

AGREEMENT, BUT RECEIVING NO SIGHT OR SOUND OF IT HE CONTINUED. "PERHAPS THE MAN LOVES YOU—THAT'S POSSIBLE. HE'S LOVED MANY WOMEN AND HE'LL LOVE MANY MORE. LESS THAN A MONTH AGO, ONE MONTH, ARDITA, HE WAS INVOLVED IN A NOTORIOUS AFFAIR WITH THAT RED-HAIRED WOMAN, MIMI MERRIL; PROMISED TO GIVE HER THE DIAMOND BRACELET THAT THE CZAR OF RUSSIA GAVE HIS MOTHER. YOU KNOW—YOU READ THE PAPERS."

"THRILLING SCANDALS BY AN ANXIOUS UNCLE," YAWNED ARDITA. "HAVE IT FILMED. WICKED CLUBMAN MAKING EYES AT VIRTUOUS FLAPPER. VIRTUOUS FLAPPER CONCLUSIVELY VAMPED BY HIS LURID PAST. PLANS TO MEET HIM AT PALM BEACH.

FOILED BY ANXIOUS UNCLE."

"WILL YOU TELL ME WHY THE DEVIL YOU WANT TO MARRY HIM?"

"I'M SURE I COULDN'T SAY," SAID AUDITS SHORTLY. "MAYBE BECAUSE HE'S THE ONLY MAN I KNOW, GOOD OR BAD, WHO HAS AN IMAGINATION AND THE COURAGE OF HIS CONVICTIONS. MAYBE IT'S TO GET AWAY FROM THE YOUNG FOOLS THAT SPEND THEIR VACUOUS HOURS PURSUING ME AROUND THE COUNTRY. BUT AS FOR THE FAMOUS RUSSIAN BRACELET, YOU CAN SET YOUR MIND AT REST ON THAT SCORE. HE'S GOING TO GIVE IT TO ME AT PALM BEACH—IF YOU'LL SHOW A LITTLE INTELLIGENCE."

"HOW ABOUT THE—RED-HAIRED WOMAN?"

"HE HASN'T SEEN HER FOR SIX

MONTHS," SHE SAID ANGRILY. "DON'T YOU SUPPOSE I HAVE ENOUGH PRIDE TO SEE TO THAT? DON'T YOU KNOW BY THIS TIME THAT I CAN DO ANY DARN THING WITH ANY DARN MAN I WANT TO?"

SHE PUT HER CHIN IN THE AIR LIKE THE STATUE OF FRANCE AROUSED, AND THEN SPOILED THE POSE SOMEWHAT BY RAISING THE LEMON FOR ACTION.

"IS IT THE RUSSIAN BRACELET THAT FASCINATES YOU?"

"NO, I'M MERELY TRYING TO GIVE YOU THE SORT OF ARGUMENT THAT WOULD APPEAL TO YOUR INTELLIGENCE. AND I WISH YOU'D GO 'WAY," SHE SAID, HER TEMPER RISING AGAIN. "YOU KNOW I NEVER CHANGE MY MIND. YOU'VE BEEN BORING ME FOR THREE DAYS UNTIL

I'M ABOUT TO GO CRAZY. I WON'T GO ASHORE! WON'T! DO YOU HEAR? WON'T!"

"VERY WELL," HE SAID, "AND YOU WON'T GO TO PALM BEACH EITHER. OF ALL THE SELFISH, SPOILED, UNCONTROLLED DISAGREEABLE, IMPOSSIBLE GIRL I HAVE——"

SPLUSH! THE HALF-LEMON CAUGHT HIM IN THE NECK. SIMULTANEOUSLY CAME A HAIL FROM OVER THE SIDE.

"THE LAUNCH IS READY, MR. FARNAM."

TOO FULL OF WORDS AND RAGE TO SPEAK, MR. FARNAM CAST ONE UTTERLY CONDEMNING GLANCE AT HIS NIECE AND, TURNING, RAN SWIFTLY DOWN THE LADDER.

FIVE O'CLOCK ROBED DOWN
FROM THE SUN AND PLUMPED
SOUNDLESSLY INTO THE SEA. THE
GOLDEN COLLAR WIDENED INTO A
GLITTERING ISLAND; AND A FAINT
BREEZE THAT HAD BEEN PLAYING
WITH THE EDGES OF THE AWNING
AND SWAYING ONE OF THE
DANGLING BLUE SLIPPERS BECAME
SUDDENLY FREIGHTED WITH SONG.
IT WAS A CHORUS OF MEN IN CLOSE
HARMONY AND IN PERFECT RHYTHM
TO AN ACCOMPANYING SOUND OF
OARS DEALING THE BLUE WRITERS.
ARDITA LIFTED HER HEAD AND
LISTENED.

"CARROTS AND PEAS,
BEANS ON THEIR KNEES,
PIGS IN THE SEAS,
LUCKY FELLOWS!
BLOW US A BREEZE,