

'Up in the Clouds'

by Beulah Earle

FIRST INSTALLMENT

Humming out of the east, the little black plane sped straight for the landing field. Natalie Wade watched it idly. She had nothing else to do.

The plane had held her gaze mostly because of the directness of its flight. Other bees from the busy hive of San Carlos Airport circled or looped or dived as the sheer abandon at having found their wings. But this black ship dived straight for the searchlight towers and the sagging windsock as tho all life must perish if it did not reach the field within the instant.

Then suddenly someone yelled in the field office. Grease monkeys came heads up at the cry. Then racing feet pounded on the concrete where the girl stood and shirt-sleeved men rushed past her to the open field.

Crossing the light breeze, the ship skimmed low, its motor roaring more and more as it neared. Then, at the last possible moment, it seemed, the roar died. The ship sat down on the far tarmac but taxied straight on as tho it would crash the high barrier before the hangars.

Moved by the rushing feet about her, the girl slipped thru the barrier gate. A burst of hoarse cheering drew her on. Field men were mobbing the fier now as he slipped out of the open cockpit and clambered to the ground.

"Atta boy, Monty," someone yelled behind her.

"Yeah," came an answering shout. "An hour and a half off the East-West record. What do you know about that?"

squarely on the lips and then swept her along beside him to the apparent chagrin of the shrieking admirers.

At the hangar office, Natalie would have drawn away, but the hero thrust her thru the screened door. Screams and shrieks rose from the other girls when they were stopped at the entrance with the mechanics and a queue of loitering boys.

Inside, Monty lifted the girl quickly to one of the desks.

"Now stay put there," he laughed down at her. "I'll give you that interview in a few minutes. Got to clean up first and sign the papers."

Natalie stayed put. There wasn't anything else to do, and, after all, what did it matter?

The brown-haired Monty had disappeared into the wash room. Presently she could hear him sloshing water over himself with much puffing and splashing. A gray-haired man who seemed to be the port manager was yelling questions at him and writing in a big book. Monty bellowed back the details of his flight.

His wrist watch was handed out, to be compared with the office clock and the watches of the other men.

When, presently, he came back into the office, his face was clean and the tousled brown hair had been ruthlessly plastered back from his forehead. Natalie saw now that his chin was cleft in a somewhat fascinating way.

"You're with the paper, you said," he offered, with a chuckle and a little wink. "We'll go down to the office and you can do your story there."

Natalie made no response but his

When he stood at Natalie's side, she spoke to him quickly.

"I'm new here," she said. "Tell the city editor I want a job and that I'm writing Mont Wallace's exclusive story of a new flight record."

The boy looked at her with a fishy eye and then ambled off to the desks where two of three men worked apparently getting out the sporting extra.

One of these with worn suspenders and with his green eye-shade drawn down so that it formed an almost perfect mask, looked up in startled fashion. He reached for a piece of paper, stared at it, and then came over to the girl's side.

"What's all this about?" he demanded.

"I'm looking for a job," she jerked out between bursts of typewriter pounding. "This is Mont Wallace who just broke the East-West flight record. I'm writing the story and he's going to sign it if I do a good job. Does that rate a try-out from you?"

The small man peered up at Wallace. Then he thrust out his hand.

"I got a flash on the yarn from the airport," he said. "My men were late at the spot and they told me someone else had grabbed you. If you'll give the young lady your story, she goes on the payroll right away. I can't promise how long she'll stay there, but she'll get a trial."

Wallace grinned.

"About how long," he questioned, "would that trial last?"

But the girl spoke up quickly.

"It doesn't matter about that," she said. "If I can't hit the ball I'll know it quickly enough and so will they. My name's Natalie Wade. Put it on the payroll and let me draw enough when the story is done to take the big boy out to dinner."

"I'm Mack Hanlon," the city editor said, glancing wisely at the fier. "The dinner goes on office expense account if you keep on the way you are going. Slap her out fast. We go down in twenty minutes."

Sitting across from Mont Wallace over the very excellent dinner that was to be charged to the San Carlos Express, Natalie laughed merrily.

"This," she explained, "is what I call getting the breaks. No job, no money, no place to go. I wander out to the airport because it is a long walk and I like to watch the planes. Then you buzz in, kiss me sweetly, and carry me off. I use you to muscle into a job and a good dinner with the hero of the hour. Isn't life a joke?"

"All perfectly sensible," Monty assured her. "You are young. You are beautiful. And you have a head on your shoulders. That's all any girl needs in this world."

"The evening will soon be complete," bantered Natalie. "You don't by any chance happen to have fallen in love with me? That's about all that could possibly occur to add to the occasion."

"Well," the youth laughed. "You can add that up, too, I guess. Something happened to me when I saw you standing there at the field. That's why I kissed you. And if it isn't love, it's sure a perfect counterfeit. You might as well give it the benefit of the doubt."

