

The Daring Sacrifice : :

WEEK-END
TRUE STORY

A Daring Treatment of a Daring Theme. Could You Meet the Test of Friendship that this Man Met?

A True Story as Told to
RALPH MATTHEWS

Tomorrow we're going back to civilization after four years up here among the towering pines—Janice, the kid and I. As the aroma of home-cured bacon is wafted to my

Backache Getting Up Nights Leg Pains

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Lydia E. Pinkham's
Vegetable Compound

gone in pretty deeply for real estate. "Oh, it isn't that at all. It's something—don't know how to tell you. I've been such a cad and such a fool, but you'll understand, Mel. You're a man yourself." He paused, offered me a cigarette, which I refused, and then proceeded nervously.

"You know, Mel, Tillie has been sick a long time, ever since that fall she had nearly a year ago. During that time I tried my best to be faithful to her. For a long time I was able to control myself by making myself believe that I was partly responsible for her condition. God, how I tried!

"A few months ago her sister came to live with us. A sweet and innocent girl was she, still in her teens, fresh from a girls' college in the South, the very image of Tillie before her beauty was stolen by her suffering. Somehow, I couldn't help feeling close to her, even though I knew I shouldn't have such thoughts, but a satanic craving took possession of me. I wanted her more than anything else in the world. Long months, void of the compan-

How well I recall the last night

In the morning, I am leaving all that I have striven for these many years I am going out in the open to try to win back the thing I have most neglected, my health. I am going out there alone to fight for the thing I want most in this world, life itself. I could not go feeling that the last thing I did in my profession was to take that which I need most myself, even at the cost of our friendship. Anything else I have, Tom, you can get, but my knowledge and skill to perform an act that in the eyes of the law is murder, I cannot give."

"Then, you will let that child come into the world nameless, break my wife's heart and probably send her back to her bed, ruin my career, and call that friendship?"

His question stumped me. I waited a moment to think. Pushing my hands deep into my pockets, I paced around the room. My eyes fell upon a picture of a girl. Long black curls dangled around a head of peach blown brown, laughing eyes that radiated mischievousness, and lips curved into a smile that displayed an even row of pearly white teeth.

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I spent in Harlem. An eventful night that, but one that has brought me happiness and a new lease on life.

The physicians had given me up. Hard work day and night in medical school had taken its toll in my first year of practice in a spotted lung. I was told I could live but a few months at the terrific pace that New York sets. There was but one hope, and that was in nature itself. So I determined to come away, forsake my practice, forget the hum-drum existence in the great metropolis and commune with mother earth herself.

My plans I kept secret and had just completed my packing, preparatory to leaving, when an urgent call took me to the home of Tom Crane, my old boyhood friend and classmate in college.

The moment I looked into his anxious face, as he opened the door of his apartment on 145th Street, I knew he was baffled by some grave problem. He waved me to a chair in his den and slumped into a seat close at hand, only after he had taken every precaution to see that the door was securely locked and there were no eavesdroppers without.

"Mel," he whispered hoarsely, "I am in serious trouble, and you are the only one to help me out. You will, won't you?"

"Certainly," I assured him, "anything to help a pal, but I haven't much money." I knew that Tom had

ionship of my wife, urged me on and dulled my conscience. I was mad, Mel; God knows I was, to do what I did. I made love to her, with my invalid wife right in the next room.

At first, she rebuked me, but I finally gained her confidence. She trusted me. She, too, forgot our relationship and—one night—don't look at me that way, Mel. I know it was an ungodly thing to do, but I could not help myself. But when we realized what we had done—"He buried his face in his arms and actually sobbed upon the disheveled desk.

"But what do you want me to do?" I asked when he looked up.

"Do? Why, man, don't you understand? That was two months ago, and today she told me—"

"You don't mean that—?"

"Just that," replied Tom, reading the question in my eyes. "You are a doctor, Mel. You are my best friend. Won't you help her out. I have nothing to offer. Tillie is well on the road to recovery now. She'll be walking again soon. If she knew, it would break her heart. You will, won't you, Mel?" There was a pleading in his eyes.

I sat there stunned for a moment. The confession of my friend was hardly what I had expected of the visit.

After several minutes of meditation, I replied, "Tom, I hope that what I am about to say will not lessen the friendship that existed between you and me since our boyhood days, but I am forced to disappoint you.

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