



GREASED BRAKES

*A Tale of the Racers Who
Ride with Death*

By BARRY LYNDON

HE DIED very quietly. A blue Delage went crashing past, rocking all over the road as the driver fought his car out of a tearing skid. The scabbing tires slung dust and stones at the Frenchmen who were dragging the wrecked Knight off the circuit, and I bent close to keep the road spume from Jimmy's face.

He lay on a dusty patch of grass. The crowds at Beaucourt Corner were straining over the palisades to look at the smoking debris of his smashed machine, and cars still in the French Grand Prix kept storming past.

Every driver knew how dangerous Beaucourt Corner was, and every man who rocked by the battered Knight knew that it might be his own turn next time round. But not one of them took his foot off the pedal. They were all out after Zeill, just as Jimmy had been.

If he had passed that wild driving Frenchman on the corner, he would have snatched the lead. That is why Zeill had not given way, and that's why Jimmy had crashed.

He had known the chances he was taking in trying to corner with Zeill. Eighty miles an hour was the safety limit for the Beaucourt turn, and even then a car needed all the road. Some of them

had wanted more, as you could see from the broken staves in the palisades, where the hubs of thrashing wheels had skimmed the woodwork.

Jimmy had tried to corner at a hundred and five and leave half the road to Zeill as well. He had failed.

His head moved against the crook of my arm as one of the Fiats went past—a crimson, wedge-tailed streak of speed, with its black-mouthed exhaust coughing flame.

Through all the droning scream of the Italian car's blower, I caught Jimmy's little sigh. His eyes closed, and another race-racked speedman had gone to the Valhalla they keep for those who think two miles a minute is slow.

The French doctor took off his hat. His gray hair showed silvery in the sunshine as he shrugged his shoulders sorrowfully, then said something to a poilu who was standing by. I helped to carry Jimmy over the top of the low bank beside the road, and we laid him down at the foot of a tree. Another soldier came up and covered him with a field blue overcoat.

Jimmy Neville was the sort of fellow who would ride out the last laps of a race with his car all but falling to bits under him, knowing what would happen if something vital broke, but carrying on

just the same. He had all the nerve there was, and not many drivers could match him for cool skill.

But he had made a mistake on Beaucourt Corner and he paid for it with his life. The luck of the game broke badly for him, because if I had crashed every time that I'd made a mistake at a hundred odd miles an hour I should have needed an army corps of nine-lived cats to pay for my errors.

As it was, my last mistake left me with a limited steering lock in one arm, and for that reason the Ace people had given me the job of looking after their racing team. We had three machines cluttering the road in this Grand Prix, and I had come over to Beaucourt to try and find out why they were so slow. I had been just in time to see the crash.

Just as I moved away from the foot of the tree, a young fellow came pushing through the crowd with half the Knight pit staff behind him. He had the same lean features as Jimmy and the same dark eyes, but without the fire in them. The two were brothers, and they called this one Gerald.

His face was like wet chalk; wet chalk with a light on it. And his eyes were the color of oil in a drip can, black with stark fear and horror.

He stopped when he saw Jimmy's car. There was blued smoke wreathing from the riven engine cover; the cockpit was crushed, and over the broken side jutted the fractured rim of the steering wheel. A couple of race marshals were tidying up the tattered remnants of the torn tires, and two others were throwing sand over an oil patch in the road.

Presently Gerald looked at me.

"Is he—hurt?" he asked, and the words all but choked him.

There was no need for me to answer, because he caught sight of the grim little pile at the foot of the poplar, with a pair of oil-smudged canvas shoes sticking out past the poilu's coat.

He stared at it for a moment, then his eyes half closed and he reeled on his heels. He would have fallen if one of the mechanics behind him had not held him up.

GERALD had been driving another Knight in the race, but he lacked the nerve of his brother, and he had got into the team only on the strength of Jimmy being so good.

I had seen him at the pits before the start, and he'd been as nervous as an owner driver using a spanner on his car for the first time. He had

wrecked his gear box on the second lap through sheer shakiness and misjudgment, putting himself out of the race.

He remained staring at the foot of the tree for nearly a minute, then he straightened up and walked towards it. The rest of the Knight crowd stopped where they were, silent and awkward. I felt the same way, because it's difficult for a man to know how to act when another fellow is finding out that his only brother has gone the way of a lot of other good men.

Gerald turned towards the car and looked at it as though he could hardly believe the reality of what he saw. After a while, he asked me:

"Did you see it happen?"