"That," she chuckled, "is what I consider the response of a gentleman. I wouldn't call it an impassioned declaration but it certainly fills the bill. I am very greatly obliged to you."

"Never kid an aviator, Natalie Wade," Monty laughed. "Give me a few drinks and I'll make it just as impassioned as you like. What say we go somewhere to dance after dinner?"

"That would be very nice," Natalie accepted. "But please omit the drinks. I am quite satisfied and I don't know you well enough to try hopping up our acquaintance with cocktails."

"All right," he agreed with evident reluctance. "Just as you say. But you have no idea how a few drinks ripen the affections."

When dinner was over he became host. He insisted on hiring a car and they drove first along the beach road. At length they found an attractive spot where an abandoned lighthouse had been turned into a sort of roadside inn and there they sat for a long time looking out toward the Pacific.

It was not till the girl found that they were sitting side by side without speech that she realized something unusual had happened to her. This was no ordinary evening, no

commonplace flirtation. There was something about their sudden acquaintance that turned night glorious and made the first strains of the small stringed orchestra send them into each other's arms without realizing it.

They had risen when the music sounded and stood upon the tiled terrace. It was only a step from the shadow that clothed them to the moonlit outdoor dance floor. But for long moments they did not take that step.

Other couples began moving from the tables within, but the two were not aware of it. When he bent his head, her lips met his without shyness or confusion. It was as tho the moment were preordained.

Then she gave a low laugh.

"Aren't we supposed to be dancing?" she asked gaily.

He kissed her again, quickly.

"Perhaps we are," he chuckled as he swept her out onto the floor with swift, rhythmic strides, "but it seems like a waste of time and of very excellent music that might be much better employed."

He danced, she found, with grace and ease. It was as tho he really enjoyed the music and as tho there had been no need for him to learn the steps thru which he guided her. For the first time, she reminded herself, since her high school class dance, she was enjoying—really enjoying—a party like this.

She wondered about that. What could it be that made this seem so much the same? Much water had flowed under the bridges of the world since that gay night. She had gone two years to the university. Then her father had died and with his insurance money she had taken a secretarial course.

For a year she had been chief clerk in her uncle's law office. But he had gone into corporation practice and there hadn't been any place for her in the new scheme of things. Since then there had been a few weeks work here and there but for ten days there had been nothing. No wonder she had now forgotten what parties were like.

Besides, at the high school dance, she had been in love.

She laughed a little at herself as she thought of that. How mad she had been about Roger Yarnell. And Roger was married now and had a good-looking baby and the last time she had seen him he had merely looked funny to her.

That was the way with love. It made funny-looking people seem wonderful for a little while.

Natalie glanced up at the handsome features above her. Really, he was wonderful looking, this Mont Wallace. Or did he only seem like that because of something in her? Heavens, maybe she was in love with this man!

His eyes caught hers now and found them smiling.

"What's so funny?" he wanted to know.

"You'd die if you knew," she laughed aloud.

"You make me feel as tho I'd forgotten to put on something, some really vital part of the old costume."

"Oh, it's nothing like that. I just had a queer thought and it made me laugh in spite of myself. Don't you ever do that?"

"Have queer thoughts or laugh in spite of myself?"

"Have thought that make you want to laugh at the silliness of them?" she tried to explain.

"Well, I've got one now that will seem pretty silly if you can't see it." He held her a little closer and her heart quickened. The smile faded quickly from her eyes. That little skip in her heart beat had told her. She was! She was in love with this boy as she had been with Roger Yarnell and he was a hundred times more splendid in her eyes already than Roger had ever been.

It was frightening, a discovery like that. He had danced with her now to the shadowy corner once more. Before she knew it, he was kissing her again and she was kissing him.

This was madness, but glorious, glorious madness. How could life do such amazing things?

"Was that your funny idea?" she said softly, standing in the circle of his arms.

"Yes," he said, suddenly serious. "I'm wild about you. I never met anyone so gorgeous in all my life before. I want you. I want you to go somewhere with me—tonight."

She was caught by his mood and she hadn't heard too much of his words because of a blare in the music.

"Where?" she asked.

"Anywhere," he told her eagerly, his lips on hers again.

In the very kiss, the warmth fled from her lips. Glory died in an instant. That lifting of her heart that had seemed like the levitation of her whole body suddenly failed.

Everything crashed that seemed to be worth while.

"Oh," she cried. "I'm sorry about

that. I should have seen it coming."

"I was afraid," he said contritely, "that the idea would be a bust. Will you forget it?"

"It can't be done, Mont Wallace," the girl said slowly. "I had just, very suddenly, decided that I loved you. And so . . ."

She flung her arms out helplessly. It was at the bus station that she made him set her down. There on that yesterday morning that now seemed so long ago she had left her few belongings. She claimed them at the checker's desk and trudged thru the cool, sweet night to a family hotel only a block or two away.

