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Chaney stared at the girl, his mind unwilling to accept the fact that a dream had become a reality. But the dream just sat and smiled at him. . . .



**To dream at night is one thing—
but to wake up in the morning and find
your dream beside you is quite another**

I Wake Up Dreaming

by Frances Yerxa



ROBERT CHANEY was bewildered. One could detect a certain weakness in his handsome face. Sitting beside the fireplace, he felt as though Laura and Philip had all the odds in their favor. They towered over him, each preferring to stand, each delivering a rather long and frightening speech about how unreasonable he was being.

Laura, Robert Chaney's lovely, business-like wife, believed in utter frankness at a time like this.

"The Chaney Stables" are washed up," she said. "Without horses you still insist on dreaming of a come-back. I've told you a hundred times that I don't love you. Philip . . ." she paused, looking at Philip Hannah with wide adoring eyes. "Philip wants to marry me and I want to marry him. Bob, be a good sport and give me a divorce."

Robert Chaney shook his head. He had been doing it with increasing stubbornness for the past fifteen minutes. Not that he expected Laura to change. So far as she was concerned, he knew that married life was doomed to be an infernal triangle from now on. It was the principle of the thing.

"I'm sorry," he said in a low voice. "We haven't done so well I'll admit. I can't see where it has been my fault. I've lost my money, but as far as I can determine, so have a lot of other men. I promised to love and honor until death do us part. Marriage can't be tossed aside every year Laura, like an old dress. You should understand."

"But, man," Philip Hannah interrupted. "Laura and I love each other. Be broad-minded, will you?"

Robert Chaney's fingers tightened on the arms of the chair. He started to rise, then sank back, feeling thoroughly miserable. In his opinion, he had been *very* broad-minded. Phil Hannah was the slick type. Slick from

his well polished shoes to the last greasy hair on his head. How Laura could fall for Hannah . . . ? But she had. In fact she spent more time with Hannah than she did with her husband. It had been her idea to force Chaney into applying for a divorce. It hadn't worked.

"I've been broad-minded, as you call it," Chaney said. "I'll admit there isn't much love lost between us. Laura is doing about as she pleases now. As for a complete separation, I'm sorry. I'm not *that* broad-minded."

Laura, her thin, well-molded face turned white with anger, leaned over him.

"Then take it from me, my very moral husband, you'll be sorry about this. I'll dog your footsteps night and day. Sooner or later you'll slip. When you do, I'll take you for every cent you have *and* a divorce."

Anger was beginning to seep into Robert Chaney's brain. He hated to make a scene. He stood up.

"I had a nice string of horses and a small fortune when you came along," he said evenly. "I've lost both. I still have some decent friends and I'm not going to lose them by starting an ugly scandal. It simply isn't right."

Phil Hannah was silent now. He didn't feel so cock-sure of himself with Chaney on his feet. He was secretly a little frightened of Chaney, in spite of his mildness. It was Laura who still felt defiance tugging inside her.

"You're an old-fashioned fuddy-duddy," she said coldly. "You won't get a divorce because you can't stand the thought of going to court. It will hurt you more when I come in some day with evidence that shows you've shown a streak of human emotion toward some other woman. Sooner or later you will, and *when* you do, I'll sue for divorce and every cent you

make as long as you live."

She turned abruptly, her cheeks drained of color, and took Philip Hannah's arm.

"Let's get out of this New England church atmosphere," she said.

WITH his wife and her companion safely out of the house, Robert Chaney wandered thoughtfully to the tobacco stand and loaded his pipe. He stood in the center of the vast room staring at the well-arranged expensive furniture. Thirteen rooms of it, he thought. Thirteen large rooms in an exclusive home filled with my life fortune. That is what's left.

It wasn't Chaney's fault, although he blamed himself in some mysterious manner. Laura had been sweet enough during the first three years. The Chaney Stables were a paying proposition. He had entered *My Lady* in half a dozen races and taken first and second money. The house had come out of that. The house and Laura's clothing.

