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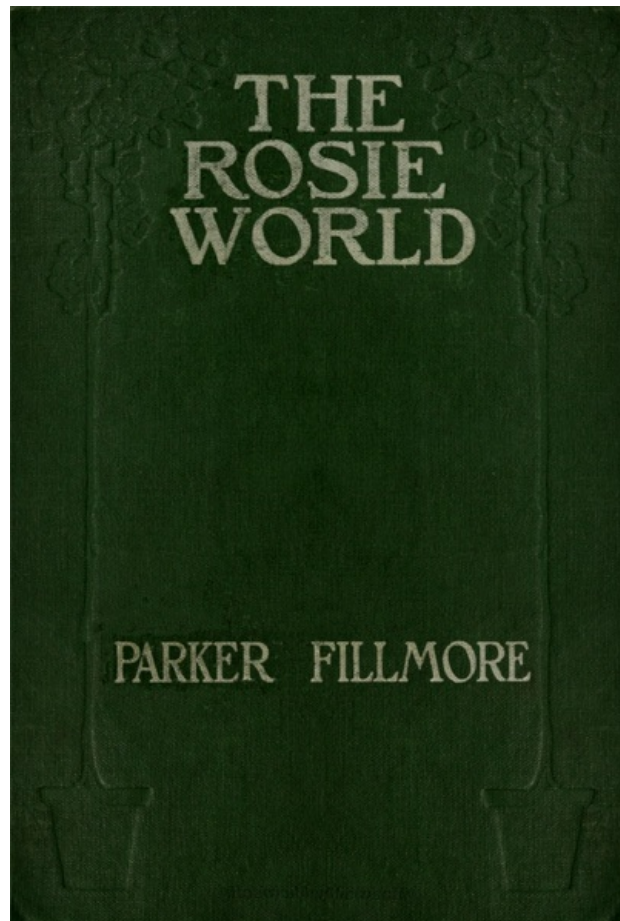
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# THE ROSIE WORLD





"I don't want to fight! I'm glad it's not ladylike to fight, it scares me so!" [[Page 12.](#)]

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# THE ROSIE WORLD

BY  
PARKER FILLMORE

Author of "The Hickory Limb," "The Young Idea"

With Illustrations by  
MAGINEL WRIGHT ENRIGHT



NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY  
1914

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**To**  
**Gilman Hall**

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## THE ROSIE WORLD

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### CHAPTER I

### THE CHIN-CHOPPER

MRS. O'BRIEN raised helpless distracted hands. "Off wid yez to school!" she shouted. "All of yez! Make room for George!" What Mrs. O'Brien really called her boarder is best represented by spelling his name Jarge.

"Maybe I didn't have a dandy fight on my last trip down," George announced as he took off his coat and began washing his hands at the sink.

The young O'Briens clustered about him eagerly.

"Did you lick him, Jarge?" Terry asked.

"Tell us about it!" Rosie begged.

"Will yez be off to school!" Mrs. O'Brien again shouted.

No one heeded her in the least. George by this time was seated at the table and Rosie was hanging over his shoulder. Terence and small Jack stood facing him at the other side of the table and Miss Ellen O'Brien, with the baby in her arms, lingered near the door.

"Your cabbage'll be stone cold," Mrs. O'Brien scolded, "and they'll all be late for school if they don't be off wid 'em!"

"Was he drunk, Jarge?" Rosie asked.

"No, but he'd been taking too much." George spoke through a mouthful of corned beef and cabbage.

"Aw, go on," Terry pleaded, "tell us all about it."

"They ain't much to tell," George declared, with a complacency that belied his words. "He was nuthin' but a big stiff about nine feet high and built double across the shoulders." George sighed and cocked his eye as though bored at the necessity of recounting his adventure. Then, just to humour them, as it were, he continued: "I see trouble as soon as he got on. They was plenty of empty seats on one side, but the first thing I knew he was hanging on a strap on the crowded side insultin' a poor little lady. He wasn't sayin' nuthin' but he was just hangin' over her face, lookin' at her and grinnin' until she was ready to cry out for shame."

"The brute!" snapped Mrs. O'Brien as she slopped down a big cup of coffee.

"Did you throw him off?" Terence asked.

George took an exasperating time to swallow, then complained: "You mustn't hurry me so. 'Tain't healthy to hurry when you eat."

Ellen O'Brien tossed her head disdainfully. "If that's all you've got to say, Mr. Riley, I guess I'll be going."

Rosie turned on her big sister scornfully. "Aw, why don't you call him Jarge? Ain't he been boarding with us a whole week now?" To show the degree of intimacy she herself felt, Rosie slipped an arm about George's neck.

Ellen sniffed audibly.

George had not been looking at the elder Miss O'Brien but, from the haste with which now he finished his story, it was evident that he wished her to hear it.

"When I see he was looking for trouble, I went right up to him and says: 'If you can't sit down and act ladylike, just get off this car.' And then he looks down at me and grins like a jackass and says: 'Who do you think you are?' 'Who do I think I am?' I says; 'I'm the conductor of this car and my number's eight-twenty and, if I get any more jawin' from you, I'll throw you off.' He'd make two of me in size but I could see from the look of him he was nuthin' to be afraid of. So, when he grins down at the little lady again and then drops his strap to turn clean around to me and poke out his jaw, I up and gives him a good chin-chopper."

George stopped as if this were the end and his auditors grumbled in balked expectancy:

"Aw, go on, Jarge, tell us what you did."

"Well, if that's the end of your story, Mr. Riley, I'm going."

"The brute, insultin' a lady!"

It was Rosie who demanded in desperation: "But, Jarge, what is a chin-chopper?"

"Chin-chopper? Why, don't you know what a chin-chopper is?" George paused in his eating to explain. "A chin-chopper is when a big stiff pokes out his jaw at you and then, before he knows what you're doing, you up and push him one under the chin with the inside of your hand. It tips him over just like a ninepin."

"Oh, Jarge, do you mean you knocked him down on the floor of the car?" By this time Rosie was skipping and hopping in excitement.

"Sure that's what I mean."

"And then, Jarge, when you had him down, what did you do?"

"What did I do? Why, then I danced on him, of course."

George jumped up from his chair and, indicating a prostrate form on the kitchen floor, proceeded to execute a series of wild jig steps over limbs and chest.

Rosie clapped her hands. "Good, good, good, Jarge! And then what did you do?"