"Yes. And I wish I hadn't. Your brother was a darn good man."

"Better than I'll ever be." His voice had something like a sob in it. "They say he—he took the turn too fast, trying to pass Zeill."

"That's right," I said. "He was in—"

"Zeill wouldn't give him the corner," he cut in, and it sounded as though he was talking to himself. "He raced Jim for it, made him go too fast and get into a skid. Zeill killed him."

That was a bad thing for a man to say, and I glanced at him. I could see that he was overwrought, and he looked shaken enough to be in the mood to say anything. He added something else, but it was lost in a sudden roar from the crowd on the corner.

An instant later Zeill's Lorraine came storming round, brake drums screaming on the kicking axles, shuddering wheels slamming stones at the wreck as the car went by, still well in the lead.

And, as it passed, Zeill thumbed the strap from under his chin and lifted his crash helmet in salute to the dead man. That with his Lorraine bucking on the road at anything up to a hundred miles an hour.

Not until the vibrant roar of the engine had died and the machine had disappeared down the dust hazed straight did Gerald Neville move. He looked at me for a moment, glanced at the field-blue coat in the shadow of the tree, then turned abruptly and went thrusting blindly through the crowd.

Men made way for him hurriedly, staring at the expression on his face. The Knight men watched him go before they came towards me and I told them what I had seen of the crash.

"If Zeill had slowed and given Jimmy the corner, he'd have got round safe?" one of them

asked. "It must ha' been Jimmy's corner by rights." Then he added: "But you don't always get your rights with a wild-riding devil like Zeill. He didn't have to slow down just because another car challenged him for the turn; but it's tough luck on Jimmy."

I stayed to see the ambulance away before I returned to the Ace pit. My team was due in for replenishments, and the drivers were pretty quiet when they pulled up, because they had seen the debris of Jimmy's crash and needed no telling that he had passed out.

There was some talk of withdrawing the team, and the Knight people had already flagged in their one remaining machine in tribute to Jimmy. But we decided to keep going, although by this time the French crowd was yelling itself into laryngitis every time that Zeill brought his speediron past the stand.

A Delage and a Fiat were dueling for second place half a lap behind, both ready to rev their engines beyond the danger line if anything happened to Zeill. Nothing did happen to him.

He took the checkered winner's flag half an hour later, at which the crowd swarmed out of the stands and said what they thought with flowers. Two minutes after the car had stopped, Zeill's Lorraine looked as though it had skidded through a florist's shop and had brought out all the stock with it.

There was a banquet to the drivers that night, but none of the British teams attended it because of poor Jimmy's death, while the Frenchmen cut the proceedings short for the same reason.

I heard that they had taken him to a little brick building just outside the Beaucourt Hospital. I went over with the Ace team, and we took a few flowers. On the way, I saw Gerald again.

He was with the girl.

I THINK this about women: If it's your job to ride a car to its limit, with a swift finish waiting for you if anything breaks or you happen to forget that you are handling a bullet on wheels and not a family saloon—if that's your job, then you've no right to have a girl sitting in the stands, with her hands going wet and dry and her heart revving up from fear of what may have happened every time you chance to be a bit late coming round the circuit.

Maybe I am wrong. But if ever I had given up

this game for a woman, the last I should have chosen would have been a girl like the one who was walking beside Gerald Neville.

She had the thoroughbred spirit of a racing car and allied to it was a show model finish. How far back Joyce Hamilton could trace her ancestors, I don't know, but it must have been a long ways. However, I did know this: both Jimmy and his brother were in love with her. She seemed to prefer Gerald, and it was because of this that he had broken into the Knight racing team.

She admired Jimmy for the daring way in which he drove, and I believe the reason he had taken that fatal chance on Beaucourt Corner was because he hoped that, by snatching the lead and setting himself to win the greatest of all road races, her admiration might deepen to the point where she would mistake it for love.

Gerald had got into the Grand Prix in an effort to show her that he was as good as his brother. He wasn't, and he never would be, so far as nerve went, because he was not built that way.

When he had come through the crowd after the smash, with his white, wet face, I had read what was in his eyes. He knew that, but for the luck of the game, he might have been lying at the foot of the poplar tree instead of his brother. You can kill yourself just as dead touring round a racing circuit at seventy miles an hour as you can at a hundred and twenty.

He hated the thought of putting his foot down and riding a car on the narrow limit which lies between safety and smoking disaster; but he dared not let the girl know because she admired men who were game and daring.

