

THE STORY TO DATE

Zella Blunt is warned by her older second cousin, John Pomfret, against Capt. Broke Castledyne, who has been escorting Zella about London. Castledyne is married to a wealthy woman much older than himself, and Pomfret has heard something shady about his war record. John and Zella are due to inherit jointly the palatial mansion called Terricks, just outside London, after the death of Zella's maiden aunt, Lady Jane Blunt. Lady Jane's vast wealth, however, will be left to whom she likes. Lady Jane invites Castledyne to a house party at Terricks, but when she learns he is married she sends, on the advice of her old friend, Lord Alfred, an invitation to Mrs. Castledyne. She accepts, much to the chagrin of the captain and Zella. John Pomfret, who secretly adores Zella, is much disturbed over her flirtation. At the house party Mrs. Castledyne becomes ill. The captain has a prescription filled for her, and Zella takes the medicine up to Mrs. Castledyne's maid, Fulmer. Next morning Mrs. Castledyne is found dead in bed. Fulmer charges that her mistress was murdered and accuses Zella, who leaves Terricks to visit her friend, Lady Toria Leland, at Kent house. While there Maj. Waite of Scotland Yard, accompanied by John Pomfret, calls to question her.

INSTALLMENT IX.

"WELL, Miss Blunt," said Maj. Waite, "are you unwilling to answer that question?"

Zella came back with a start to the horrible present, and, feeling as if she were in a nightmare from which she might perchance awaken, she looked around the old school-room of her dear little friend, Toria Leland.

Who was this cruel Maj. Waite with his sneering voice, and why had he the right to torture her like this? Also why was John Pomfret here—and if here, why did he not protect her from these horrible questions?

"I don't exactly understand what it is you want me to tell you," she muttered.

"My question is quite clear. I ask you who, in your opinion, slit open, obviously with some sharp object which had been made hot, the blot of red staining which was fastened to the paper around the bottle of medicine you admit you conveyed to Mrs. Castledyne's maid?"

"I have no idea who did it," she said listlessly. "How could I have?"

And then she gave a kind of choking cry, for all at once there had come over her more than a suspicion, an absolute conviction and knowledge, as to who had done that thing.

Before her had suddenly risen the convulsed face of Broke Castledyne during the brief moment they had been alone in the smoking room, and she seemed to hear the tone in which he had exclaimed: "Darling—darling—O, God! what shall I do?"

And it was as if she lived again the flash of time during which the boy had been in the room and she had gone toward the door with the bottle of medicine in her hand. Castledyne had wished to stop her—she had sensed it at the time—but her one wish just then had been to escape from any repetition of that mad, imprudent manifestation of his passion.

"Zella!" cried John Pomfret. He started up from his chair. "What's the matter? Do you feel ill?"

"Mr. Pomfret, remember your promise!" exclaimed Maj. Waite in cool, incisive tones.

He longed to send the young man out of the room, but already, in one of the great criminal trials in which he had been concerned, he had been censured by a judge. He was determined that this time no action of his should spoil what he hoped was going to lead to the high promotion he considered long overdue.

"I beg your pardon! I feared my cousin felt ill."

To himself the Scotland Yard official smiled derisively. No doubt the girl did feel ill.

HE TURNED to her again. "It is to your own interest, Miss Blunt, to go on now, rather than postpone our interview."

Zella made a desperate effort over herself. "I am quite ready to go on now," she said firmly.

"Cast your mind back to the Sunday afternoon preceding Mrs. Castledyne's death. How did the bottle of medicine come into your possession?"

"As far as I can remember, Capt. Castledyne had brought it back from Kingston, and one of the servants said Mrs. Castledyne's maid was waiting for it. So, as I was going upstairs in any case, I said I would take it."

"And are you prepared to swear that you stopped nowhere on your way?"

"Most certainly I am prepared to swear that. It is the truth."

As Above, So Below

Look for your birthday or the group in which it appears throughout the following notes—it may be mentioned more than once. Mark it with a pencil wherever you see it, and then heed the counsel given.

By WYNN

GOOD intentions can't grow up to be big and strong unless they are properly taken care of; we make the mistake of thinking all we have to do is to start them out and they will be able to take care of themselves. This week is of the type where we assume without trying hard enough to prove. Avoid snap decisions in the first half of this week; file 'em away at least overnight. Socially and with the opposite sex the latter half of the week calls for whatever you have in the line of human understanding; use it.

Today and tomorrow: Plan ahead, using the past as a guide to buying and selling. Tuesday and Wednesday: Observe competitors, parents, and those related to your estate and affairs, dealing wisely with them. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday: Creative, inventive, artistic, affectionate days—be constructive. Next Sunday: Watch health.

