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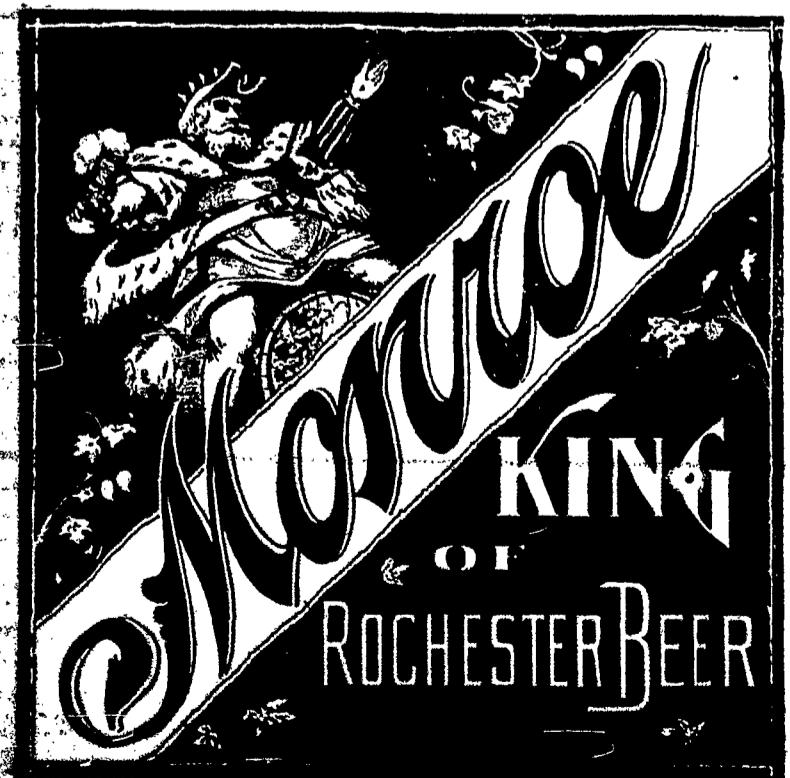
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## Saved From a Madhouse

How a Girl Discovered a Plot and Detained It.

By DAISY WINSLOW

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How I saved Herbert and brought him out with a strong brain and in every way physically sound is so strange a case that it should be placed in writing before I forget any of the details. I do not mean that I did the thinking and the planning that saved him, but that had it not been for me no thinking or planning would ever have been done and Herbert would have died under the strain or lived a lifetime in a madhouse.

Herbert and I were first playmates, then schoolmates, then the status between us was that of a strong friendship between a very young man and a very young woman. His mother, a rich widow from the first disapproved of our intimacy for her son would inherit her vast estate, while I had nothing. But neither Herbert nor I at that time thought of marriage. When he was eighteen his mother died, leaving him all her property to be paid to him when he became of age. His brother, Edgar Holt, was appointed executor of the estate and Herbert's guardian. There were other features of the will which had we known earlier would have saved Herbert a deal of suffering. Not knowing them, we were working in the dark.

Mr. Holt, an old bachelor on the death of his sister went to live with his ward, taking personal care of him. I could not see any necessity for this, for Herbert was at an age when he should have been at college. Yet this uncle kept him at home, doing nothing. I asked Herbert why he assented to this, and he said it was better for him not to antagonize his uncle till after he had attained his majority.

Some time after Mrs. Torrey's death Herbert sent me a note asking me to come and see him. He gave no reason for the request; but thinking he might be ill, I went at once. I was taken by the house-keeper to a suit of rooms he occupied and found him lying on a lounge, the picture of despondency. "Why, Herbert," I exclaimed, "what is the matter?"

"I don't know," he said mournfully. "Never had I seen such a change in any one in so short a space of time. I had been with him a week before, and he was then perfectly well. Now he seemed to have gone far on the way to become a nervous wreck."

"What a singularly decorated room!" I said to him after he had told me about himself. The wall paper was purple, and the shades and curtains to the windows were red. There was something in the colors or combination of colors that made me feel a strange nervousness.

"Uncle Edgar had my rooms redecorated while I was away recently. How do you like the paper?"

"I don't like it at all," I replied. "I encouraged Herbert as well as I could and when I left promised to return soon. I went straight to our own family physician, Dr. Millard, and told him all about Herbert's case. Incidentally I mentioned the decoration of his rooms."

"Get him out of that at once," said the doctor.

"Why so?"

"Because if he lives surrounded with those colors and none other for a month he'll be a maniac."

I sent a note to Herbert the same evening telling him that the doctor had recommended other rooms for him, and the next afternoon I went to see him. I found him where I had left him the day before. I asked him why he had not moved, and he said his uncle had declared Dr. Millard's statement to be nonsense. I begged Herbert to do as I asked him, but he did not seem to have the power to resist his uncle.

I was very much distressed when I left him, not knowing what to do. On the stairs I met Mr. Holt. He stopped me and said:

"My nephew is under my guardianship till he comes of age. You will oblige me by not coming here again to make him dissatisfied with arrangements I have made for him. His mother warned me against your designs to get him and his property."

