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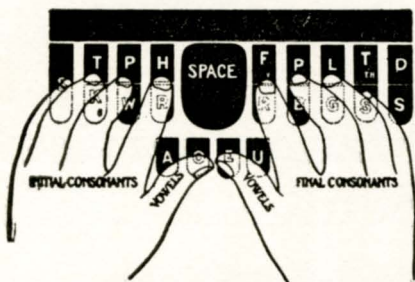
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EL PALENQUE

VOLUME II

NUMBER II

SAN DIEGO STATE COLLEGE



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Spambo

ARTHUR J. O. ANDERSON

Deep in a silence of scratching pens, Gareth's moved in the rhythm of a written exercise. The sharp belligerent sting of loosed ammonia brought the owner's annoyed nose toward the front of the class.

Dr. Clapper ceased pondering on the length of his fingers; he peered up, raised scientific eyebrows from their supporting octagonal glasses, and wondered what freshman had introduced *this* reek. He even opened his thin experimental lips to loose an appropriate sarcasm—for two upperclassmen sat aloof; but the nerves never responded further.

On the back of his chair clawed feet and a hand clamped a shining black rubbery body draped in creased finny wings; a gargoyle's head, neatly horned and mousily eared, insulated electrically blue eyes watching a tail beat an unsteady rubato adagio.

There was no time even for a co-ed to gurgle, "oh, *isn't* he cute!" The creature seized Dr. Clapper by the collar, flashed with him in a blue sparking arc across the blackboard, and thudded through the floor with a buttery splash.

Next blink of eyelids the being again clawed the back of the vacant chair, just as if it had never moved, snaky tail flipping a triumphant scherzino.

"You can go," it said.

The class melted out stupidly, Gareth slinking out last; and as he reached the door, the author of this unroutined break perched upright on the back of the chair, jumped up, and, diminishing rapidly and thoroughly, dived into Gareth's sweater pocket.

The sweater covered the spidery shoulders of one but lately initiated into the lower borders of college. His straight hairs were unrestrained, his profile cubist. But Aunt Gwyneth endorsed his profile; it kept the silly girls away.

She did deplore Gareth's perverted imagination. Disappearance of a mere teacher—who cares about a psychology teacher, anyway?—disturbed not his peace of mind, nor diminished his appetite; but conversation harped on the subject.

"Such things do not happen!" Miss Gwyneth Nyle's grey head, tightly combed and austere down-lined, vibrated in emphasis. She sat at the table, a bundle of stiff propriety, arms folded in strength, as much as possible of her spine consciously touching an equal length of chair-back.

"Why, it's absurd! A devil? The only devils I know of go to college and wear short skirts! Why, even Luther's devil has been proved due to a tired mind!"

"Well, I don't care. If it wasn't a devil, I don't know what I'd call it. It was a pretty animal, though," he added, with rather a shiver.

"Well, anyway, I didn't think you were such a milky fool as to allow your eyes to—"

"But, doggone it—"

"Don't say that! There's absolutely no call to say anything! I don't see how you could have been such a ninny, after all the teaching I have had you read!"

She planted a rhetorical fist on the table, and tossed her head,—grazing the creature, perched on the corner of her chair as if it had never been elsewhere, its spiked tail rippling an *allegro giocoso*.

"Why, Aunt Gwyneth—" gasped Gareth, catching his breath.

Clawing the knot of her hair, the devil threw her feet up, and shot down with her in a bright blue arc through the floor, with a quiet, mushy thud. Gareth choked in ammonia.

When Gareth next opened his eyes to see, the being perched on the empty chair, tail still in happy tempo.

"She marvelled at her wisdom and limitless view; but in reality her gaze ended where it fell," snickered the creature in the voice of a bass saxophone.

Now, a psychology professor one can lose and not miss; Gareth could conceive of losing two teachers, without feeling deprived of much value. But an aunt—even if inconvenient at times . . . well, that became intimate.

"Hey, you! Bring her back!"

"Calm yourself, kid," said the creature. "She was just going to insult me, and tell you not to start the eyes out of your head. She's better where she is, with plenty of good people to reform."

"But I want her back, doggone it! Doggone you!"

"Now, now! You shouldn't have written my name five times this morning—even in an exercise—if you didn't want me. And you shouldn't doggone me: it's uncomfortable."

"Huh?"

Gareth actually sat up straight.

"Yes. You can call me Spambo, if you like. And I'll live in your sweater pocket, if you don't mind."

"My pocket?"

"Sure; it's quite good enough."

"Well!" Gareth began to like the idea of a private devil.

"Listen—you—Spambo! You get my aunt!"

"Really, she doesn't deserve it. She's having a good time converting all the good Catholics and Protestants she's with, anyhow."

"I don't care! Bring her here!" ordered Gareth, tapping the table.

"Well!" snapped Spambo.

But he vanished in an ammonious void, leaving Gareth convulsed in coughing against puckered nose and eyes.

When he recovered, Aunt Gwyneth sat on the table, legs dangling uncomfortably.

"Hussies! Just hussies! They were old enough to know better—every one of them! And whoever heard of bright green lights and servants dressed as devils, even at a party—"

The sight of Spambo, roosting serenely, his tail-tip twitching an *allegretto e marcato*, jabbed her senses.

"Gareth, what are you doing with—with—things—like this in the house?" Aunt Gwyneth multiplied the lines in her forehead. "I—I can't say I think it wise—"

"Dr. Clapper—"

"Are you going to try to make me believe that a—thing—like this . . . I shall demonstrate that it's all your imagination!"

She reached to the shelf for a compact Bible.

Spambo grated a laugh like cogs rasping.

Miss Nyles had intended to open the book; but this scraping changed her intentions. She flourished it above her head, and let it fly. Her arm, never made for throwing, pitched it a yard wide; nevertheless, the being harpooned it with its tail, twirled it around, and tossed it to the goldfish.