[2]

[3]

[4]

"What did I do? Why, then I snatches off the stiff's hat and throws it out the window. As luck went, it landed in a fine big mud-puddle. Then I pulls the bell and says to him, 'Now, you big bully, if you've had enough, get off this car and go home and tell your wife she wants you.'"

"And, Jarge, did he get off?"

"Did he? I wonder! He couldn't get off quick enough!"

George glanced timidly toward Ellen in hopes, apparently, that his prowess would meet the same favour from her as from the others.

Ellen caught his look and instantly tightened her lips in disgust. "I think it's perfectly disgraceful to get in fights!"

Under the scorn of her words George withered into silence. Terence rallied instantly to his defence. He turned on his older sister angrily. "Aw, go dry up, you old school-teacher!"

"I'm not an old school-teacher!" Ellen cried. "And you just stop calling me names! Ma, Terence is calling me an old school-teacher and you don't say a thing!"

Mrs. O'Brien looked at her son reprovingly. "Why, Terry lad, I'm surprised at you callin' your poor sister Ellen a thing like that! You know as well as I that she's not an old school-teacher."

"Well, anyway," Terence growled, "she talks like one."

Rosie's wild spirits, meantime, had vanished. She sighed heavily. "Say, Jarge, wisht I was a boy."

George looked at her kindly. "What makes you say that, Rosie?"

"Oh, nuthin'. Only I know some stiff's I'd like to try a chin-chopper on."

George eyed her a little uneasily. "Aw, now, Rosie, you oughtn't to talk that way. You're a girl and 'tain't ladylike for girls to fight."

"I know, Jarge. That's why I say I wisht I was a boy."

George grew thoughtful. "Of course, though, Rosie, I wouldn't have blamed the little lady in the car if she had poked her hatpin into that fellow. It's all right for a lady to do anything in self-defence."

In Rosie's face a sudden interest gathered. "Ain't it unladylike, Jarge, if it's in self-defence?"

George answered emphatically: "Of course not—not if it's in self-defence."

He would have said more but Terence interrupted: "What's the matter, Rosie? Any one been teasing you?"

Rosie answered quickly, almost too quickly: "Oh, no, no! I was just a-talkin' to Jarge——"

"Well, just stop yir talkin' and be off wid yez to school! Do ye hear me now, all o' yez!" Mrs. O'Brien opened the kitchen door and, raising her apron aloft, drove them out with a "Shoo!" as though they were so many chickens.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE SCHNITZER

"TELL me now, Rosie, are you having any trouble with your papers?" Terence asked this as he and Rosie and little Jack started off for school.

Terence had a regular newspaper business which kept him busy every day from the close of school until dark. His route had grown so large that recently he had been forced to engage the services of one or two subordinates. Rosie had begged to be given a job as paper-carrier, to deliver the papers in their own immediate neighbourhood, and Terence was at last allowing her a week's trial. If she could be a newsgirl without attracting undue attention, he would be as willing to pay her twenty cents a week as to pay any ordinary small boy a quarter.

Twenty cents seemed a princely wage to one handicapped by the limitation of sex, and Rosie was determined to make good. So, when Terence inquired whether she were having any trouble, she declared at once:

"No, Terry, honest I'm not. Every one's just as nice and kind to me as they can be. Those two nice Miss Grey ladies always give me a cookie, and nice old Danny Agin nearly always has an apple for me."

"Well," said Terence, severely—besides being Rosie's brother, fourteen years old and nearly two years her senior, he was her employer and so simply had to be severe—"Well, just see that you don't eat too many apples!"

Terence and Jack turned into the boys' school-yard and Rosie pursued her way down to the girls' gate. Just before she reached it, a boy, biggish and overgrown, with a large flat face and loosely hung joints, ran up behind her and shouted:

"Oh, look at the paper-girl, paper-girl, paper-girl! Rosie O'Brien, O'Brien, O'Brien!"

He seemed to think there was something funny in the name O'Brien, and his own name, mind you, was Schnitzer!

Rosie marched on with unhearing ears, unseeing eyes. Other people, however, heard, for in a moment, one of the little girls clustered about the school-yard gate rushed over to her, jerking her head about like an indignant little hen.

"Don't you care what that old Schnitzer says, Rosie! Just treat him like he's beneath your contempt!"

Whereupon she herself turned upon the Schnitzer and, with most withering sarcasm, called out: "Dutch!"

Rosie's friend's name was McFadden, Janet McFadden.

Why don't you just tell Terry on him?" Janet said, when they were safe within the crowded school-yard and able to discuss at length the cowardice of the attack. "It wouldn't take Terry two minutes to punch his face into pie-crust!"

"I know, Janet, but don't you see if I was to tell Terry, then he'd think I was getting bothered on my paper route and take it away from me. He's not quite sure, anyhow, whether girls ought to carry papers."

Janet clucked her tongue in sympathy and understanding. "Does that Schnitzer bother you every afternoon, Rosie?"

"Yes, and he's getting worse. Yesterday he tried to grab my papers and he tore one of them. I'm just scared to death when I get near his house, honest, I am."

Janet clenched her hands and drew a long shivering breath. "Do you know, Rosie, boys like him—they just make me so mad that I almost—I almost *bust!*"

Black care sat behind Rosie O'Brien's desk that afternoon. It was her fifth day as paper-carrier and, but for Otto Schnitzer, she knew that she would be able to complete satisfactorily her week of probation. Was he to cause her failure? Her heart was heavy with fear but, after school, when she met Terry, she smiled as she took her papers and marched off with so brave a show of confidence that Terry, she felt sure, suspected nothing.

As usual, she had no trouble whatever on the first part of her route. At sight of her papers a few people smiled but they all greeted her pleasantly enough, so that was all right. One boy called out, "How's business, old gal?" but his tone was so jolly that Rosie was able to sing back, "Fine and dandy, old hoss!" So that was all right, too.

The Schnitzer place was toward the end of her route, a few doors before she reached Danny Agin's cottage. As she passed it, no Otto was in sight, and she wondered if for once she was to be allowed to go her way unmolested. A sudden yell from the Schnitzers' garden disclosed Otto's whereabouts and also his disappointment not to be on the sidewalk to meet her. He came pounding out in all haste but she was able to make Danny Agin's gate in safety.

Rosie always delivered Danny's paper in the kitchen.

"Come in!" said Danny's voice in answer to her knock.

Rosie opened the door and Danny received her with a friendly, "Ah now, and is it yourself, Rosie? I've been waiting for you this half-hour."