In a rage I went out of the house vowing never to enter it again. But I had not been gone ten minutes before a suspicion came into my head that the man was trying to kill Herbert by keeping him under the influence of those colors. Going to Dr. Millard, I told him of what had happened. "Go to the inheritance court," he said, "and ask them to show you Mrs. Torrey's will. Then we will know what to do next."

I did as he advised, was shown the will and discovered that in the event of Herbert's death his estate would all go to Edgar Holt.

The discovery filled me with horror. But now since I knew that the executor had a motive for getting his nephew out of his way I hoped that I might defeat his purpose. I saw his plan. There was no necessity for him to murder Herbert with the risk of discovery. His object was to make a hopeless lunatic of him, which would give the executor continued control of the estate till his ward's death, when he would inherit it. I returned to Dr. Millard, who, after I had told him of my discovery, sat thinking for a time before he spoke.

"It's a very plain case to us," he

said at last, "but a very difficult one to handle. I have never heard of read of so wily a plan to rob a heir of an estate. While the damage is being done there is no way to get the boy out of his uncle's hands. After it is done there is no way of convincing a jury of the perpetrator's guilt."

I was in agony at hearing the doctor say this and begged him to try to think of some way of preventing poor Herbert from being used as a maniac.

"I'll try," he said, "but can't you see any method likely to succeed? Heirs have been kept in lunatic asylums before this who have been in perfect mental condition. That's an old story. Here is a case where a man is to be made really mad without any one being able to get him out of his persecutor's clutches. The law is slow, and it will require but a month to drive the subject hopelessly insane. Besides, I understand that nearly one-half of that time has been spent."

"Great heavens!" I exclaimed. "We have only a fortnight!"

"Less than that. In a fortnight the case will be hopeless. Even now we can get no help from the patient himself. He is too far gone. I see but one chance, and that is to kidnap him." I left the doctor, plan after plan running through my brain whereby to carry out his suggestion. I thought many hours before I decided what to do. When I made up my mind it seemed to me that my method was very simple, though this was no reason why it should succeed. I resolved not to take any one into my confidence to help me, fearing to complicate matters, and believed that I could do all myself.

My plan was to put on a bold front, call for Herbert with an automobile, ask him to go for a ride, take him away and conceal him. All depended upon his being permitted to come with me. Had it not been for certain happenings he would not have been so permitted, these being first that his uncle had gone to his office, and the house-keeper who had charge of Herbert in his absence had left it for ten minutes to buy a spool of thread. It is singular that Herbert's manly should have depended on a spool of cotton, but it did. I drove up to the house two minutes after the house-keeper had left it and was driven away with Herbert just as she approached the house on her return. I can see her look of consternation now. But before she could do anything we were spinning away from her.

I said nothing to Herbert as to my intention till we had been out two hours. I supposed Mrs. Rigle would telephone Mr. Holt as to what had occurred, but he had no reason to suppose that I was doing more with his nephew than giving him a ride, and he would probably wait a reasonable time for my return. Nevertheless I followed a torturous course to throw him off the track if he followed me. The change in Herbert after his removal from the noxious colors and partaking of plenty of fresh air was marvelous. He was not by any means himself, but he was near enough himself for me to tell him what his uncle was trying to do and that I was kidnapping him in order to save him from hopeless lunacy.

There was some response—more than I could have expected in so short a time—and after a while he began to realize, urging me to go faster and faster still, in order not to oppose him, I had on full speed, though I knew of no pursuit.

We had started on our ride at 10 o'clock. At 1 we stopped at a road-house for luncheon and by 2 were again under way. By this time Herbert was so far restored that I left our future course to him.

"Have you arranged for any place to take me?" he asked.

"No."

"Very well; we will go to B. I know a place there kept by one I can depend upon not to betray me, a quiet place in which to hide, though now that I am myself and my own master all will be different."

Nevertheless he seemed to dread getting back under the horrible spell that had enthralled him. To draw his mind away from it I told him that I did not fear pursuit, for his uncle would not know on what road to follow.

"That's not the situation at all," he replied. "He can telephone to different places along the road, describing us, and order us held till he can get on with papers for our arrest."

This appalled me.

"As my guardian," Herbert went on hurriedly, "he has a legal right to my care—that is, if he can prove me ill or of unsound mind. You must assume the position of my legal custodian."

"Certainly. But how?"

"We must be married as soon as we can find any one to tie the knot."

"Oh, Herbert!"

"It's the only way to save me."

"But I have never thought of you in that way."

"No, matter. Either I must go back to my uncle to be driven mad by him or made away with by some other means or my legal guardianship must be transferred. There's a church."

With a fluttering heart I stowed up at a small house, evidently the parsonage. We went inside, and ten minutes from the time Herbert proposed to me I was his wife.

"Now," he exclaimed, with a sigh of relief, "the law is all on our side."

"Herbert," I said as we were merely spinning along after the ceremony, "I never thought to take a wedding trip in an automobile."

"Nor I."

"Herbert," I said again after considerable time, "I'm glad we're married—'Are you?' Why?"

"That old villain said I was trying to get you. He'll think that's the reason I courted him."

"That's a very plain case to us," he

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