



She found herself marooned with the man who thought she was on the road to hell

Introducing the heroine

WOULD too much money spoil YOU? Well, it seemed to be having a bad effect on Margaret Verity. She had been a nice LITTLE girl—but now, at 19, she was a "modern" of the worst type, dancing, smoking, flirting and drinking. (This is England, where anybody can get it.)

Long ago it was the young lady who hoped to reform the dashing, daring, wild but likable youth. But Archie Mount, apparently, didn't need reforming. And Margaret did.

There's a delightful desert island episode in this new daily serial—quite different from the conventional desert island story. You'll like it. An entertaining installment every day.



A portrait, painted, roughly, with oil washes, showing the author as she looked during the early days of the Margaret Verity book before the alterations.

INSTALLMENT I

MARGARET Verity sixteen was what is called, as a term of reproach, a modern girl.

At times, one fancies that even now, girls are merely what they always were and always will be. Namely, girls.

At other times one is brought up standing by an example such as my friend Mrs. Verity's Margaret. She might have posed for the symbolic figure of deprecated modern girlhood.

Brusque, blasphemous, and neurotic! She was all that, and more.

Not an idea in her head but of the hectic chase after amusement from morn till night—or rather from afternoons until morning. An annexer of men, to whom she brought no gift of young love, but simply expectation and disturbance! A preening, puffed, rouging, cocktail absorbing cigarette-smoking, all-night, dancing, möhre snubbing modern of the most ungirlish type that was Margaret Verity just before the adventure.

I am going to tell you all I know about that adventure and of what it meant to her, but I must go back first to Margaret's beginnings.

There was nothing the matter with those. The girl's roots were set in simple, wholesome soil. Her "inheritances," as north country people call them, were sound enough.

Her mother, my friend Mrs. Verity, was a dear. Not clever; she never pretended to be that. Not a firm character; she certainly never pretended to be that.

But she was sweet as the simple flowers with which she filled the garden of her Sussex cottage. Pretty, too. The ingenuous face that artists used to call "the English Rose type." A good wilker, a good tennis player—for nineteenth century standards—a good manager of a tiny income, a good housewife and gardener. Deadly dull it sounds. Believe me, she was not dull; she was saved from that by a gift which a great many more intelligent people of stronger character just simply have not got. The genius for loving her husband.

She asked no more from heaven than some one to whom to devote her life. Heaven sent Jack Verity.

Most attractive he must have been, though I've only seen his portraits. They are extraordinarily like his little daughter,

Margaret inherited his short, determined profile, his carriage of the head buoyantly set on a proud neck, his eyes—large, wide apart, and cloudy gray trimmed with a great deal of brown fringe. Men voted him a thoroughly good fellow; women not only loved but liked him. He was a sailor—or of all men the most idealized of women.

Jack Verity went down with his ship in the late autumn of 1914. After which you can imagine that there was only one thing that kept her caring to live—this girl.

In that white-walled cottage in Sussex by the sea, there, on the bleak lap of the Downs, little Margaret Verity spent the next few years of a hardy life.

The child was brought up to go out every day in any weather. There were long tramps in the rain (and this was the girl who later never put her little French-heeled foot on the earth except when she stepped from the Rolls). A bedroom without a fireplace and with windows flung open winter and summer (this was hiero who afterwards grumbled if the least thing went wrong with the steam heat). One makeshift serge frock, home-knit jerseys, a couple of prints, a mackintosh, thick boots, and a tam o' shanter—not much more in the way of her wardrobe (she who afterwards never wore the same dance frock three times running, and who could not, have counted the number of her other garments). She learned to wash up; to lay the table; to do any odd jobs to lighten the work of their single servant (she who was presently the waiter's terror and the nightmare of the chambermaids). Every morning, of, her life, she splashed in her icy cold tub (yes, this same Margaret who at nineteen must wallow for hours up to her chin in heavily perfumed water so hot that she emerged at last par boiled, shivering, dizzy, big sick). No luxuries did she know then; no parties, no chocolates, no silk underclothes, no fragile, expensive shoes; none, even, of the comforts to which a child of her age is at this era accustomed. All this, not because my friend Mrs. Verity was any Spartan by nature, but merely because the mother and child were at that time what people call miserably poor.



She used to help her mother with the housework and the management of the chambermaids.



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