War

Wise old-timers left word for us that the main idea of our presence on this sphere is to learn how to get along with one another. And, judging by our habits in courts of law, in the holy bonds of matrimony, and on the battlefields of history, we still

have at least a few minor things to learn before we can call ourselves successes in the art of living.

In astrology the seventh division of the circle is that of our relations with the other fellow, including law, marriage, and war—whether we are right or wrong, the seventh is the arc of the circle in which that relationship falls. As Manly Hall has wisely said, "We afflict the planets, not they us." We cannot justly blame the perfect pattern of nature when we do wrong; it is our fault for misusing, misdirecting the energies given to us.

Marriage is the biggest personal problem in life for most of us; it is our opportunity to demonstrate cooperation with our partners, our own selves, if we are properly mated. And, whether you are in or out of the wedding ring, friends of Feb. 21-March-April-May 29, Aug. 13-31, and Oct. 13-Nov. 5, now is the beginning of at least twelve months during which you would do very well to study and understand your relations with others, especially those of the opposite sex, in personal and legal matters.

Both husband and wife should contribute to the success of their joint venture; this is something to understand thoroughly before tying the knot. Keep out of domestic and all other wars.

Your Past

You are an artist, speaking in symbols if not concretely. Your life is the picture you are painting. And the canvas upon which you express yourself is time. The brush and paint you use are memory and experience. Without your past you could not do as much as you can now, for your ability is something you have at the beginning in potential only.

Our past is that part of us which we have recognized. It is reduced to habits of thought, feeling, and action, all of which make our characters more and more definite as we go on. To try to ignore our past would be a mistake, for even though we might not want to repeat everything we have done, it has been by our previous expressions that we have tested and proved our ideas and inclinations.

Memory is the guide of judgment and imagination, all three of these intellectual faculties being related astrologically to the air signs of the zodiac, forming a great trinity of mental power. Study them well if you would advance, especially during the coming year if you were born June 29-July 11, July 26-Aug. 17, Sept. 1-25, Dec. 18-Jan. 4, or Feb. 15-26. Take note, J. Pierpont Morgan, John Colville, Gen. John J. Pershing, Jesse L. Lasky, T. R. Roosevelt Jr., and Nick Altrock.

telling all the truth, even concerning this trifling matter of the box of cigars. As for the skein of wool, he was convinced she had just invented it to prove a reason for her having gone upstairs.

"When you went into the smoking room to fetch those cigars you did not find Capt. Castledyne alone—or was he alone?"

"I can't remember."

And once more he felt certain she was lying.

And then John Pomfret made his final intervention. "I was in the smoking room when Miss Blunt came into it."

Zella threw her cousin a quick look. Had he really been in the smoking room when she had rushed in there? She would have sworn he had not—and yet he might have been there and walked out just when she came in.

She now felt too oppressed and bewildered to remember exactly what had happened then, apart from that agonized exclamation of Broke Castledyne and the hungry, fevered embrace which had appeared to her so madly dangerous.

Maj. Waite got up, and for the first time he spoke in a courteous tone. "I hope you will agree that I have not put to you what, under the circumstances, might be regarded as an improper question."

He waited a moment. "By the way, there is one last question I should like to ask you—"

Zella stood up. Both men could see now she was trembling all over with agitation and—was it fear? "Yes," she said, "ask me anything more you like."

"It is true, is it not, that you are

"I see; and now I have to put but one last question to you, Miss Blunt. Did you notice as you went upstairs that the wrapping paper was, so to speak, loose?"

Zella exclaimed in a defiant tone, "I noticed nothing!"

And that was the only untrue answer she had made up to now to her inquisitor, for as he asked that question with a terrible clearness she had recalled the slight sensation of surprise which had come over her when she had seen that the paper in which the bottle had been wrapped had been unfastened and then more or less clumsily put together again.

She added in a breathless tone: "I'm afraid you won't believe me, but I assure you that the whole thing did not take three minutes. My aunt, Lady Jane Blunt, sent me in doors from the garden, where we were all sitting, to fetch a box of cigars, also a skein of wool from her bedroom, and I was in a hurry to go out again."

Maj. Waite was watching his victim very narrowly. He felt certain within himself that she was not

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"I was in the smoking room, too," he observed. "And my cousin is right. The bottle of medicine stood on a table, I noticed it because it looked so odd there. I was not aware at the time that Mrs. Castledyne was ill."

And this interruption was allowed to pass without comment.

"Am I to understand that Capt. Castledyne had only just returned from Kingston?"

"As far as I know, he had only come into the house a few moments before."

And then came a question which Pomfret had hoped would not be asked.

"Did the manservant give the message from the maid in the hall or in some other room?"

Maj. Waite looked fixedly at the girl. She had now moved her chair a few inches, apparently to see him more clearly, and he on his side saw her face in the light for the first time and noticed how white she had become.

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