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Blue Package

HARRIET *and the* PIPER

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

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CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

"I remember feeling that way!" Harriet sympathized, solidly, as she paused.

"Well," Harriet said, "I met Norval Blondin one night. He lived in my home—Norval was. He had a dreadful artistical sort of mother, I remember, didn't approve of her at all. A friend of his named Street was an artist, and he had a nice little wife—just a baby, and they lived in a big Sarrafine sort of studio. It seemed wonderful to me. They loved each other, and their baby, but they were so free. They would have the whole crowd to dinner, about twenty of us, bread and wine and marzetti and music and talk. It was a wonderful—as I thought so! It was so different from Linda's ideas, of frosted layer-cake and chopped nuts, and Five Hundred. I loved the studio, and they—they all loved me, and be—Norval—loved me especially. He used to talk about Yogi philosophy and Oriental religions and poetry, and after awhile he was understood among them all that he loved me, and I him, and we were engaged. Of course Linda suspected, and there was opposition, but he had the studio, helping the Street get their suppers, it seemed so right and simple. Royal and I were to be married in the orthodox ceremony of marriage. It was decided no one could live up to Norval, and I believed him. Miriam Street, the artist's wife, was a poet, and she wrote the ceremony by which we were married. We had a big supper, and they were all there, and this poem—this marriage poem—was beautiful. It was published in a magazine, afterward, and called 'A Marriage for True Lovers.' It had a part for the woman to say, and a part for the man, and Royal and I said those, and then it had a part for the woman's friend to say, and the man's friend, and for all their —or any marriage—foreclosed in failure from the start!" I didn't spoil Nina, I didn't form her tastes. She has thought of herself as an heiress, she has spent money, lived luxuriously, I only ask a fair chance. Make it the world that you disapprove! Many a long-standing marriage has turned out a brilliant success. She loves us, I—I want to love her. I see tremendous possibilities in her!"

"She loves you as a child does and doesn't know you," Ruth said, thoughtfully. "She has been handed everything. I suppose, Blondin. Here! Here's a check for a thousand dollars, and all you have to do is sign it!' Nina hasn't had to learn self-control. She has never had to make up her mind to anything. She's like a child who has had a stuffed bird given her, and wants a live one. She doesn't know that she must feed it and water it, and that it will die if she doesn't. She doesn't know that she must work for what she wants, and that she must be willing to wait for it. She wants you, and she wants you now, and she doesn't know that you can't have you now!"

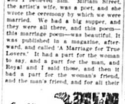
"I'm not kind at all!" Richard said, with a rather confused laugh. He put his head back unconcernedly. "The world will shake both you and Nina up, and give you a world of good!" he said.

"You think—" Harriet raised the light, dark lashes, and her splendid eyes met his. "You really aren't afraid about Nina?"

And she tried by a very faint stirring of her fingers to free them, and Richard held them.

"I thought you could, left my hat and bag. I went down the stairs, and there was Royal in the elevator. And we went to Mrs. Harrington's. She was very kind and took me in; she said that perhaps it would be better to wait a week. I waited. I cried all night, and the next day Mrs. Harrington lent me the money, and I went back to Linda.

"Of course, it was terrible, at first. But they were kind to me, in their way, and I was glad to be with Royal and I said time, and then it had a part for the woman's friend, and the man's friend, and for all their



"I Remember Feeling That Way!" Harriet Commented, Mildly, as She Paused.

friends. And then there was a promise that when love failed on either side, we were free, to keep the memory of the perfect love unsullied by the years."

She paused, Richard did not speak. She had told him this much in a simple, childish voice, a voice that was as free of self-consciousness as of any other. Then she went on:

"There was music, and then the vows, blessed me, and we had supper and danced two dances, and then I went to my room and changed my dress, and left that night to my electric. Royal went with his mother. He promised to go away on our honeymoon the next day, but did not tell Linda and Nina that I considered myself married. I thought Royal would understand. I thought it would try to interfere.

"I