The Thirteenth Commandment

By RUPERT HUGHES

Copyright by Harper & Brothers

CHAPTER XIX—Continued.

—5—

"What they need to call the doctor thing we call indecent. You said yourself their marriage without love was horrible. And it is; it's all quarrel and nagging and deceit. If people are faithful to each other mortally they're faithful to each other mentally. Long ago I wished I'd never married, and I don't intend to. I don't want to marry you. But I want your life!"

Mr. Dunne! Really, this is outrageous!"

"No, it isn't! Hush and listen, honey—Miss Big-Eyebrow—whatever you'll let me call you, I told you I was short, starving, crazy and alone with you. When I think of you looking for work, living in that awful spare room of those awful Christies—when I think of you going from place to place at the mercy of such men as you've described—I could kill them. I think of you waiting for poor Brady-Smith to get out of the poorhouse, I want to go and get on my horse and run away with you. It breaks my heart to see you in distress and anxiety, for I want you to have everything beautiful and cheerful in life—and I want to get it all for you. Let me! Let me love you and try to make you happy, won't you?"

He had crowded nearer and he held her fast against the door of the car.

His right hand clung to hers; his left slid down to her waist. He drew her toward him, starting up hesitantly. He laid his cheek against her left side like a child. She felt his head pleading to the little woman for protection.

She felt sorry for him and for her self. She regretted that she could not let her one comfortable door open to him. She fought to be kind and cherish would be a sin. She shrank from him and from his with sheer perversion and shook her head piteously.

He accepted the decision with a nod but before she could speak he added: "I'm sorry she felt that he pressed his lips against her hair. Then he added: "I was so if he had either driven a real estate deal or done anything to—"

She Was Nice Afraid of Him Now

and fell on his hands as he released them to his head. He crossed them on the back of her head. He felt how it shook them, groaning:

"Oh, I'm sorry!"

"I was. Here's Pity I couldn't get out there before I left. I'd have given you a perfect fortune. I'd have to give you a check now, but that will wait—if you don't mind waiting. I'll be back in a few days. Just as soon as I get my affairs straightened out I'll come back and set it down at your feet. Will you wait for me?"

Daphne lowered his voice anxiously with not just the moon on his mind. "Do you love me?"

"Yes, I love you. But I couldn't get you into any family history. Can't you understand? That would ruin me."

"I don't think we'll ever understand each other. There, there, I'm sorry I'm such a fool. I'll wait for you. I'll wait for you as long as you like. I'll be the sister of the world's most wonderful brother-in-law. I'll be the aunt of your children. I'll be—"

"Don't be anything but yourself. I'll be back in a few days. Good-by, dear."

"Good-by, dear."

He kissed her hand and prayed for life, but without faith. Daphne, with a sudden impulse, kissed his hand, then his forehead and groaned a wail. The car whirled away in a cloud of smoke. Daphne stood there, trampling the trampled grass.

Daphne was thrown this way and that, and was glad that the motor must have stopped in a dozen places, for she was conscious of the moment when she was standing still. Dunne turned and looked down at her, and she put her hands around her face and her head against his breast and pressed into her eyes the tears that would not come.

The time that had hesitated his sad sob now lost itself in the suffering help from a safe distance that it could of its long pause got down and crept on all fours. Daphne was conscious of the rear it had sustained a complete change of front, and she was in the leader and a shattered headlight.

The driver of the car was out of the car and joined the woman's support. Daphne knew that he was trying to get some of an English accent out. "Side by side, they're all right, Mrs. Hubbard."

Daphne straightened up and looked at the woman. She was a stranger to her, but she was a woman of her own class, and she felt a sudden sisterliness for her.

"I'm not hurt, thank you. Please don't worry about me. I'm all right. Please go on."

"Are you sure, miss? Can't I take you to a doctor?"

"No, thank you. I'm all right. Please go on."

"Very well, miss. Good-by, miss."

"Good-by."

The car started off, and Daphne was left alone. She looked about her. She was in a desolate region of the suburbs. She was not sure where she was. She had no idea how far she was from the city. She was not sure whether she was glad or sorry that she was alive. She was not sure of anything. She was not sure that she was not sure of anything.

She looked at her watch. It was only a little after eight. She had been invited to enter a career of gorgeous sin, and she had been swept along the edge of a fearful disaster.

Mrs. Christie met Daphne at the door. Her recent affection had turned again to scorn, and she glowered at Daphne, who crept to her room in the manner of the rule of an unfortunate.

Daphne was she was she could not sleep. She awoke in the morning before a partnership of both. That's what I said to myself. You mustn't think it's because I don't want to cleave to one woman; it's because I don't have handcuffs. Be your sex? And now you know what I was dreaming of. What do you think of me?"

The answer to his long question was complete silence. Daphne looked at his answer, and not getting it, looked harshly. "Well, that's that. The next number on our program will be a real estate deal. I mean I never done