He was a little apple-cheeked old man who wheezed with asthma and was half-crippled with rheumatism. "Mary!" he called to some one in another room. "It's Rosie O'Brien. Have you something for Rosie?"

A voice, as serious in tone as Danny's was gay, came back in answer: "Tell Rosie to look on the second shelf of the pantry."

Rosie went to the pantry—it was a little game they had been playing every afternoon—and on the second shelf found a shiny red apple.

"Thanks, Danny. I do love apples."

Danny shook his head lugubriously. "I'm afeared there won't be many more, Rosie. We're gettin' to the bottom of the barrel and summer's comin'. But can't you sit down for a minute and talk to a body?"

Rosie sat down. As she had only two more papers to deliver, she had plenty of time. But she

[9]

[10]

[11]

had nothing to say.

Danny, watching her, drew a long face. "What's the matter, Rosie dear? Somebody dead?"

Rosie shook her head and sighed. "That old Otto Schnitzer's waiting for me outside."

Danny exploded angrily. "The Schnitzer, indeed! I'd like to give that lad a crack wid me stick!"

"Danny," Rosie said solemnly, "do you know what I'd do if I was a boy?"

"What?"

"I'd try a chin-chopper on Otto Schnitzer. That'd fix him!"

"It would that!" said Danny, heartily. He paused and meditated. "But what's a chin-chopper, darlint?"

Rosie explained. "And Jarge says," she concluded, "they tumble right over like ninepins." [12]

"Who's Jarge?"

"Jarge Riley, our boarder. He's little but he's a dandy scrapper. Terry says so, too."

Danny wagged his head. "Jarge is right. I've turned the same thrick meself in me younger days, many's the time."

"It would just serve that Otto Schnitzer right, don't you think so, Danny?"

"I do!" Danny declared. He looked at Rosie with a sudden light in his little blue eyes. "Say, Rosie, why don't you try it on him? He's nuthin' but a bag o' wind anyhow. One good blow and he'll bust."

Rosie cried out in protest: "But, Danny, he's so big and I'm so scared! I don't want to fight! I'm glad it's not ladylike to fight, it scares me so!"

"Whisht, darlint!" Danny raised a quieting hand. "Mind now what I'm sayin': Almost everybody's got to fight sometime. I don't mean to pick a fight but to fight in plain self-protection. Now it's me own opinion that young hound of a lad'll never let up on ye, Rosie, till ye larn him a good lesson. I could give him a crack wid me stick if ever he'd come nigh enough, but he'd be at you just the same the next time I wasn't around. Now, Rosie, if you ask me, I'd advise you to farce yirself to give that young bully a good chin-chopper once and for all. And, what's more, I'll take me oath ye'll never be feared of him again.... Come here and I'll show you how to go at him. Palm up now with yir fingers bent making a little cup of the inside of your hand. Do ye see? Now the thrick is here: Run at him hard and catch his chin in the little cup. One good blow and you'll push him over. Oh, you can't miss it, Rosie." [13]

Rosie's breath was coming fast and her hand was cold and shaky. "But I don't want to do it, Danny, honest I don't! I can't tell you how scared I am!"

Danny wagged his head. "Of course you don't want to do it, Rosie. Because why? Because ye're a little lady. But I know one thing: ye'll make yirself do it! And them that makes theirselves do it, not because they want to do it but because it's the right thing to do, I tell ye, Rosie, them's the best fighters! Come, come, I'll crawl out to the gate wid ye and hold yir apple for you while ye do the business."

Fixing his bright little eyes upon her, Danny waited until Rosie had, perforce, to consent. Then, with her help, he stood up and slowly hobbled to the door.

"We won't mention the matter to the ould woman," he whispered with a wink. "She mightn't understand."

Rosie almost hoped that old Mary would catch them and haul Danny back, but she could not, of course, give the alarm.

As she had expected, the Schnitzer was there waiting for her. At sight of Danny he moved off a little. [14]

"Now then, Rosie dear," Danny whispered, after Rosie had propped him securely against the gate-post; "at him and may luck be wid ye! It's high time that young cock crowed his last!"

As Danny spoke, the Schnitzer's taunting cry rang out: "Look at the paper-girl, paper-girl, paper-girl!"

Rosie started up the street and the Schnitzer cavorted and pranced some little distance in the front of her, making playful pounces at her papers, threatening to clutch her hair, her arms, her dress. Then, suddenly, he stood still, stretching himself across the middle of the walk to bar her passage.

Rosie's heart pounded so hard she could scarcely breathe. She wanted to dodge to the side and run, she wanted to turn back, she wanted to do anything rather than go straight on. But she felt Danny's presence behind her, she heard the click-clack he was making with his stick to encourage her, and she pushed herself forward.

Then her mood changed. What had she ever done to this great lout of a boy that he should be



annoying her thus? He was not only terrorizing her daily with no provocation whatever but, in addition, he was doing his best to beat her out of her job. Yes, if she lost this well-paying job tomorrow, it would be his fault, for he was the one thing on the route that caused her trouble.... Oh, for the fist of a Jarge to give him the chin-chopper he deserved!

[15]

She was close on to him now, looking him full in the eye. "Otto Schnitzer, you let me go by!" The words came so naturally that she was not conscious of speaking. "I guess I got as much right to this sidewalk as you have!"

"You have, have you? Well, who do you think you are, anyway?" The Schnitzer pushed out his jaw at her and grinned mockingly.

*Who do you think you are?* Where had Rosie heard those insulting words before? Ah, she remembered and, as she remembered, all fear seemed instantly to leave her heart and she cried out in ringing tones:

"Who do I think I am? I'm the conductor of this car and if you——"

Rosie made for the Schnitzer and, with all her strength, sent the cup of her hand straight at his chin. You have seen a ninepin wobble uncertainly for a moment, then go down. The comparison is inevitable. A yell of rage and fright from the sidewalk at her feet brought Rosie to her senses. Glory be, she had chin-choppered him good and proper!

But what to do next? What next? In her mind's eye Rosie saw the interior of a street-car with George Riley dancing a jig on the prostrate form of a giant. Thereupon Danny Agin and Mary, his wife, who by this time had joined him, and the woman next door, with a baby in her arms, saw Rosie O'Brien perform a similar jig over the squirming members of the Schnitzer.

[16]

That trampled creature was sending forth a terrific bellow of, "Murder! Murder! Mommer! Help! I'm gettin' killed!"

"And just good for him, too!" the woman with the baby shouted over to Mary and Danny. "I've been watching the way he's been teasing the life out of that little girl!"