Then *My Lady* broke her leg and had to be shot. After that, a jinx hovered over the Chaney Stables. Three horses died in a year. Bankruptcy threatened Chaney for weeks and lifted only when he sold everything but the house and a couple of small buildings at Arlington.

Then Philip Hannah came along, and Laura decided that the deal she had made with Chaney had folded up. No money, no love. It was that simple.

Chaney pushed the unlighted pipe between his teeth and went to his room. It was close to midnight. Laura wouldn't be in until four or five.

What difference did it make? She insisted on a separate room anyhow. His room was too cluttered with pipes and magazines. Laura demanded pink curtains and plenty of perfume. They didn't mix.

Chaney undressed slowly, trying to think out some plan that would bring her back to him. At last he gave it up as a bad job.

Lying on his back, he stared at the ceiling and tried to adjust himself to the idea of facing the years ahead. He had no fear of Laura being able to find grounds for divorce. He, Chaney, felt no interest at all in other women. Laura had cured him of that for all time. It was the moral side of it. Hollywood peddled divorces as though they were evening papers. The Puritan spirit in Chaney forbade any compromise with marriage.

Gradually he grew drowsy and Laura slipped from his mind. He remembered the better days out at Chaney Stables; the smell of clean straw and bright sunrise at the track. He thought of *My Lady* and what a grand horse she had been. After a while he gave up the fight and slept.

In his subconscious mind, Robert Chaney knew that he was sleeping. He knew what was happening was only a dream. He didn't try to escape it, because the dream was pleasant.

He was leaning over the rail at Arlington. Crowds roared in the stands behind him. It was the final stretch. A beautiful, straight-limbed horse thundered down the stretch, well ahead of the field.

He was cheering wildly. Why? *The white horse was his.* It was a very foolish dream. He didn't even know the horse's name. Yet, it belonged to him, Robert Chaney, and it was winning by a good three lengths.

He climbed halfway over the rail before he realized what he was doing, and the scene changed so abruptly that he cried out with disappointment.

He was sitting in a rickety chair, feet on the rungs, leaning back against a stall in the stable. He smoked quietly

and stared with surprise at the vision of the loveliness who faced him.

She stood with legs well apart, pointing an accusing finger at him. She was just tall enough, he thought, to reach his shoulder, had he been standing up. A blob of soft chestnut hair framed her fresh, impishly pretty face.

They had known each other for a long time. He was sure of that, for she seemed to know all about him. Still, he couldn't remember where they had met.

"Laura will come around again," she said, and her voice tinkled pleasantly. "Just you wait and see. As soon as she finds out how smart you've been in buying a winner, she'll see her mistake."

"But I haven't," he protested. "It isn't my horse, really, but we'll overlook that. I never saw either you or the horse before the race."

"Oh," she said, "but you have. I've been your ideal for years and you just haven't realized it. I'm your dream lover."

He felt a warm uncomfortable feeling creep through him. This wasn't right. He didn't know why, but it just wasn't. He had never even dreamed of her before.

"But—Laura," he said weakly.

The girl came very close to him, leaning over to where she could whisper in his ear.

"Laura doesn't give you many breaks," she said, "but she can never penetrate your dreams. We're quite safe from her here."

Chaney swore.

"I'm safe anywhere," he said. "It's none of Laura's darned business what I do. I don't have to hide myself in dreams."

HE HADN'T realized that his voice was so loud. Perhaps it was her

lips brushing his ear ever so slightly that made him shout. Anyhow, the sound yanked him upright in bed. His eyes were wide open.

He blushed.

Now that he was awake, he felt very guilty. What sort of love thief was he, to dream such things? It—well, it was almost as bad as what Laura was doing.

"Well, if you don't care, then why should I hide in your dreams," a startlingly familiar voice said.

Chaney jumped three feet, caught himself just as he was about to fall out of bed, and drew the covers up tightly around his neck. He turned slowly in the direction of the voice.

