

SUNNY-SAN

By ONOTO WATANNA.

Illustrated by Arthur Ferrier.

PROLOGUE

It was the night of the Festival of the Full Moon, but Hirata, the proprietor of the House of a Thousand Joys, was infuriated, for was not Madame Mary Smiles, the famous dancer, lying dead among her robes? At her feet knelt her child, crushed and hurt by a grief that nothing could assuage, and it was for the sake of her mother's honour that presently she stood a-tiptoe on the tight-rope, laughing at the sea of faces round her and throwing her kisses right and left. So charming was she that the Lord of Negato, amorous for this lovely child, tossed her a jewel and a handful of coin, which she cleverly caught on her fan but, acting under a sudden impish impulse, she suddenly threw them in her admirer's face and, jumping to the ground, vanished into the tea-house.

A party of English students visiting Japan had witnessed this scene and, learning that she was to be punished for her slight to the Japanese nobleman, they made a sudden raid on the tea-house and carried off the girl before Hirata's lash could fall a second time upon her shoulders.

These four students and their tutor then decided to adopt Sunny-san, the dancer's child, whose father was a white man. They formed a syndicate, and together raised sufficient money to provide for Sunny during her lifetime.

Soon a time came when the Englishmen had to return to their own country, and they regretfully departed, leaving Sunny in charge of a missionary. She begged them to take her with them, but the hardest moment came when she said good-bye to Jerry Hammond, who had been her faithful champion from the first. However the ship carrying the Englishmen sailed away, and left a sorrowful Sunny languishing in Nagasaki.

As time went on, Sunny's friends across the sea reached a period where they thought of her as a charming and amusing episode of an idyllic summer in Japan. One bleak March day, Jerry was surprised to learn, on the telephone, that Sunny-san was in London and waiting instructions from the Syndicate. He hastily collected her other friends, and while they were discussing the position Sunny entered. She had grown to be a charming young woman, and her friends, agreeably surprised, cannot do enough for her. Jerry cabled to the Professor to return from Canada to take charge of Sunny, but he was unable to do so, and she took up her abode in Jerry's flat.

Sunny has proposals from Monty and Bobs, but refuses them both. Acting on the advice of Hatton, Jerry's valet, she decides to wait till Leap Year and then ask Jerry to marry her.

CHAPTER XI

A WEEK after Bobs proposed to Sunny, Jinx, shining like the rising sun by an especially careful grooming administered by his valet, a flower adorning his lapel, and a silk hat topping his head, with a box of chocolates large enough to hold a picture hat in his hand, and a smaller box of another kind in his vest pocket, presented himself at Jerry Hammond's studio. Flowers preceded and followed this last of Sunny's ardent suitors.

He was received by a young person arrayed in a pink pongee smock, sleeves rolled up, revealing a pair of dimpled arms, hair in distracting disorder, and a little nose on which seductively perched a blotch of flour, which the infatuated Jinx was requested to waft away with silken handchief.

Sunny's cheeks were flushed from close proximity to that gas stove, and her eyes were bright with the warfare which she waged incessantly upon the aforesaid honourable stove.

Most of the dishes created by Sunny, were more or less done under the eye of Hatton, but on this day Hatton had stepped out to the butcher's. Therefore Jinx's arrival was hailed by Sunny with appreciation and relief, and she promptly lead the happy fellow to the kitchen and solicited his advice. Now Jinx, the son of the plutocratic rich, had never been inside a kitchen since his small boyhood, and then his recollection of said portion of the house was of a vast white place, where tiles and marble and white capped cooks prevailed and small boys were chuckled over or stared at and whispered about.

The dimensions of Sunny's kitchen was about seven by nine feet, and it is well to mention at this moment that the room registered 95 degrees Fahrenheit, Jinx

weighed two hundred and thirty-five pounds, stripped. His emotions, his preparations, his hurry to enter the presence of his charmer, to say nothing of a volcanic heart, all contributed to add to the heat and discomfort of the fat young man down whose ruddy cheeks the perspiration began to roll. Jinx had come upon a mission that in all times in the history of the world subsequent to cave days has called for coolness, tact, and as attractive a physical seeming as it is possible to attain.

Sunny drew her friend along to that gas stove, knelt on the floor, making room for him to kneel beside her—no easy "stunt" for a fat man—opened the lower door and revealed to him the jets on full blaze.

Jinx shook his head. The problem was beyond him, but even as his head shook, he sniffed a certain point in Jinx's anatomy that Sunny would quaintly have designated as his "honorable insides." The little kitchen, despite its heat, contained in that oven, Jinx knew, that which was more attractive than anything the cool studio could offer. Seating himself heavily on a frail kitchen chair, which croaked ominously under his weight, Jinx awaited hopefully what he felt sure was soon to follow.