"Good wur-r-rk, Rosie, good wur-r-rk!" old Danny kept wheezing as he pounded his stick in enthusiastic applause.

As the jig ended, Rosie stooped and snatched off the Schnitzer's cap. For a moment she hesitated, for there was no mud-puddle on the street into which to throw it. Then she noticed a tree. Good! That would give him some trouble. She twisted the cap in her hand and tossed it up into a high branch where it lodged securely.

Then she leaned over the Schnitzer for the last time. He was moaning and groaning and whimpering with no least little spark of fight left in him. And was this the thing she used to be afraid of? Danny was right: never again would she fear him. She gazed at him long and scornfully. Then she gave him one last stir with her foot and brought the episode to a close.

"Now then, you big bully, if you've had enough, get off this car—I mean, *sidewalk*, and go home and tell your—your *mother*, I mean, that she wants you!"

[17]

And, as Rosie said that evening in relating the adventure to George Riley: "And, oh, Jarge, you just ought ha' seen how that stiff got up and went!"

---

## CHAPTER III

[18]

### THE PAPER-GIRL

ON Saturday night as soon as supper was cleared away, Terence was accustomed to make out his weekly accounts. He had a small account-book with crisscross rulings and two fascinating little canvas money-bags, one for coppers, the other for nickels and silver. After his book accounts were finished, he would gravely open his money-bags and, with banker-like precision, pile up together coins of the same denomination—pennies by themselves, nickels by themselves, dimes, and so on.

Though oft repeated, it was an impressive performance and one that Rosie and little Jack surveyed with untiring gravity and respect. With a frown between his eyes and his lips working silently, Terence would estimate the totals of the various piles, then the sum total. He would very deliberately compare this with the amount his book showed and then—it always happened just this way—with a sigh of relief, he would murmur to himself: "All right this time!"

On this particular night, instead of sweeping the money piles back into their little bags at once, Terence paused and looked at Rosie with a questioning: "Well?"

[19]

"Well." Rosie used the same word with a different intonation.

"I suppose I owe you twenty cents."

"Yes, Terry, you do."

"Are you having any trouble?"

With a truthfulness that made her own heart glow with happiness, Rosie was able to answer: "No, I'm not having a bit of trouble, honest I'm not. You're going to let me have it now regular, aren't you?"

Before Terence could answer, Ellen O'Brien, who was seated on the far side of the table, presumably studying the pothooks of stenography, called out suddenly: "Ma! Ma! Come here! Quick!"

Mrs. O'Brien appeared at once. She was still nursing the baby to sleep, but no matter. Whenever her oldest child called, Mrs. O'Brien came.

"Say, Ma, I think it's disgraceful the way Terry's letting Rosie sell papers. If I was you I just wouldn't allow it! It's awful for a girl to sell papers!"

Rosie's heart sank. Was this comfortable income of twenty cents a week now, at the last moment, to be snatched from her?

"Aw now, Mama," she began; "it's only right around here where every one knows me, honest it is! This is the end of Terry's route and he gets here so late that if I don't help him he'll lose his customers, won't you, Terry?"

Rosie appealed to Terence, but Terence was busy scowling at his older sister. "Say, Ellen O'Brien, what do you think you are? You mind your own business or I'll give that pompadour of yours a frizzle!"

Ellen concentrated on her mother: "I don't care, Ma! You just mustn't let her! How do you think I'd feel going into a swell office some day, hunting a job, and have the man say, no, he didn't want any common newsgirls around!"

For a moment every one was silent, overcome by the splendour of that imagined office. Then Terence broke into a jeer:

"Aw, forget it! If Rosie was to make her living selling papers, who'd know about it downtown? And if some one from downtown did see her, how would they know she was your sister? Say, Sis, it's time for you to go shine your nails!"

"Now, Ma, just listen to that! I wish you'd make Terry stop always making fun of me! Haven't I got to keep my hands nice if ever I'm going to be a stenog?"

Mrs. O'Brien tried hard to restore a general peace: "Terry lad, you mustn't be talkin' that way to your sister. P'rhaps what Ellen says is right. I dunno. We'll see what himself says when he comes in."

The young O'Briens were used to having their mother refer to their father as one to decide all sorts of vexed questions. When he was out of the house he seemed the person to appeal to. When, however, Jamie O'Brien was at home, no one ever heeded him in the least. He would come in tired and silent from his run and, after sitting about in shirtsleeves and socks long enough to smoke a pipe, would slip quietly off to bed. So no one was deceived by Mrs. O'Brien's manoeuvre of begging them to await their father's judgment in the matter. Rosie and Terence would have been willing to let it mark the close of the discussion, but not Ellen.

"I tell you, Ma," she insisted, "it's a perfect disgrace if you don't stop it right now!"

Terry regarded his sister grimly. "Listen here, Ellen O'Brien, I've got something to say to you: Who's been paying your carfare and your lunch money, too, ever since you been going to this fool business college?"

Mrs. O'Brien feebly interposed: "Ah now, Terry lad, Ellen's just borrowin' the money from you. She'll pay you back as soon as she gets a job, won't you, Ellen dear?"

Terence grunted impatiently. "Aw, don't go talkin' to me about borrowin'! I guess I know what borrowin' means in this house! But I tell you one thing, Ellen O'Brien: if you don't stop your jawin' about Rosie, it'll be the last cent of carfare and lunch money you ever get out o' me!"

More than two-thirds of Terence's weekly earnings went into the family coffers, so what he said carried weight. Ellen tossed her head but was careful not to speak.

Terence rumbled on disjointedly: "Business college! Business nuthin'! I bet all you do down there is look at yourself in a glass and fix your hair and shine your nails. Huh!"

Ellen shrugged her handsome shoulders and, tilting a scornful nose, returned to her pothooks.

Rosie was jubilant. She was sure Terry had intended letting her keep on, but Ellen's opposition had clinched the matter firmly.

"So it's all settled," she told her friend, Janet McFadden, the next day. "Just think of it, Janet—

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[22]

twenty cents a week!"

Janet sighed. "My, Rosie! What are you going to do with it all?"

Rosie hadn't quite decided.

Janet was ready with a good suggestion. "Why don't you save it and buy roller skates, Rosie? I don't mean old common sixty-cent ones, but a fine expensive pair with good ball-bearings. Then you could skate on Boulevard Place. Why, Rosie, is there anything in the world you'd rather do than go up to Boulevard Place with a pair of fine skates? And listen here, Rosie: if you lend them to me in the afternoon while you're on your paper route, I'll take good care of them, honest I will."