The girl he had talked with in the dream was sitting on the far side of the bed.

She didn't look like a dream now. The tightly fitting blue robe and impish face were very real.

"You!" he stuttered with becoming modesty. "You can't . . . That is, you mustn't stay here. What would . . .?"

She smiled, reached over and pinched his arm.

"What would Laura say? You told me a minute ago that you didn't think it was any of her darned business."

A high whinny came from the far side of the room. This time, Chaney did clear the edge of the bed. He stood there, draped Indian style in a blanket. He was staring at the horse he'd seen in his dreams. From the way it's hoofs had marked the shiny hardwood floor, he knew the animal was very real also.

He heard the girl laugh and his face turned a darker shade of red.

"What—what is this madness," he asked, and his voice was full of pity for Robert Chaney. "*It isn't possible.*"

The vision on the bed arose and with a sudden abandoned bounce, sprang across the bed and snuggled close to him. He felt her warm breath on his

neck and the softness of her hair in his face.

"It's all *quite* real," she said softly. "You're an old fuddy-duddy, Bob. You have the idea that to live with a woman who hates you is quite noble. It happens that I have been trying to get into your dreams for a long time. Believe it or not, I'm quite fond of you, in spite of the foolish ideas you have."

"But I haven't," he protested. "It's all wrong. *This* is all wrong. A horse in my bedroom."

She moved away from him abruptly.

"The best solution of that," she said calmly, "is to get rid of the horse."

She was right. A horse had no business in a man's bedroom even if he was a dream horse.

"Where—how? What will I say about the creature. People will ask questions."

"It's your horse, isn't it?" she asked. That made sense also.

"I—I guess so. I dreamed him."

She smiled teasingly.

"Well, what difference does it make *how* you got him, as long as he's yours. You'd better take him out to the stable before someone sees him here."

He thought of Laura, who was due home any minute now. The thought made him hurry into his shoes. About to complete the job of dressing, he remembered that the girl of his dreams was still present. She had stretched out full length on the bed and was watching him with fascinated eyes.

"You'll have to get out," he said.

"Why?"

"I—I—well, it's not right, that's all. You'll have to get out, I can't dress with you here."

She sighed.

"Fuddy-duddy," she said, and crawled out of bed. "I'll stay in the closet for just two minutes. You'd

better hurry."

He did.

THE horse *was* a beauty, he admitted to himself, as he led her out of the back door toward the deserted stable. She looked a lot like *My Lady*. She was a perfect racer, the color of old ivory, and the way she acted as he led her through the darkness to her stall told him that she was a real queen of the track.

Chaney hadn't taken time to think everything out carefully. However, the headlight of a car cut the night as he went back toward the house. They almost caught him but he ducked behind the hedge and ran inside just as Laura drove into the garage. He was panicky. His friend of the dream was sitting before the mirror, applying makeup. It was Laura's makeup. She turned as he came in. He had to admit that Laura never had looked like this.

"My wife," he stammered. "She's come home." Then he realized what had happened. "*Where did you get that makeup kit?*"

He heard Laura enter her room, which was next door to his own.

"From your wife's vanity," his visitor said. She seemed very innocent and not the least bit frightened.

He couldn't tell her to put it back. It was too late. He heard Laura come to the door. She didn't attempt to come in.

"*Mr. Chaney*," she called, and there was no sweetness in her voice. He looked wildly at the girl. He wanted to keep quiet, to pretend he was asleep. If he did, she might open the door.

"Yes," he said weakly. "What do you want?"

"My makeup kit," she said. "*Don't* tell me you're using perfume and powder after all these years."

He could have choked her for that.

"As a matter of fact," he admitted lamely, "I did bring it in here. Thought you might have some bath powder. I ran out."

Laura laughed. It was a tight frightening little laugh.

"You must try my shaving cream also," she said sarcastically. "Keep the kit, I have another. Good night darling."

