

Miss Nobody from Nowhere BY ELIZABETH JORDAN

SECOND INSTALLMENT

"Yes," he told her, thinking it out as he spoke. "We can do it like this: I will get out of the cab a block from the hotel and walk the rest of the way..."

didn't pay much attention, because she said she was leaving again the next morning. I suppose she changed her mind, the way women do..."

tion, but we've got to do some guesswork. It may mean that you were rather desperate when you came here. Perhaps you were afraid of a nervous breakdown and felt it coming; perhaps you were hiding from some one; anyway, you certainly registered in a way that gave no clue to who you are."

"You think of everything," she assured him, with relief; and again there was a faint suggestion of a smile around her mouth.

"How about her letters? They would settle the matter of the name, at least," the guest suggested.

"Then we're just where we were!" she cried out. "What shall I do?"

There was no trace of a smile ten minutes later, however, when the clerk having greeted her with evident recognition but without mentioning her name, turned from his inspection of the mail rack to tell her there were no letters.

"Can you make out the town?" The clerk was beginning to think there might be more in this than appeared on the surface.

"Eric Hamilton, The University Club" he read aloud, and added the penciled word "Chicago" to the address. She gathered up the three cards without comment and dropped them into her hand-bag.

Nothing she saw suggested that she had ever been there before, except the attitude of the clerk. He had gone to the mail rack with the assurance of one who knew exactly what he was looking for, and he had also run over a few letters that had just been dropped on his desk.

"Good afternoon, Miss Parsons," he began.

"It's a quarter of six," he said. "Suppose we dine here together at seven. You must eat something you know to keep your strength. Then, if you haven't found any more clues in your room, I shall ask you to let me look up the best psychiatrist in town and have him come here this evening."

Her slight delay had caused her to pass her new acquaintance in the lobby and he stepped aside to make way for her, raising his hat with conventional courtesy as he did so.

"Because I happen to know a little French."

"Just hear me through," he begged. "I know a little about such cases, and my theory is that you will be all right in a day or two, or in a few days at the most. I mean to stand by till you are. But I want to find a reliable man, and have him see you, and give him your credentials, so that he'll let me act as your counselor and friend. If you insist, we will wait till morning to send for him. If you seriously object to a doctor, we won't have one. I am not going to risk losing, by officiousness, any confidence you may have in me. But, I've simply got to tell you what I think we ought to do, and then let you make your own decisions. You see that don't you? I wouldn't be worthy of your trust in me if I didn't do it."

"Who is that girl?" he asked casually, nodding at the slight retreating figure, as he lit the match he had asked for and applied it to a cigarette.

"Miss Eve Personne, *Nulla part."

"It's amazingly kind of you to take all this trouble. I wonder if I've ever had an attack like this before. Somehow I feel that I haven't. I know you are being a Good Samaritan. And," she slowly admitted, "I suppose you are right about sending for specialist."

"Easy to look at, isn't she? Her name is Parsons, I think—Miss Eve Parsons. At least it's as much like that on the register as like anything. She begins a word with one big clear letter and goes on with a wavy line. But we've called her Miss Parsons ever since she came and she answers to it," he added philosophically, "so I guess it's all right."

"What does it mean?"

Mr. R. Stephen Carrick, who dropped in at eight o'clock with the casual air of one making an

evening call, was as human as he was distinguished. He listened patiently to Hamilton's preliminary recital, asked a few leading questions, and made a thorough examination of his patient in a manner that was not too impressive. He left Miss Parsons very much encouraged—they had decided to adopt the hotel's name for her—but when he found himself alone with Hamilton in the hotel writing room his manner was less care-free.

Anyway, it's probably all I have in the world, for my clothes show I'm not rich. They're 'good but not gorgeous,' she grimly paraphrased.

She said, as he turned to take up his hat. "I'd rather you were here when she comes. There's some light literature on the table that may interest you."

"It's a case one can't safely make any predictions about," he confessed. "If we knew what had caused the condition, or what the patient's previous life had been, we could do some guessing; and one man's guess would be about as good as another's."

His heart leaped over the small jest, but before he could speak her face darkened and she went on.

She made a hospitable gesture toward the light literature, and disappeared through the roof leading into her bedroom.

Her general health seems to be good. She's a highstrung, temperamental creature, but she has dignity and poise even in this condition and I'd wager she's kept herself pretty well in hand all her life. I'm guessing that some big jolt caused this—something that just about sent her off her head."

"The money won't carry me very far in a New York hotel if I have a long siege—with a trained nurse at night and a psychiatrist coming every morning," she pointed out. "Suppose this attack lasts longer than my money does?"