Registering, she chose an inexpensive room and put off the bell boy with smiling thanks in lieu of a tip.

But the smile came hard. Here was lonely night on the heels of a ruined evening.

Love! For a moment it had caught her in its spell. For a single instant it had glorified the vistas of life. And now it was gone, like the fading afterglow of northern lights.

She lay long staring into the dark, wondering if stolen ecstasy could be the searing thing she had been taught, wondering if love must always die so tragically, wondering why a heart without a wound could hurt so fearfully.

And lying there, it seemed as tho a presence filled the room, as tho Mont Wallace stood there holding out his arms and smiling contritely. Instantly the feeling was gone but now her heart had come alive again.

Hurt there still was in her breast but it was sweet pain.

Life would go on. Struggle and woe and sorrow, glowing delight and fearful ecstasy would make its lights and shadows. But this one day would color the whole fabric of it for it was the day on which her love had been born.

She knew that this much was real out of the tumult of the evening. This much could never be taken away, that she loved Mont Wallace and would love him always.

Even in loving she laughed. — Wouldn't he smile at that? Wouldn't he grin to know this thing he had left in the crushing hurt beneath her breast?

It was a jest of fate. Only her heart had been ravished; but she knew there would be no forgetting. — Lightly he might go on from one kiss to another, gathering them like trophies of his prowess in the air. Lightly he might test them in the crucible of passion, even to find one that finally claimed his own eternal desire.

But always there would follow him the adoration of herself, of Natalie Wade. Her heart could not bow down. It could not abase itself. But it could burn with an eternal fire that he had kindled even tho he might never know.

Sleep came at last, deep dreamless sleep that would not summon even a phantom of this youth to her arms but in the morning she knew some glory burned in her before ever her mind remembered that she loved Mont Wallace.

Consciousness of him went with her to breakfast in the hotel dining room. It crossed the street with her to the morning office of the Express. It stood with her beside the day editor when he complimented her on the story she had done and ratified the agreement of his assistant that she should have a trial on the staff.

Her name was on the assignment book. It thrilled her to find it there.

"Follow Wallace," was the assignment.

Natalie had enough of her father's tradition in her to know the meaning of that. 'She was to bring in another story of the new hero, and she was to telephone him. She was to see him, and spend what time she could with him until the deadline of the afternoon paper and perhaps until the final edition, that sporting extra for which she had written the afternoon before.

She was to chronicle every slightest incident in his life of that morning of that day. Yet, strangely, she was not to write the tremendous story of that night, at least not as it had burned itself into her heart.

She thought of the eager readers all over the nation who would be waiting for her story. It would be carried on the wire. It would, if she could do it well, bring a hundred million people to sit beside this one man, to question him and to hear whatever he had to say that would reveal the man.

Millions of girls, she knew, would be among those readers. Millions of girls would want to know what this man was like. Girls made heroes of men like Mont Wallace. They would follow him. They would write him. They would send foolish mash notes and requests for his picture.

And now, Natalie knew what she would write. It was one story, at least, that all the girls would read. She took from the pile of rough

copy paper that lay beside her typewriter. She fitted carbon paper between two sheets and then she wrote the one line she knew would free her from the rules of newspaper writing that she knew so vaguely.

"By Natalie Wade," she wrote in the middle of the line. It would be a by-line story and she alone of the girls and women in the world could write it. Perhaps it would not be published. Perhaps when she had finished she would find that she could not let it be published. But it must be written. And the last wrote itself before her unheeding eyes.

"I danced last night with Mont Wallace," it read. "I danced with him and loved it. For Mont Wallace dances as he flies, gaily, easily, excellently well. Unwearied by the long grind at the controls of his little black plane, by the prodigious effort it must have cost to hurl that plane from coast to coast in faster time than ever man made the flight before, he danced as lightly as tho it were the first exertion of the day."

She wrote on and on, in each line something that would give the girl for whom she wrote an instant in the hero's arms.

And as she wrote she thought of that other story she might have written but did not. "I kissed Mont Wallace last night," it should have read. "I kissed the man who flew from coast to coast straight to my feet. I kissed again the man who had bent to kiss me before ever he knew my name or I his."

There were in the story she was actually writing some touches of this man's humor, of the physical splendor of him, of the cleft in his chin that had fascinated her and of the brown hair that lay unruly as his brow.

Natalie had lost herself in the writing of her story. She did not know when the day editor came to stand behind her chair and to read the lines she had written.

She did not know when he hurried back to his desk and bellowed for Jimmy Hale, the staff photographer. It was not until she had finished what she was writing and had written the conventional "30" at the bottom of her copy that she looked up to find the photographer standing beside her and with him the familiar figure of Mont Wallace.

"Listen, kid, the old man wants a special picture on this."