"Good night," he mumbled, and sighed with relief. He moved silently across the room and turned the key in the lock. He returned to the bed. He sat down and cradled his head in both hands.

He felt the weight of his dream girl on the bed beside him. Her arm went around his shoulders.

"What's the matter?" she asked softly. "Don't you like me?"

He looked up. Sitting very close to her like this, he had to admit that she was both exciting and dangerous.

"I—like you all right," he said. "It isn't right, that's all."

She pinched his cheek.

"It will do you good," she said. "You're so darned straight-laced that you've forgotten how to be happy."

"And what am I supposed to do about it?"

She stared at him, wide eyed with surprise.

"Good Heavens, don't you know?"

He shook his head.

"Don't get me wrong," he said. "I can't control my dreams. If you had to come here, and with a horse thrown in for good measure, why couldn't you come like a lady?"

She tossed her head, her eyes flashed.

"In a carriage, drawn by five white horses?" she asked.

He shook his head.

"That would have been better at least, to have arrived during the day,

and decently clothed."

She leaned back on the bed.

"Suppose I thought you wanted me this way. Suppose I think I'm very attractive. After all, I did bring a horse. You can thank me for that."

"Thanks," he repeated without enthusiasm.

"Is that all?"

"Yes," he said. "All but the solution of how I'm to get rid of you."

She laughed, and it wasn't a very quiet laugh. He lived in constant fear now that Laura would hear them.

"You can get rid of me easily," she said. "Just go to sleep and dream me away."

It sounded like a very fine idea. Still, he wasn't sure. Suppose he dreamed of a couple more just like her?

"Where are you going to go in case I *can't* dream you away?" he asked. His voice was so pitiful that it made her look a trifle sad.

"I guess I'll just have to stay here. After all, I'm your dream. I can't belong to anyone else."

"What's your name?" he asked. He had to call her something.

"Susan," she said, "Susan Wayward. I guess I am a little, Wayward, I mean."

"And where do you propose to sleep tonight?"

"Right here," she said, and cuddled her pretty head on the pillow.

"Then I," Chaney said with new stubbornness, "will have to sleep in the bathroom or the closet."

She didn't seem to hear. Her eyes were closed, and she stretched deliciously.

"I said, I'd have to sleep in the bathroom," he repeated.

She opened one eye and winked at him deliberately.

"Too bad," she said. "That's just too bad."

IT WAS ten o'clock in the morning before Robert Chaney dared leave his room.

Laura, as usual, ate breakfast alone. She drove out at ten minutes to ten, and Chaney dressed. He hadn't had a good night. The bath tub was hard, even when padded with half a dozen blankets. The shower insisted on dripping on his feet all night. He hadn't dared sleep again, because he feared he might dream. He shuddered at what might happen the next time he abandoned himself to the pleasure of a dream.

Susan Wayward was up before him. He searched the house for her, and following the fresh odor of toast, found her in the kitchen in one of Laura's finest tailored suits. She had set the table for two and was making oatmeal for them. She turned as he came in and hurried to his side. She kissed him on the chin. It was as high as she could reach without his co-operation.

"Don't do that," he begged.

She laughed.

"Don't tell me you don't like it?"

Life now was a continual blush for Robert Chaney. He sat down hurriedly. The toast was very good and he had to admit that Susan looked much better across the table than Laura ever had.

"Now that we face the full light of day," she asked, "am I lovely?"

The brazen way she threw herself at him troubled Chaney. She seemed to take it for granted that he couldn't resist her. By golly, he could, and every moral fiber within him insisted that he should.

"You—look very nice," he said. "Now, we'll have to get you out of here and into another place to live."

"Mr. Chaney," she cried, and he wondered what he'd done to make her an-

gry. "It wouldn't be nice. You can't support another woman."

He blushed.

"I—I wouldn't be! Not exactly. It would be different if I intended to see you again."

She looked crestfallen.

"Don't you?"