He selected a magazine, drew an easy-chair to the reading lamp and contentedly sat down. She was only a few feet away, on the other side of the door, and there was something satisfactory in being her sentinel. It wasn't strange that he was immensely interested in her, he mused. Any one would be interested in a girl in that tragic plight. For a few minutes more he casually thought about her while he turned the pages of the magazine, glancing at pictures and titles.

On the whole, their talk left the Good Samaritan glad he had shared his responsibilities; and later, in Miss Parson's upstairs sitting room he gave her a carefully edited report of Carrick's conclusions.

"Come now," he urged, "keep steady! A whole lot depends on that. The more quietly you take this, the sooner you will get over it. He agrees that the thing to do is to sit tight, just as you're doing and let inquiries come from the other end. If your family and friends don't know where you are, they'll have started an investigation by this time, but they're probably doing it very carefully."

"A title on a page of the magazine he held caught his eye and he began to read, with frequent glances at the closed room and an ear alert for sounds in the inner room. As he had already demonstrated, it was not his habit to do anything by halves. He became attentive to the article he was reading, then interested, and finally absorbed.

"He thinks as I do" he robustly announced, "that it's merely a temporary matter. He told you that, himself. Your memory may return any minute or it may not come back for some time—possibly not for several days," he optimistically added, observing the quick change in her expression.

"Oh, what a devilish situation this is!" She turned back to the window, bringing her hands together with an effect of desperation that alarmed him.

"Yes, of course. We have been expecting you."

"As I expected, he wants a nurse with you at night," he went on, "and he will send a good one within an hour. He knows of just the right person. I'll stay with you till she comes. She is an understanding, tactful woman and she realizes that she is engaged simply as a companion."

"She stool still and stared into the darkness. Suddenly she turned back to the room with a little laugh that broke through their seriousness like a gush of a fountain.

"Doctor Carrick told me all about the case and gave me full instructions," the nurse went on. "It took some time. Otherwise I could have been here sooner. I suppose she's in her room," she suggested. "Hadn't I better go right in and report?"

"Suppose we dine here together at seven. You must eat something you know to keep your strength. Then, if you haven't found any more clues in your room, I shall ask you to let me look up the best psychiatrist in town and have him come here this evening."

"What a ghastly idea!" he began, and stopped abruptly. As if she had caught his thought she looked at him with sudden intensity; but he was on his guard again and his disarming smile banished any suspicion she might have had. However, the little episode seemed to harden some half-formed purpose, for she went toward the inner door with an air of resolution he recalled later.

"Miss Adams gave the door panel a soft but decided tap, and when she received no reply she repeated it without emphasis, calling clearly: "The nurse, Miss Parsons. May I come in?" But when there was no response to this, she

"I know a little about such cases, and my theory is that you will be all right in a day or two, or in a few days at the most. I mean to stand by till you are. But I want to find a reliable man, and have him see you, and give him your credentials, so that he'll let me act as your counselor and friend. If you insist, we will wait till morning to send for him. If you seriously object to a doctor, we won't have one. I am not going to risk losing, by officiousness, any confidence you may have in me. But, I've simply got to tell you what I think we ought to do, and then let you make your own decisions. You see that don't you? I wouldn't be worthy of your trust in me if I didn't do it."

"If you will excuse me," she said "I'll make some preparation for the nurse. I suppose since she is coming she must be made comfortable. No, please don't go,"

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THIRD INSTALLMENT

"Will you tell me exactly what the doctor said, and all he said?" she asked at last.

"Of course," He came and stood beside her. "He thinks that you have had some sort of shock which made you decide to get away from the scene of it, whatever it was. He thinks you came to the decision very hastily, for you started with no luggage. Yet when you got here you clearly expected to stay some time, for you went out the next day and bought some things which you had delivered here at the hotel."

"When I came up here to my rooms before dinner I went thru everything," she confirmed, "but there was nothing to help me, except some money. It's not much, but I hope it will see me through."

turned and cast a questioning glance at the young man. "Go in," he managed to bring out, and strengthened the order with an imperative gesture.

Plainly Miss Adams was not the type of nurse who accepted orders from every one who chose to give them. She hesitated, and rapped a third time. Still receiving no reply, she turned the knob and entered the bed-room leaving the door ajar behind her. Hamilton remained close to the open door, but he did not look into the room beyond it. Instead he wheeled and stared hard at the opposite wall, telling himself there were a half dozen reasons why the girl in the inner room might not have heard those three decided raps.

Miss Adams reappeared, and now she was obviously disturbed.

"We mustn't assume too much," she said kindly, with an understanding glance at his agitated face. "You said she was frightened and cast a questioning glance at the young man."

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