Aunt Gwyneth then dropped Funk and Wagnall's latest dictionary at him; but it shattered through the window.

"I'm going upstairs to concentrate," she said, after staring glassily at the creature. "Put the dishes on the sink," she added absently, and brushed out.

"I'm sorry I brought her back," growled Spambo. "Have you any amonia? What with travel and the force of learning, I'm rather tired."

* * * * *

Next morning Gareth wrung the crank of his flivver in plenty of time to dash into class just a minute late. Ritual cranking and choking heaved from the machine sighs of regret; but no more. Gareth again strained at the handle; the Ford politely but firmly declined. A third time he tried to wrench out a snort; age and experience again won.

"Help me roll this down the driveway," panted Gareth to Spambo, who leaned sniffing over the gasoline tank.

Gareth swung himself in before velocity swung him off; for the creature, tail coiled about the radiator cap, wings churning the air, had just about jerked the Ford from Gareth's push.

The speedometer gave up with a gasp; even traffic officers stood agape in awe. Spambo whiffled the four miles in one minute and thirty-two seconds,—Gareth whirling behind, clammy hands glued to wheel.

Just when he liked the sensation, Spambo skittered to a stop.

Dr. Dusp, having expanded into Dr. Clapper's absence held forth on the apt subject of supernatural phenomena.

"The devil or bat, some of you claim," said Dr. Dusp, "could easily have been after image of your paper on the blackboard, with a pernicious imagination you must curb. As for the disappearance, I think I have made it quite plain Dr. Clapper was mad. Anyone who could disagree with me and Dr. Snap over the matter of obliviscence—"

"What about the hole?" objected Gareth.

"Freshman mischief!" snapped the professor. "Is anyone sure it was not here at the beginning of the period?"

The class gazed at the hole, expressionless, without comment.

"But I'm sure—"

"Mr. Nyles is no doubt sure he saw Lucifer himself dig it with his fork," bit Dr. Dusp. "Mr. Nyles would interest some alienists I know."

Polite class titters answered the chorus leader, as expected.

Still irritated by the orchestrated snickers, Gareth frowned in silence.

"Thursday at Psychology," decided Gareth, splashing dishwater that evening, "we'll just show Dr. Dusp whether you're a devil or not. When he laughs at me next, I'll pull you out of my pocket, and you give him a good scare right then."

"First you'd sear me with dishwater, and now you'd have me become an experiment! This is too much! I won't do it!"

"You will, or you don't get any ammonia!"

"Miss Nyles, this dishwater is ruining me—"

"No dish-drying, no ammonia!" cracked Aunt Gwyneth, bustling in. "Besides, you needn't get too close: all you have to do is blow. Mind you don't scorch the woodwork!" She flurried out.

"Anyway, Spambo, you'll have to appear and prove my point; you might even get a little rough. Really, I think you will be quite useful when I get you trained."

"Well, I won't do it anyway; and you'd better not make me!" Spambo scowled professionally.

"You might as well make up your mind right now!" said Gareth, handling the dish-mop like a sceptre.

"Here's some information you can get me," remarked Gareth later, hand-

(Continued to page 20)

Mistress Gladiol Pours Tea

RACHEL HARRIS CAMPBELL

Mistress Gladiola's garden is like Mistress Gladiola herself—cool, quiet, shadowy, with a trace of mischief, a fairy-like mockery beneath its stillness. Close-clipped lawns, tiny artificial trees with their locks severely trained in place, dainty flowering shrubs that hold up their skirts with prim audacity, a rock-cradled fountain that even in its babyhood has a wealth of lusty laughter,—these are the sort of things to be found in the garden of a lady so whimsical that she throws all precedent aside on her afternoon at home, and sets her tea table on the lawn, on the most friendly terms with the rose bushes.

Nan, her grave-eyed bond-girl, comprehends her mistress so perfectly that the table with its dainty burden seems almost to have grown from the turf, and to be as much a part of things as the fountain or the transient, curious butterflies. Here Mistress Gladiola, in a flounced silk gown of blue and lavender, counts out lumps of rose sugar into a silver bowl, and anxiously samples the flavor of the tea in her gleaming pot.

"Charming!" thinks Captain Roger Braithewaite, the earliest comer, sauntering up grandly between the pansy beds, and pretending a haughty indifference to little Nan's straining eye-brows and unabashed stare of admiration. Captain Roger secretly admits that admiration is only his due. Is he not tall and well-favored, with the grace of a cavalier and the sure bearing of a soldier? Are not his coat and breeches of the russet satiny brown that lines an opened chestnut burr? Is not his wig a soft rich black, and newly curled? Are not his stockings of lustrous silk, his lace jabot white beyond reproach? His sword and scabbard—even the ring on his finger—are they not so brilliant that Nan cannot look at them without blinking? Captain Roger Braithewaite is mightily pleased with himself, and he desires that Mistress Gladiola Starne—and Mistress Dolly Gregory—and all other fair ladies—shall look at him with as much awe as little Nan.

Mistress Gladiola does not see the Captain's grandeur. Nodding graciously to indicate the seat he is to take, she glances quietly at his bravely mustached face. She sees that he is very young about the eyes, though his lips and chin try valiantly to give a touch of debonair boldness and gaiety to his face.

"My services to you, Madam," says Captain Roger, bowing as he sits.

They are carefully casual. They talk of the garden, the sunshine, the latest ship come to harbor. Mistress Gladiola pours a stream of savory warmth into a cup thin as parchment.

"Cream, Captain Braithewaite?"

"If you will be so kind, Madam."

He sips absently; he seems to be listening to Mistress Gladiola's talk, but his eyes see only the garden gate and the path beyond.

"I have heard said that you will soon return to England, Captain Braithewaite," says Mistress Gladiola, suddenly.