H'm, roller skates. The longer Rosie thought about the idea, the better she liked it. She decided to talk it over with Danny Agin on Monday afternoon when she left him his paper. [23]

Danny met her with a sly grin. "Have you been chin-chopperin' some more of them, Rosie?"

Rosie looked at her old friend reprovingly. "Aw now, Danny, why do you always talk about that? I don't like to fight boys, you know I don't. It was Otto Schnitzer's own fault. But, Danny, listen here: Bet you can't guess what I'm saving for."

Danny couldn't, so Rosie explained. Then she continued:

"You see it's this way, Danny: those old cheap skates are no good anyhow. They're always breaking. I'd give anything for a good pair and so would Janet. We just love to skate on Boulevard Place—the cement's so smooth and it's so shady and pretty. But do you know, Danny, last summer when we used to go up there on one old broken skate they called us 'muckers.' We're not muckers just because we're poor, are we, Danny?"

Danny Agin snorted with indignation. "As long as ye mind yir manners, ye're not to be called muckers! You don't fight 'em, Rosie, and call 'em names, do you?"

"No, Danny, I don't, honest I don't, but sometimes Janet does. She gets awful mad if any one calls her 'Cross-back!' You see, Danny, they're all Protestants and Jews on Boulevard Place."

"From their manners, Rosie, I'd know that!"

"But it seems to me, Danny, if we had a pair of ball-bearing skates we'd be just as good as they are." [24]

"Betther!" said Danny.

"So you think I'm right to save for skates, do you, Danny?"

"Do I think so? I do. Why, Rosie dear, as soon as people find out that ye're savin' in earnest, they'll be givin' ye many an odd penny here and there. Let me see now.... Go to the panthry, Rosie, and on the third shelf from the top ye'll see a cup turned upside down, and under the cup—well, I dunno what's under the cup."

Rosie went to the pantry and under the cup found two nice brown pennies. "Thanks, Danny. But do you think Mis' Agin would want me to take them?"

"Mary? Why, Mary'd be givin' ye a nickel—she's that proud of you for chin-chopperin' the young Schnitzer. He stones her cat, but if he does it again she'll be warnin' him that you'll take after him. Ha, ha, that'll stop him if anything will!"

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## CHAPTER IV

### A LITTLE SAVINGS ACCOUNT

WHAT Danny said proved right. As soon as Rosie's immediate family and friends heard of the project, they gave her every encouragement. Little Jack lent her his last Christmas money-box—one of those tin banks whose opening is supposed to be burglarproof against the seducing attractions of all hatpins and buttonhooks except those employed by its rightful owner—and Mrs. O'Brien suggested at once that the old wardrobe upstairs would be the place of greatest safety for the bank.

"You can get into it whenever you like, Rosie dear, for you know yourself where the key's to be found."

It might be argued that every one else in the family knew where the key was to be found, for it was an open secret that its hiding-place was under the foot of the washstand. Nevertheless, it was an accepted tradition that anything in the wardrobe was under lock and key and therefore

safe. So, with unbounded confidence, Rosie slipped her first week's wages into Jack's money-box and carefully locked the old wardrobe.

George Riley, the boarder, was the first to make a handsome contribution.

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"Do you know, Rosie," he said, "here you are carrying my supper up to the cars every night and I've never said anything more than 'Thank you.' I just tell you I'm ashamed of myself! After this I'm going to pay you a nickel a week regular."

"Aw now, Jarge, you won't do any such thing!" Rosie shook her head vigorously. "You can't afford it! And besides, Jarge, I just love to carry your supper up to the cars, honest I do!"

"Of course you do! And why? 'Cause you're my girl!" George turned Rosie's face up and gave her a hearty kiss. "Now you'll be making twenty-five cents a week regular. Here's a nickel for last week."

Twenty-five cents a week and two good sure jobs to one who, but a few days before, was nothing but a penniless creature dependent on any chance windfall! Rosie hugged herself in delighted amazement. She even bragged a little to her friend Janet McFadden.

"Why, Janet, once you know how to do it, making money's just as easy as falling off a log! Look at me: My papers don't take me more'n half an hour in the afternoon and carrying Jarge's supper-pail up to the cars is just fun. And every Saturday night twenty-five cents, if you please!"

Janet said "Oh!" with a rising inflection and "Oh!" with a falling inflection: "Oh! Oh!"

"And besides that, if I hadn't my paper route I'd have to take care of Geraldine all afternoon. Don't you see?"

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"You would indeed, Rosie, I know you would."

Rosie looked at her friend thoughtfully. "Say, Janet, why don't you get a job? Of course, I'll lend you my skates, but if we both had a pair we could go to Boulevard Place together. Wouldn't that be fun?"

Janet cleared her throat apologetically. "Do you think Terry would give me a job, Rosie?"

Hardly. Though he did employ Rosie, Terence was scarcely in position to employ every needy female that might apply to him. Rosie spoke kindly but firmly:

"No, Janet, I don't believe Terry can take on any more girls. When I get my skates, though, I tell you what I'll do: I'll let you 'sub' for me sometimes. Yes. On the afternoons I go to skate on Boulevard Place, I'll let you deliver my papers. I'll pay you three cents a day. Three cents ain't much but, if you save 'em real hard, they count up—really they do. If you 'sub' for me eight different times then you'll have twenty-four cents. I told you, didn't I, that twenty-five cents is what's coming in to me now every week regular?"

Yes, Rosie had already specified the amount many times but Janet, being a devoted friend, exclaimed with unabated enthusiasm: "You don't say so, Rosie! Well, I think that's just grand!"

Janet was right. It is fine to have an income that permits one to enjoy the good things of life. Without a touch of envy Rosie could now view the rich Jews and Protestants as they skimmed the smooth surface of Boulevard Place. She, too, would soon be rolling along as well skated as the best of them. The time was not far distant when, hearing the soft whirr of the ball-bearings, they would look at her with a new respect and no longer call out "Mucker!" the moment her back was turned.

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This was the happy side of saving. There was, however, another side, and to ignore it would be to ignore the effect upon character which any effort as conscious as saving must produce. In simple innocence Rosie had started out supposing that all that was necessary toward saving was to have something savable. She soon discovered her mistake. The prime essential in saving was not, after all, the possession of a tidy little sum coming in at regular intervals, so much as the ability to keep that sum intact. That is to say, for the sake of this one Big Thing, that looms up faint but powerfully attractive on the distant horizon, you must do without all the Little Things that make daily life so pleasant.