In due time, Sunny opened the upper door of the oven, withdrew two luscious looking pans of the crispest brown rice cakes plentifully besprinkled with dates and nuts and over which she dusted powdered sugar, and passing by the really suffering Jinx she transferred the pans to the window ledge, saying with a smile:

"When he are cool, I giving you one, Jinx."

Wiping her hands on the roller towel, she had Jinx pull the smock over her head, and revealed her small person in blue taffeta frock, which Jinx himself had had the honour of choosing for her. Unwillingly, and with one longing backward look at those cakes, Jinx followed Sunny into the studio. Here removed from the intoxicating effects of that kitchen, Sunny having his full attention again, he came to the object of his call. Jinx sat forward on the edge of his chair, and his round, fat face looked so comically like the man in the

moon's that Sunny could not forbear smiling at him affectionately.

"Ho! Jinx, how you are going to lig' those cake when he is getting cold."

Jinx liked them hot just as well. However he was not such a gourmand that more rice and date cakes could divert him from the purpose of his call. He sighed so deeply and his expression revealed such a condition of melancholy appeal that Sunny, alarmed, moved over, and took his face up in her hand, examining it like a little doctor, head cocked on one side.

"Jinx, you are sick? What you are cat? Show me those tongue."

"Aw, it's nothing, Sunny—nothing to do with me tongue. It's—it's—just a little heart trouble, Sunny."

"Heart! That are bad place be sick! You are ache on him, Mr. dear Jinx?"

"Yes—a—little."

"Ye-eh—some."

"I sawry! How I are sawry! You have see doctor."

"You're the only doctor I need."

Which was true enough. It was surprising the healing effects upon Jinx's aching heart of the solicitous and sympathetic hovering about him of Sunny.

"Oh, Jinx, I are go at those telephone ride away, get him Mr. Doctor here come. I 'fraid mebbe you more sick than mebbe you know."

"No, no—never mind a doctor." Jinx held her back by force. "Look-a-here, Sunny, I'll tell you just what's the matter with my heart. I'm—I'm—in love!"

"Oh—love! I have hear those word bi-fore, but I have never feel him," said Sunny wistfully.

"You'll feel it some day all right," groaned Jinx. "And you'll know it, too, when you've got it."

"Ad Japan nobody—loave. Thas not nize word speag ad Japan."

"Gosh! It's the nicest word in the language in England. You can't help speaking it. You can't help feeling it. When you're in love, Sunny, you think day and night and every hour and minute and second of the day of the same person. That's love Sunny."

"Ah!" whispered Sunny, her eyes very bright and dewey. "I are know him then!" And she stood with that rapt



"Sunny, I'm awfully sorry I was such a beast."

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look, scarcely hearing Jinx, and brought back to earth only when he took her hand, and clung to it with both his own somewhat flabby ones.

"Sunny, I'm head over heels in love with you. Put me out of my misery. Say you'll be Mrs. Crawford, and you'll see how quickly this old bunged up heart of mine will heal."

"Oh Jinx, you are ask *me* to make marry wiz you?"

"You bet your life I am. Lord! I'm fully keen on you, Sunny."

"Ho! I sawry I kinoo do thad to-day. I am not good ad my healt'. Aexcuse me. Mebbe some odder day I do so."

"Any day will do. Any day that suits you, if you'll just give me your promise—if you'll just be engaged to me."

"Emgaged?" Bobs had already explained to her what that meant, but she repeated it to gain time.

"Why, yes; don't they have engagements in Japan?"

"No. Marriage broker go ad girl's father and boy's father and make those marriage."

"Well, this is a civilised land. We do things right here. Gosh, you're a lucky girl to have escaped from Japan. Here, in this land, we first engaged, say for a week or month or even a year—only a short time will do for you and me, Sunny—and then, well, we marry. How about it?"

Sunny considered the question from several serious angles, very thoughtful, very much impressed.

"Jinx, I do nod like to make marriage, bi-cause thas tie me up wiz jos one frien' for hosban'."

"But, Gosh, you don't want more than one husband?"

Jinx remembered hearing somewhere that the Japanese were a polygamous nation, but he thought that only applied to the favoured males of the race.

"No-O tha very nise for Mormon man I am hear of, bud—"

"Not fit for a woman," warmly declared Jinx. "All I ask of you, Sunny, is that you'll promise to marry me. If you'll do that, you'll make me the happiest man in England. I'll be all but off my head, and that's a fact."

"I sawry, Jinx, but, me? I kinned do so."

Jinx relapsed into a state of the darkest gloom. Looking out from the depths of the big, soft overstuffed chair, he could see not a gleam of light, and presently groaned.

"I suppose if I weren't such a mass of flesh and fat, I might stand a chow with you. It's hell to be fat, I'll tell the world."

"Jinx, I are lig' those fat. It grow nize on you. And *please* do not loog so sad on you face. Wait, I go get you something thas goin' make you look smile again."