Captain Roger starts. For a moment he forgets to watch the gate. He looks into Mistress Gladiola's eyes.

"I assure you, madam, the intelligence is true, though I know not who may be spreading the rumor."

"Shall you be glad, Captain? You have been away for years at various posts, have you not?"

Captain Roger sets down cup and saucer, and marks circles on the table linen with the handle of his spoon.

"Have ye ever been in England, Mistress Starne?"

"Never," say Mistress Gladiola's softly shaken curls.

"Faith then . . ."

Captain Roger has no tongue. How can he make an outlander see the lanes and hedges and fields of England?

But Mistress Gladiola is no provincial, though she has never been above fifty miles from home. The golden-brown fluid with which she refills his cup, the warmth of the smile she sends into his eyes, have the odd effect of making Captain Roger betray himself to a woman whom he knows as little as any woman in the world.

"My home is in England," says Captain Roger. "I—I shall not regret that my—exile is ended."

"Your home!" Mistress Gladiola is merrily gentle. "You are not married, Captain."

Captain Braithewaite laughed uneasily.

"Nay, madam, but—". He glances sharply into her quiet brown eyes. They are cool and safe as the arms of a mother to her sick-hearted child. He cannot trifle with her, and because Captain Roger knows no half-hearted way of doing things, he lays his soul bare in a single gesture.

He pulls from his safest pocket a thin gold chain with a heart-shaped locket at its end. Snapping it open to reveal the miniature within, he flings the trinket on the table.

Mistress Starne carefully sets down the teapot and takes the chain reverently in both hands. There smiles up at her the face of an English girl.

"Oh!" breathes Mistress Gladiola. "She is lovely, Captain Braithewaite! She—why, she is prettier than even our Dolly Gregory! What is her name?"

"Elizabeth," says Captain Roger, a lad and a lover once more. "Betsy Allison. She—we are—that is, when I return to England—"

Mistress Gladiola lifts her brows at him warningly. Nan is advancing from the gate with fresh tea, and other guests are close behind her. Captain Roger's lip quivers aghast as he sees Master Arnold Gregory with his young wife, Mistress Dolly. The Captain's fingers tremble foolishly as he tries to pick up the locket. Mistress Gladiola, seeing his dismay, gathers up the chain in her long fingers and drops it into her lap, under the lavender flounces of her dress.

As the newcomers approach the tea table, the Captain rises and bows, his hand on the ruffles above his breast. Master Gregory returns the bow, not very successfully. He is the sort of man of whom there is nothing to be said, except that he is rather more than middle-aged, and that to his chronic rheumatism has been lately added new tribulation in the form of a touch of gout. Yet he fancies that to the pretty child at his side he is cavalier, protector, lover.

Mistress Dolly smiles with her eyes. They are really the most important part of her; wide blue cornflower eyes they are, that have looked at life, not into it. She curtsies gracefully and sinks into the chair by Mistress Gladiola. Master Gregory sits down heavily, aided by the Captain, and eases his sore body. Mistress Gladiola pours tea all around.

Again the talk is of nothings. Once more Captain Roger is flush-cheeked and hard-eyed—soldier, gallant, man of the world. Mistress Dolly looks at him kindly, but with not so much awe as little Nan. Mistress Dolly thinks far too well of herself for that.

Master Gregory drinks his tea, and speaks sometimes to Mistress Gladiola, but he has really no thought for anyone but his child-wife.

"Dolly, my dear, you have not seen my garden since the early rains have brought out the pansies," cries Mistress Gladiola at last. "Captain Roger, will you not take her about a bit? Sure Master Gregory has a word or two for me of the parson's sermon last Sunday, which, lack-a-day, I was forced to miss."

"May I have the pleasure?" says Captain Roger in a voice that tries hard to be assured.

Mistress Dolly nods demurely, and off they go with scarcely a backward thought. They are soon out of sight among trees and hedges, though Captain Roger's hard, keen witticisms are still to be heard, and at times Mistress Dolly's laughter bubbles out from the shadows, light-hearted, irresistible.

Mistress Gladiola looks hard at Master Gregory. She is sorry for the early white in his hair and the tiredness of his mouth. She feels that Master Gregory is one whom life has passed by; yet she hates herself for pitying him. She offers him a dish of especially dainty sweetmeats.

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Night

*Like one descending to meet a lover,
Night glides down the darkening stairs of evening.
No lover greets her
For an eternity has she paced the earth
Looking waiting but finding never
Him whom she seeks.
Though she has strewn her misty veils with lambent stars,
And worn the moon like a cereus blossom
In her hair,
He has not come.
Meek, quiescent, Night folds her shadowed hands,
And paces on unhurried through her destiny,
No crying out nor pleading with the gods
To give her stay.
Night does not know
That those who walk with stateliness about the earth
May not know love.*

Conquest

NADEAN BLAKE

Joan sat stiffly in the barber's chair and pouted at her own slim reflection. A dark oval little face sulked back, a pair of wide-set brown eyes questioned an identical pair. And Joan often pouted. Philosophical young married women always wondered enviously just what Joan Cummings could find to pout about. There was to them but one panacea for feminine discontent, clothes. A glance at Joan left the question still answered. They often said as much to her.

Even Anne and Virginia couldn't understand. Joan wanted wanted a man. Not a "youngster" (her lip always curled when she said that), she wouldn't go with "youngsters": she wanted someone "old enough to know something, twenty-five or thirty." Anne and Virginia always echoed her enthusiasms about these Gods of wisdom and experience, but they were conscientiously saving of the "youngsters" Joan scorned.

Anne had objected once. "But Joan, you just can't pick them up off the street. Where are you going to meet anyone like that? I'd be nice to Tommie or Clyde 'till I found someone older."