Alas, once you begin saving, you may no longer heedlessly sip the joys of the moment taking no thought for the morrow. Saving involves thought for the morrow first of all! In the old days when she hadn't a penny, Rosie had somehow managed to enjoy an occasional ice-cream cone, or a moving picture show, or a cent's worth of good candy. Now, on the other hand, with money in the bank, these and all like indulgences were forbidden. She was saving!

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If for a moment she tried to forget the wearisome task to which she had publicly dedicated herself, some one was always at hand to remind her of it and to rescue her, as it were, from her weaker self. For instance, if she even hinted of thirst in the neighbourhood of a root-beer stand, Janet McFadden would turn pale with fright and hurriedly drag her off, imploring her to remember that, once she had her skates, she could have all the root-beer she wanted. Yes, of course, but Rosie sometimes felt that she wanted it when she wanted it and not at some far-off time when she would, no doubt, be too old and decrepit to enjoy it.

The experience began to give Rosie a clue to one of those mysteries of conduct which had long puzzled her. She had never stood in front of the glowing posters of a picture show, saying to

herself or to any one that chanced to be with her: "I tell you what: If I had a nickel, I bet I know what I'd do with it!" nor paused before a bakery shop or a candy store, that she hadn't seen other people—men, women, and children—with eyes as full of desire as her own. What used to amaze her was that many of these people, she was absolutely sure, had money in their pockets. Heretofore, in her ignorance of life, she had supposed that, to possess yourself of anything you wanted, was a simple enough matter provided you had money in your pocket—or in your bank, which is the same thing. What a mistake she had made! How she had misjudged those poor creatures who, in spite of their jingling pockets, so often turned regretful backs upon the pleasures of life. Rosie understood now. Money in their pockets had nothing to do with it for—they were saving.

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Unknown even to themselves they were all members of a mystic brotherhood, actuated by the same impulse, undergoing the same sacrifices for some ultimate benefit. Look where she would, she saw them plainly: Miss Hattie Graydon, Ellen's fashionable friend, saving for an outing in Jersey; Janet McFadden's poor mother always saving for a new wash-boiler; George Riley saving to give himself a good start on his father's farm; and now, the newest recruit to their ranks, Rosie herself, saving for ball-bearing roller skates.

"I'd just love to go with you! If there's anything I do enjoy, it's a matinée. But I can't. I got to have a new hat this spring."

"I'd like to lend it to you, Charley, the worst ever, but I don't see how I can. I got to save every cent this year for payments on the house."

"Waffles nuthin'! I ain't goin' a-spend a cent till I got enough money for a new baseball mitt!"

They were the things Rosie had been hearing all her life but never until now had she grasped what they meant. Think of it, oh, think of it—the heroic self-denial that masks itself in commonplaces like these! Rosie wondered if the others, too, had their moments of weakness. Weren't there perhaps times when George Riley sighed over the shabbiness of his clothes, realizing that, if only he were a little sportier, Ellen might not scorn him so utterly?

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Theoretically practice makes easy, but Rosie found that the practice of self-denial, instead of growing easier, became harder as time went by. The week she had a dollar ninety-five in her bank, a Dog and Pony Show pitched its tent in a field which Rosie had to pass every afternoon on her paper route. She thought the sight of that tent would kill her before the week was over. The only things talked about at school were Skippo, the monkey that jumped the rope, Fifi, the dancing poodle, and Don, the pony, who shook hands with people in the front row. Afternoon admission was ten cents but, nevertheless, there were people who attended daily.

Even Janet McFadden, valiant soul that she was, grew pale and wan under the strain. "Of course, though, Rosie," she said, "you wouldn't have time to go even if some one was to give you a ticket."

This was Friday, so Rosie was able to answer: "I could go tomorrow afternoon, Janet. You know the Saturday matinée begins at two instead of half-past three. That'd get it over by four. I could ask you or somebody to get my papers for me and meet me at the tent at four o'clock. Then I'd be only a few minutes late."

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Janet made hopeless assent. "Yes, I could get them for you all right. And if some one was to give me a ticket, Tom Sullivan would get them for you—I know he would. Tom would do anything for you, Rosie."

Tom was Janet's red-haired cousin and a flame of Rosie's.

"Yes, Janet, I suppose Tom would. But there's no use talking about it.... Now if only I could just take——"

Rosie broke off and Janet, understanding her thought, murmured hastily: "No, no, Rosie! Of course you can't take any of that!"

Janet was right. Rosie could not possibly raid her own bank. Too many eyes were upon her. Yet all she needed was a quarter: ten cents for herself, ten for Janet, and five for her small brother. She couldn't go without Janet and Jack and, as she hadn't a cent anyhow, it was just as easy to plan the expenditure of a quarter as of a dime.

She wondered idly if there could by some happy chance be more in her bank than she supposed. She hadn't counted her savings for nearly a week. There wasn't much likelihood that a dime or a quarter or a nickel had escaped her count, but perhaps now—... There was one chance in a thousand, for Rosie was not very strong in addition. At any rate, after supper she would slip up to the wardrobe and, with a bent hairpin, make investigations. A dollar ninety-five was all she was responsible for to the world at large. If her bank contained more, she could appropriate the surplus and no one be the wiser.

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Supper afforded one excitement.

"Oh, lookee!" Jack suddenly cried, pointing an excited finger at Ellen. It was the period of pompadour and false hair and Rosie and Terence, following Jack's finger, saw a new cluster of shiny black curls in Ellen's already elaborate coiffure.

"Get on to the curls, Rosie," Terence remarked facetiously. "Lord, ain't we stylish!"

Ellen made no remark but seemed a little flurried.

"Shame on you, Terry!" Mrs. O'Brien expostulated. "Talkin' so of your own sister! Don't you know if Ellen's to be a stenog, she's got to be careful of her appearance? All the young ladies at the college are wearing curls."

Terence answered shortly: "She can wear all the curls she wants as soon as she's able to pay for them. But I tell you one thing, Ma: you needn't think you're going to get me to pay for them, because I won't. She tried to work me for them last week and I told her I wouldn't."

Ellen regarded her brother distantly. "You make me tired, Terence O'Brien. When you're asked to pay for these curls it'll be time for you to squeal."

"Are they paid for already?"

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"Of course they're paid for already. Do you think I can get curls on tick?"

