

Will You Wait For Me?

By Norma Bicknell Mansfield

ILLUSTRATED BY WENDELL KLING

It was through no fault of hers that other men had loved her. But Woodley was a long time in realizing this

AS WOODLEY drew closer to his destination he admitted at last he was on a fool's errand, the kind of thing a man of his age and former attainments should have had the wisdom to reject. But Penster had asked this service of him, and he had liked young Penster from that first day when they had been inducted together.

Troubled and uneasy, Woodley began to question his liking for Penster. He decided it was an irrational affection. Penster honestly believed the world was good, a theory Woodley had cast aside years before as impractical. Penster exalted love. Woodley was safely past that gulf. Penster trusted his emotions. It was Penster's emotion, Woodley saw abruptly, that had brought him out here today into the residential north end of a city he had never seen before. He had ridden forty miles in a crowded bus from camp, taken another bus to the end of the line and was walking now, resentfully, on the strength of Penster's emotion.

Woodley had thought he was immune to fervor, but one day Penster had said, "I won't have a chance to see her again before I go. It's the sort of thing you can't say over a telephone, not to her. She's more your kind than mine, Lance, honestly, but I want you to go to her home and ask her to wait for me. You'll do a better job of it than I would. Just ask her to wait, see?" Woodley had thought, even then, the boy should be told about women, but Penster's eagerness, his confidence, had deterred the older man.

Woodley trudged on, fog soft and dank on his face and hands. It had been quixotic of him not to take a taxi. The houses out here had become estates, set back from the road, half hidden by shrubs. Woodley, recalling his instructions from Penster, turned down a narrow, paved lane, and the smell of the Sound came up to him, salty and pungent.

Penster had said she would be at home today. On Saturdays she entertained soldiers. On other days, Woodley assumed, she entertained herself, having done her bit of war work for the week. Still, you had to hand her something for giving up one day a week. Lallie wouldn't have done it.

Lallie had been his wife, and they had lived in a place something like this, remote and socially unassailable, and it had been almost more than Lallie could bear to have him discuss bills with her once a month. She had begrudged even that much time from her own diversions. In the third year of their marriage, their last, she had begun to hark back to his beginnings when the bills came in. No one but Lallie could have devised so sure a devil's fork to spear him.

"You'll never get over pinching pen-

nies, Lance. Of course I'm expensive, but you can afford me." He could remember even now the sharpness of the pain awakened by his fear that she would leave him. And after she had got her divorce he could remember, too, the slow growth of relief in his heart, unadmitted at first, but welcome at last. Welcome because it brought knowledge, cynical but reliable. No one but Penster could have induced him to talk to a woman again about love.

He found the grilled gates Penster had mentioned and pushed through one and latched it behind him. Inside the grounds the hedge, taller than he, more than six feet high, shut him into a spacious privacy of clipped lawn and tended shrubs. The house was ivy-covered and remote; it reminded him of places he had seen in England. The bricks were old and, doubtless, dated.

AN OLD woman, gaunt and leather-skinned, let him into a wide hall.

"The others," she said, "are in the drawing room." By the others, she meant Saturday's soldiers.

"I'm not staying," Woodley said. "I want to see Mrs. Blaine. I have a message for her."

The old servant moved toward a doorway down the hall and Woodley followed her into a small room lined with filled bookshelves. There was an old, carved desk with letters and papers neatly stacked on top of it. There was a gardening glove, soiled and worn, flung down on the gleaming surface. The woman, with a quick glance around the room, picked up the glove and withdrew.

Woodley had no idea how long he would have to wait. A fire laid in the hearth was unlit and the fog outside the windows was gray and depressing, but the room was somehow warm in its aura and comforting. He could hear a piano going somewhere in the house and men's voices, taking courage as the music possessed them, singing heartily.

When the door opened and Blossom Blaine entered, he turned without anticipation. She was tall. Penster had told him she was tall, and he had prepared Woodley, too, for her beauty, the warm olive of her skin, the soft dark hair simply arranged, the dark eyes lustrous and appealing. All of these things Woodley had known she would have, but he had not been prepared for her vitality. Penster had conveyed the impression of languor, of ethereal charm.

"Hello," she said, and offered her hand with a quick, firm clasp. She stood, faintly smiling, waiting for him to speak, but with the moment upon him he realized he had not thought out what he would say. "Tilda said you had a message for me?" Her glance was candid, appraising him.

"Yes," Woodley said. "Bruce Penster asked me to stop by to see you."