Joan's lip wrinkled and she arched one eyebrow with carefully acquired nonchalance. "Wait and see. I *won't* go out until I can have a decent date. Just watch."

That was three weeks before; Joan was staying home and the pout was becoming a fixture.

The barber clicked his shiny scissors almost rhythmically, cutting off bits of her fluffy black hair and genially contributing to an unsatisfactory discussion between two collarless patrons. He stopped to brush the clippers and Joan looked about lazily. Directly in front of the chair was a huge glass door leading from the shop into the lobby of the building. Moving intermittent patches of light, criss-crossed by shadow bars, betrayed the four gliding elevators. Across the black and white tile was an identical door labeled in gold; New York Building and Loan . . . Pacific Branch. Suddenly Joan's eyes widened, she leaned way forward and watched the door across the lobby. The barber gingerly took her shoulder and pulled her back. Joan uncrossed her legs and stretched forward. A casual observer would have seen, behind those gold letters, two young men seated at a desk and talking seriously. Joan saw two young men but really only one handsome profile, one curly dark head, one dark grey suit. Between scowls at the barber (who insisted on pulling her back where she couldn't see), and an interested stare, the pout was fast losing place. By the time she had paid the disgusted barber, pulled on a flaming little hat

and powdered her nose, any previous expressions had merged into one; eager primitive determination.

After eight long minutes of examining savings slogans and nearby window displays . . . and watching the street door of the Loan Office, Joan shamelessly stood on the curb outside and waited. He came out, laughing, unaware of the determined little figure whose brown eyes followed him so closely, nor of the whole-souled admiration of his broad-shouldered dignity. Leisuredly, he sauntered half way up the block and slouched far down in the seat of a fat nosed blue roadster, drove off. Joan sighed; it was just right that he should drive that car. A cloud of dreams piled itself up and up, radiating color and light and love. She would show them all, especially Anne and Virginia. But how . . .

Facing the savings slogans she planned, her determinations aiding a clever brain. Building and Loan . . . she'd heard of dollar shares. Another careful slap of powder, a lift of her chin and a brisk little figure tapped across the tile to the desk facing the lobby door.

The young man at the desk was busy and scowlingly perplexed about something, it seemed. Despite the concentration, he was aware of the provocative youngster coming toward him. She commanded attention . . . what a tiny thing she was; must be about nineteen . . . but he was very busy looking at some papers. For no reason at all he looked at the papers some seconds after the girl stood before him. A heel clicked sharply on the tile, just once, an indignant little sound. He looked up quizzically, rose and pointed to a chair beside the desk.

"Can I help you?"

Joan seated herself, put her feet close together, toes on the floor and heels high up, looked at him seriously for a second and then smiled. "I thought maybe you could tell me about Building and Loan. I'd like to save some money and someone said that a share or two would be an easy way of putting away a little." It was charmingly glib.

The young man was courteously condescending. He leaned back and looked into space just over Joan's right shoulder. "Selling shares to new patrons is not just what I'm here for, but I'll tell you what you want to know and show you where to get your shares. Just how much do you want to save each month?"

His manner annoyed Joan; he was so businesslike and patronizing at the same time. How could she approach such an unappreciative old automaton? She answered with a short question about the price of shares.

"The kind you'll want are one dollar a share per month, materializing in ten years with six per cent interest. It is an excellent way of investing small savings and it mounts up considerably in ten years Five one-dollar shares? All right, go over to that second window and tell the girl what you want. She will open your account."

Plainly he was through. Joan rose and looked at him, all the enthusiasm gone from her face. She turned toward the window he had indicated, "Thank you so much." He was appreciating to the fullest extent the slim straight little figure and remembering that spoiled red mouth. Suddenly she wheeled about he was concentrating over those papers. Her first bravado had ebbed somewhat, but she faced him squarely. "Pardon me, but will you tell me the name of the gentleman who was talking to you just before I came in? I think he is a friend of my brother's." (Clever to add that on, she thought. He wouldn't guess she didn't have a brother.)

A hint of amusement seemed to dance across his face as he nodded politely, and made some mental comments about those two inscrutable narrow eyes, slits far below raised eyebrows; they had been so wide and questioning before. "Certainly. That was Doctor Morley."

"Thank you."

It seemed an age before the girl at the window stamped the new leather book and said something about payment the nineteenth of next month. And all the while Joan knew the man at the desk was laughing at her.

In her own room Joan sat and looked at the phone book Physicians and Surgeons, M.D. . . . Dr. Morgan, Dr. Morin, Morrison, Morrel, Morris no Morley! Why, he was not a physician and she had planned so carefully to be ill and call him. Of course, father and Aunt Margaret wouldn't understand when there was a perfectly nice old family doctor at hand, but it would have worked somehow. And now (She hoped he wasn't a veterinarian.) Oh, of course, she laughed at her own stupidity, he was probably a dentist. Again the directory. Dentists . . . M . . . Dr. Morford, Dr. Morlet, Dr. Morse

She kicked off her shoes, curled her feet under her and frowned. What kinds of doctors were there, anyway? Chiropodists. He just couldn't be the kind that worked on people's feet; they were all old men Optometrists? Mh, it wouldn't hurt to look. Moore, Moran, Morley, Dr. G. H. Morley. Why it would be easy to find something wrong with mere eyes. She might even need glasses and then she could go back several times.

By dinner time the campaign was complete. She came languidly into the dining room and sat down beside her father. "I almost came down and had lunch with you today, but I met Anne so we ate together; maybe tomorrow I'll

come." (It wouldn't do to be too abrupt about one's eyes). Toward the end of the meal she looked at him seriously, "Daddy, there's something wrong with my eyes. They burn so much and I get a headache whenever I read, and this one is red." (There *was* a tiny bloodshot place in the corner.) "I just won't wear glasses, though." (She'd always said that and it wouldn't do to be so suddenly agreeable about it.)