She disappeared into the kitchen, returning with the whole platter of cookies, still quite warm, and irresistibly odorous and toothsome looking. Jinx, endeavouring to refuse it, had to close his eyes to steady him in his resolve, but he could not close his nose, nor his mouth either, when Sunny thrust one of the delicious pieces into his mouth. She wooed him back to a semi-normal condition by feeding him with crisp morsels of his favourite confection—was it possible to resist something that pushed against one's mouth and once having entered that orifice revealed qualities that appealed to the very best in one's nature?

Jinx was not made of the spartan stuff of heroes, and who shall blame him if Nature chose to endow him with a form of rich proportions that included "honourable insides" whose capacity was unlimited? So, till the very last cookie, and a sense of well-being and fullness, the sad side of life pushed aside *pro tem.*, Jinx was actually able to smile indulgently at the solicitous Sunny. She clapped her hands delightedly over her success. Jinx's fingers found their way to his vest pocket. He withdrew a small velvet box, and snapped back the lid. Silently he held it towards Sunny. Her eyes wide, she stared at it with excited rapture.

"Oh-h! Thas mos' beautifullest thing I are ever see."

Never in fact had her eyes beheld anything half so lovely as that shining platinum work of art with its immense diamond.

"Just think," said Jinx huskily, "if

you say the word, you can have stones like that covering you all over."

"All over!" She made an expressive motion of her hands which took in all of her small person.

Melancholy again clouded Jerry's face. After all, he did not want Sunny to marry him for jewellery.

"I tell you what you do, Sunny. Wear this for me, will you? Wear it for a while, any way, and then when you decide finally whether you'll have me or not, keep it or send it back, as you like."

He slipped the ring on to the third finger of Sunny's left hand, and holding that hand made him a bit bolder. Sunny, unsuspecting and sympathetic, let her hand rest in his, the ring up, where she could admire it to her heart's content.

"Look-a-here, Sunny, will you give me a kiss, then—just one? The ring's worth that, isn't it?"

Sunny retreated hurriedly, almost panically.

"Oh, Jinx, please you excuse me to-day, bi-cause I lig' do so, but Mr. Hatton he are stand ad those door and loog on you."

"Damn Hatty!" groaned Jinx bitterly, and with a sigh that heaved his big breast aloft, he picked up his hat and cane, and ponderously moved toward the door.

In the lower hall of the studio, who should the crestfallen Jinx encounter but his old-time friend, Jerry Hammond, returning from his eight hours' work at the office. His friend's greeting was both curt and cold, and there was no mistaking the look of dislike and disapproval that the frowning face made no effort to disguise.

"Here again, Jinx? Better move in," was Jerry's greeting.

Jinx muttered something inarticulate and furious, and for a fat man he made quick time across the hall and out into the street, where he climbed with a heavy heart into the great roadster, which he had fondly hoped might also carry Sunny with him upon a prolonged honeymoon.

CHAPTER XII

Sunny poured Jerry's tea, with a hand turned ostentatiously in a direction that revealed to his amazed and indignant eye that enormous eye of fire

that blazed on the finger of Sunny's left hand. His appetite, always excellent, failed him entirely, and after conquering the first surge of impulses that were almost murderous, he lapsed into an ominous silence, which no guile nor question from the girl at the head of his table could break. A steady, a cold, a biting glare, a murmured monosyllabic reply was all the response she received to her amiable overtures. His ill-temper, moreover, reached out to the inoffensive Hatton, whom he ordered to clear out, and stay out, and if it came down to that, get out altogether, rather than hang around sniggering in that way. Thus Jerry revealed a side to his character, hitherto unsuspected by Sunny, though several rumblings and marks from the "dog in the manger" would have apprised one less innocent than she.

They finished that meal—or rather Sunny did—in silence electric with coming strife. Then Jerry suddenly left the table, strode into the little hall, took down his hat and coat, and was about to go, heaven knows where, when Sunny at his elbow sought to restrain him 'by force. She took his sleeve and tenaciously held to it, saying:

"Jerry do not go out these night. I are got some news I lig' tell to you."

"Let go my arm. I'm not interested in your news. I've an appointment of my own."

"But, Jerry—"

"I say, let go my arm, will you."

The last was said in a rising voice, as he reached the crest of irritation, and jerking his sleeve so roughly from her clasp, he accomplished the desired freedom, but the look on Sunny's face stayed with him all the way down the stairs—he ignored the lift—and to the door of the house. There he stopped short, and without more ado retraced his steps, sprang up the stairs in a great hurry, and jerking open his door again, Jerry returned to his home. He discovered Sunny curled on the floor, with her head buried in the seat of his favourite chair—the one occupied that afternoon by the mischief-making Jinx.

"Sunny! I'm awfully sorry I was such a beast. Look here, little girl, I'm not myself. I don't know what I'm doing."