With a long line of tight-nerved Hamiltons behind her, the one thing that she could not understand was a man being afraid. I had seen her lap Brooklands as a passenger, at a hundred and twenty-five miles an hour, dead time, with the off wheels a tire's width from the lip of the banking to come into the paddock afterwards and say that it was great fun. About another five miles an hour, and the car would have been riding thin air.

She didn't know but what Gerald thought that kind of thing was great fun, too, and he had done his best to hide his dread from her.

She was holding his arm and looking up at him as they passed me now. Neither took any notice of my quiet little bunch, and I heard her saying:

"No one can prove that Zeill did it deliberately,

but he must have known he was forcing Jim out. If he did, Gerald, there's only one thing to do."

"Drive against him on the Givors Circuit, and ride him off the road as he did Jim," came his voice, and there was a timbre to it like you get if you hit drawn steel—quivering and metallic. "I'll do it, Joyce!"

I thought those words over that night, and it was easy enough to figure out what Gerald meant to do. He was going to run a car at Givors, the next big French race, and pit himself against one of the finest drivers who ever held a cord-bound wheel—Zeill. More than that he was going to crash him so that Jimmy would be avenged.

No doubt the girl thought it was a romantic and courageous thing to do, and Gerald would go through with it so that she might never know how much he was afraid of high speed work.

It meant that he would have to fight and beat the fear which obsessed him, and I couldn't see him doing that. In addition, it was one thing to say that he would run at Givors, but quite another to get a car. After the sorry show he had made in the Grand Prix, I knew that the Knight team would not give him a mount; neither would anyone else.

I watched the entries. A Delage team came in, and Bugatti entered five cars. The Knights signed up about the same time as we said we would run an Ace team and try not to get into anybody's way. Germany entered a couple of Mercedes, but Gerald Neville's name didn't figure among any of the drivers.

THE day before the lists closed at double fees, I heard that a Rackenbaker was going to help cut up the Givors Circuit. I thought that another of those board track experts from the U.S.A. was coming over to find out just how much a French road race isn't like a half-mile board speedway.

Two days later I saw the official entry list. This Rackenbaker had been put in by Gerald Neville, and it was to be driven by the entrant.

Rackenbackers are extraordinarily fast. This particular car had been built specially for American board tracks, and it had a maximum speed of something like a hundred and forty-five miles an hour, but it had not been designed to stand up to the fierce stresses of a road race.

I thought that Gerald would fit a tougher gear box and strengthen the car in other ways for the

Givors Circuit. But I did not hear of him doing anything like this, and he seemed to be spending most of his time on the engine.

From the news which filtered through to me, I could tell that the Rackenbaker would be good for about a dozen laps in the actual race, and would then crack up. It was plain that Gerald wanted the car to stay only long enough for him to get Zeill.

I mulled all this over. It seemed to me that if he went through with this and crashed the Frenchman, he would be doing something next door to plain murder.

I didn't want telling that if I spoke to him about it, I should get a pretty cool answer and no satisfaction. If I went to the race stewards and told them what I thought, they might listen and return his entry fee. In fact that was the most likely thing to happen—if I went to them. I didn't.

I had a feeling that the whole thing would work itself out in a way that I could not see, and there was always the chance that Gerald would funk it at the last moment or, still more likely, drive badly and wreck his engine.

Getting the Ace team ready drove the Rackenbaker out of my head for a while, and in the fullness of time we ran the machines to the Givors Circuit. As usual, we were late, but I sent the team out for practice next morning with instructions to hold the cars in until the drivers knew their way round the circuit. When they had gone I went to look for the Rackenbaker pit.

The replenishment pits are little enclosures built in a row at the side of the course and in front of the grandstands. There is one for every team in the race, and cars pull in there for repairs or fresh fuel.

The Rackenbaker was out on the track, and Gerald's three hired mechanics were lounging about the pit. I marked them for hardboiled engine wreckers, so clever that they couldn't have held down jobs in a mass production factory.

Each would have styled himself an "expert racing mechanic," and when a man takes the trouble to call himself an expert you may know that he isn't. Experts don't talk, but these four talked quite a lot. They said that the Rackenbaker had been down there for five days, and the fastest lap it had done had been seventy-one miles an hour. Zeill, I know, had lapped at well above eighty.

The slowness of the Rackenbaker was accounted for by the fact that Gerald was taking the corners as though there was a six-wheeled tractor

waiting for him on the blindside of every bend, and he was handling his brakes the same way as I would handle a month old baby.

Obviously, his brother's crash had made him worse than ever.