Her father looked at her with concern. The child never had anything wrong with her . . . and she had no mother . . . "I'll call Dr. Wilson tomorrow and make an appointment for you. He'll look them over . . . don't let me forget, and then we can have lunch together."

Joan gasped. He *would* do something like that, and he'd tease her unbearably if she explained. "Isn't Dr. Wilson that old man who made your glasses? I know, I met him once and I don't like him! He's cross! I won't go to him." him."

Again that concerned look crept across her father's face, and a baffled frown. She looked inflammable, shaking her curls that way and pouting. "Joan, you're so silly sometimes. Just because he gave you an unpleasant impression you refuse to be sensible. He's only gruff and he's a very capable optometrist. Sometimes I wish you were old enough to be spanked, or at least not so sophisticated. I'm bashful about offering parental advice. Mhuh . . . have you any other doctor in mind?" He seldom got very ruffled and by this time his eyes were wrinkling at the corners; something amused him.

Joan looked at him suspiciously . . . his sense of humor was abominable. She poked at her salad and dismissed the conversation. "I'll find out who did Anne's work and go to him. Will you take me to the football game Saturday?"

A high-heeled tiny figure in bright blue, her face almost hidden by a fluffy fur, quietly opened the big door labeled:

DOCTOR JOHN B. KEENER
DOCTOR GENE H. MORLEY
Optometrists
ENTER HOURS 10-12; 1-5

Inside at the desk, a pretty red-haired girl in a white uniform was telephoning and making notes on a pad. She knew she wouldn't like the girl; she was too pretty and besides, here she was by "him" all day. At least she was ten minutes late . . . she'd have hated to be prompt with that red-headed girl there. The pretty nurse turned around. "Which doctor did you have an appointment with?"

"Dr. Morley," haughtily.

(Continued to page 24)

Arena

ROY BURGE

The bull ring had been searingly hot all day, and Ramon swore sibilantly to himself as he retrieved a banderilla from the sand, flinging it back of the barrier to keep the banderilleros from stabbing their quick feet. A moment past, a swift lean bull from the vacada of the duke of Veragua had lunged so near that Ramon's scarlet jacket hung in flaming shreds.

And on top of all this, Amapola, that she-devil, had thrown her rose to Felipe. He could see her even now as she leaned from the lower box, and the slow grace of her lifting arm as she tossed the scented thing. And all because Felipe had vaulted over the bull. As if he had not taught Felipe that trick when they had been novices in the ring together. Sworn friendships and a woman . . . Ramon gingerly felt of a cut in his wrist. Jesu Maria, but she was the cold one.

Ramon turned suddenly and ran to the side of the arena. Francisco Delgado, the matador, had signaled for another estoque. He had dropped the one he carried into a pool of blood, and, fastidiously, signalled for another so that his hands might not be soiled. Ramon drew another long steel needle from its gemmed sheath, then speeding back to the matador, offered the sword upon bent knee.

On the far side of the arena, the banderilleros were weaving in a wild fluttering dance about the bull, to give the master a breathing space before the kill. The more daring darted under the bull's very nose, to the music of thrilled bravos, and the pelting of little red roses from the ladies above. Then as the bull was in position, in a precise instant, they all presented the white lining of their capes to the bull and retreated behind the barrier. The bull, bewildered, halted.

Francisco Delgado gave a great shout. The bull turned—Francisco swept his cloak like a red flame about his head. The legs of the bull stiffened, his head lowered—bellowing he darted at the matador—and Francisco leapt, resilient as a new bent bow, to just beyond the horns. The bull shook his head, stopped uncertainly—turned—and darted again at the matador. The long steel blade glimmered—Francisco lunged once, and leaped aside. The bull ploughed crimson the white sand of the arena.

Ramon sighed wearily. He had seen that happen ten thousand times before, not counting the time El Exquisito Jose had bled out his life upon the horn of a vicious Andalusian bull. All of the arena tossing its bravos into the empty Spanish sky, the thrown roses, the shawls fluttering from the boxes,

people gone mad for an instant, it was always this way. Ramon felt suddenly like an empty wineskin; he tried to fill himself with the anger that had possessed him a moment ago. It was gone. He turned to the dressing rooms.

A hand twitched his tattered crimson cape. He turned to find Felipe smiling gravely upon him, a dark red rose blossoming on his jacket.

"Well?"

Felipe's voice was huskily even.

"Amapola wants to speak to both of us."

With a contemptuous lift of his shoulder for his old friend, Ramon turned to the little escalera that led up to the box seats.

Amapola, the first soft breeze of late afternoon stirring the faintly damp ringlets on her forehead, was composing herself as they entered the box, powdering her smooth olive complexion to an even pallor. Her thin red lips lifted in a faint smile, showing the startling beauty of even teeth. The powder puff disappeared, the ebony fan dropped to her lap as she held out her hands to the Banderilleros. Simultaneously Ramon and Felipe bent to kiss the slender fingers.

Amapola smiled impartially upon them as she rose gracefully, shrugging back a fold of the lace mantilla. She took them both gently by the arm.

"Something I would say—to you Ramon—and to you Felipe." She squeezed their arms in emphasis. "To my carriage please." Her words were like little golden bubbles bursting in a cool glass, as they threaded their way by the railing of the arena.

"I have an answer for you at last," she began. "Both of you love me—no? Carefully, Ramon, your bear-grip crushes my fingers. You may kiss them. You still hate each other? That both does and does not matter to me. Is it not a strange predicament that I am in? I love you both. Yes, equally. And since I cannot choose, I leave the decision with you. Felipe! Stop. You kiss my fingers most beautifully, but I am not to be swayed by finger kissing."

Felipe bent to kiss the mocking lips, but Ramon pushed him away violently. In Felipe's hand a knife suddenly glittered. Amapola laughed, softly, and tapped it with her fan.

