



THE DUB

A Job-Hunter's ♥♥♥ ♥♥♥ *Love Story*

by
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Illustrations by
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LILY did not wait to say good-by to the other girls; she had not made friends with any of them in the few weeks she had worked for Garden & Company. She did not make friends easily, although she had often wished that she had the gift. After her hat and coat were on, she walked from the lockers through the main office, nodding farewell to three or four of the stenographers and clerks, but not stopping to speak.

She was sorry she had been discharged, but she was not worried. She felt quite confident of finding another position shortly. Lily was well equipped to fend for herself. Almost as long as she could remember she had been compelled to do so, and through these years of self-support she had been constantly perfecting the tools that brought her a livelihood. Besides, there was added consolation in the knowledge that her savings amounted to about five hundred dollars.

She walked down the dim hall. It was the time of day when daylight lingers as if waiting for the lights of man. On the way to the elevator she passed the seldom-used stairs. In their bend, half concealed, she made out a man sitting in a crouching position. Lily walked on, but, just as she was about to press the button for the

elevator, she determined to go back. It had come to her that the man was some one she knew.

She turned, and in a moment, climbing the few steps to the bend, stood before him. She was right; he was one of the young men who worked in the bookkeeping department. She had often furtively admired his young vitality.

He did not look up until she touched him. Then he started, lifting a shamed face and reddened eyes to hers. "What do you want?" he asked surlily.

"You laid off, too?"

He nodded and resumed his former position.

Lily waited a moment, and then said, "There's no use going on like this about it."

He looked up with a flicker of anger. "Oh, there ain't, ain't there? Much you know about it, butting into other people's affairs! It don't mean much to you, perhaps. Probably you just work to have spending money." His eyes swept over her neat attire. "But me, all I've got is my week's salary — all I've got in the world, and two weeks' board due, and all my clothes looking like the devil. I'm down and out."

Lily sighed. She thought it a hopeless case — she might as well be on her way — but she sat down near him, a step below.

"There's plenty of other jobs," she said.

"Not for me," he answered, looking at her, and wondering a little at her interest. "I can't seem to keep a job. I was just hoping this would be permanent. I was doing my best here — honest, I was! And they gave me the G. B. — I guess because I was incompetent."

"It wasn't that at all," Lily declared warmly. "You're not the only one that was laid off. How about me? I'm competent, and don't you

forget it! There were about six others, too — the ones that had been there the shortest time. And business being slow was the only reason.”

“Yes, business being slow,” he repeated; “and then you’re jollying me into thinking it’s a cinch to get another job.” He stopped, and then said suddenly, “Say, what’s your game, anyway?”

As he looked up into Lily’s face, she noted the weakness of the mouth and chin; yet she admired his straight, sharply carved features and his splendid, muscular throat. She wished she could help him — he so evidently needed help. And yet he angered her; she felt a desire to shake him; and if she were a man, she thought, she would not only shake him but swear at him. It seemed to be what he needed.

But she chose another course. She put her hand firmly on his shoulder. “Come along!” she said. “Somebody’s likely to see you here any minute. Let’s go outside; and as we go along we’ll talk it over.”

Outside, it was March. There was a little sunshine left, but the wind was cold. They walked across the City Hall Park until they came to two vacant seats on a bench near the fountain. “Let’s sit here,” said Lily.

They did not talk for a few minutes; each had grown a little shy of the other. Finally Lily asked: “What’s your name?”

“George Scott.”

“Well” (it seemed foolish to call him “Mister”), “well, George, what are you going to do about a new position?”

He had almost forgotten his troubles, but the question plunged him back into his depression. “Answer ads; see my friends; look around,” he said briefly.

“That’s all right,” she answered; “but it requires more than that. It needs —” She gave him a quick side glance and then wondered if it were worth explaining. That brought a new idea.

“I’ll tell you what you do. Come to my house to-morrow morning, and we’ll answer the ads together. I’ll help you and you can help me.”

He brightened visibly. “That is nice of you. What time shall I come?”

From her hand-bag she took a card on which her name and address were printed; she scribbled “8.30” on it and handed it to him. “At that time; then we can have the parlor to ourselves. None of the other boarders are up Sunday mornings before ten.”

She shivered and stood up, holding out her hand. “Good-bye until then, and — and don’t worry.”

He took her hand, pressed it hard, and left her without speaking.

George was on time the next morning, and they sat in the front parlor with a Sunday paper’s “want” columns spread over the table before them. Lily read the advertisements and George wrote the answers as she dictated. Working in this way, they answered eight advertisements for him and five for her.

