

Whirlwind

by Norma Newcomb

CHAPTER THREE

Part Three

On the street, somewhat dazed and definitely worried, Sally hesitated, but only long enough to make up her mind, then dived into a cab. She didn't stop to analyze her feelings, didn't stop to think that Mr. Perkin would not like her interference. Her voice was ringing as she gave the address to the driver. After all, Jimmy hadn't meant to disgrace the airline. That was the line to take — make it all seem like a prank that had backfired. Mr. Perkin was human, wasn't he?

Mr. Perkin waited until she got herself comfortably seated in the big leather chair by the side of the desk. He was a fragile-looking man, with a neat mustache and a partially bald pate. His voice, when he spoke, was surprising, booming as though from the chest of Hercules.

"Well, Miss Alliston?"

"Mr. Perkin," she began despondently, "it was my fault. If I hadn't . . ."

"Allow me to interrupt," His watery gray eyes twinkled as he leaned over the desk. "I have already dealt with Jimmy. I summoned him, heard him, and passed judgment on him."

He rose and bowed her out. Jimmy winked at her from the bench in front of the secretary's desk in the outer office. He rose and went up to her, not looking at all disturbed by the mess he'd contrived to get himself into.

"Mike suspected you'd come over here, cherub. Thanks for trying."

"I'm sorry, Jimmy. I did my best."

He shrugged. "I'm sorry too."

"Jimmy—" she looked at him incredulously — "do you really mean that?"

"Sure. Think of all the gals who are going to be disappointed when I don't come flying in to bring romance into their lives!"

Yes, as she had told Mr. Perkin only a moment before, he was a boy playing at love.

And she had never liked boys.

Her mother was waiting for her when she returned to the apartment.

"What brought you to town, old dear?"

"A cheque for a hundred dollars. I thought you'd like to come along with me while I proceed to demolish it. I was looking in your wardrobe. You need several dresses yourself."

Mrs. Alliston sailed off with cheque in hand, a reluctant Sally tagging along. After Sally had been prevailed upon to accept a new dress, they headed out of the store toward the lobby, and there, of all people, was Philip. Sally had the strange feeling that it was all planned beforehand.

He was waiting by the door and although he pretended to be very surprised, he didn't carry it off very well.

"Sally, how nice to see you!"

"Philip, you didn't have a chance to see me."

"I beg your pardon!" He looked so distressed that Mrs. Alliston patted his hand soothingly. "It's quite all right, Philip, Sally has been in a difficult mood all morning. Perhaps you would like to invite her to lunch."

"Of course."

"But you must excuse me, Philip," Mrs. Alliston smiled. "Wouldn't you know that I have an appointment with my hairdresser?"

"In other words, Philip," Sally smiled as they watched her mother walk away, "you're stuck with me."

"Stuck?" He took her arm with an air of great satisfaction. "I don't consider that I'm stuck."

"I'm really not the least bit hungry."

"Oh, you could have something. Please Sally. We've not seen one another for what seems a century."

To be continued



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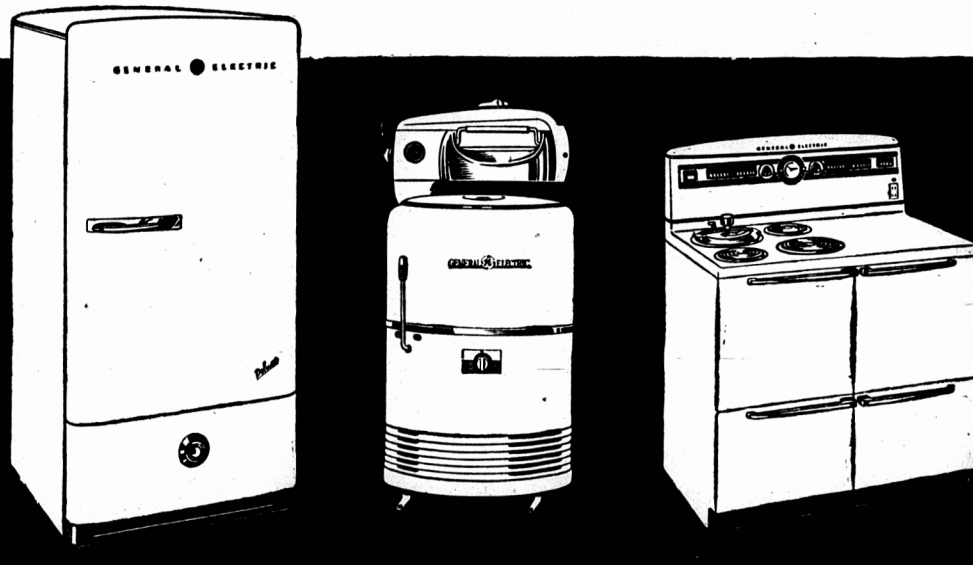
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