

*Done on Justice*

*"The Woman of It"*

By

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Nan was the tigress type of woman; the type with eyes which seemed capable of but one real affection; eyes that smolder for years and then suddenly spotting the man for which they have been waiting, they flash, and the first and only real affection is found for them. Often it transpires that we covet that which we have not within ourselves. It seemed that this must be the reason for Nan's sudden savage interest in a new-comer in the under-world of which she was a part. Many men in her particular and peculiar little circle had coveted her; more than many feared her. But when Jack Dunn came into their environment and seemed intent upon staying there, all realized that Nan was in love. He had something, or had had, which she lacked—education, culture, and a very shrewd brain. He was not a bull-like fighting type; he was clever, but with a weakness, and he had come to the underworld to fight that weakness or give up to it in a hotbed of its practice. The weakness was "dope," and it looked as though his fight would be a losing one until Nan took a hand. With her aid he won his fight, was adopted as a sort of advisor by one of the higher class gangs, and proved very valuable to the criminals

by the ingenuity of his plans, and often his clever little tricks of law saved them even when they had been caught.

Jack Dunn had been a lawyer, and a very excellent one. Also, he had been a dreamer,—perhaps that was the reason he was forced to fight "dope."

Nan, though a sort of uncrowned queen in the neighborhood, had always been lonely. Jack was in an alien land. He, also, was lonely. They were brought together by the most powerful of all solvents, mutual loneliness, and the flash of Nan's eye was of a sort that would turn the most solid morality into a puff of vapor and change air-tight conventionality into a sieve. Jack was fascinated and bewildered by her power, and the savage intensity of her love. Before he knew just what was happening they were living together, and he was a criminal; because he had brains, one of the most dreaded criminals in the great city.

Nan basked in the reflected glory of his shrewdness, and loved the man she had found as only such women are capable of loving. Perhaps there was something of satisfaction in her love, due to the fact that she had taken this man from the great outer world which she hated and held him away from it through the sheer power of her being. But, fundamentally, Jack was a dreamer, and a dreamer never forgets the one great and culminating dream of his life. Put him where you will, and that dream will come back and haunt his days and nights, like a phantom fabric of desire.

Slowly, the situation between Nan and Jack became a desire on his part to lift her to another plane, and a savage determination on her side to keep him where he was.

Jack, completely cured of his habit, began to dislike his life as he was living it. The old visions haunted him and made him want to go back. Finally, he came to Nan with a marriage license and insisted upon a ceremony. Nan fought him desperately, telling him that if she could not hold him in their present relationship she did not want him. She felt a strange uneasiness about this plan of his; a desire to return seemed to be manifesting itself in the man. It was the thing she had feared and dreaded, and the first disquieting moments gave place to a savage determination to fight for her point.

In the great outer world lived Judge Geary, the coldest man on the bench; the automatic machine, capable of weighing evidence pro and con in giving an unbiased and unfettered decision to the world. His ward was a girl who seemed of society, but not with it, in that she reserved the right to think good of all things and all people. This being contrary to the basic principle of society, she was not of it. Accidentally, this girl—Phyllis by name—carried a small book of poems in her pocket when on a slumming tour which led her party to the dive frequented by Nan and Jack.

When the party entered, Jack watched this girl. She was a vision of the world from which he had stepped into oblivion. Also, she was very appar-

ently of an unusual type; one which looks upon a sinning world with big, trusting eyes and refuses to believe that it is bad. Nan watched the girl; she also watched Jack's face and realized what was transpiring there. A "dip" managed to pick a small necklace from the girl as she passed through the room. Nan, at one time the cleverest pick-pocket in a great city, stole the necklace cleverly from the "dip" himself and returned it to the girl, saying that it had been done merely as an exhibition for the benefit of those in her party. Phyllis seemed to read a different story in the eyes of the woman she was facing. Jack watched the two women facing each other, and contrasted them in his own mind. One was of a world he had lived in, the other of the world in which he was living.

Phyllis desired to give Nan something as a token of thanks. She gave her the book of poems and went on her way, forgetting the incident. Nan laughed over the experience later when she and Jack were alone, and threw the book carelessly in a corner. Jack picked it up and began to read. A poem re-vitalized his old desire to be someone, and awoke ambition in him once more. The old dream to thrill a courtroom, to be the greatest criminal lawyer, came back. He told Nan of that ambition, and she laughed at him. Then, he started an effort to climb back.

At first Nan fought viciously to hold him, and, when she seemed to have won her point and beaten him back to his place beside her, the woman of it came to the surface—she was sorry for him in defeat; she was sorry that she had beaten him.