He came into the pit while I was there, and I took the chance to look at his engine. It was running as sweetly as a clock, tuned to its limit. When he sat in that cockpit, Gerald was behind the wheel of the fastest car in the race. He knew it, I knew it, his mechanics knew it—and so did Joyce.

She spent a lot of time at the pit during practice, and she must have realized how sinfully slow was the Rackenbaker. Nor could she have missed the fact that the three mechanics were beginning to make a joke of the car; but nothing of that showed in her manner.

One of the men, especially, was full of what he'd do if he were driving. This chap was a big, swaggering fellow named Prior; but I knew that one lap at even the Rackenbaker's crawl would have sent him sick to the nearest *estaminet*. That's if you could have got him into the car at all.

THE night before the race I spent working on one of the Aces. She had blown a hole in the crown of a piston, and I wanted to be certain that she was all right to run. Next day I saw my team off to the start, then slipped along to the Rackenbaker pit.

Gerald was just leaving, fixing his goggles as his car ran past the stands. Zeill flashed by him on the way to the line, debonair and cool as ever. He was one of those tough, wiry Frenchmen, as reckless as fate and a devil when he saw a chance to win.

The girl was leaning over the pit plank and looking after the Rackenbaker, her arms resting among the tools. She smiled when I came up, because I had been able to lend them a hand during practice, easing a little trouble they had with tires.

Knowing what was afoot, perhaps I shouldn't have assisted at all; but one racing team always helps another where it can. And if I hadn't done so then Delage or Knight or somebody else would have slipped in. Apart from that I couldn't see Gerald doing anything in the race, since he hadn't shown himself nearly fast enough to ride anywhere near Zeill.

"You got him away, all right?" I asked Joyce.

"Yes, thank you," she said. "His engine is

running splendidly."

"An' he's out to win," Prior cut in, and his big mouth stretched in a grin. "We've seen to that, ain't we?" He looked round at the others. They all laughed.

They had something up their sleeves; anybody could see that. There was a clever air about them, as though they had done something mighty smart and wanted to be congratulated.

"You've seen to it. What d'you mean?" I asked them.

"He told us he wanted to sit on Zeill's tail, an' we've fixed it for him," Prior said. "He's got to go fast, whether he wants to or not!"

I said nothing. Up at the start the engines were revving for the drop of the semaphore, azure smoke shooting back from the slamming exhausts. The speed-hounds were bellowing in the leash, and they'd be slipped in a minute.

"That Rackenbaker's hotted up to beat anything on wheels," Prior grinned. "Only he ain't got the stuff to make it show its paces. He's yellow; got a streak in him as wide as the road."

He didn't care whether the girl heard that or not, but she might have been made of marble—she was white enough now—for all the emotion she showed.

"He daren't take a corner fast, but he's got to in this race. You don't think we've worked on the car not to get a show, do you?" Prior asked me. I knew just how much work they had done; most of it had been with crooked elbows at the *estaminets*. Prior added, "He'll take the turns as fast as the fastest—if not faster!"

Then I knew for certain that they had done something which they thought was clever. I hadn't long to wait before Prior came out with it. Presently, he boasted:

"We reversed the thrower rings in his back axle last night. He'll have to take the corners fast—because he's got greased brakes!"

THE cars went away from the start just as Prior told what he and his fool mates had done. I heard the girl gasp as she turned and stared blankly at the cloud of oily smoke the scuttling machines had left behind them.

I watched it, too; thinking as fast as I knew how, while the shattering roar of the massed start blared in the air. In the back axle which Gerald had fitted to his Rackenbaker was a little device designed to

prevent oil getting to the rear brake drums. Prior and the others had turned these thrower rings around so that they would not pick up oil but would sling it to the brake shoes, greasing them and making them ineffective.

Their idea was that, with no brakes, Gerald would take the corners faster. The born idiots knew so little about the game that they didn't understand how racing cars took a turn: up to it at the limit of speed, brakes hard on at the last possible moment, the machine slowing like magic for the corner, then around and off again.

How was the Rackenbaker to slow swiftly for a turn if it had no brakes? They were thinking that Gerald would have to take a corner fast, simply because he couldn't slow. That way lay disaster.

Of course, he had his front wheel brakes left to him, but they would probably serve only to make things worse by running him into a front skid.

"You'd better flag him in when he comes round on the first lap," I told them, "or he'll kill himself!"

"He won't come in!" I felt Joyce's hand on my arm. "He won't trouble to look for signals. He's—" She broke off and drew me out of earshot of the mechanics. "He doesn't mean to run for more than a few laps. He isn't in the race to win it."