"Put it away, tontito," she said. "The love song of Castile is played upon a steel edge. But you give me an idea. You, Ramon and Felipe, have murder in you. It is plain. Why not make it a contest?—Why not a duel?" her voice rose eagerly. "Eh?" She moistened her lips and pushed a dark curl from the soft curves of her throat. Her words were little explosions echoing faintly in the now empty arena.

Amapola clicked open her fan, but too violently. The flimsy thing slipped from her moist fingers and flew over the railing into the arena. Almost simultaneously, Ramon and Felipe leaped over the railing. Ramon lit smoothly, but Felipe, miscalculating, sprawled on the hard packed sand. Felipe lunged toward the fan, but Ramon pushed him again to the ground.

"Down, fool," he screamed. "The fan is mine."

Felipe reached for his knife as he sprang to his feet. Ramon's leaped to his hand. Amapola's voice beat fiercely down upon them.

"Fight, fight," she screamed. Her voice rose in sadistic ecstasy. "I am the prize. Slash him, Ramon. Kill him, Felipe. I reward the victor." Her clenched fists beat a hard tattoo upon the railing.

Felipe's dagger was a shimmering light about the swift attack of Ramon. In and out they rasped, a frenzied dance, death glittering from the knife edge. Blood soaked Ramon's left arm, Felipe's tunic dripped red from a slashed side. Ramon's shirt was ripped wide, a thin red line forming suddenly on the white chest. A savage thrust tore the flesh from Felipe's temple. He dashed the blood from his eyes and stabbed back wildly. And still the voice, like tiny hammers beating steel wires—"Through his guard—slash—Ramon—Felipe. Down to the heart.—"

Felipe stabbed fiercely upward, missing Ramon's chest by an inch, slashing open the cheek. Before he could guard himself, Ramon lunged hard, the knife slipped smoothly home between the shoulder blades. Felipe collapsed. Ramon leaped upon him. As he poised the thrust to tear the heart, a voice, Amapola's, struck with steely wildness on his ears.

"Kill him—quick—through the heart—through the heart—."

And in that moment Ramon saw his hand clutching the knife. He felt his arm muscles poised to speed the knife. A torn heart for Felipe, whose eyes were pleading with him, whose soft black curls were powdered with the arena sand.

He leaped from Felipe's body and snatched the fan from the ground. With a savage jerk he broke the brittle sticks, and running to the railing, flung them hard at the red lips of Amapola.

He turned . . . there where Felipe lay . . . blurred . . . in a pitiful heap. Kneeling almost tenderly, he brushed the sand from the black curls; gently he wiped a speck of blood from the full lips. Felipe sighed faintly, and wearily closed his eyes.

Then softly, with no backward look, as one might carry a gift into the temple, Ramon carried Felipe across the white sand and disappeared beneath the arena.



Editorial



Volume Two—Number Two . . . and EL PALENQUE is with us again, two months late. In every issue, tucked away on a back page, can be found this notice:

"The advertisers have made it possible for EL PALENQUE to appear this year. The staff urges its readers to mention the magazine in patronizing them."

To the present EL PALENQUE staff these words carry an especial poignancy. We do not choose to trust this appeal to merely an inconspicuous footnote. If you would help EL PALENQUE appear again, "mention the magazine in patronizing them."

Would it interest you and help in estimating our efforts and results to know the editorial point of view for each story?

"Spambo," our featured story, has been chosen for the strength and the force of its delineations. Mr. Anderson in terms of flashing imagination takes a piquant dig at psychology.

"Mistress Gladiola Pours Tea" exudes a gentle appeal of delicacy, of leisurely tempo, of subtle lucidity in its characterizations.

"Arena" moves along vividly on a current of intensity which proves at last to be illustrative of an ideal of friendship—and justifies the writing.

"Conquest" won a prize in a classroom competition. We think they liked the note of ingenuous sophistication that sounds from first to last, and the sense of humor that peeks slyly out between the lines.

We have sought to satisfy a wide variety of tastes, and yet preserve the unity and integrity of this publication. With some we shall have succeeded; with others,—not. With all we should like to be remembered as having said:

*Though whom-so-ever mention it
Two meanings hath each word:
Intent of him who uttered it,
And his concept who heard."*

Spambo

(from page 8)

ing Spambo a sheet of paper. "Never mind the first two: begin with Julius Caesar's diet."

"I don't want to do it!"

"You will, or you don't get any—"

"Well—"

Spambo hesitated a moment. Then, sputtering a little, he faded out bluely, leaving an angry odor, like that of a bakery at midnight. Gareth pulled a letter out of his pocket, and gloated over it until a crackle announced Spambo's presence.

"There you are. I don't thank you for the job; never again will I try to get by St. Peter!"

"Thanks. By the way—here's something different."

Gareth held out the letter, and, heels on cushions, bunched himself on the armchair. Spambo read:

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Spambo's claws punctured the paper. He shook it off. He darted about the room, dizzying Gareth with a spiral of blue. Then, quite without warning, he collapsed nearby, glinting spasmodically, the fire spitting staccato sparks at the screen in sympathy.

"What! You'd take me on the stage, make me do tricks, waste my time rehearsing, while you draw five thousand a week!" gurgled Spambo, a chaos of angry saxophones in his voice.

Aunt Gwyneth clicked the living room door open. Spambo sprang into the shadow of the floor lamp.

"I'm so glad!" quavered Miss Nyles up and down the scale in tempo molto marcato. "I'm

so glad! That—thing—of yours was just a figment. I've just had it proved; and really, I can't see it anywhere. I'm so glad!"

Spambo thumped his tail on the floor.

"Gareth! Don't knock your heels on the floor! You'll wear all the rubber off them, and spoil the rug!"