"Sunny slowly lifted her face, revealing

to the relieved but somewhat indignant Jerry a face on which it is true there were traces of a tear or two, but which nevertheless smiled at him quite shamelessly and even triumphantly. Jerry felt foolish, and he was divided between a notion to remain at home with the culprit—she had done nothing especially wrong, but he felt that she was to blame for something or other—or follow his first intention of going out for the night—just where, he didn't know—but anywhere would do to escape the thought that had come to him. The thought of Sunny's probable engagement to Jinx. However, Sunny gave him no time to debate the matter of his movements for the evening. She very calmly assisted him to remove his coat, hung up his hat, and when she had him comfortably ensconced in his favourite chair, had herself lit his pipe and handed it to him, she drew up a stool and sat down in front of his knees, just as if in fact she was entirely guiltless of an engagement which Jerry positively did not approve. Her audacity, moreover, was such, that she did not hesitate to lay her left hand on Jerry's knee, where he might get the full benefit of the radiant light from that ring. He looked at it, set down his pipe on the stand at his elbow, and stirred in that restless way which portends hasty arising, when Sunny :

"Jerry, Jinx are come to-day to ask me make marriage with him."

"Silly idiot! I pity any girl that has to go through life with that fat head."

"Ho! I are always lig' thad fat grow on Jinx. It look very good on him. I are told him so."

"Matter of taste, of course," snarled Jerry, fascinated by the twinkling of that ring in spite of himself, and feeling at that moment an emotion that was dangerously like hatred for the girl he had done so much for.

"Monty and Bobs are also ask me marry wis them," Sunny dimpled quite wickedly at this, but Jerry failed to see any humour in the matter. He said with assumed loftiness :

"Well, well, proposals raining down on you in every direction."

Jerry felt ashamed of himself, but he did not propose to reveal it, especially when that little hand had crept back to its

old place on his knee, and the diamond flaunted brazenly before his gaze. Nobody but a fat-head would buy a diamond of that size anyway, in Jerry's opinion. There was something extremely vulgar about diamonds. They were not nearly as pretty as rubies or emeralds or even turquoise, and Jerry had never liked them. Of course, Miss Falconer, like every other girl had to have her diamond, and Jerry recalled with irritation how he had purchased his first diamond, and he hoped his last. He neither enjoyed the expedition nor the memory of it. Jinx's brazen ring made him think of Miss Falconer's. However, the thought of Miss Falconer was, for some reason or other, distasteful to Jerry in these days, and, moreover, the girl before him called for his attention at that moment.

"So you decided on Jinx, did you? Bobs and Monty were discarded and the affluent fat and fair Jinx was the winner."

"Jerry, I are *prefer* marry all my friens', but I say 'No' to each one of those."

"What are you wearing Jinx's ring for, then?"

"Bi-cause it are loog nize on my hands, and he ask me wear it there."

Now emotions were flooding over the contrite Jerry. Something was racing like champagne through his veins, and he suddenly realised how jolly life was after all. Still even though Sunny had admitted that no engagement existed between her and Jinx, there was that ring. Poor little girl!

A fellow had to teach her all of the western conventions, she was that innocent and simple.

"Sunny, you don't want to wear a fellow's ring unless you intend to marry him, don't you understand that? The ring means that you are promised to him, do you get me?"

"No! But I are promise to Jinx. I are promise that I will consider marry him some day if I do not marry some other man I wan' ask me also."

"Another man. Who—?"

Sunny's glance directed full upon him left nothing to the imagination now. Jerry's heart began to thump in a manner that alarmed him.

"Jerry," said Sunny, "I am going to wear Jinx's ring *until* that man also asking me. I *wan'* him to do so, bi-cause I are lig' him mos' bes' of all my frien'. I thing——" She had both of her hands on his knees now, and was leaning up, looking so wistfully into his face that he tried to avert his own gaze. In spite of the lump that rose in his throat, in spite of the frantic beating of his heart, Jerry did not ask the question that the girl was waiting to hear. After a moment she said gently:

"Jerry, Hatty are tell me that nex' year he are come a Leap. Then, he are say, thas perlite for girl ask man make marriage wiz her. Jerry, I are goin' to wait till those year of Leap are come, and then, me? I are goin' ask *you* those question."

For one thrilling moment there was a great glow in the heart of Jerry Hammond, and then his face seemed suddenly to turn grey and old. His voice was husky and there was a mist to his eyes.

"Sunny, I must tell you—— Sunny, I—I—am already engaged to be married to an English girl—a girl my people want me to marry. I've been engaged to her since my eighteenth year. I—— *Don't* look at me like that, Sunny, or——"

The girl's head dropped to the level of the floor, her hands slipping helplessly from his knees. Somehow she seemed all in a moment to become purely Japanese. There was that in her bowed head that somehow was strangely reminiscent of some old and vanished customs of her race. She did not raise her head even as she spoke:

"I wishin' you ten thousand year of joy. Sayonara for this night."

