

icing, for Martha and her dolls to eat the next day.

This evening they were all nice to her. Jane had brought over some chocolate fudge she had just made, and Jim, Jane's boy friend, introduced Tom to her.

"Martha's almost too pretty, but she's a darn good pal, aren't you, Marty? Best swimmer around," Jim was saying.

The radio was playing a hit tune, a soft waltz, and she and Tom were swaying to the music.

She looked over at Mother. Mother's hair was getting a little grayer, and perhaps there weren't quite so many lights in her eyes. She had wanted Martha to keep on in school. She and Daddy and grandmother and Aunt Sue had been so sure that Marty would reach the top, that she would be the most popular girl in college, and be the leading actress in the dramatic club.

When Martha had stumbled over the most important line she had in the play, and she had had only a small part, Ted had patted her on her shoulder and said she was all right and she had smiled and known she wasn't. The director had liked Jeanne much better although she wasn't nearly so pretty, and Jeanne was given the lead in the new play.

Martha had told mother that afternoon of the Christmas vacation that she didn't think that she could go back to school, that she didn't like it. Mother had told her that if she felt that way perhaps she would be better off at home. She could take art lessons at the Institute in town. She could always draw well anyway.

Martha wished her mother had told her to buck up and run along. She'd get over it. But her mother told her that she would be all right and Martha had smiled.

Martha looked up at Tom. "I'll be glad to see you at art school," he said. It was nice. That's when she smiled at him.

The Hunt

MARS B. FERRELL

The youth descended briskly the steep side of the gully. His two dogs, already at the bottom, trotted through the light snow. Their high noses and quickening steps were read by the young trapper as definite signs that a catch was to be expected. The trap he had set a day ago at a den on the side of the small tributary gully ahead probably held a victim. In any event, the "set" had looked good—several fresh skunk tracks.

The dogs by now had begun to bark lustily—a bark characteristic of "cornered" or "treed," that is a succession of vicious yaps. As he came upon the scene, the trapper saw a skunk standing crosswise of the narrow gully-bottom, and hissing at first one dog and then the other as they barred the way either to his burrow or to the thick brush at the rim of the wash. The dogs, he observed with the eye of a trainer, were standing apace, for every hunting dog soon learns the rules of skunk capture. Young Bonnie, lacking the reserve of Pard, made the fatal move, which was to dive headlong at the seemingly harmless black animal. Instantly, the skunk's tail rose vertically. Skunk and dogs were enveloped by a metallic blue haze and, very shortly, the skunk stood alone. Both dogs were rooting in the snow, attempting to rid themselves of the "green" skunk-odor and, doubtless-regretting their encounter with such a revolting and sickening "taste." Green skunk-odor, as you know, when present in sufficient quantity, seems to mix with the saliva to give a singularly repulsive taste-reaction.

The trapper was angered by the ignoble treatment of his dogs, and was spurred on by the desire to obtain the pelt which he had already appraised as valuable. He tightened his grip on the short "finishing" club, took a deep breath of semi-fresh air

and "waded in."

One well-placed blow secured the prize. From the dogs' viewpoint, however, such "kills" are seldom worth the consequences suffered.

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High Pressure

CATHRYN SMITH

Pauline regarded John fretfully. She thought: "He's so sensible. I don't believe he ever did or said anything crazy in his life. He's absolutely stodgy!"

They rode along in silence for a while. John never drove fast, but there was enough wind to whip color into their faces, and Pauline's hair blew wildly.

Feeling her gaze, John turned to her and smiled, undisturbed by her frown. The frown deepened.

"Can't you say anything?" she demanded.

The smile left his face. His eyes looked hurt. He looked back at the road, his hands tightening on the wheel while he spoke steadily as if what he said had been said many times before.

"I've told you how I feel. You've known me two years now, and for a year you've been trying to make up your mind. Jerry's a play-boy; I'm not. Jerry's been handing you a line since you were sixteen, and now you think maybe it's strong enough to hang on to forever. Well, you've known him longer than you've known me. Maybe he would make a good husband, but I can't believe you'd want a line all your life.

"I love you, Pauline. I love you enough to want you to be happy. That's why I've kept on when I knew the competition was heavy. But it can't go on indefinitely. I may be wrong. After all, you ought to know what you're doing.

"I'm no high-pressure man. I love you, and you know it, but I'd feel foolish trying to recite poetry about

you. You're going to see Jerry tonight. When he talks to you, try to picture yourself married to him. If you like the picture, don't call me tomorrow. If you decide you'd rather look at me across the breakfast table every morning, call me before twelve, and we can probably arrange it."

Pauline looked puzzled.

"Are you trying to tell me that if I don't make up my mind by tomorrow morning, I won't see you again?"

John nodded, "Something like that."

Pauline moved closer.

"John, do you know how many times you've kissed me?"

"Twice." The reply came promptly.

Pauline rested her head on the seat near his shoulder and closed her eyes. The car stopped suddenly.

"You're home." John spoke brusquely.

He jumped out and opened the door for her. She refused his arm, looking at him wonderingly. At the door, he said goodbye hurriedly, almost gruffly, and walked swiftly back to the car.

That night Pauline listened closely to Jerry's conversation. While they danced, he kept up a constant flow of words: commented on her beauty every few minutes.

"You're gorgeous tonight, Paul," or "Paul, I'm quite infatuated with you, you know."

Later he said, "You were always a beautiful dancer, honey. Really, it's a pleasure to know you."

Once he said, "Happy, sweet? Your eyes are like stars."

During a pause, Pauline looked at him thoughtfully, and began "Jerry, have you ever thought—"

"Never think," he interrupted. "I know everything. For instance, I know you're the grandest pal a man ever had."

Pauline smiled gayly.

"We are pals, aren't we?"