Finally she threw down the paper and jumped to her feet. “That seems to be about all. Now, what do you bet that we don’t both get a position this same week?” she laughed.

George caught her enthusiasm. “Well, we ought to, if letters count for anything.”

They were silent. He fumbled at his coat lapel, while she lifted and replaced a vase on the mantel.

“Shall we go out for a walk?” he asked suddenly.

She swung around, smiling. “Oh, I can’t go this morning. I have lots of sewing and things to do. Sunday is just as much a work-day for me as any other. If it wasn’t, goodness knows what I’d look like. But I’ll tell you what you do, if you want to,” she added. “Come about four o’clock this afternoon, and I’ll go.”

He was there again sharply at four; Lily was ready, and they started. It had grown mild overnight; the air was of the peculiarly soft, fragrant quality that foretells spring.

They had walked up to the park and part way back, when George said: “Can’t you take dinner with me? I know where we can get a fine meal for thirty-five cents. You’re doing so much for me, I’d like to have you.”

Lily slipped her hand through his arm. “And you broke and out of work,” she said. “Not much!”

But he urged her, and at last they compromised: Lily would go if she might pay for her own dinner. They crossed to Sixth Avenue, and on one of the meaner side streets found the restaurant, which, he assured her, was “elegant for the money.”

The meal seemed to bring them closer together; in a way, it put a new aspect on their relationship. Lily was no longer the dominating personality; it was George who shone forth. His ready talk and good looks both helped. But — perhaps for that very reason — Lily enjoyed herself immensely. She had seldom gone out with men; life, so far, had denied her a “beau.” She wondered what the other girls in the restaurant thought of George; she imagined that some of them envied her.

The time passed so quickly that in an incomprehensibly short time they were outside again. As they stood there, a man, flashily dressed and with bright, protuberant eyes, swung past; he glanced from George to Lily, then back again.

"Hello, Georgie, my boy," he sang out, raising his hat.

George waved his hand. "Hello, Bill."

Lily waited a moment, and then asked, "Who's that man, George?"

"Why, it's a friend of mine; I used to go to school with him."

"I don't like him. What does he do?"

George evidently did not hear.

"What does he do, George?" she repeated.

"He — he runs a pool-room."

"Do you have anything to do with that?" she asked quickly.

He shook his head and answered, with a trace of sullenness, "Not lately."

By that time they were walking down the street. When they turned into Sixth Avenue, George proposed a moving-picture show.

Lily agreed to go on the same terms on which she had consented to the dinner, and they walked up to Twenty-third Street, to a theater where a continuous bill of vaudeville and moving pictures was offered to the public for twenty cents.

Lily had beguiled many an otherwise lonely hour at moving-picture shows, but she had never enjoyed one as much as she did this. As George leaned a little toward her, she was conscious of his arm against hers. To go with some one was much nicer than going alone, thought Lily.

When the illustrated songs came, and the singer, with an air of frightened good-fellowship, invited the audience to join in the chorus, Lily and George both sang. "Let's sing right out loud," she said. "I've never dared to before, but I've always wanted to."

Together they followed the words on the screen, and the pretty, lilting music haunted Lily's heart ever after that night. "There'll never be another girl like you — you — you!" (Lily wondered if George felt it as she did.) "And you I'll always love, dear, for you're true — true — true!"

Soon after that the continuous bill began to reroll from the act at which it had been when they entered. Lily and George, with some others, passed through the red-lighted "Exit" into the street, and George saw Lily home to the boarding-house on East Seventeenth Street.

"Will I see you again?" he asked rather forlornly, standing at the gate.

"Why, of course; I'm not going to lose track of you until you've got a good job." She thought for a moment. "Suppose we meet at six o'clock Tuesday night at the restaurant and compare notes."

With that agreement they parted.

Lily went upstairs to her tiny hall bedroom.

She locked the door, and then, without removing her hat and coat, sat down in the one chair. "I wonder what I'm doing it for?" she said, her eyes round with musing.

Her thoughts flew back and forth over the events — they were events — of the night. How really handsome George was — how strong, how big! And yet he didn't amount to much. He really knew very little, she thought reluctantly. He was inefficient — and she detested inefficiency. She had often thought that if she ever loved a man he must not only be strong and virile, but he must be capable and commanding; he must be a leader, even if he led only a gang of street laborers. But what right had she to think of love? Then she wondered if, by any strange distortion of fancy, George could think her pretty — she who all her life had cried a protest against her own unattractiveness.

