"Only seven left."

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"Ain't time hasty!... We can be sensible about it, can't we?"

"How sensible?"

"Not painfully. Just reasonably." His head came down to hers. "Yes, that's what I mean," she murmured.

"Do you realize that it's getting harder and harder to take a reasonable view of you? We'll have all the rest of our lives to be sensible."

"So we will. I've got about forty dates this morning, but maybe I can sink up to our private deck after breakfast. Not that you rate To be continued"

**Ellen's Diary**

Continued from page 2

the low roofs and indeed higher ones of buildings as slides, where the snow had reached up to the heights there. There were depths of it in field and woodland and meadows, and folks used to laugh and say when the skies darkened and again flakes appeared "I wonder what we're going to do with this — where shall we put it?" there had been so much already. We recall plodding toilsomely along the lane, that evening before St. Valentine's Day as we came on one pretext or another to Jane's.

She was putting stitches in a quilt at the time, one she had been piecing through the Winter months. In a Log Cabin pattern that takes care of the smallest scraps, and is so gay and colorful it reminds one of a flowerbed that flaunts every blossoming shade. The girls were there, chattering over their Valentines and had spread them before their mother that she too might admire them. And we thought of the hoarded pennies that had gone into the precious buyings — and for whom, we could only surmise. Janet left the threaded needle poised in a stitch, as she lifted them one after another, then over again, one after another, without a remark. "And don't you like them?" Mary the second one giggled — she was the merriest of them, bright and quick and likeable and although there is a sort of unwritten law which bans teachers having favorites among their pupils, it was difficult to be impartial with Mary. "Yes," Janet nodded, after a pause, "I like them — they're pretty and the words are nice. You know, just looking at them — but there now" she smiled at us. "you'll be thinking I'm a silly old one! but just looking at them makes me wish that I had just one to send!"

We recall the surprise on the daughters' faces. "Yes," she continued "I'd love to have one — to send to my beau!" It was Mary, who caught her meaning. "To Daddy?" she laughed "now why didn't we think of that before? Why, you're welcome to the prettiest one of mine!" "Or mine!" Jane offered. "And what do you know, teacher?" Al, Janet's husband told us proudly on an evening when we came there to discuss the current news about who sent to whom and who received whose in the community, and we kept well the secret about a very prim vinegary-visaged lady that

had gotten in amongst ours, and dust claims its own. Yet it had gone up in a burst of flame "this old fellow here, got the best of them all!" The years scatter families — and folks, and the memories live on. Until tomorrow — Diary — Good night...

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**LAST TIME I PASSED HE WAS READIN' A NEWSPAPER INSIDE THE FRONT OF THAT TENT!**

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"Come out."

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"Only seven left."

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