



CHAINED

ADAPTED FROM THE METRO-GOLDWYN MAYER PICTURE BY BEATRICE FABER



WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Diane Lovering had been sent on a trip to Buenos Aires by her lover, Richard Field, forty-eight and wealthy, so that she might forget the scene that had occurred when his wife had found out about their love-affair. Striking up an adventuresome shipboard acquaintance with Mike Bradley, a rancher in Buenos Aires, her friendship with him had rapidly ripened into love. Arriving home, intending to tell Richard of her coming marriage to Mike, he confronts her with news of his divorce, and the whole world knows he has given up his wife and children for Diane. She cannot let him down! Without mentioning Mike, she and Richard are married. Mike receives a letter saying "that luxury is more important than love." Now, a year later, she spies him unexpectedly in a sporting goods store. She is about to steal away, unseen by him.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER IX.

A TRYST

"LET'S SEE your over-and-unders," Mike had told the clerk. It was as he raised the shotgun he held and sighted along it again that Diane came into his line of vision. For a split second he was still, then he lifted his head as if to clear it.

"No sale. Maybe tomorrow," he said to the clerk. "Come on, then." He took Diane's arm. They walked up Fifth Avenue in silence for a while. Every now and then Diane stole a look at him. Once he caught her and the veiled plea in her eyes. She looked quickly away.

"Has—has Johnny been well—and happy?" she finally asked, not meaning Johnny at all.

"Sure."

"You look—pretty well."

"I can't complain."

"I—I'm so glad, Mike."

"So am I."

Silence again, as she trudged along beside him.

"Where are you heading?" Mike asked abruptly.

"Why—I'm supposed to be at the Colony for luncheon—"

"Oh." At the corner Mike indicated the sign on the lamp post.

"This is my station. Going West."

As he raised his hat Diane touched his sleeve impulsively.

"Mike—how long will you be in town?"

"Oh, three—four days, maybe. Well, Diane, keep up the good



"Hello, Mike," she said in a small voice.

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Mike summoned a brittle gayety. Well, hello! Fancy meeting you in your own home town." He extended his hand. "How are you, Diane? This is a surprise."

"Y—yes. How long have you been up here?"

"I don't know — two — three weeks."

"Is—is Johnny with you?"

Mike laughed. "Nope. He said he hadn't yet recovered from New York since the last time."

"Oh." Her silence asked, "Have you recovered, Mike?"

Aloud she said, "Where—where are you stopping?"

"St. Regis." Mike broke the shotgun a few times as Diane searched his face yearningly.

"I've—I've the car outside. Can I drop you anywhere?"

"Mmm." He was pleasant enough. "No, thanks—I'll walk."

"All right." Making her decision quickly, she turned and was out the door, while Mike looked after her grimly.

Continuing on down to the car, Diane hurriedly reached into the floor of the tonneau for her galoshes and pulled them on.

Waving aside the doorman's offer of assistance with an excited laugh, she re-entered the store, and in another minute was standing beside Mike.

"Have—have you decided on a gun?" she asked with a curiously calm, poised brazenness about her.

Mike stared at her galoshes. "What's the idea?"

"I'd—I'd like to walk, too."

Oh, so that's it, Mike thought. Wants to have her cake and eat it too, perhaps. Hm—why not oblige the lady? After all—

luck and I'll tell Johnny I saw you and—"

"Can't—couldn't we go some place and talk?"

Mike shot a glance at her.

"Sure," he replied easily, "providing you can break that date and lunch with me."

She nodded eagerly. "That's all right, Mike."

"And—" there was a slight insinuating note in Mike's voice, "providing you let me pick the place."

"Anywhere you say, Mike."

Mike smiled ironically. "I guess that's fair enough, isn't it?"

"—I do want to talk to you."

"Sure."

Entering the brownstone house that had once been a luxurious "speak," Mike was greeted with a vociferous welcome by Felix, the proprietor. With a knowing air he acceded to Mike's request for "a place where we can hear ourselves think" and escorted them up the stairs to a private room.

Lunch ordered, cocktails were served. "Well, what'll we drink to?" Mike asked.

"Let's see—Johnny."

"He's a scoundrel. Not worth it."

"Well, then who is?"

Mike's lip curled. "Is anybody?"

A cloud passed over Diane's face. But she couldn't relent now. She had wanted Mike to despise her. "Of course, I know. Chili Beans!"

"All right. To Chili Beans!" Mike echoed her with a hard chuckle. "You know—I sold him," he added, over-casually.

Diane's lips trembled. Mike had made himself only too clear. She had loved Chili Beans and Mike had known it—knew it now.

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"Is—this where you—I mean—you come here often when you're in New York?"

"First time this trip." He went on blithely. "Yes. Pleasant place for the out-of-towners and for some of the citizens, from what I gather. There's more of it, upstairs."

"Mike—" Diane pleaded.

There was a suggestion of a sneer on his face. Then lunch was set before them. The food barely tasted, the waiter cleared it away shortly afterwards, then addressed Diane: "Benedictine, Miss?"

"No, thank you."

"No?" Mike asked.

"No, Mike."

"Anything else, sir?"

"Nothing else."

The waiter bowed and discreetly withdrew, carefully adjusting the latch so that it would lock. As it clicked Diane looked up to meet Mike's quizzical gaze.

"Well, Mrs. Field," he said, evenly.

Her eyes were downcast and she plucked at the tablecloth nervously. "That's the first time you've called me that."

Mike, sorry he had rubbed it in, replied gruffly, "Okey. It's the last." He addressed her more pleasantly. "But while we're on it, how's it working out?"

"Why—splendidly."

"For you and for him both, hm?"

"Of—of course."

"That's fine. How's his health?"

he shot at her with edged sarcasm.

"Why he's—" A slow flush crept up her face as she grasped the import of his question. Her mouth turned down in a pathetic, tragic droop. "Do I—really deserve that much, Mike?" she asked with a sharp intake of her breath.

Mike decided not to spoil the tryst. "Sorry. If you felt that below the belt, I didn't mean it. Skip it."

"It's—it's skipped," Diane asserted bravely, tears behind her desperate gayety.

"But I see you're still the same healthy girl, aren't you?"

Deliberately she misunderstood him. "Not a doctor's bill," she laughed, "not a dentist appointment—not even—"

Mike caught her hand. His soft laughter held nothing but naked desire. "Not even the sun, hm?"

Diane caught her breath. "What, Mike?"

"The sun. Don't you remember? We went a little balmy under it once and were going to

settle down there for life or something."

"Mike!" Diane rose, her mouth twisted agonizedly.

Mike rose with her and drew her nearer, still holding her wrist. "Well—that's out, and I don't blame you. But we'd blame ourselves if we didn't take an hour or two of it, now that they've stopped the clock for us."

His eyes burned into hers, and as Diane felt the menacing insidious danger of his hands on her shoulders, she tore herself away and pushed past him to her coat. Feverishly she was trying to adjust it when he swung her around.

"What's the matter? Do you like to run away — and be caught?" he demanded with a quiet chuckle.

Diane looked away. "Really, Mike—I've got to go—" Her voice rose hysterically. "I don't know why I came. I—I don't know why I spoke to you. You—you've changed so—"

Ignoring her words for the minute, Mike slowly and forcibly stripped off her coat, then pulled her to him roughly.

"Because you remembered something you missed," he said in a hard voice, "that's why."

(Continued on Page 25, Col. 5)