Terence's incredulity changed to suspicion. Turning to his mother he demanded: "Did you give her the two dollars you begged from me for the baby's food?"

Mrs. O'Brien spread out distracted hands. "Why, Terry lad, of course I didn't! Rosie went to the drug-store herself with the money, didn't you, Rosie?"

Yes, Rosie had, but even this did not satisfy Terry.

"Well, anyhow, I bet she's playing crooked somewhere!"

Ellen disdained to answer and Rosie remarked: "I'd rather spend my money on skates than on old curls."

Ellen looked at her kindly. "They say skates are going out of style, Rosie."

Rosie folded her hands complacently. "I don't care whether they're going out or coming in. I don't like 'em because they're fashionable but because I like 'em. If the Boulevard Placers didn't have one pair I'd want to go up there by myself and skate by myself just the same. I love roller skates! And, what's more, by the time vacation comes I'll have the finest pair of ball-bearing skates in town! And vacation, mind you, comes at the end of next week!"

Terence nodded a cautious approval. "You're that close to the finish, are you, Rosie?"

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"Sure I am. Tomorrow night when I get paid I'll have two twenty and, by the end of next week, if I can manage to scrape up an extra nickel, I'll have two fifty exact."

Mrs. O'Brien fluttered her hands nervously. "I dunno about all this skatin', Rosie dear. I dunno if it's healthy to jump around so."

Rosie smiled superiorly. "I don't jump around. I know how to skate."

A few moments later Ellen excused herself from her usual evening duties on the plea that her friend, Hattie Graydon, had invited her out. So Rosie had to wipe the supper dishes as well as wash them before she could slip upstairs for the purpose of counting her savings.

She found the wardrobe key in its usual place and the little bank where she had put it, hidden beneath her mother's Sunday hat. She reached for it and lifted it up and then, with a loud cry, she clutched it hard and shook it with all her might.

"Ma! Ma!" she screamed, flying wildly downstairs. "My money! Some one's taken all my money!"

"Ssh!" Mrs. O'Brien implored. "Ye'll be wakin' Geraldine!"

For once Rosie heeded not the warning. "I tell you my money's gone! Some one stole it! Listen here!" She was weeping distractedly and waving the empty bank aloft. "There's not a cent left! And, Terry, look here how they took it!"

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The thief had not even had the grace to use a hairpin, but had calmly bent back the opening slit.

Terence looked at his mother sternly. "Ma, who took Rosie's money?"

Mrs. O'Brien squirmed uncomfortably. "Now, Terry lad, how do I know who took it? But I do know this: whoever it was that took it only borrowed it and Rosie'll get paid back."

"Paid back!" wept Rosie. "Don't talk to me about getting paid back in this house! I guess I know!"

With a determined eye Terence held his mother's wavering attention. "Now, Ma, you know very well who took that money and I want you to tell me."

"Why, Terry lad, how you talk!" Mrs. O'Brien turned her head to listen, in hopes, apparently, that the baby would require her presence. "But I will say one thing, Terry: Ye know yirself a young girl, if she goes out, has to keep up appearances."

Terence nodded grimly. "So it was Ellen, was it? I thought so."

"Ellen," Rosie repeated in a dazed tone. Then her body grew tense, her eyes blazed. "Terry, I know! Those curls! I bet anything it was those curls!"

Mrs. O'Brien made no denial and Rosie, dropping her head on the table, wept her heart out.

"Terry, Terry, what do you know about that! And after the way I been working hard and saving every cent for two whole months! Just think of it! And you know yourself the fuss she always made about my selling papers at all! It's disgraceful for me to sell papers because I'm a girl, but it ain't disgraceful for her to go steal all my money and buy curls!... And I can't do nuthin'! If she was a nigger, I could have her arrested but, because she's my own sister, I can't do nuthin'! Oh, how I hate her, how I hate her!..."

Mrs. O'Brien sighed unhappily. "But, Rosie dear, Ellen'll be paying you back as soon as she gets a job. She promised me faithfully she would. You see, she'll soon be going around to them offices now and she feels she ought to be lookin' her best. Oh, you'll be gettin' back your money all right! Why, nowadays a good stenog gets ten dollars a week up!"

Terence cut his mother off sharply. "Aw, forget it! You can't fool Rosie with guff like that! I tell you, Ellen's nuthin' but a low-down crook and it's your fault, too, for encouraging her!"

"But, Terence lad, what could I do? I thried to dissuade her, but ye know yirself how set she is once she gets an idea into her head."

Yes, Terence and Rosie both knew and they knew, likewise, their mother's helplessness in her hands. With no further words they could easily imagine just what had taken place. Mrs. O'Brien had, no doubt, tried hard to protect Rosie's interests. She could always be depended on to protect the interests of an absent child. Her present attitude was an evidence of this, for now she was turned about seeking to defend Ellen because Ellen was absent.

A wail from upstairs brought her ineffectual excuses to a close and, with a "Whisht! The baby!" she fled.

Rosie, crushed and miserable, wept on. Terence put an awkward hand on her shoulder.

"Say, Rosie, I'm awful sorry, honest I am. I wish I could give you a quarter, but I can't this week. They've cleaned me out. Here's a nickel, though."

Rosie did not want the nickel; at that moment she did not want anything; she took it, however, because Terry wished her to.

"Thanks, Terry. It wasn't your fault. You're not a sneak and a thief. I—I'm glad some of my relations are honest."

Little Jack, who had been listening gravely, snuggled up with a sudden suggestion: "Say, Rosie, if you want me to, I'll kick her in the shins when she comes in."

Rosie wiped her eyes sadly. "No, Jackie, I don't see how that'll do any good."

"Do you want me to spit in her eye?"

Rosie gave Jack a tight hug, for his sympathy was sweet. Then she shook her head reprovingly. "You mustn't talk like that, Jackie, and you mustn't do things like that, either. You don't want to be a mucker, do you?"

For this once Jack thought that perhaps he did, but, when Rosie insisted, he promised to behave.

From babyhood he had been Rosie's special charge, so now, when the time came, she took him upstairs and saw him safely to bed. Then she herself slipped down to the front porch and there on the steps, in the dark electric shadow, she waited for her friend, George Riley.

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## CHAPTER V

### GEORGE RILEY ON MUCKERS

ROSIE had not long to wait, as George's run ended at nine o'clock.

"Sst! Jarge!" she called softly as he bounded up the steps and would have passed her in the dark.

"Is that you, Rosie?"