With her head full of these musings, she got up and prepared for bed. "Well, I'll get him a job, and then he'll forget all about me," she told herself, as she turned out the light. "But if he doesn't forget," valiant hope sang on, "what then?"

"Lily Ritter, you're a fool!" she cried aloud, vehemently, and jumped into bed. It was her final summing up of the situation.

Tuesday night found Lily at the restaurant first. She had received three replies to her five letters, and was triumphant with the promise from one firm of a trial. She was to begin work in the morning. "Now, if only George has something," she thought. But at that moment she saw him enter, and she knew immediately that he had not been as fortunate as she.

Nevertheless, as soon as he was seated opposite her, she said with assumed gaiety, "What's the news?"

He shook his head. "I got answers from four places, but nothing doing. I've got one more place to go to in the morning."

Her small clenched hand came down on the table. "Now, look here, George! You've got to get that place — do you hear? You say to yourself, as you're going in, 'I'm going to have it,' and feel that you are — look it — and you'll get it. That's my plan."

He straightened his shoulders as she spoke. "Gee! I wish you could come along with me."

"Oh, you'll get it all right, George. Remember, I expect you to."

They arranged to meet again the next evening.

All through her work that day Lily kept wondering how George was succeeding. "If these people knew what I was thinking all the time, I see how my trial would end!" she admonished



"LILY READ THE ADVERTISEMENTS, AND GEORGE WROTE THE ANSWERS AS SHE DICTATED"

herself, as her trained fingers flew over the keyboard. But when the end of the work-day came at half past five, she gathered, from what her new employer said, that already she had "made good."

She rode in the subway to Fourteenth Street, and walked the few blocks to the little eating-place. It was George who was there first that night, and almost before Lily was seated he cried out to her radiantly: "I got it, Lily! I got it!"

In her pleasure, she placed her hand over his. "I'm so glad!" she said.

Both talked eagerly of their new positions until, toward the end of the meal, a constraint fell upon them. Each stole occasional glances at the other. Presently Lily said, "Will — will I see you again?"

He nodded. "Of course."

"I'll be glad to have you call any night," she said, trying to put it indifferently.

They parted when they reached Sixth Avenue;

George said he had an engagement with some friends. Lily went home alone.

"And he didn't say when he'd come to see me," she murmured, as she walked along. "I suppose this'll be the end of it for me." She knew she was not pretty; she knew she had not that charm with which other girls seemed to attract men so easily.

She tried to become accustomed to the thought that she would never see George again, and in doing so it suddenly burst upon her that, completely and irrevocably, she loved him; knowing his weakness and his faults, she loved him. It seemed incredible that in so short a time this love had become as vital a part of herself as her flesh and blood.

"He's a dub!" she reasoned angrily. "Think of me loving a dub!"

By the time she reached home she had ceased to fight against this love; she had surrendered to it. She stood looking up at the stars — they

seemed strangely near and brilliant to-night. "Love!" she whispered. "Love! And it's come to me at last!"

That was Wednesday night. Thursday came, and Saturday; another week slipped by; but she neither saw nor heard from George. The following Saturday night she went to the restaurant where they had dined together. "It isn't that I expect to see him there," she told herself, and even as she said it she knew she lied. Presently he came in and saw her. He looked away quickly and made as if to go to another table. But suddenly he swung around and sank into the seat opposite hers without speaking.

"What — what's the matter?" she asked.

"I'm ashamed to even look at you," he said, covering his eyes with his hand.

Lily did not say anything, but, feeling the direct gaze of her eyes upon him, he blurted out: "They let me go Wednesday night; said my work was not satisfactory."

Now that Lily knew the worst, she summoned all her courage to his aid. "They're not the only people you can work for, George," she cried angrily. "We got that job easy; we can get another just as easy."

He shook his head. "You could, Lily; but there's something lacking in me. I'm in wrong."

Lily fought with his depression. After they left the restaurant, they walked along as far as the Sixties, and all the way she said at intervals, "Just keep a stiff upper lip, George," or, "Something is sure to show up, and meanwhile you can count on me."

They turned and walked back; and presently they came to the park on East Eighteenth Street, and found a bench.

"Here I am, a great, overgrown brute," he said bitterly—"feel the muscles of my arm, Lily." Her fingers touched him lightly. "And I can't make enough to keep myself. What's the matter with me? What's the good of keeping at it?"

After some persuasion, Lily made him promise to come to her boarding-house in the morning, and let her answer some advertisements for him.