She knew that he was a clever lawyer, and, finding the address of Judge Geary in the little book of poems, which Jack seemed to cherish above all else, she went to the Judge and told him of Jack and his desires.

The Judge probably would have paid no attention to her story, had it not been for one sentence which she uttered, a short sentence which proved that it is the deft touch and not the killing effort which marks our lives for better or for worse. The Judge asked her why she thought Jack would make a criminal lawyer. She answered:

"He's been a criminal, and he knows law."

This interested the old man, and he saw that a sure way of breaking up one of the most dangerous gangs in the city would be to give this chap's ambitions a chance. He decided to offer a place to the man without letting him know why he was doing it.

Nan insisted upon not being quoted in the matter; even tried to give the impression that she would be glad to get rid of his influence in her neighborhood.

Jack was surprised when he found himself apprenticed in a great law firm. The sheer intensity of his dream made his zeal almost unbeatable as he began to struggle up the ladder.

Nan realized that she could not follow, and that he could not go up without leaving her behind. She determined to drive him from her and kill once and for all his thoughts of lifting her. She did this, at a celebration, by insisting upon going there

and reigning as she formerly did; by telling them all she wanted to come back, and that Jack was a mollycoddle and she was through with him.

Jack came, and attempted to force her to go home. She pretended to be very drunk and made fun of him, finally telling them all she wanted to spend the night with another man.

Jack left the hall, telling her that it was good-bye. The man whom she had mentioned as intending to be with for the rest of the night approached her about her promise, and she threw a drink in his face, went into an outer room and sobbed.

Jack found a place in the upper world awaiting him, in the offices of the District Attorney, and started his struggle upward. Nan, realizing in the first bitter pangs of loneliness that she hadn't really tried to go up, refused to aid her old assistant and determined to attempt to go straight. She found work, and a cheap place to live in another district.

Jack's knowledge of criminals and law, aided him wonderfully in his work, and he rose to a position of assistant to the District Attorney. His prosecutions were cleverly handled, and he seemed to be the administration's one winner on the staff. An election neared, Haines feared a political airing of his record would end all chance of re-election, and Jack was the only man who seemed capable.

Lieutenant Dillon, a detective, and friend of Jack's, was on a case of a stolen necklace, and was handling it personally as he feared leaks at headquarters and wished to take no chances on

getting this man. He told Jack of his plan and solicited the latter's advice, which was given.

Nan, now living in a different district, under a different name, was seen by Keeley, a member of her old gang and former suitor of hers. He tried to win her back to the old life, but she was determined to go straight. He even offered her a share in a necklace, which he showed her at the time. Finally he attacked Nan, and the latter drove him from her home at the point of a gun.

Keeley returned to his own neighborhood, and found out from a pal that the police were so close on the trail of the necklace that it would be best to get it out of his hands. His pal suggested planting it on some one, and tipping the police to its whereabouts. Keeley, still angry at Nan, decided to place it in her room, and started back. He was trailed by Dillon, who followed him as he forced an entry into Nan's room. In attempting to arrest Keeley, Dillon was shot and killed. Keeley had used the revolver belonging to Nan, and, with which she had driven him from the apartment in earlier scenes. Circumstantial evidence pointed to Nan, and she was arrested on a charge of murder. In leaving the apartment, Keeley had taken the necklace with him.

Haines, District Attorney, realized that the case must be won, and assigned Jack to prosecute. When the trial opened, Nan and Jack realized the situation, he recognizing her as he started the prosecution. Unable to force gratitude to dissolve before duty, his prosecution was listless, and it was apparent that he was losing the case. Nan's

attorney confided to her that it would break the present administration, and she, feeling that her own future was hopeless, resolved to make a supreme sacrifice and confess to save his future.

The critical moment of the trial was when Jack faced Nan for cross-examination. After a series of questions, not too forcefully driven home, Nan jumped to her feet and confessed the killing. The courtroom was in an uproar, and Jack surprised a look on Nan's face which told him that she was lying. He faced the Judge, saying:

"Your Honor, I propose to show this woman's confession false."

He then forced her to admit that her confession was a lie. Keeley, who was in the audience, watched closely. Jack began then to try to force some evidence from Nan which would point the way to the real criminal. Finally he insisted upon the name of the man who called upon her on the day of the murder, and she refused to give it. In addressing the bench, he stated that to his own knowledge, Lieutenant Dillon was trailing the man he believed possessed the stolen Argus necklace on the day of his death. Nan remembered the necklace shown her by Keeley, and the truth was clear. She saw Keeley in the audience, make a quick move to his pocket with his hand, and she pointed him out, demanding that he be searched. The necklace was found, and Keeley broke down. Nan was saved; Jack had won; and later they found that she had saved the license which she refused once before, and now realized that it was not too old to use.