"Doggone it, aunt—"

"Why Gareth! What did you say? Don't let me hear that again!"

She settled herself on the couch, picked up the morning paper, and stared owlshly at it through oval glasses.

"I see they're still bothering over this disappeared professor. When will people know . . ."

Spambo clawed into the back of Gareth's chair, unnoticed, wings shimmering firelight, tail darting scherzando.

Gareth pulled a sheet of paper from his notebook, and fished his pen from his pocket.

"Dear Sir,—" he wrote, and stopped to dry the ink on his fingers—

Spambo grated sparks from his teeth, with a steel saw effect.

"Gareth! Don't scrape on the screen that way! You know better!"

" . . . I have received your letter of the . . ." He picked up the clawed letter " . . . and shall call on you at the earliest hour at my convenience. I believe you will be pleased with my devil . . ."

But his pen flew off.

Spambo, with a final presto swish of his tail, tangled his right claw in Gareth's wild mop and his left in Aunt Gwyneth's severe coil, and dangled them over the floor lamp. Then, with a green hissing rush, all three jarred dully through the carpet, a faint oily splash reverberating.

The fire shivered on the scattered pen and paper.

Mistress Gladiola Pours Tea

(from page 11)

"I feel a very grandmother beside little Dolly," she laughs.

Master Gregory has forgotten how to laugh. "Dolly is a child, Gladiola," he says, dully. "I sometimes wonder—so young a wife must have a weary time of it with a man broken as I."

Mistress Gladiola thinks of the young, unbroken gallants with whom Dolly Gregory so

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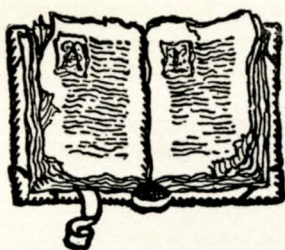
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innocently makes merry, and her heart sobs; bravely she tortures a smile out of her lips.

"Dolly loves you, Arnold," she says. "And if we are no longer young, are we not the wiser of life?"

"We!" Arnold Gregory breaks out, bitterly. "You are not old, Gladiola. Only I. Was it kind of you—to bring me to—this?"

"That is over, Arnold," says Mistress Gladiola, very quietly, as to a fretful child. "It is Dolly of whom you must think now."

Master Gregory plainly does not understand, and Gladiola hates to tell him.

"Dolly loves me, as you say," he answers slowly. "And though you may think me foolish, Gladiola, I love the child. I—I cannot do without her. I have grown very helpless in the last few years."

Mistress Gladiola has known all about this, but she is shocked to find that he also knows. Poor Master Gregory, who ten years ago was young and a lover, who now is only a dotard husband . . . Poor Mistress Dolly, fluttering in the clasp of this man who needs her so pitifully . . . Poor Captain Roger, in his young sureness taking the long road that leads so very far from home!

Because Mistress Gladiola is what she is, she does not get so far as "Poor Gladiola Starne!"

Presently Dolly and Roger return. Master Gregory greets them dully, with no trace of jealousy, only a senile hurt. Mistress Dolly is flattered and happy; Captain Roger is more deeply flushed than before. He bows to Mistress Gladiola, and takes his hat from the table.

"Forgive my haste, madam," he says, contritely. "Your hospitality has been most charming."

Mistress Gladiola puts out her finger-tips. "I trust I shall see you again before you sail for England, Captain Braithewaite."

"For England!" cries Mistress Dolly, piqued and dismayed.

"Indeed," Captain Roger assures his hostess, "That may be some little time."

"But really, Captain, with so fair a reason for haste, I should think you could scarcely wait," smiles Gladiola Starne. "Why, my dear lad, you are leaving the locket!"

"The locket!" says the Captain sharply, with an edge of warning to his voice. Mistress Dolly bends her fair head over the dish of sweets.

Mistress Starne cups her hands over the trinket in her lap, and showers it in a gold

flash upon the tablecloth. The heart-shaped locket is open.

"Oh!" cries Mistress Dolly, between spite and pleasure. "What a lovely girl! Who is she?"

Captain Roger looks like a boy about to be whipped, but he says nothing.

"She is Betsy Allison," Mistress Starne explains, "And she is also Captain Roger's most urgent reason for resigning his post and returning to England."

Silence. Mistress Dolly will not look at Captain Braithewaite. She puts an arm about her husband's neck and leans toward him most winningly.

Master Gregory cannot restrain a single swift barb.

"With so fair a lass waiting you in England, Captain Braithewaite, I wonder that you should be so long contented to dally with our honest provincial maids."

The hardness of Captain Roger's face breaks up in sudden agony; he is a little boy bursting into tears.

"A man may sometimes be a fool," he blurts out, "without going so far as to be a rogue. Your colonial girls are well enough, but Betsy—she is as much above them as—England is greater than America—"

Master Gregory cuts in harshly, for a moment the man who almost won the love of Gladiola Starne.

"Sir, I beg that you will be so kind as to desire some friend to wait on me, that we may settle this argument in a more becoming way—"

"Sir, I will give you that satisfaction," says Captain Roger, wildly.

Mistress Dolly flings her arms about her husband and storms like a little child.

"Captain Roger, you are horrible!" she pouts. "Arnold, never heed him. You cannot fight him—and there is naught to fight about!"

"My love," Master Gregory remonstrates, "He has insulted you—and the American colonies. I am not afraid to meet him—"

"Oh, what does it matter, dear? The American colonies can scarce be hurt by his foolishness—let him think his Betsy the loveliest thing on earth, if he likes . . . I wish he would go home to her and leave me—us—in peace. Come on home, Arnold! I can't permit you to take such risks."

Master Gregory is not really sorry to go. He rises with difficulty, bows slightly, and de-

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parts, his arm about Dolly's shoulders.

Captain Roger Braithewaite shrugs fiercely, and looks hard into Mistress Gladiola's eyes.

