

JANE: (Folding tabloid newspaper she has been reading to Maggie.) So he says, "All you can do with a story like that is live it down, Mary."

MAGGIE: I told you they'd begin all over. Once a thing like that is out between a married couple, they've got to fight it out. Depends which they get sick of first, each other or the argument.

JANE: It's enough to make you lose your faith in marriage.

MAGGIE: Whose faith in marriage?

JANE: You don't believe in marriage?

MAGGIE: Sure I do. For women. (Sighs.) But it's the sons of Adam they got to marry. Go on.

JANE: Well, finally he said to the madam, "I gave her up, didn't I? And I was a swine, about the way I did it." How do you suppose he did it, Maggie?

MAGGIE: Maybe he just said, "Scram, the wife in onto us."

JANE: Well, the madam didn't believe him. She says, "Stephen, you really ain't seen her?"

MAGGIE: He lied in his teeth—

JANE: Oh, the way he said it, I kind of believed him. But the madam says, "Oh, but can I ever trust you again?"

MAGGIE: You can't trust none of 'em no further than I can kick this lemon pie.

JANE: Oh, it was terrible sad. He said, "Mary, dear Mary, Mary, dear Mary, Mary—"

MAGGIE: Dear Mary. But it ain't exactly convincing.

JANE: Then, I guess he tried to kiss her. Because she says, "Please don't. I'll never be able to kiss you again without thinking of her in your arms."

MAGGIE: (Appreciatively.) Just like in the movies—Imagine him taking up with a girl like that.

JANE: He was telling the madam; She's a virgin.

MAGGIE: She *is*? Then what's all the rumpus about?

JANE: Oh, she ain't a virgin now. She was.

MAGGIE: So was Mae West—once.

JANE: He told the madam he'd been faithful for twelve years.

MAGGIE: Well, that's something these days; that beats Lindbergh's flight. Did the madam believe him?

JANE: She said, "How do I know you've been faithful?"

MAGGIE: She don't.

JANE: But the way he said it—

MAGGIE: Listen, if they lay off six months, they feel themselves busting out all over with haloes.

JANE: Anyway, he says this girl was a really nice girl. So sweet and interested in him and all. And how it happened one night, unexpected, in her room—

MAGGIE: Did he think it was going to happen in Roxy's?

JANE: He said she wouldn't take nothing from him for months—

MAGGIE: Only her education. Oh, that one knew her onions. She certainly played him for a sucker.

JANE: That's what the madam said. She said, "Stephen, can't you see that girl's only interested in you for your money?"

MAGGIE: Tch, tch, tch. I'll bet that made him sore. A man don't like to be told no woman but his wife is fool enough to love him. It drives 'em nutty.

JANE: Did it! "Mary, I told you what kind of girl she is," he says. You know—I just told you—

MAGGIE: I had her number. You didn't convey no information.

JANE: Well, then they both got sore.

MAGGIE: (Rises, goes out for coffee.) I knew it.

JANE: So he began to tell her all over what a good husband he'd been. And how hard he'd worked for her and the kids. And she kept interrupting with what a good wife she'd been and how proud she was of him. Then they began to exaggerate themselves—

MAGGIE: (Enters with coffeepot.) Listen, anybody that's ever been married knows that line backwards and forwards. What happened?

JANE: Well, somewhere in there the madam says, "Stephen, you do want a divorce. Only you ain't got the courage to ask it." And he says, "Oh, my God, no, I don't, Mary. Haven't I told you?" And she says, "But you don't love me!" And he says, "But, oh, my God, Mary, I'm awful *fond* of you." And she says, very icy, "Fond, fond? Is that all?" and he says, "No, Mary, there's the children." Maggie, that's the thing I don't understand. Why does she get so mad every time he says they've got to consider the children? If children ain't the point of being married, what is?

MAGGIE: A woman don't want to be told she's being kept on just to run a kindergarten. (Goes to icebox for bottle of cream.)

