

forward. Big Tim set himself and his fist smashed to the man's jaw. He fell as if he had been hit with a mallet.

One of the men whom Big Tim had put down first made as if to rise. Jimmie struck him "quick and sharp" and he lay still.

"It is not much of a fight, is it?" Big Tim asked. "Well, we'll have some fun with this un."

He suddenly seized the last man by the waist and tossed him into the river. Tim stood on the dock and peered down at the dark water. He could hear the man strike out for him. Leaning far over, he extended his hands and the man seized them.

"Up with ye," Big Tim said, and he lifted him up beside him.

Once more he caught him about the waist and tossed him. Once more he assisted him to the dock. And still once more he seized him about the waist.

"Fer Gawd's sake, don't do it again," the man pleaded. "Do you want to drown me?"

"I aint that particular that I care," Big Tim answered. "You've been the leader av them. I have no doubt ye kicked the hardest when ye had the lame lad down. In ye go!"

When the man had been assisted to the dock for the third time he lurched to his knees.

"I've enough of it," he said. "Leave go."

"Lie down there where the lad can black-jack ye if ye stir," Big Tim ordered. And to the two he had knocked down first: "Get up now."

They rose.

"One more round with you an' we're done," he said.

Together the men sprang upon him. But he was ready. His big fist crashed into the face of one, and he fell and did not rise. Big Tim took the other about the waist.

"I can't swim," the man screamed. "I can't swim."

"Aw, ye wharf rat," Big Tim exploded, and he lifted him and cast him against the side of the building.

The man did not get up.

"Come on, lad," said Big Tim.

Perhaps you killed that last man," said Jimmie when they had gained the street.

"Naw," said the gladiator. "I trun him so's his body took the force av the blow. His head wont be cracked. Maybe a bone broken; no worse."

They came to Mrs. Egan's door. Big Tim stepped inside for a moment behind Jimmie.

"I'm off to Mike's to drink yer health—all av ye," he said. "It may be that somebody over there will have a word to say against you two youngsters. I haven't got started yet, an' the night is young."

"Well," said Mrs. Egan when Kitty and Jimmie had explained at great length, "I wish I had another daughter an' she'd marry Tim. He's a man after my own heart. Just think of him swallyin' his own sorrow and going down there with Jimmie when he hadn't got over the shock—"

"The shock?" Kitty laughed. "Oh, Mother, Jimmie and Tim and I knew just what was going to happen. Jimmie heard the men talking it over yesterday—about the diver and all. So I said to Jimmie: 'We'll get married right away. We can't go on like this.' So we were married, and to-night I called up Tim—"

"Ye called up Tim?" Mrs. Egan interrupted. "It was a man on the telephone."

"Oh, I got a man to call up for me," said Kitty. "When Tim came to the phone I asked him to meet me. I told him there was no chance for him to marry me, since I was married already. But there was a good chance for him to get a fight out of it."

"Tim is a man that's lovin' every girl he meets." A touch of Irish came into her voice. "He's never happy lest he's lovin' or fightin'. It's anny maid to love or anny man to fight with him." She glanced at her husband. "Besides, why wait?" she concluded.



## The Fitter-In

By OLIVER JAMES



I NEVER could quite convince myself which attracted me most to Allison's—Allison himself, or the picture. I liked Allison immensely, but after my discovery of the picture I visited his apartment twice as frequently as before. It held a peculiar fascination for me from the beginning, and to its fascination Allison added a lure of mystery. It was the picture of a girl—one of the sweetest faces that I had ever seen, and from the first I saw that my friend prized it above all of his other possessions. The face was of a rare type of southern beauty, and yet possessed of a gentle sweetness which one would not have expected to find in that type—a face which one might never forget, and which became more beautiful the longer one looked at it. From the night that I first saw the face it was indelibly impressed upon my memory. It was always with me, a mysterious visitant of all hours and moods, an elusive and unreal thing of my daily life; haunting me insistently. I began to look for it among the hundreds whom I met each day, and the more I sought, the more a part of my existence it became, until frequently I found that I was going to see the photograph instead of Allison.