Sunny had left him alone. Jerry felt the inability to stir. He stared into the dying embers of his fire with the look of one who has seen a vision that has disappeared ere he could sense its full significance. It seemed at that moment to Jerry as if everything desirable and precious in life were within reach, but he was unable to seize it. It was like his dream of beauty, ever above, but beyond man's power to completely touch. Sunny was like that, as fragile as elusive as

Beauty itself. The thought of his having hurt Sunny tore his heart. She who had aroused in him every impulse that was chivalrous, the longing to guard and cherish her being almost paramount to all other feelings. What was it Professor Barrowes had warned him of?—that he should refrain from taking the bloom from the rose. Had he, then, all unwittingly injured little Sunny?

Mechanically, Jerry went into the hall, slowly put his hat on his head and passed out into the street. He walked up and down, round the block in which his flat stood, retracing his steps three times to the studio building, and turning back again. His mind was in a chaos, and he knew not what to do. Only one clear purpose seemed to push through the fog, the passionate determination to care for Sunny. She came first of all. Indeed, she occupied the whole of his thought. The claim of the girl who had waited for him seven years seemed of minor importance when compared with the claim of the girl he loved. The disinclination to hurt another had kept him from breaking an engagement that had never been of his own desire, but now Jerry knew there could be no more evasions. The time had come when he must face the issue squarely. His sense of honour demanded that he make a clean breast of the entire matter to Miss Falconer. He reached this resolve while still walking up and down. It gave him no more than time to catch the last train to her home. As he stepped aboard the train that was bearing him from Sunny to Miss Falconer, all of the fogs had cleared from Jerry's mind. He was conscious of an immense sense of relief. It seemed strange to him that he had never taken this step before. Judging the woman by himself, he felt that he knew exactly what she would say when, with complete candour, he would lay his cards upon the table. She was a good sport. He did not delude himself with the idea that an engagement that had been so irksome to himself had been of any joy to her. It was simply, so he told himself, a mistake of their parents. They had planned and worked this scheme, and into it they had dumped these two young people at a psychological moment.

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CHAPTER XIII

For two days Sunny waited for Jerry to return. She was lonely and most unhappy, but hers was a buoyant personality, and, in spite of her hurt, she kept up a bright face before her little world of that duplex studio. In spite of the two nights when no sleep at all came, and she lay through the long hours trying vainly not to think of the wife of Jerry Hammond, in the day-time she moved about the small concerns of the flat with a smile of cheer, and found a measure of comfort in her pets.

It was all very well, however, to hug Itchy passionately to her breast, and assure herself that she had in her arms one true and loving friend. Always she set the dog sadly down again, saying:

"Ah, little honourable dog, you are jos' liddle dog, tha's all. How you can know whas ache on my heart? I do nod lig' you more for to-day."

She fed Mr. and Mrs. Satsuma and whistled and sang to them. After all, a canary is only a canary. Its bright, hard eye is blank and cold. Even the goldfish swimming to the top of the honourable bowl and picking the crumbs so cunningly from her finger lost their charm for her. Miss Spring Morning had long since been banished with severe Japanese reproaches, for his inhuman treatment of Sunny's first friends, the honourable mice, several of whose little bodies Sunny had confided to a grave that she herself had dug, with tears that aroused the caretaker's sympathy, so that he permitted the interment in the back yard.

The gramophone working incessantly the first day supplied merely noise. On the second morning she banged the top impulsively down, and cried at Caruso:

"Oh, I do not wan' hear your honourable voice to-day. Shut you up!"

Midway in an aria from "Rigoletto" the golden voice was quenched.

She hovered about the telephone, and several times lifted the receiver, with the idea of calling one of her friends, but always she rejected the impulse. Intuitively Sunny knew that until the first pang of her refusal had passed her friends were better away from her.

Little comfort was to be extracted from

Hatton, who was acting in a manner that had Sunny not been so absorbed by her own personal trouble would have caused her concern. Hatton talked incessantly and feverishly and with tears about his missus, and what she had driven him to, and of how a poor man tries to do his duty in life, but women were ever trouble-makers, and it was only "yuman nature" for a man to want a little pleasure, and he, Hatton, had made this perfectly clear to Mr. Hammond when he had taken service with him.

"A yuman being, miss," said Hatton, "is yuman, and that's all there is to it. Yuman nature 'as certain 'ankerings, and it's against yuman nature to gainsay them 'ankerings, if you'll pardon me saying so, miss."

However, he assured Sunny most earnestly that he was fighting the devil and all his works, which was just what "them 'ankerings" was, and he audibly muttered for her especial hearing, in proof of his assertion several times through the day: "Get thee be'ind me, Satan." Satan being "them 'ankerings, miss."

In normal times, Sunny's fun and cheer would have been of invaluable assistance and diversion to Hatton. Indeed, his long abstention was quite remarkable since she had been there; but Sunny, affect cheer as she might, could not hide from the sympathetic Hatton's gaze the fact that she was most unhappy. In fact, Sunny's sadness affected the impressionable and sympathetic Hatton so that the second morning he could stand it no longer, and disappeared for several hours, to return hiccupping cravenly and explainly:

"I couldn't 'elp it, miss. My 'eart haches for you, and it ain't yuman nature to gainsay the yuman 'eart."

