

Uncle Peter

By EDITH M. DOANE

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Thomas Coleman, cold, reserved, ambitious, sat at the head of the heavy library table. Beside him his pretty, fashionable wife drummed softly with her finger tips on the polished mahogany and watched her husband sideways out of her dark, inscrutable eyes.

The other Coleman, Elizabeth, stood by the window, a letter with a queer South American postmark in her hand.

"Poor, lonely old man," she said softly. "Listen, Tom. I'm kind of hungry for the sight of a face that belongs to me! and this is just what I want to get acquainted with my own folks—isn't that pathetic?"

"I ain't beholden," she went on, scanning the letter swiftly. "I don't ask no favors, but I'd kind of like to feel that them that is to have the little something I leave will have a kindly fellow for the old man who scraped it all together, when he's gone."

She looked up with swift comprehension at the tense attitude of the other two. "You do not suppose that 'little something' can be a fortune, do you?" she said half nervously.

"It might be as well," Thomas Coleman suggested, "to acquire more definite information concerning it before we ab-committing ourselves." Thomas Coleman was a man whom his friends called "level headed."

"May be nothing in it," he added.

"But if there should be?" suggested his wife, still drumming softly on the polished wood. Only his wife knew how fearfully Thomas Coleman had been hampered in money matters lately.

"Whether there is or not, he has a claim upon us," put in Elizabeth, hotly. "He's a poor, lonely old man—our father's brother."

Thomas Coleman raised a remonstrating hand. "Be reasonable, Elizabeth. We do not know him. It is not to be supposed that we can offer him



"I have come to take you home with me," he repeated, "I warn't thinkin' of the money, an'—" he patted her hand lovingly. "I warn't thinkin' of the money, an'—" he patted her hand lovingly. "I warn't thinkin' of the money, an'—" he patted her hand lovingly.

Elizabeth was a standing grievance with her sister-in-law—Elizabeth, who was supremely indifferent to the value of money—Elizabeth, tall and straight and splendid, who preferred a self supporting life in a tiny flat to the domestic life in her brother's beautiful home, and who proposed to "throw herself away" on a fellow whose only lack was that of money.

She confronted them now indignantly. "It is a shame!" she flashed, looking like an enraged princess, with her flaming cheeks and heavy, red gold hair. "A lonely old man begs for affection. He freely offers us all he has. Be it much or little, it is all. In return you weigh and appraise and calculate. Oh!" she broke off, "I am ashamed of you. Let me see him honestly welcome, whatever he brings."

And in that first day, while the others held aloof, it was Elizabeth who, in warm-hearted, impulsive fashion welcomed the little old man earnestly in a shaggy greatcoat, who regarded his "own folks" with shrewd blue eyes which looked out rather wistfully from under the shaggy brows.

On the second day Uncle Peter approached Thomas Coleman.

"Some mornin' when it's convenient I'd like to go downtown with you. I want to find Willie Moore's office," he added apologetically.

Thomas Coleman looked up quickly. "William T. Moore, the lawyer?"

The old man nodded. "Willie Moore's father and me was boys together, and I always had considerable confidence in Willie. I've got a few papers I'd kinder like him to keep," he added.

"The few papers turned out to be \$5,000,000 worth of shares in the El Juaré gold mines."

Uncle Peter's welcome was assured. For six months he was the recipient of every attention which the solicitude of his beloved and happily surprised nephew and his wife could devise;

then, one day, like a bolt from a clear sky, the news came.

The El Juaré mines were flooded! The rumor started in the Mining Exchange when stock that had been \$150 was quoted at \$25 a share; then the reporters got it, and the journals flaunted great headlines of "Panics in Wall Street!" "El Juaré Mines Flooded!"

Later the report was confirmed, and by 3 o'clock the shares of the El Juaré mines were not worth the paper on which they were written.

The old man to whom the mines had been a lifelong companion stared desperately at the flaunting headlines, then, covering his face with his rough worn hand, gave way to his grief with the abandon of a child.

"Them mines was jest like my own child," he sobbed. "I knowed they weren't actin' up jest right when I left 'em, but I never suspicioned they'd fetch up where they hev', and again there flowed unrestrainedly down the front page of the paper.

Disappointed, lithered, almost maddened by the loss of sorely needed wealth just within his grasp, Thomas Coleman broke the silence.

"Don't worry," he said kindly. "You are not too old yet to find some suitable employment."

Uncle Peter looked up in astonishment, as if the meaning of the cruel words dinned upon him as he faced west suddenly and pitifully white.

"I kinder thought if I was ever in trouble I could depend on my own folks," the old voice quavered pitifully as the curtain fell on Elizabeth entered the room. Sweeping past the others, she took the old man's hands in her young ones.

"I have a plan to take you home with me," she said simply.

"But the mines," he said unsteadily. "Never mind. There isn't much room in my little flat, but there's a loving room, and soon we shall happily—" there will be a little house in the suburbs."

"But how about that young fellow you're goin' to marry?" questioned the old man demurely.

"He told me to come for you," answered Elizabeth, with proud, happy eyes.

The old man rose and, still holding Elizabeth's hand, faced Thomas Coleman and his wife.

"You said I wasn't too old to find suitable employment," he said, "and I'll find it. I've got to go to try that house out in the suburbs, and it won't be no little one, either. An' I'm goin' to set the young fellow up in whatever business he wants to be set up in, an' when I'm goin' to give Elizabeth a million dollars in government bonds for her wedding gift. I ain't through with the other million yet, but when I can see her children gits it. My money wan't in them mines. I told Willie Moore how they were actin' up, an' he took it out fer me three months ago. I ain't denyin' I felt bad about 'em, but 'twarn't the money I was thinkin' of."

"No," he repeated, "I warn't thinkin' of the money, an'—" he patted her hand lovingly. "I warn't thinkin' of the money, an'—" he patted her hand lovingly.

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Notice is hereby given to all persons interested that the Board of Trustees of the Village of Barrington, having ordered that a connected system of water mains and supply pipes with the necessary hydrants and appliances be constructed in Main Street, from Cemetery Street west to the west limits of said Village Corporation, in the Village of Barrington, counties of Cook and Lake, State of Illinois, the ordinance for the same being on file in the office of the Village Clerk of said Village, and the said village having applied to the County Court of Lake County, State of Illinois, for an assessment of the cost of said improvement, according to the benefits and an assessment therefor having been made and returned to said Court (Docket No. 4), the final hearing thereon will be held on the 1st day of October, A. D. 1906, or as soon thereafter as the business of the Court will permit.

Said ordinance provides that the aggregate amount of said assessment shall be divided into five (5) installments bearing interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum.

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