Allison was directly responsible, though under the circumstances I quite readily forgive him. I am not of a temperament to fall in love with a picture, and I am sure that if he had told me something about it at the beginning it would not have worked out its little tragedy for me. But he told me nothing. Twice I asked who the girl was, and

each time he replied with an evasiveness which I could not fail to understand. He never mentioned the picture himself, and always when I handled it, or spoke of it, he would maneuver cleverly to draw my interest in another direction.

Often I wondered why he did not rid himself of the picture, or at least place it beyond the reach of my hands. But it was never missing. It was not difficult for me to see that its mysterious effect upon him increased with the frequency of my visits. At the same time some subtle influence seemed reaching out from the photograph, fastening itself upon me more and more, and filling me with an indefinable uneasiness where before there had been only pleasurable sensations. I was oppressed by an unaccountable loneliness when I left Allison's room, as though in that room there were a living, breathing presence, something that was warm and beautiful, and which called me back to it irresistibly. The presence became more real to me as the days passed, haunting me into a torment of desire, until I knew that to find the original of the girl in the photograph had become the greatest wish of my life.

I said nothing of this to Allison, but struggled to overcome the strange influence of the picture. Perhaps I would have succeeded had it not been for a discovery which I made one evening when Allison was down upon the street purchasing fresh cigars. At least I tried to console myself with the belief that I would have succeeded. I had taken the photograph and was looking at it closely under the reading lamp when sud-

denly I was aware that a change had come over it. The beautiful eyes were fading. The sweet face seemed looking at me as if from out of a growing shadow, and over the whole there was gathering a soft grayish film. I held the picture at arm's length, and the result startled me. There was no doubt—the face was slowly disappearing! Even as I looked, I fancied that it grew fainter, and that I saw the gray film thickening in a ghostly veil over the lovely eyes. A low cry fell from my lips, and I felt the strange presence as I had never experienced it before, thrilling me with a trembling excitement—with something that was almost fear. I did not hear Allison's returning footsteps in the hall. I did not see him as he stood in the door staring at me. It was his quick, excited breathing that caught me first, and I turned upon him like a flash, holding out the picture. I was startled again—this time by the look in his face. His eyes flashed with a dull fire. His cheeks were flushed. I saw that he was crushing the cigars in his hand.

For a full half minute we stared at each other. Then he came in, closing the door softly behind him, but without taking his eyes from mine.

"Has she—has she done that to you—too?" he asked. It was not like Allison's voice. I placed the picture face down upon the table and caught him by the arm, my fingers gripping deep into his flesh. I do not remember just what I said to him in these moments of my excitement, but I know that at the end of it he pulled himself together and laughed squarely into my eyes. There was a strangeness in his laugh, as there had been in his voice.

"I'm sorry that it has happened, old man—and yet I'm glad," he said, freeing his arm and beginning to pace back and forth in his old nervous way. "I'm sorry because I know that it will hurt you for a long time, as it has hurt me, and I'm glad because I've wanted to unburden myself to you—and have been afraid. Yes, afraid!" he repeated, pausing in his quick walk to face me. "Afraid that you would laugh at me, afraid that you would call me a fool, that you would think I was half mad, or an idiot! Do you know—"

He stopped to light one of the broken cigars and laughed at me over the sputtering match: "Do you know—I've had a good deal to do with human tragedy, and I've met comedies in real life, and I've seen pathos combined with them both—but I've never encountered anything like this. Ninety-nine out of every hundred people down on that street to-night would laugh at me and call me crazy if they knew about it. I would be the laughing-stock of the town. *And so would you!*"

"And all because of—that," I said, and pointed to the picture.

He nodded.

