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HARRIET *and the* PIPER

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

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CHAPTER X—Continued.

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He had not been a widow of Jon Hopper a few nights ago; a faded little pleasant woman of fifty, pathetically grateful for his casual politeness in her strangeness and shyness. He had chanced, quite idly and accidentally, to make an impression on her. She had promised to come to the studio and look at his pictures.

Boyal wondered why she dressed so badly; she needed simple materials and flowing lines. He heard himself telling her so.

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Richard sat on, on the terrace, thinking, and presently his mother came out and joined him. Wasn't he the old lady asked elaborately, going to the city? It was almost five o'clock, her son reminded her. Two or three of his business associates were coming to dinner; Hansen was to drive them all into the city later. Now, he just felt lazy.

"Are you today?" he asked, presently. People usually went to the club on Sunday, said his mother, the added irrelevantly, that Harriet was asleep. Richard said that she had looked tired this morning. Mrs. Lloyd was the best for her.

"Did you have a good sleep?" Richard asked. She had had the best of a recent look.

"Oh, the most delightful of my whole life! Eight hours without stirring!"

The Hopts arrived; a handsome motor and two equally handsome daughters. Harriet went to them immediately; Richard saw that she was accepting good wishes. She took the congratulations and filled their cups herself.

"How certainly is wonderful!" Richard said. He perfectly realized his mother's suddenly changed feeling for her, but he dared not analyze it yet. When Mrs. Hunt hinted at a dinner, he took part in the conversation. "Thursday? Why not, Harriet? We have no engagement for Thursday?"

She looked brightly, signaling to him that she had already indicated an excuse. She had never dined to-gether away from home. He need not think, said Harriet's anxious eyes, that he need carry the appearance of marriage to extremes.

"But—but aren't Nina and I to be in town Thursday?" she ventured.

"Shopping? You can make that next week!" Richard said. He loved her confusion.

"Then we surely will! Thank you," she said to Mrs. Hopt.

"Thursday, then, at eight!" the latter said cordially. She and Harriet were seen with them to their car and re-turned. Then Harriet half-wanderingly, half-laughing.

"What do you want to dine with them?" she asked.

"Why not?" His smile challenged her, and she laughed hardily.

"Mrs. Lloyd, you're crying! I'm only her prisoner—yes, and there's only one key to the door, and it's on altogether, Mrs. Main Street—Is it not, Richard?" she said.

Mrs. New Street inserting Mrs. Now Street's name in the sentence that other kind of jury.—Chicago Journal.

"Blue and silver, then." Richard felt a distinct regret when the news he expected appeared. There was but one blue and white room in his own set of study, flower-scented terrace, and that was Harriet's bedroom in a white gown.

For two or three days he was conscious of a new interest in her and in her pursuits and disappearances, a con-scious desire to please her. He was conscious of one mastering curiosity; he must know what it was that kept her garded him. It seemed suddenly of supreme importance. He thought of it as he sat in his office, and smiled to himself during important business conferences, wondering about it. It seemed incredible to him, now, that his experience of the past year had been so largely one of indifference to her. She was a companion, his daughter's governess, his own quiet and dignified house-keeper, the woman he had married in a moment of pity for her loneliness, and a quite visionary person, with whom the practical business life arrangements had been possible.

But Harriet was beginning to seem to him a human being who possessed as once the most mysterious and child-like and the most beautiful and the most baffling personality that he had ever known. He made excuses to go home early, just to catch glimpses of this new Harriet. She had been, he felt, he had ever taken a fatherly, advisory interest in Richard's welfare. Now she was another woman to him, her mere appearance made him thrill with pleasure, her mere voice stir him. He had walked into her room—he had walked into her life—without knocking. What would she say now, where would she move her eyes, or lay her white hand, he wondered. When she murmured to him under an undertone, he tried to catch the words.

"Did you have a good sleep?" Richard asked. She had had an excellent look.

Mrs. Hopt and Nina were leaving. Harriet went with them to their car and returned. Had Harriet half-wanderingly, half-laughing.

"Richard, I'm afraid I've been selfish! I've been so happy myself that I've forgotten that you must be lonely! Why don't you have Nina and Mrs. Hopt and some other girls in delicious terror. "oh, they would be overwhelmed! Nina is only a child! They climbed up our terrace, and I'm sure they're on the porch," Richard said. "Mrs. Hopt was wondering how we were entertaining ourselves. Harriet, I'm afraid you've been neglecting the ways to the line of parked cars.

"Oh, we lived in Paris—old Mrs. Rogers and I. Harriet reminded him carelessly. And reaching the little group of waiting cars, she entered the clubhouse and the parking field, she thought still, looking at across the quiet spread of fields and valleys, with the sense of wonder and delight. She could see the streaming shadows of the last lingering golfers on the green. "What a day!" she said, filling her lungs with great breaths of the sweet air. "What an hour!"

"What? I had to say to you up there on the porch," Richard said, "when that—that woman interrupted us—"

Harriet herself interrupted with a laugh.

"You say that woman' as if it was a bitter, deadly curse" she said.

"Well, I suppose it was," he said sternly. "What sort of honor do you call it, Harriet, to be asked to marry a man you've never seen, and locked into a house with him, straightening up.

"Yes, that is a country club!" Harriet offered, placatingly, as she got into the driver's seat, and looked back proper robe snugly about the saffron-colored gown.

"I suppose so!" He got in beside her. There was a moment of backing and wrenching before they glided out among the white cars, driveway. "What I meant to say was this," he said, looking down at her profile, a glance from his wheel. "I—I want you to understand I appreciate all you've done—the cruelness of my reading Jon's letter to you, Christmas day. I realize that we all have been very happy, and you've taken you too much for granted! I don't know what I'd have done without you, Harriet. The companionship of Francesca at this point, however, added to the white driveway.

"You did not look me in Smartins'" Harriet said, smiling, childishly. "They climbed to the balcony, and we were all introduced separately. Then I went to Richard, "and here they were having a—a—a—