"Now look here," he adopted his best father to daughter voice. "Of course I don't. You may be the product of a dream, but that wouldn't mean a thing to the public. I don't know just how a man is supposed to act toward a dream girl, but I'm married and I have a certain reputation to maintain."

"Is that good?" she asked.

He had a feeling that she was making fun of him.

"It is," he said stiffly. "And if I didn't send you away, just what is your suggestion?"

"First we'll go to the track," she said briskly. "We'll have to try Sheba."

"Sheba?"

"Yes, silly, my horse. We'll have to try Sheba and see what kind of time she can make. We'll start winning races next week, as soon as the season opens."

Sheba—the clean limbed racer that he had taken to the stable, was Susan Wayward's horse.

"Look here," he said. "That horse is a beauty. Where did you get him?"

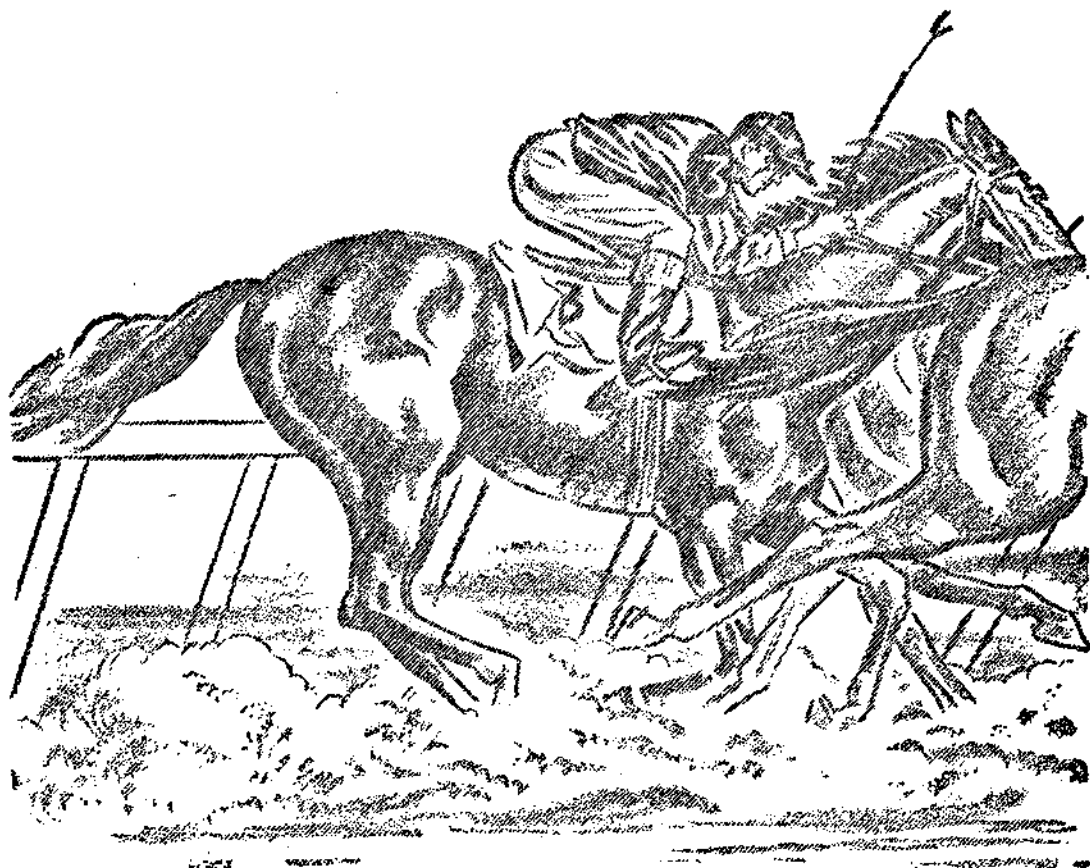
"I didn't," she admitted. "You dreamed him up, and I took possession of him when we came here."