"I wouldn't tell you about her unless I thought it was necessary to your own mental salvation," he went on seriously. "Until to-night I had not guessed that the picture meant quite as much to you—as it does to me. I believed that you would easily throw off its influence, but you haven't. And you won't, unless I show you what a fool you are. Do you know, there is something very strange—something almost supernatural—about that photograph! Sometimes I have thought that it is alive!"

"It is alive!" I exclaimed wildly, snatching up the picture. "See, it is fading away! It is disappearing before our very eyes!"

A red flush mounted into his face as he stared at the grayish film.

"There is no need of telling you the effect that it has had upon me," he continued, turning so that he stood before the fire in the grate. "And yet, after all, you have felt only the beginning of it. My sister brought the photograph home with her from Wells. From the moment that I first laid my eyes upon it I was enslaved by some potent power that seemed reaching out of it to me. Within a week I was desperately in love—with the face in the picture! I learned from my sister that the girl was a Virginian, and a senior at Wells. For a time I succeeded in keeping my secret. But it was not for long, and—well, to cut the thing short, I confided a little in Nan and she invited Miss Redmond to spend a few weeks with us at our cottage up in the mountains. I almost counted the hours. And at the last moment—the day before she was to arrive—you remember how

our affairs went to smash over in Chicago!"

Allison faced me again, and I could see by the tense lines about his mouth that what he was saying, ridiculous as it may have seemed to others, was an ordeal for him.

"Of course I had to go. We had planned on a little party of four, my sister and her betrothed, Miss Redmond and I!" Something like a smile relieved the fensity of his face. In it there was but a flickering shadow of humor. "Did you ever hear of a 'fitter-in'?" he asked. "No? Well Mack was what our little set called a fitter-in. Whenever a little party was arranged, and some man dropped out, we always called upon Mack. Everybody liked him. He was regarded as a sort of a brother by all of the girls, and yet poor Mack could never get one of them to love him. He was an unfortunate devil in that way, and whenever one of us had a sweetheart whom we were compelled to place in some other man's care for a time, it was always Mack who got the job. We regarded him as an entirely safe proposition, though he was a fairly good-looking fellow with excellent tastes in dress, knew a great deal about art and a deuced sight more about literature. So when I found that it was necessary for me to go to Chicago I had my sister arrange with Mack to take my place until I returned. In Chicago I was taken ill, and for three weeks I was in a hospital. But Mack

filled my place to perfection. He not only fitted. He stuck. To-day Miss Redmond is Mrs. Mack—and I have never seen her!"

"Never seen her?" I cried. "Never!" he repeated. "Mack has always blessed me for that invitation to the cottage. He writes me that he is the happiest man in the world, and has asked me again and again to come and see him and Mrs. Mack. But I haven't gone. I shall never go. I love her, and I would go to the end of the earth to see her if I had the right. But it wouldn't be right to go to Mack's. So—" He shrugged his shoulders despairingly. "You see what that picture has done for me!"

I had picked up the photograph. Once more I looked into the beautiful face; then I went to the grate. Allison had turned to the table, but I called to him softly, holding the picture over the glowing coals. When he saw my meaning his face went suddenly white.

"It's best for both of us," I urged. He came toward me, holding out a hand, and I gave him the picture. From behind him I watched. For a long time he looked at it, and then tossed it into the fire.

But before he did this I saw him hunch his shoulders, as if to hide something from me, and press the photograph to his lips. I knew, then, the reason for the mysterious gray film that was gathering over the sweet face in the picture.

## The Odor of Alcohol

By STANLEY SHAW

IT WAS going to be a matter of lawyers more than of law, and Holliston, waiting for court to open, did not propose to take the one drink that would disable him for the final plea. He had made the same resolve many times before; but, on this occasion

there was something to hold to, the pale, appealing face of Jocelyn Macleese continually before him.

The law of God and man was clear; thou shalt not kill; and everything pointed to the fact that Jocelyn Macleese had disobeyed the divine command-