"Hatton," said Sunny severely, "I are smell you on my nose. You are not smell good."

"Pardon me, miss," said Hatton, beginning to weep. "I'm sadly ashamed of myself, miss. If you'll pardon me, miss, I'll betake myself to less 'appy regions then Mr. 'Ammond's studio, miss, as it's my desire not to 'urt your sense of smell, miss. So if you'll pardon me, I'll say good-bye, miss, 'oping you'll be in a 'appier mood when next we meet."



"What are you doing in my son's flat?"

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For the rest of that day there was no further sign from Hatton. Left thus alone in the apartment, Sunny was sore put to find something to distract her, for all the old diversions, without Jerry, began to pall. She wished wistfully that Jerry had not forbidden her to make friends with other tenants in the house. She felt the strange need of a friend at this hour.

It will be seen, therefore, that Sunny, a stranger in a strange land, shut in alone in a studio, religiously following the instructions of Jerry to refrain from making acquaintances with anyone about her, was in a truly sad state. She started to house-clean, but stopped midway in panic, recalling the Japanese superstition that to clean or sweep a house when one of the family is absent is to precipitate bad fortune upon the house. So she got down all of Jerry's clothes and piously pressed and sponged them, as she had seen Hatton do, being very careful this time to avoid her first mistake in ironing. So earnestly had she applied herself to ironing the crease in the front of one of Jerry's trousers that first time that a most disastrous accident was the result. Jerry, wearing the pressed trousers especially to please her, found himself on the street the cynosure of all eyes as he manfully strode along with a complete split down the front of one of the legs, which the too ardent iron of Sunny had scorched. Having brushed and cleaned all of Jerry's clothes on this day, she prepared her solitary little lunch; but this she could not eat. Thoughts of Jerry sharing with her the accustomed meals was too much for the imaginative Sunny, and pushing the rice away from her she said:

"Oh, I do nod lig' put food any more ad my insides. I givin' you to my friends."

The contents of her bowl were emptied into the pail under the sink, which she kept always so clean, for she was under the delusion that said pail helped to feed the caretaker and his family.

All of that afternoon hung heavily on her hands, and she vainly sought something to interest her and divert her mind from the thought of Jerry. She found herself unconsciously listening for the bell, but, curiously enough all of that day neither the buzzer, the telephone, nor even the

door-bell rang. She made a tour of exploration to Jerry's sacred room, lovingly arranging his pieces on his chiffonier, and washing her hands in some toilet water that especially appealed to her. Then she found the bottle of hair tonic. Sniffing it, she decided it was very good, and painfully Sunny deciphered the legend printed on the outside, assuring a confiding hair world that the miraculous contents had the power to remove dandruff, invigorate, strengthen, force growth on bald heads, cause to curl and in every way improve and cause to shine the hair of the fortunate user of the same.

"Thas very good stuff," said Sunny. "He do grade miracle on top those head."

She decided to put the shampoo-tonic to the test, and accordingly washed her hair in Jerry's basin, making an excellent job of it. Descending to the studio, she lit the fireplace, and curled up on a big navahoc by the fire, wrapped in a gorgeous bathrobe belonging to Jerry, Sunny proceeded to dry her hair.

While she was in the midst of this process the telephone rang. The clerk at the desk announced that visitors were ascending. Sunny had no time to dress or even to put up her hair, and when, in response to the sharp bang upon the knocker, she opened the door, she revealed to the callers a vision that justified their worst fears. Her hair unbound, shining and springing out in lovely curling disorder about her, wrapped about in the bright embroidered bathrobe which the younger woman recognised at once as her Christmas gift to her fiancé, the work in fact, of her own hands. Sunny was a spectacle to rob a rival of complete hope and peace of mind. The cool fury of unrequited love and jealousy in the breast of the younger woman, and the indignant anger in that of the older, was whipped at the sight of Sunny into active and violent eruption.

"What are you doing in my son's flat?" demanded the mother of Jerry, raising to her eyes what looked to Sunny like a gold stick on which grew a pair of glasses, and surveying with pronounced disapproval the politely bowing, though somewhat flurried Sunny.

"I are live ad those house," said Sunny simply. "This are my home."

"You live here, do you! Well, I would have you know that I am the mother of the young man whose life you are ruining, and this young girl is his fiancé."

"Ho! I am very glad to make you 'quaintance," said Sunny, seeking to hide behind a politeness her shock at the discovery of the palpable rudeness of these most barbarian ladies. It was hard for her to admit that the ladies of Jerry's household were not models of fine manners, as she had fondly supposed, but, on the contrary, bore faces that showed no trace of the kind hearts which the girl from Japan had been taught by her mother to associate with true gentility. The two women's eyes met, with that exclamatory expression which says plainer than words:

"Of all the unbounded impudence, this is the worst!"