He was secretly proud of himself for dreaming up such a fine horse. She seemed to read his mind.

"May I remind you that you dreamed me also," she asked. "And I think your taste is pretty good."

He had no argument for that. They loaded Sheba on the trailer and drove her to Arlington. By five in the afternoon, Sheba had proven to be of cham-

Was it all merely a dream? Could it be that he wasn't really holding the girl in his arms? Chaney wondered ...



pion stock. Everything was moving forward nicely, except a solution that would satisfy Robert Chaney's moral attitude toward Susan Wayward.

SUSAN, much against her will, was confined to the large, if not airy closet in Chaney's room. It was dinner time and that one period of the day when Mr. and Mrs. Chaney met as man and wife across the dinner table.

This evening, however, hostilities had not ceased, as they usually did during the dinner hour. Laura definitely had something on her mind. Something that made her look wise and nasty.

Robert read his evening paper, to prevent if possible, any outbreak on his wife's part. For the first time in his life, he had a guilty conscience. The conscience was named Susan Wayward.

Laura contained herself as long as she thought necessary, then exploded her first bomb-shell.

"I noticed you had company for breakfast!" she said.

Chaney tried to effect surprise. He had forgotten that both his and Susan's dishes were left when they finished with them.

"I—I don't understand," he said, but



he did.

Laura adopted a "holier than thou" expression.

"So ducky doesn't understand, doesn't he?" She stood up, arms akimbo and glared at him. "Two cups of coffee *dear*, and with lipstick on one of them."

There was no argument. Chaney bowed his head and waited.

"And my makeup kit missing last night." She was only starting. "And Philip Hannah saw you at the race-track today. You were with a very pretty wench."

He was about to protest over her calling Susan a wench, when he decided that Laura was probably exactly right.

"I'm—I'm sure that I can explain," he said, pleading for time.

She wasn't in a listening mood.

"Don't try," she said. "From now on I'll stick to your trail like a hound. I'm sure you'll slip again. I'll get evidence on you that will leave you without a reputation to stand on."

"You've been *walking* on it for years," Chaney said bitterly. "It's worn so thin from the mud you've tracked into it, its very little good to me anymore."

* * *

Came the running of the Hi-Lo Sweepstakes. The first place was interesting to Chaney because with the eye of an old horseman, he recognized winning material in Sheba, the dream horse.

A scant week had passed since his last scene with Laura. During that time, he had hidden Susan as though she were a bottle of fine bootleg Scotch. The fact that she might cause a break-up in the Chaney home didn't seem to trouble Susan in the least. Sometime, Chaney thought she was trying to do exactly that.

He finally convinced her that the

guest room would be an excellent place for her to spend her nights. This gave him a chance to escape the bathtub and balance his moral scale slightly. It also prevented Laura from discovering the girl, as Laura was much too lazy to penetrate to the second floor, where the guest room was located.

Still, Susan had a way of wandering around the house in an indecent gown which positively frightened Chaney. He dreaded the night that she and Laura came face to face. The battle would be fast and furious. He would be of little use to either of them when it was all over.

Chaney hadn't, as yet, been able to adjust himself to Susan Wayward. He was forced to admit that, as a dream, she left little to be desired. In fact, he dreamed of her each night and not once during those dreams did he feel any urge to get rid of her. It became a habit of his to check up the first thing every morning, to make sure she was still somewhere around.

She never embarrassed him by mentioning the rather risque dreams he involved her in, and he, fuddy-duddy that he was, thought of the dream Susan and the flesh and blood Susan as two entirely different people. It didn't occur to him that she was following a carefully planned road that led into his heart.

Thus, the week passed and Laura felt that she and Philip Hannah were much closer to their goal. She didn't want to be too hasty about the divorce. She had seen the new horse and realized that her husband was about to tap a brand new source of income. It looked as though he was ready to make some real money.

Laura had no intention of passing up an opportunity to collect all she could and thereby add to Philip's rather limited income.