JANE: Well, the madam says, "Stephen, I want to keep the children out of this. I haven't used the children. I ain't asked you to sacrifice yourself for the children." Maggie, that's where he got so terrible mad. He says, "But why, in God's Mary? You knew about us all along. Why did you wait until now to make a fool of me?"

MAGGIE: As if he needed her help.

JANE: So she, suddenly she says, in a awful low voice, "Stephen, oh, Stephen, we can't go on like this. It ain't worthy of what we been to each other!" And he says, "On, no, it's not, Mary!"

MAGGIE: Quite an actress, ain't you?

JANE: My boyfriend says I got eyes like Joan Crawford.

MAGGIE: Did he ever say anything about your legs? Have a cup of coffee. (Pours coffee.)

JANE: That's when the madam says what could have knocked me down with a feather! The madam says, "Stephen, I want a divorce. Yes, Stephen, *I* want a divorce!"

MAGGIE: Tch. Tch. Abdicating!

JANE: Well, Maggie, you could have knocked him down with a feather.

MAGGIE: (Waving coffeepot.) I'd like to knock him down with this.

JANE: "My God! Mary," he says, "you don't mean it!" So she says, in a funny voice, "Yes, I do. You've killed my love for you, Stephen."

MAGGIE: He's just simple-minded enough to believe that.

JANE: So he says, "I don't blame you. My God, how can I blame you?"

MAGGIE: My God, he can't!

JANE: So then she said it was all over, because it was only the children he minded losing. She said that made their marriage a mockery.

MAGGIE: A mockery?

JANE: Something funny.

MAGGIE: I ain't going to die laughing.

JANE: He said she was talking nonsense. He said she was just upset on account of this story in the papers. He said what else could she expect if she was going to spill her troubles to a lot of gabby women? He said she should go to bed until she could think things over. He was going out for a breath of fresh air.

MAGGIE: The old hat trick.

JANE: So the madam says, "You're going to see that girl." And he says, "Oh, for God's sake, Mary, one minute you never want to see me again, the next I can't even go out for a airing!"

MAGGIE: You oughtn't to let none of 'em out except on a leash.

JANE: And she says, "Are you going to see her, or ain't you?" And he says, "Well, what difference does it make, if you're going to divorce me?" And she says, "It don't make no difference to you, I guess. Please go, Stephen. And don't come back *ever*." (Begins to cry.)

MAGGIE: (Impatiently.) Yes?

JANE: I didn'r hear his last words. Because naturally, when he said he was going, I scooted down the hall. But I heard her call, "Stephen?" and he stops on the landing and says, "Yes, Mary?" and she says, "Nothing. Just don't slam the front door—the servants will hear you!" So I came down here. Oh, Maggie, what's going to happen?

MAGGIE: She's going to get a divorce.

JANE: Oh, dear. I'm so sad for her.

MAGGIE: I ain't.

JANE: What?

MAGGIE: She's indulging a little pride she ain't entitled to. Marriage is a business of taking care of a man and rearing his children. It ain't meant to be no perpetual honeymoon. How long would any husband last if he was supposed to go on acting forever like a red-hot Clark Gable? What's the difference if he don't love her?

JANE: How can you say that, Maggie!

MAGGIE: That don't let her off her obligation to keep him from making a fool of himself, does it?

JANE: Do you think he'll marry that girl?

MAGGIE: When a man's got the habit of supporting some woman, he just don't feel natural unless he's doing it.

JANE: But he told the madam marrying her was the furthest thing from his mind.

MAGGIE: It don't matter what he's got in his mind. It's what those two women got in theirs will settle the matter.

JANE: But the madam says it's up to *him*. She said, "You love her, or you love me, Stephen."

MAGGIE: So what did he say to that?

JANE: Nothing for a long time. Just walked up and down—up and down—up and—

MAGGIE: He was thinking. Tch—tch. The first man who can think up a good explanation how he can be in love with his wife *and* another woman is going to win that prize they're always giving out in Sweden!