"I think I know why he's in the race," I said, and she looked at me quickly. "But he won't go fast enough for—"

Again she cut me off.

"Won't he?" Her voice was almost a cry. "Won't he? I talked to him before he went out to the start. I told him that he was too slow in practice, that he was afraid. He said he—he would show me!"

She had spurred him on to do the thing they had planned. He had started out keyed up to drive like fury and get Zeill early, wanting desperately to prove that she was wrong about him. Naturally he wouldn't pay any attention to his pit or look for flagged signals.

"He *was* afraid," she said. "I thought I wanted him to be like Jimmy, but I don't. I can see it now." She caught the front of my overalls with a pair of slim hands that were as pale as her face. "And it may not have been Zeill's fault! Gerald tried to tell me that; but I wouldn't listen. I want him out of it—safe. We must stop him, *somehow!*"

Her voice was jerky and choking. She was frightened for him, and I could see that this thing went deeper than I had imagined. She had guessed

all along at Gerald's weakness, and she had urged him into the race just to silence her own fear that the boy she loved might not be the iron-nerved type of man she admired. Avenging Jimmy was just an excuse, and Zeill. . . .

What was going to happen to Zeill? Gerald would try to get him as the Frenchman had got Jimmy, slashing around a corner somewhere on the course.

"He might come in on his own, when he finds his brakes are all wrong," I said to the girl, but she laughed—a short little laugh with a gasp at the back of it.

"He won't, now that he has started," she said. "He won't come in until—something—has happened."

"Well, where is it to be?"

"At Broulle Corner," she said. That was the last turn before the cars came past the pits and the stands, and it was about half a mile down the road. "He won't be able to control the car without proper brakes!" Joyce exclaimed. "Oh, those three fools! I must stop him. If I could get to that corner, perhaps he could see me and understand that something is wrong."

There was faint hope of him seeing anything while he was wrestling an almost brakeless car around a turn that was the fastest on the circuit. If he got as far as that—which was doubtful. Joyce started off for the corner while she was speaking, and I followed her. We ran together along the back of the pits and onto the road.

THE course was eleven miles around, and we got to the Broulle turn just in time to hear the leading machines coming at it.

The outside of the corner was hedged by a high sand bank, and the seats behind were solid with spectators. The inside was marked by a safety palisade, and more spectators were packed in the enclosure that lay behind the safety zone back of this fence.

The bellowing roar of approaching cars drowned everything else. The crowd swayed, and a fraction of a second later a blue car came round the turn. Zeill, in his low-built Lorraine.

Right at his tail was the white Rackenbaker, boring straight for the sand bank in a slashing, front wheel skid.

I could see the dust spurting from the tires as they slid, and my heart kicked as it seemed that the

machine must crash. Just at the right moment, Gerald took his foot off the brake pedal, the rear wheels slung round, the Rackenbaker's tail wagged and he was off after Zeill.

The watching girl gasped and her slender fingers clutched my arm. She said something, but I never heard it because the pack came thundering round the curve. The cars showed as blue and red and green streaks in the surging dust, brake shoes squealing, blowers whining, exhausts belching flame and shuddering sound. Round they came, with my Aces lying fourth, seventh and tenth, all nicely positioned to wait chances.

The machines slammed out of sight along the straight. Two or three lame ducks came battling round as the crowd settled to wait for the leaders to show up again.

"I thought he was going to crash!" The girl was still clinging to my arm. "He'll kill himself! Isn't there some way to get him off the course? Couldn't the stewards flag him in?"

I answered.

"Listen: He knows all about his brakes and he knows what he's doing, or he'd never have got round just now. But he'll tear his tires to pieces, taking the turns like this. They won't last half a dozen laps, then he'll have to pull in to be reshod. And we'll stop him going out again."

"But half a dozen laps may be too late, and if a tire bursts on a turn—" She didn't finish it.

We were both on our toes as we waited for the machines to come round. The mad roar awoke beyond Broulle Corner, and once more the crowd gasped and swayed. The white Rackenbaker ripped into the bend—leading—and, as it showed, the car slithered squarely across the curve, full in the path of the following Lorraine!

Zeill stood on everything, slowing as though he had run into mud, while the Rackenbaker careened on in a wild slide, to straighten out and leap away side by side with the French machine.

