

"Oh, well, it'll always come in handy." And Carl careened away on the tractor.

As always, Carl was right. For it was the little polo field which so enchanted Will Rogers that he persuaded me to rent the Long Island place to him for two seasons, while Bob and I stayed in Miami Beach—at the invitation of Carl.

One afternoon he spread the completed blueprints for the new Miami Beach house on the carpet of my house in Long Island. I saw at once that this would be another of Carl's oversized mansions.

"Carl, it's too big," I objected. "I thought this was going to be a cozy little cottage, and it's another of our white elephants."

"You'll like it," he assured me. "Besides, you're used to living in big houses."

"But, Carl, couldn't I change just a few things?"

"Hell, why do you want to change anything, when I tell you it's all right! Besides, it's practically finished. I'll have it all furnished, ready for you to move into when you come down."

I did not like the way he was looking at this time. The dark flash of his eyes had faded and his body had grown puffy. Fat and poor vision, the two things he dreaded most in life! The drinking habit had fastened itself upon him so heavily that when he drove over mornings to breakfast with Bob and Jackie and me, he would refuse to touch food without first taking a glass of whisky.

I knew, too, that he was worrying about Montauk. Never before had I seen Carl harried by anxiety. Many times when Miami Beach had seemed a bubble that must break, I had seen Carl grim and fighting mad, but never worried like this.

I realized that now his pride was being torn as men who once had believed in him were beginning to doubt the Fisher magic and the Fisher luck.

Montauk Point was slipping from his grasp. When, following the foolish message from a hysterical salesman, Carl had ordered all work stopped on Montauk Point, he had halted a city's destiny. Now he was struggling to find means to whip it back to activity. He had spent ten millions on Montauk. He needed more millions to start work on it again.