"I am going home!" he cries. "I am not what you must think me!"

"I think you!" Mistress Gladiola smiles, as she puts the locket softly into his hand. "I do not think, Roger. I only try to understand. I hope that you—and Mistress Betsy—will be very happy."

She watches him as he swings away down the strait-laced little path. Nan, coming up with her tray, stops as before to stare at his finery.

Mistress Gladiola looks straight before her for a moment, her long fingers smoothing the ruffles of her lavender and blue dress. Nan deposits the tray on the table.

"Lawk, ma'am, ain't he a fine gentleman?" says the child, shyly.

Her mistress does not reply. With sudden, astounding tenderness she gathers the little bond-girl into her arms. Then . . .

"More tea and cakes, Nan? That is right, child. Are those more guests coming in at the gate?" says Mistress Gladiola Starne lightly.

Conquest

(from page 16)

"Dr. Morley? Oh, you're Miss Cummings. The doctor isn't quite through; so you'll have to wait a few minutes."

Joan nodded coolly. She didn't like the way the girl said "the doctor," it sounded possessive. Somehow the presence of the girl made her lose confidence. A blinding thought struck her. What if he were married? He couldn't be . . . of course he wasn't. For a minute she wanted to run, anywhere; but there sat the red-headed girl. Of course not; one of the plans was sure to work.

In ten minutes Dr. Morley came out with an elderly patient. The nurse nodded toward Joan; he turned and smiled, appraising her professionally . . . "Miss Cummings? Just come into my office."

Perched in the chair it was easy to get acquainted. For fifteen minutes he examined her eyes, and chatted. Joan thrilled; he was all he looked and out of college just a year with a promising practice. She talked to him enthusiastically. It seemed such a short time before he helped her from the chair and picked up her coat. Joan's face fell. She hadn't had a single chance and he might not say she had

to come again. He was cool and professional.

"Miss Cummings, you have slight myopia but really nothing serious. You probably abuse your eyes, like everyone else, but you don't need glasses at all. If you wish I can give you one or two treatments. I think that will suffice."

The girl smiled. "Perhaps I should take a few; you know, my father is the one who is worried about my eyes. It would probably satisfy him more if I did have treatments. When do you want me to come?"

"To morrow at eleven. Is that all right?"

He went out with her into the waiting room, —just as he had the other patient, thought Joan. Looking back as she shut the door, she saw him leaning against the desk talking to his vivacious nurse.

* * * *

Dr. Morley was working and Joan was yawning, great wide purposeful yawns that had to be stifled with a small fist and hankie. She shut her mouth and laughed apologetically, "I'm so sleepy, but I did have a gorgeous time. I went to a dance at the Golf Club . . . more fun!" She wrinkled her nose mischievously. The doctor laughed.

"I haven't been to anything like that since I left college. Not that I've missed it exactly, but I always enjoyed them. Since I came here and started to practice I haven't had a chance to go. I've been busy . . . besides, I don't know many of the younger group."

Joan was too delighted to notice that last inference. Plan number three was working . . . she straightened in the chair and opened her eyes wide; "why Doctor Morley, I have a bid to a sport dance at Redwood Park Club next Saturday . . . maybe you'd like to go." She lowered her eyes. "Perhaps you wouldn't though, but I'd love to have you."

"I'd really like to, Miss Cummings, and you are sweet to ask me. He helped her from the chair. When you come tomorrow we'll talk about it. You won't need any treatments after that. I think I have a patient waiting. Goodbye."

As she went out, she smiled graciously at the detestable red-head . . . she felt she could afford to. It was gratifying to feel so charmingly superior.

* * * *

Joan was radiant, and in love. The dance was a success and she was having a perfect time. There was not quite the furor she had anticipated, but most of them looked properly impressed when she introduced him as "Doc-

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tor." The long ride in the nicked blue roadster had been a definite stepping stone to progress. They had chatted so intimately and he had been so understanding . . . not even the least bit amused. And it was such fun to be sweetly condescending to Clyde and Tommy.

She snuggled far down in the seat of the car and shivered . . . life was really heaps of joy if you knew how to go after it. As he got in she smiled up at him. "Were you terribly bored, Gene?"

"Of course not, Joan. I've enjoyed every minute of it. It has done me a world of good to get out and relax. I wasn't bored at all."

The girl sighed contentedly . . . she couldn't see the tiny amused wrinkles around his eyes, nor the tilt of his mouth corners. Before he started the engine, he took a tiny case out of his pocket and offered her a cigarette. A light caught a bit of gold and green on the cover and made her exclaim. "What an adorable cigarette case! May I see it?" She held it under the dashboard light and admired it. Black lacquer etched with gold and inlaid with bits of jade. "It's stunning! Where did you ever get it? I've never seen anything just like it."

He turned the little case over and over in his hand, watching the light glint in the gold and green. "It is a clever piece of work. My fiancée sent it to me from the orient. She is making an eight months' Asiatic tour. We are to be married as soon as she returns."

Joan slumped in the corner of the seat and smoked and smoked.

* * * *

In the barber's chair Joan sat stiffly and pouted at her own slim reflection. A dark oval little face sulked back, a pair of wide-set brown eyes questioned an identical pair. It was just two weeks since she'd been here; she looked across the lobby at the big glass door and sighed. Slowly she leaned forward ever so little; the young man at the desk behind the gold-lettered door was busily studying some papers. He looked very nice bending his head over the desk that way. Yes, he was really better looking than . . .

It suddenly occurred to Joan that she could make next month's payment ahead of time! She might even take out some more shares. She looked across the lobby again. Yes, it would really pay.

Best Sellers

(Compiled for EL PALENQUE through the courtesy of the Artemisa Bookshop, Stationers' Corporation, and University Book Store, San Diego, California. The report is for February.

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