"I have been told," went on Mrs. Hammond haughtily, "that you are a foreigner—a Japanese." She pronounced the word as if speaking of something extremely repellant.

Sunny bowed, with an attempted smile that faded away as Jerry's mother continued ruthlessly:

"You do not look like a Japanese to me, unless you have been peroxidizing your hair. In my opinion you are just an ordinary bad girl."

Sunny said very faintly: "Aexcuse me."

She turned like a hurt dumb thing unjustly punished to the other woman, as if seeking help there. It had been arranged between the two women that Mrs. Hammond was to do the talking. Miss Falconer was having her fill of that curious satisfaction some women take in seeing in person one's rival. Her expression far more moved Sunny than that of the angry older woman.

"No one but a bad woman," went on Mrs. Hammond, "would live like this in a young man's apartment, or allow him to support her, or take money from him. Decent girls don't do that sort of thing in America. You are old enough to get out and earn for yourself an honest living. Aren't you ashamed of yourself, or are you devoid of shame, you bad creature!"

"Yes," said Sunny, with such a look that Jerry's mother's frown relaxed somewhat, "I am ashamed. I am sawry

that I are bad—woman. Aexcuse me this time. I try do better. I sawry I are—bad!"

This was plainly a full and complete confession of wrong, and its effect on the older woman was to arouse a measure of the Hammond compunction which always followed a hasty judgment. For a moment Mrs. Hammond considered the advisability of reading to this girl a little lecture that she had recently prepared to deliver before an institution for the welfare of such girls as she deemed Sunny to be. However, her benevolent intention was frustrated by Miss Falconer.

There is a Japanese proverb which says that the tongue three inches long can kill a man six feet tall, but the tongue of one's enemy is not the worst thing to fear. The cold smile of the young woman staring so steadily at her, had power to wound Sunny far more than the lacerating tongue of the woman, whom, she realised, she was fighting on her son's behalf. Very silken and soft was the manner of Miss Falconer as, insinuatingly, she brought Mrs. Hammond back to the object of their call. She had used considerable tact and strategy in arranging this call upon Sunny, having, in fact, induced Jerry to remain for at least a day or two at home, "to think matters over, and see whether absence would not prove to him that what he imagined to be love was nothing but one of those common aberrations to which men who lived in the East were said to be addicted." Jerry, feeling that he should at least do this for her, waited and Miss Falconer had called in the able and belligerent aid of his mother.

"Mother dear"—she already called Mrs. Hammond "mother." "Suppose—er—we make a quick end to the matter. You know what we are here for. Do let us finish and get away. You know, dear, that I am not used to this sort of thing, and, really, I'm beginning to get a nervous headache."

Stiffened and upheld by the young woman whom she had chosen as wife for her son, Mrs. Hammond delivered the ultimatum:

"Young woman, I want you to pack your things and clear out from my son's apartment at once. No argument! No

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excuses! If you do not realise the shamelessness of the life you are leading, I have nothing further to say, but I insist, insist most emphatically, on your leaving my boy's apartment this instant."

A key turned in the lock. Hatton, dusty and bedraggled, his hat on one side of his head and a cigarette twisting dejectedly in the corner of his mouth, stumbled in at the door. He stood swaying and smiling at the ladies, stuttering incoherent words of greeting and apology.

"La-adiesh, beggin' y'r pardon, itsha pleasure shee ttiish bright shpring day."

Mrs. Hammond, overwhelmed with shame and grief over the revelation of the disreputable inmates of her son's apartment turned her broad back upon Hatton. She recognised that man. He was the man she and Jerry's father had on more than one occasion begged their son to be rid of. Oh, if only Jeremy Hammond, senior, were here now!

Sunny, having heard the verdict of banishment, stood helplessly, like one who has received a death sentence, knowing not which way to turn. Hatton staggered up the stairs, felt an uncertain course along the gallery toward his room, and fell in a muddled heap midway of the gallery.

Sunny, half-blindly, scarcely conscious of what she was doing, had moved with mechanical obedience toward the door, when Mrs. Hammond haughtily recalled her.

"You cannot go out on the street in that outrageous fashion. Get your things, and do your hair up decently. We will wait here till you are ready."

"And suppose you take that bathrobe off. It doesn't belong to you," said Miss Falconer cuttingly.

"Take only what belongs to you," said Mrs. Hammond.

Sunny slowly climbed up to her room. Everything looked so strange and like a queer dream to her. She could scarcely believe that she was the same girl who but a few days before had joyously flitted about the pretty room, which showed evidence of her intensely artistic and feminine hands. She changed from the bathrobe to the little blue suit she had worn on the night she had arrived at Jerry's studio. From a drawer she drew forth the

small package containing the last treasures that her mother had placed in her hand. Though she knew that Mrs. Hammond and Miss Falconer were impatiently awaiting her departure, she sat down at her desk and painfully wrote her first letter to Jerry.