IN THIS manner the infernal triangle grew. Susan Wayward stalked silently through the center of the drama, avoiding Laura by inches, and having the time of her sweet life. There was no doubt in Susan's heart. She had found out what she wanted. Now she had to crack his outer shell to reveal the real Chaney beneath the crust of New England Puritanism.

* * *

The first and biggest race of the season was one day away. It might have easily turned out to be the story of the man who made a fortune from a single race. Unfortunately, his wife wasn't Chaney's sole worry. He thought constantly about Sheba. On the fatal night he at last fell asleep and dreamed that the race was already in progress. Once more he was at the rail. Sheba was out in front as she had been in the dream he met Susan.

Cheering hoarsely, he saw the fat purse coming closer to his grasp and felt immensely proud to own such a grand creature. Then, he realized suddenly that something was wrong. A cry of horror came from the stands. He looked back again to the spot Sheba had held throughout the race. She was gone. Panic stricken, he allowed his eyes to travel back—back on the empty track.

Sheba was down.

She had thrown her jockey and lay writhing on the track. He knew at once because he recognized such things with the eye of an expert, that Sheba had broken a leg.

Robert Chaney awakened with perspiration pouring from his face. He sat up in bed, remembering vividly how cruel the dream had been. Sheba dead? Good Lord, why did he have to dream that?

Susan burst in upon him. Her eyes were wide with terror. She had taken time only to wrap herself in a light robe.

"Bob—Oh, Bob, why did you have to . . .?"

He clapped his hand over her mouth, muffling the sound of her voice. If Laura heard . . .?

"Have to—what?"

She was quieter now.

"Sheba—Oh, Sheba," she sobbed it out, her heart was broken. "Bob, you darned fool. Don't you know that Sheba and I are only dreams. You dreamed that Sheba broke her leg. If you dreamed it, you forced it to happen."

Far away, in the library, the phone rang.

"See," she said. "They are calling."

In his heart, he knew that she was right. His own damned selfish mind had made him worry. Because he worried, he had destroyed the very thing that would have made him a fortune. Slowly, without daring to speak, he went toward the phone. When he came back, Susan was sitting quietly on the bed. She didn't speak. Her eyes were filled with tears. He looked down at her and nodded.

"Sheba kicked her way out of the stall," he said. "She's dead. They had to shoot her."

A sob shook Susan Wayward's shoulders.

"YOU can dream me right back into non-existence any time you wish," Susan Wayward sobbed. "I can see now that it was all a mistake. You'll never be anything but a moss-backed old Puritan. You didn't want me in the first place. It was Sheba that you wanted, not me."

This was a bitter speech, but Chaney knew he deserved it. The night had

passed and badly, for him. Now that Sheba was dead, what little interest he had in the future was gone. He had lost his last chance to make a comeback. He couldn't even look at Susan without thinking how terrible it would be if Laura caught her. He was left in a position where he could support no one, not even himself.

They were eating a late breakfast. Laura had gone to the track, because Philip Hannah had bet a small fortune on a horse, and she hoped it would come in, in the money.

Susan finished her tearful scolding and Chaney felt very low.

"It isn't because you aren't pretty," he tried to explain. "It's because I'm just not—not the type who can go through with such things. I've always considered marriage sacred. We can't lose our heads at a time like this. We are facing a crisis. How do I know that I love you, or for that matter, how do I know if you won't try the same thing Laura did after you grow tired of me?"

Susan gazed at him scornfully.

"You won't have a chance," she said. "You brought me here, and it's up to you to send me back. I demand it."

Chaney wasn't sure that it was the best thing to do, because his head felt like an empty butter tub, and his temper had been worn to tissue thinness through just such arguments with Laura. He was willing to try anything.

"OKAY," he agreed. "I'm going to dream you so far away that you'll never have to worry me again."

"Now?" Susan asked hopefully.

Chaney sprang to his feet.

"Of course not," he said. "Why, who ever thought of dreaming at ten in the morning? You'll have to wait until tonight."