Zeill's eyes were blazing behind his goggles as he lifted a hand from the wheel and shook his fist, but the white car's driver took no notice. Gerald's lips were parted, and I could glimpse his gritted teeth and the strained muscles at the sides of his jaw. Then the machines went roaring away and, fifteen seconds later, the pack came round; strung out, now, with my Aces still well placed.

"Gerald tried it then!"

I knew that just as well as the white-faced girl

beside me. He had overtaken Zeill on the turn and had deliberately shot across his track to rush him into a skid. Only the Frenchman's clever driving, and the fraction of a second's grace, had saved him.

I wondered what was happening on the rest of the circuit. Gerald must be driving as no man had driven before, judging every corner to thousandths of an inch and doing miracles in skids to get round.

With as good as no brakes he would lose time on the turns. To keep up with Zeill he would have to ride the Rackenbaker on the straights until she trembled in her speed. He was proving that he had several different kinds of nerve, and I let Joyce know it.

"I don't care, I want him out of it! He isn't being brave, it's just desperate recklessness. I wish he would burst a tire so that he would have to stop; burst it somewhere that he could hold the car safely."

MACHINES that had dropped back were rocking past where we stood at the end of the sand bank, flipping stones at us. But she seemed not to notice it, and picked out the sound of the Rackenbaker's exhaust long before I did.

"Here they come!"

It was Zeill who showed first this time, coming with a vicious roar and riding wide so that he could cut the inside of the curve. In the instant that he appeared, the Rackenbaker slashed out in a fierce, deliberate front wheel skid, and looked as though it must cut the road directly in front of the Lorraine.

I saw Zeill's head jerk up, and his mouth opened in a shout that was lost in the tearing whine of brakes and the scutter of tortured tires on the road. He was done, and he knew it. He'd have to pull out to miss the white car, and that meant hitting the sand bank for an eighty-mile-an-hour spill.

It happened in a split second. And in the very last fraction of time, Gerald let Zeill off.

He took his foot from the brake pedal and stamped on the accelerator, so that the Rackenbaker shot on and gave the Lorraine a clear road. Gerald did it in the instant that he had all but accomplished what he had set out to do, and it meant the finish for himself.

He slued sideways, and the tail of his machine hit the sand bank. The car bounced off with a terrific cloud of dust founting behind, a wheel

breaking as it slid sheer across the road again, just missing the Lorraine as Zeill hurtled on.

The side of the Rackenbaker caught the palisade, ploughing on with wood and debris striking up in a black, shifting shower. The sound of grinding metal was heard above all else.

The breaking wheel snapped at the stub axle. The car heeled over, then somersaulted high into the air and smashed down on one side, to go skating past the sand bank for nearly fifty yards before it nosed its shattered, steaming radiator into the grassy slope at the side of the road.

The girl was first to the machine, but I was next and I helped her to get him out from under the smashed steering wheel.

He had ducked down there at the moment of the crash, and I had to borrow a rifle from one of the French soldiers who came running up before I could lever the steering column sufficiently to drag him out.

I thought he was dead, but he wasn't. He had instinctively played the one card left to the racing driver when his machine gets out of control: duck down in the cockpit and hope that the steering wheel will save you if the bus turns over!

We set him down just clear of the wreck, with Joyce kneeling at his side, holding his head in her cupped hands while two doctors felt him over, looking for broken bones. They found only bruises.

"Gerald! Wake up, Gerald!" She said that again and again as she gazed down into his dust-caked face, flecked by tiny streaks of blood where flying

stones from the Lorraine's wheels had caught him. Her voice was almost a whisper, but presently his eyelids lifted slowly and he looked up, just as though he expected to see her there.

"I couldn't do it, Joyce." His lips were quivering from the shock of the crash, and the words came jerkily.

"I know. I know you couldn't. I'm glad you let him go. Oh, you were fine, Gerald—fine!"

She was trying to smile as she bent over him, because she could see that he had the kind of nerve she had never understood before—the will finally to force himself to do the things from which his body quailed.

He had matched Zeill in the fastest laps of the race, with a car that the Frenchman himself wouldn't have dared hold to its speed. He had conquered his fear. Yet, when it came to doing the actual thing for which he was riding, he had balked—because it was too cowardly.

"Joyce, I was—afraid—all the time," he said shakily.

"Oh, Gerald dear, so was I!" Her arms were around him and her cheek was pressed against his own as she sobbed the words again: "So was I!"

THEY'RE married now, those two. I hear that they drive around in a twelve-horsepower saloon which would buck if you tried to drive it from here to there at more than fifty miles an hour.

But the girl seems quite content.