"Jerry sama,—How I thank you three and four time for your kindness to me. I am sorry I are not money to pay you back for all that same, but I will take nothing with me but those clothes on my body. Only bad girls take money from gentleman at this England. I are hear that to-day, but I are never know that before, or I would not do so. I have pray to Amaterasu-oho-mikami, making happy sunshine at your life. May you live ten thousand year. Sayonara. SUNNY."

She came out along the gallery, bearing her mother's little package. Kneeling by the half-awake but helpless Hatton, she thrust the letter into his hand.

"Good-bye, kind Hatton," said Sunny. "I sawry I are not see your face no more. I sawry I are make all those trouble for you wiz those gas stove an' those honourable mice. I never do those ting again. I hope mebbe you missus come home agin some day ad you. Sayonara."

"Wh-wheer y're goin', Shunny? Whatsh matter?" Hatton tried vainly to raise himself. He managed to pull himself a few paces along by holding to the gallery rails, but sprawled heavily down on the floor. The indignant voice of his master's mother ascended from the stairs:

"If you do not control yourself, my good man, I will be forced to call in outside aid and have you incarcerated."

Downstairs, Sunny, unmindful of the waiting women, ran by them into the kitchen. From goldfish to canaries she turned, whispering softly: "Sayonara, my friends. I sawry leaving you."

She was opening the window on the fire-escape, and Itchy, with a howl of joy, had leaped into her arms, when Mrs. Hammond and Miss Falconer, suspicious of something underhand, appeared at the door.

"What are you doing, miss? What is that you are taking?" demanded Mrs. Hammond.

Sunny turned, with her dog hugged up close to her breast.

"I are say good-bye to my liddle dog," she said—"Sayonara Itchy. The gods be good unto you."

She set the dog hastily back in the box, against his most violent protests, and Itchy immediately set up to such a woeful howling and baying as only a small mongrel dog, who possess psychic qualities and senses the departure of an adored one, could be capable of. Windows were thrown up and ejaculation and protests emanated from tenants in the court, but Sunny had clapped both hands over her ears, and without a look back at her little friend, and ignoring the two women she ran through the studio, and out of the front door.

After her departure a strange silence fell between Miss Falconer and Mrs. Hammond. The latter's face suddenly, worked spasmodically, and the strain of the day got the better of Jerry's mother. She sobbed unrestrainedly, mopping up the tears that coursed down her face. Miss Falconer fanned herself slowly, and unlike her usual solicitude for her prospective mother-in-law, she refrained from offering sympathy to the older woman, who presently said in a muffled voice:

"Oh, Stella, I am afraid that we may have done the wrong thing! It's possible that we have made a mistake about this girl. She seemed so very young, and her face—it was not a bad face, Stella—quite the contrary, now I think of it."

"Well, I suppose that's the way you look at it. Personally you can't expect me to feel any sort of sympathy for a bad woman like that."

"Stella, I've been thinking that a girl who would say good-bye to her dog like that cannot be wholly bad."

"I have heard of murderers who trained fleas," said Miss Falconer. Then, with a pretended yawn, she added: "But, really, we must be going now! It's getting very dark, and I'm dining with the Westmores at seven. I told Matthews we'd be ready shortly. He's downstairs with the car now."

She had picked up her gloves and was drawing them smoothly on, when Mrs. Hammond noticed the left one was ringless.

"Why, my dear, where is your ring?"

"Why, didn't suppose, did you, that I was going to continue my engagement to Jerry Hammond after what he told me?"

"But our purpose in coming here——"

"My purpose was to make sure that if I were not to have Jerry, neither should she—that Japanese doll!" All the bottled-up venom of the girl's nature came forth in that single utterance. "Do let us get away. Really I'm bored to extinction."

"You may go any time you choose, Miss Falconer," said Jerry Hammond's mother, "I shall stay here till my son returns."

It was less than half an hour later that Jerry burst into the studio. He came in with a rush, hurrying across the big room toward the kitchen and calling aloud:

"Sunny-San! Hi, Sunny! I'm back!"

So intent was he in discovering Sunny that he did not see his mother sitting in the darkened room by the window. Through dim eyes, Mrs. Hammond had been staring into the street and listening to the nearby rumble of traffic. Somehow the roar spelled to the woman the cruelty and the power of the mighty city, out into which she had driven the young girl, whose eyes had entreated her like a little wounded creature. The club woman thought of her admonitions and speeches to the girls she had professionally befriended, yet here, put to a personal test, she had failed signally.

"Jerry" her son, was coming through the studio again, calling up toward the gallery above.

"Hi, Sunny, old thing, where are you?"

He turned with a start as his mother called his name. His first impulse of welcome halted as he saw her face, and electrically there flashed through Jerry a realisation of the truth. His mother's presence there was connected with Sunny's absence.

"Mother, where is Sunny? What are you doing here? Where is Sunny I say?"

Another instalment of this novel will appear in the next issue of the
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