It was Jimmy Hale's husky voice, Jimmy's slightly bleary grin that backed the request.

"Come on in here now. I've got to make it snappy."

Natalie followed him, a little confused, with Mont coming behind.

And presently she stood in the cluttered room that was the photographer's office. Mont Wallace's arms were around her once more. And for the picture's sake she looked up into his eyes as she had done that night before while Jimmy Hale took the picture that was to tell more than all her story had done and that was to bear a caption her opening line—"I danced last night with Mont Wallace."

That was the day Natalie came to know Jimmy Hale. A likeable boy who swore he couldn't write a line of copy, he proved to be the best instructor she could have had in the business of hunting down news.

Where things happened, there sooner or later—generally sooner—Jimmy Hale would be found with his small car loaded with cameras, lamps and other equipment of his trade.

Because the girl was given feature assignments almost from the first, she and Jimmy were thrown much together and he came to consider her his special charge. The time was to be when Jimmy would call her in the middle of the night if a story broke and together they would race to the spot, Jimmy to prowl for significant pictures and Natalie to hunt odd interviews and special details that made good feature material.

Jimmy had unerring news hunches and it was he who, on that first of their days together, swung the car around to the mansion of Jake Marlon, west coast plane builder and halted under the wide porte cochere.

(Continued Next Week)

Uncle Ab says that the rain which pleased everybody has never fallen.

Notice of School Meeting
Andover Central School

The annual meeting of the inhabitants of Andover Central School, Town of Andover, N. Y., qualified to vote at school meetings in said district will be held at the school house of said district on Tuesday, July 11, 1939 at 8:00 p. m. (Standard Time) to transact such business as is authorized by the Education Law of 1910 and the acts amendatory thereof.

Dated June 15, 1939.
Board of Education of Andover
Centralized School.

W. J. ALDERSON, Clerk

South

(Mrs. Earl Schoonover)

July 5.—Mr. and Mrs. Schoonover attended reunion at William Ica, Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ho family were callers day last week.

Miss Gertrude Scott to Wellsville, N. Y. Mr. and Mrs. Newberry.

Miss Dorothy Schenck joying a new bicycle. Miss Lenora Dean were callers.

Dean at Ithaca, Fri. Mrs. Glenn Schoonover.

Voorhees

(Mrs. Raymond Church)

July 5.—Mr. and Mrs. Church were called to Wat

Monday by the death of aunt, Mrs. Fannie Saylors. The Church reunion was day with Mr. and Mrs. Church.

Miss Maude Perkins was Saturday evening with shower at the home of Mr. and Mrs. B. Perkins.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Perkins were present from Hornville and North East, Pa. Mr. and Mrs. John J. Wellsville were callers.

kin home Sunday afternoon. Mrs. Muriel Kruger and June of Meservey Hill spent day night with her parents. Mrs. R. B. Church.

Miss Koneta Perkins summer school in Buffalo teachers' college.

Mrs. Eliza Sherwood her brother and wife, Mr. Lorenzo Slocum in Andover day p. m.

Mrs. Floyd Pierce and Mrs. Wellsville spent evening at the Lewis home. Mr. and Mrs. Earl At Valley called on Mr. and Mrs. Slocum one evening.

Mrs. Jennie West and Mrs. Stewart of Wellsville sister, Mrs. Anna Doyle their guest spent an afternoon at their old home occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Woodfield.

Miss Maude Perkins Wayne Hallet of North were guests at a double Helen Carlson and Vivian Carlson Hillman at the brides' home Monday, July 3rd.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul family of Wellsville were the Perkins home Tuesday.

Elm Valley

(Mrs. Charley Cole)

July 5.—Reed Cooper, Earl Nye's in Whitesville. Keil Kinder has moved to Wellsville in over Clair's grocery store.

Judson Burdick is vacation in Michigan.

Mrs. Judson Burdick of her brother, Charley, other relatives in Erie.

The community picnic attended Saturday was present and guests from Michigan, Kansas City, Belmont, Alfred Station, Andover and Wellsville.

Mr. and Mrs. Cov were in Jasper Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur sons and Mr. and Mrs. Cornish of Orleans were in a vine Osborne, the Four.

Leonard Osborn home from the hospital is now able to sit up each day.

A family birthday at the home of Mr. Atwell Sunday, honoraid and Wilmer Atwell guests were present.

Atwell of Greenwood a visit with her son.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenn daughter, Patricia, of Del., were brief call and Lloyd Mead's, St.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Belvidere were callers home Sunday.

Miss Glennys Foster and Philip Brunville were Tuesday.

Clair's.

Mrs. Grace Klaas of Rochester are party with Mr. and Mrs. Burdick.

Mrs. Olive Mead Hill spent Wednesday at Lloyd Mead's commencement exercises.

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"You aren't really one of those writing women?"