But, although George received several replies to these letters, it seemed impossible for him to get anything. A week passed, and then another. Lily saw him almost every other night. Each time she managed to send him forth with some small share of new courage. But at times she could have wept with despair; at others she felt that she could hardly control her tongue from telling him that it was his own inefficiency that held him down; and yet, all the time, she had to restrain a desire to enfold him in her arms, to comfort him with soft touches of

her hands and lips. It seemed as if her love had grown until it would stifle her. "Think of me loving such a dub!" she repeated again and again, with fierce self-scorn; but it did no good.

At last there was an evening when George came to her and said, with a strange absence of triumph: "Well, I've got a job."

She studied him from beneath her lowered eyelashes. "What is it, George?" she asked.

"I'm not going to tell you!" — this defiantly.

Lily said nothing. She adopted an indifferent tone. "Well, shall we go out for a walk?"

Suddenly he turned to her. "Oh, Lily!" he cried brokenly; then he controlled himself. "Yes, let's go out," he said.

It was April now. Instinctively they sought the quieter streets, walking along without speaking. Finally they came from the calm of a night-deserted business street into the glare and roar of the Bowery. "Where are we, anyway?" asked Lily.

George looked at a lamp-post. It was Canal Street. "Let's go down to the bridge," he suggested.

They were soon there. Midway, they stood leaning on the rail. Far beneath them, the dark waters glistened. George, looking up, found Lily's eyes full upon him. He knew the reason.

"Remember that man we met one night in front of the restaurant?" he asked.

Lily remembered. "Yes; the one I didn't like?"

"I went to see him the other day, and he offered me a job — a good job," he added hurriedly; "twenty a week."

"The man who ran the pool-room?" she asked.

He nodded.

"Oh, George!" she exclaimed, and the tone called a defense from him.

"I had to take it, Lily," he said. "You've tried hard to make something out of me; but you couldn't. What difference does it make if I do take it?"

She put her hand on his sleeve. "I can't let you do this, George — I can't. You can't take it!" The words came hurriedly. "I'll give you money until you get a position; but don't take this."

He dropped his arm, and her hand fell from it. He did not meet her eyes as he said: "It's all settled."

"What can I do?" Lily thought. She knew that if George took this position it would ruin him. His weakness and the constant temptations — the rottenness of the whole thing! She pictured him going down and down.

It was George who broke the silence by saying hesitantly, "I've often thought if I could get away from New York, if I could go West or

even on a farm somewhere, I'd make good. I'm in wrong somehow. You've helped me a lot, Lily, but even you couldn't make a go out of it — here. This" — he lifted his strong arms — "don't count for much in the city."

Suddenly Lily knew that he was right. Out West — somewhere else — there would be a chance for him. Here he was "in wrong." Well, she could send him West; she had the money — five hundred dollars; she'd give him half. But at that thought she stopped. What of her? She couldn't send him away. It wasn't as if he would come back to her. She couldn't hold him — deep down within her, she knew that for the truth. If she sent him away, he would probably be successful, but it would be the end of him for her. "Oh, I can't do it!" The cry came so clearly it seemed to her almost as if she had uttered it aloud. "Oh, I can't!"

Then, passionately, as if she wished to keep in advance of her desires, she took his hand between hers. "I can send you away, George," she said. "I have the money, and you can have it."

He looked at her curiously. "Lily —" he began, and choked. "Why are you so good to me? But — I can't take it!"

"It'll just be a loan." She spoke in a way that seemed to stamp her words as true prophecy. "I know, as well as I know that I'm standing here, that you'll make good. *I feel it!* It'll be a loan and you can repay me."

He shook his head, but she continued to plead with him. Presently he began to talk hopefully; he began to plan for a new life; and Lily became the silent one. She listened with a dull pain at her breast, that grew and grew, so that she could have cried out with the agony of it. She was afraid to look at George; she was almost afraid to speak to him. They stood for a long while; a policeman passed, gazing at them inquiringly, smiling, with a shrug of his shoulders.

They started for home. As they passed the

Fox Building, the clock showed a quarter to twelve. They had been on the bridge for more than three hours! When they reached the street, they boarded a car, and in about fifteen minutes were before the house where Lily lived.

Hardly a word had been spoken on the way home. One or two glances at George's face told Lily that he was still thinking of his future — his future without her.

"I'll get the money to-morrow — it's at a private banker's," she said; "and you can start Sunday. Good night." She held out her hand without looking at him.