He turned and stormed out of the

house. He didn't take the trouble to look back. If he had, he might have seen tears streaming down Susan's pretty face.

Chaney sat up, drew the bed clothes around him and stared morosely at the vision sitting at the bottom of the bed.

"It's no use," he groaned. "I can't go to sleep, much less dream."

Susan smiled. She had chosen to wear a shimmery, unsubstantial affair of black silk and it did things for her that would keep almost any man awake. She stretched carefully and placed a pretty hand to her lips. She yawned.

"It's up to you," she said. "I can't do anything about it."

Chaney didn't answer. He stretched out at full length and tried again to go to sleep. For the second time he sat up.

"I've been trying since ten o'clock," he said sourly. "It's three-thirty now. I can't seem to get into the dreaming mood. I keep staring at you."

"That's odd," Susan answered innocently. "Now, what do you think causes such a feeling?"

He shook his head.

"Susan, for Heaven's sake, can't you sing me to sleep or something. I can't do a thing about it. You *want* to go away, you know."

Surprise flitted across her face.

"Do I?"

"You said you did," he insisted. "The sooner the better, you said."

"I meant that I wanted to get away from you if you were going to continue being such a fuddy-duddy."

"I can't change my personality," Chaney said stiffly.

"But it isn't your *real* personality," she cried. "You're a nice boy underneath. It's just that hard, Puritanical shell you've climbed into."

TO PROVE that she was right, she jumped up quickly and landed squarely in Chaney's lap. Struggling weakly to free himself, he felt her lips firmly against his.

Then events piled up with terrific speed.

The door flew open and someone howled in a loud voice:

"Hold it!"

A light flashed in Chaney's face that completely succeeded in blinding him for an instant.

When he could see again clearly, Susan was still on his lap with her arms thrown around his neck. Laura, Philip Hannah and a strange looking little bum with a camera were all grouped around the bed.

Laura was saying something in a very unpleasant voice.

"You all see him. You are my witnesses. He's been with this *woman* for several days. I knew we'd catch them sooner or later."

Phil Hannah had that same polished look on his mug, and the photographer wore a grin and stared at Susan with something that was more than professional interest.

"We got the picture, all right," he said. "Boy, what a baby. Can't say as I blame you, Mister."

"Well, I do," Laura said in a tight, half jealous voice, "and now I can have that divorce *and* enough alimony to make me happy."

Susan drew the covers around her and pressed herself as tightly as possible against Chaney's chest. She hardly knew what his reaction would be.

Chaney looked bewildered and very doubtful for a minute. Then an odd, triumphant smile lighted his face. Susan thought that he looked strong and brave and it seemed that he felt very self-satisfied.

"Well, Laura," he said sternly. "So you've finally got the evidence you need. Well, maybe that picture wasn't clear enough. *Maybe you better tell that peeping Tom to take another shot, just to make sure.*"

He placed both arms around Susan and gave her a long, and decidedly deliberate kiss.

"That's better," he said, as they separated. He felt slightly dizzy and light headed, as though he was floating in the air again after being grounded for a long time.

"*Now, get out of here, the whole pack of you. I've got unfinished business to take care of.*"

Before his anger, the three melted like ice on a hot skillet. When the door closed, he looked once more at Susan.

"There," he said. "Now, am I a Puritan?"

Susan was breathless.

"A Puritan would never kiss like that," she said.

"And I'm broke. Do you remember? I'll have to give Laura everything I own, including the house, before she's satisfied."

Susan tickled him affectionately under the chin.

"After it's all over with, and she's satisfied," she said. "You can dream up all the horses you want to fill the best racing stable in the state. If you did it once, you can certainly do it again."

A bewildered smile wreathed Robert Chaney's face.

"I—I never thought of that," he admitted.

Susan Wayward smiled.

"There are a lot of things you never thought of," she chided. "Not until tonight."

He kissed her again.

THE END