"Bruce?" There was surprise and

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Lance put his arm around her and turned her to face him. "I'm eligible for a goodbye kiss," he said





The long arm of the U. S. Government reaches out to crush the handful of chiselers and profiteers who would victimize their own country

WAR FRAUDS MUST BE PUNISHED, NOW

BY FRANCIS BIDDLE

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

The home-front traitors who see the nation's peril in terms of profits rather than lives aren't going to get away with it this time. Enough of them have already found this out to make our record, so far, the best in any war we've ever fought

WHEN Americans are called upon to show how they can bear up under the strain of a war crisis, their best is always a shock to their enemies; their worst, a shock to themselves. Along with our fighting men and the great body of grimly determined citizens ready to do their full part, we have a wretched little handful of chiselers and cheats, who would victimize their own country—the shoddy scattering of profiteers, black marketeers, ration-card loopholers, and perpetrators of war frauds. Unmindful that their own skins are being saved from Axis terrorism, they go on twisting and devising and squeezing, trying to fatten on the patriotism of their neighbors and the war emergency.

The picture they make in the midst of war is not a pretty one. Part of it has come before the public in the war-fraud disclosures made to date by the Department of Justice. Many of us have been shocked, some alarmed. It is hard for us to believe that while our men are facing death on distant battlefields any-

one here at home could send them defective equipment for the sake of larger profits to himself.

Yet looking at the isolated instances of fraud, within the broader picture of our vast war program as a whole, we need not be alarmed. We are not losing this war to our enemies within. Against the volume of our war production, the amount of real damage has been trifling. And we are going after those who are responsible, and hitting hard—not after the war is over, but now.

Anyone who thinks that war fraud is a modern innovation need only consult the record. Fraudulent transactions have, unhappily, entered every war we've fought. Charges were flying thick and fast during the Revolution—one, for example, brought by the Committee of Safety against a man who had purchased cloth on commission for the Continental Congress and had charged fifty per cent more than its cost. There were serious abuses connected with shipping. In 1776, Congress agreed to reimburse shippers if the cargoes they sent out should fall into the hands of the enemy. The claims for losses became so heavy that the guarantee had to be dropped. George Washington wrote to the New York legislature that he had "almost incontestable proof . . . that a ship went from hence, sailed with no other view and joined the enemy at the Hook."

In the Civil War, "remarkable combinations" were reported by a Congressional committee investigating government contracts in 1861. "The profits from the sale of arms to the government have been enormous, and realized, too, in many

instances, even by our own citizens, through a system of brokerage as unprincipled and dishonest, as unfriendly to the success and welfare of the nation as the plottings of actual treason."

The report goes on to cite a \$49,000 profit on a sale of carbines "at the very best not exceeding \$60,000 in value;" a 40 per cent profit on blankets for the Army; and "great irregularities in the purchase of horses and wagons." The same kind of transactions appear in records of the Spanish-American War, especially in the furnishing of food of poor quality at exorbitant prices.

Shipbuilders Come Under Fire

In 1934, scanning the record of the first World War, a Senate committee studying the munitions industry found the wartime performance of certain shipbuilders "close to being disgraceful. . . . They secured cost-plus contracts and added questionable charges to the costs. . . . They secured changes in contract dates to avoid war taxes. . . . They bought from the government, very cheaply, yards which had been built expensively at government costs. In one case, this was prearranged before the yard was built. . . . Profits were concealed as rentals. . . . If there were no conversations about bidding among them, there was telepathy."

Four years after the fighting ended in 1918, the Department of Justice set up a "War Transactions Section" to comb through some 30,000 ordnance contracts, in the hope of recovering overpayments. All those contracts were marked

closed." For the investigators, the going at that late date was not easy. Witnesses and evidence were missing; the cases were "cold," and so was the public, which had had enough of war and everything connected with it. Yet the War Transactions Section managed to recover more than \$11,000,000. Although a few criminal cases were developed, convictions were even more difficult than money recoveries. The section finished with only one verdict of guilty.

Such lag in the administration of our laws is totally unnecessary and has serious consequences on public morale. We have executed spies and saboteurs; traitors have been convicted; fraud must be punished severely, and the time for prosecution is now. With a tremendous purchase program, we should not be surprised to find a certain amount of cheating; but in a war with the Axis, any cheating is too much; and any delay in the discovery, prosecution and punishment of those guilty of it is too long. Treachery is not a matter for library research ten or twenty years hence.

As a result of a suggestion from Congressman Hatton W. Sumners of Texas, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who was very much concerned with our experiences in the last war (he became a member of Congress in 1913), I set up a War Frauds Unit in the Department of Justice in February, 1942.

The nucleus of the new unit was formed with personnel from the Antitrust and Criminal divisions of the Department of Justice, a staff well seasoned in the handling of kindred problems in peacetime industry. To head it, I picked Tom C. Clark, a 42-year-old Texan with a good prosecutive sense.

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