But he was still full of his plans. He started to speak of them again, but now the confidence of his first enthusiasm was over. Before long he said: "But suppose I don't succeed, Lily? Suppose I lose your money — what then?"

"Don't get talking that rot, George," she answered. "Of course you'll succeed."

"It'll seem awful new — awful lonely, at first," he continued. "Here I had you to help me, and other friends. There I won't even have Bill to offer me a position in a pool-room." He took her hand and held it. "Say, Lily, why — why can't you come, too?"

She was trembling. "What do you mean, George?"

"Why can't you come along as my wife and my pal? You can make something out of me, Lily. You can make me succeed. And, God knows, I need you!"

She did not speak for a moment. She knew why he asked her — simply because he was afraid to go alone. But finally she turned to him with "Oh, George, I think in some ways you're an awful dub," — she was sobbing, — "but I do love you, and I — perhaps that is what I was made for — to help you. Besides, I think I need you just as much as you need me! So —"

"Yes?" he urged.

"So let's go together."



MISS CAL

BY

ELIZABETH ROBINS

AUTHOR OF "COME AND FIND ME" AND "THE MAGNETIC NORTH"

ILLUSTRATION (SEE FRONTISPIECE) BY F. WALTER TAYLOR

THEY were talking, one evening, at a London dinner-party about a girl who was coming later in the evening to sing. People were mildly curious about the nameless one — "Oh, quite unknown," said the hostess; "a young American."

But London knew what to expect at Lady St. Edmond's. "A little music after dinner," was the way the invitations ran when Paderewski was to play. To-night it was to be Kreisler and Tetrassini and the Unknown.

"Where did you hear her?" somebody asked.

The lady in the smoke-colored gauze and the wonderful emeralds smiled as she confessed: "Like you, I shall hear her to-night for the first time."

"Aren't you rather nervous — considering who's here?" demanded her brother-in-law.

All the eyes at our end of the table followed the direction of Lord Seale's. With one accord they fastened on the man who sat between the hostess and myself. Foreigner though I was, I had not lived in London all these years without knowing something of the meaning of that instinctive appeal to the slightly bored, gently cynical, middle-aged man at my side. Eighteen years ago my first glimpse of Noel Berwick had revealed a tall, extravagantly slim man of thirty-one or -two, with delicate, indeterminate features and charming, if slightly supercilious, manners. To-day I knew that not his inherited high place in the English hierarchy, any more than the despotic power he had come to exercise in politics, not even the personal charm that his bitterest opponent could not deny — none of these causes had focussed the attention of a gathering like this upon the man sitting between the hostess and myself. His power of imposing fastidious, intensely circumscribed taste in art and letters had ruled this little great world for twenty years. He had made it the fashion to be "intellectual" — within limits. As one noted the sensitiveness of the instant response to his faintest playing upon the organ of social opinion, one remembered Oscar Wilde's saying: "A man

who can dominate a London dinner-party can do anything on earth." It is not and never was true, but the *mot* gives some measure of the combination of gifts required for such social ascendancy as Berwick's.

People dreaded the faint irony of his reflective smile more than another man's loud denunciation. A shrug of the stooped shoulders was committal to outer darkness. No need for him to cry: "So much for Buckingham!" — the head of the unfortunate was already weltering in the basket.

Before dinner, Lady St. Edmond had whispered in my ear: "Olive Hertford will be furious because she isn't put next him. But she's too *exigeante*. He's tired — harassed. That horrible all-night sitting! Mind, *no politics!*" she said, shaking her pretty head till the long emerald and diamond earrings flew out and scattered splinters of light. "He must be gently diverted."

I was not over-pleased with my task. If, in common with all the world, I felt Noel Berwick's charm, I resented his easy despotism. I resented other people's assuming the supreme importance of saying to *him* "the right thing" and never praising the wrong. Well enough, I told myself, to remember that this was a party. All life was more or less "party" to Noel Berwick.

But now, seated at the table, with all these eyes following Lord Seale's to my neighbor, I came under the spell of the common wonder as to how even Lady St. Edmond had dared ask an untried stranger to sing before this man.

"I am not in the least nervous," she answered, "because Miss — a — the young lady was recommended by Mr. Berwick."

I was intensely conscious that he would rather she had left that unsaid.

"Well, in matters *musical*," said the Liberal whip who had taken me down, "we are all willing to follow Mr. Berwick." The gibe fell flat on Tory ears.

Interest in the Unknown had enormously quickened. A question from the other side of the table elicited from the great man the languid information that he had heard the girl only once.