"Sit down a minute, Jarge. I want to ask you something."

George mopped his head with his handkerchief and drew a long breath. "Whew, but I'm tired,

Rosie! I rang up over seventy-five fares three times tonight."

Rosie opened with no preliminary remarks. "Say, Jarge, can you lend me twenty-five cents until tomorrow night? You know I get paid tomorrow."

"Sure, Rosie. What for?"

"I want to go to the Dog Show matinée."

George paused a moment. "But, Rosie, you don't need twenty-five cents for that. You told me it was ten cents."

"I know, Jarge, but I want to take Jackie and Janet."

"Why, Rosie!"

"Well, if I don't, poor Janet'll never get there. She never gets anywhere. You know her father boozes every cent. And I just got to take Jackie if I go myself. Besides, he'll only cost me five cents and that will let me use the nickel Terry gave me for peanuts."

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"But, Rosie,"—George cleared his throat—"I thought you were saving every penny. You know you can't save and spend at the same time."

"I'm not saving any more." Rosie spoke quietly, evenly.

"Not saving any more! What do you mean, Rosie? What's happened?"

She could feel his kind jolly eyes looking at her through the dark but she knew that he could not see the tears which suddenly filled her own.

"N-nothing," she quavered.

"Rosie! Tell me!" He put his arm about her shoulder and drew her to him. At the tenderness in his voice and touch, all the sense of outrage and loss in Rosie's heart welled up afresh and broke in sobs which she could not control.

"I wasn't going to tell you, Jarge, honest I wasn't, because you're dead gone on her and, besides, she's my own sister."

For a few seconds Rosie could say no more and George, with a sudden tightening of the arm that encircled her, waited in silence.

"I—I was going up to count my money, Jarge, and what do you think? Some one had smashed open the bank and taken every cent! I tell you there wasn't even one cent left! And, Jarge, I've been saving so hard—you know I have!" She lay on his shoulder, her body shaking with sobs.

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George spoke with an effort: "Why do you think it was Ellen?"

"Terry and me got it out o' ma. When we cornered her she told us.... And she's gone and spent it on a bunch of curls! Think of that, Jarge—curls for her hair! Just because Hattie Graydon's got false curls, Ellen's got to have them, too! Now do you call that fair? I saved awful hard for that money, you know I did, and it was my own!"

George sighed. "Poor kiddo! Of course it was your own! But Ellen'll pay you back, I—I'm sure she will."

"That's what ma says. But, Jarge, even if she does, it won't be the same thing. Just tell me how you'd feel yourself if all your savings were snatched away from you!"

George's answer was unexpected. "They have been, Rosie, a good many times."

"What!" Rosie sat up in fright and astonishment. "Has she dared to go and break into your trunk?"

George laughed weakly. "No, Rosie, it ain't Ellen this time." He paused a moment. "I've told you about my father's farm. It's a good farm and I'd rather live on it and work it than do anything else on earth. But it's got run down, Rosie. The old man's had a mighty long spell of unluck. A few years ago he got a little mortgage piled up on it and for nearly two years now he hasn't kept it up like he ought to. In the country you've got to have ready money to wipe out mortgages and to start things goin' right. That's why I'm here in town railroading and that's why I'm saving every cent until people think I'm a tightwad."

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"But, Jarge, how did they get it away from you so many times?"

"Well, just to show you: Two years ago one of the barns burned down. That cost me two hundred dollars. Last summer we lost a couple of our best cows worth sixty dollars apiece. This winter the old man was laid up with rheumatiz a couple o' months and it cost me a dollar a day to get the chores done, let alone the doctor bill. And each time I was just about ready to blow my job here and hike for home. I thought sure I'd be doing my own plowing this spring."

Weariness and discouragement sounded in his voice and Rosie, forgetting her own troubles, slipped her arms about his neck.

"I'm awful sorry, Jarge. Maybe if nothing happens this summer you'll be able to go back in the fall."



George shook himself doggedly. "Oh, I'll get there some time! I cleaned up the mortgage the first year I was here and now I'm working to pile up five hundred in the bank before I go. I'm getting there, too, but I hope to God I won't have any more setbacks!"

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"And if you do, Jarge?..."

The answer came sharp and quick: "I'll save all the harder!"

For a few moments both were silent. Then George spoke: "I'm sorry, Rosie, about this thing. I know how you feel. If you want to, after this you may hide your savings in my trunk. I've got two keys and I'll give you one."

"I—I didn't think I was going to save any more, Jarge."

"Not save? Of course you're going to save! You've got to save!"

"Why?"

"So's to have something to show for your work!"

"But it takes so awful long, Jarge, and even then maybe you lose it."

"I know, Rosie, but even so you got to do it. It's only muckers that never save."

"Why, Jarge!"

"Sure, Rosie. Only muckers. They blow in every cent they get as soon as they make it or before. That's why they can afford to go off on drunks and holler around and smash things up. They ain't got nuthin' to lose no matter what they do. Oh, I tell you, Rosie, just show me a loud-mouthed mucker and I'll show you a fellow that don't know the first thing about saving!"

"Really, Jarge?"

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"Yes, really. And the same way, take decent hard-working people and what do you find? As sure as you're alive, you'll find them saving every cent to put the children through school, or pay for their home, or take care of the old folks. I tell you, Rosie, you got to save if ever you get anywhere in this world!"

"But, Jarge, I—I think I just got to go to that Dog Show now."

George laughed and gave her a little hug. "All right, kiddo. Here's the quarter. Have a good time and tell me about it afterwards. Next week, you know, you can begin saving in earnest. My trunk——"

"Please, Jarge," Rosie begged, "don't make me promise. Give me a week to think about it."

"Of course you can have a week to think about it." They were standing up now, ready to go into the house. "But I know all right what you'll decide."

"How do you know?"

George stooped and gave her a hearty country kiss, smack on the mouth. "Because I know there's nothing of the mucker about Rosie O'Brien!"

And Rosie, as she slipped upstairs, tying the quarter in the corner of her handkerchief, suddenly realized that she was no longer unhappy. How could any one be unhappy who had a friend as good and as kind as George Riley? And, in addition to him, she had nice old Terry—hadn't he given her a nickel and been sorry it wasn't a quarter?—and dear little Jackie and the faithful Janet and poor old Danny Agin, too! Thank goodness, neither Ellen nor any one else could steal them away from her!

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## CHAPTER VI

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### JACKIE

IN declaring that Ellen would repay the money she had taken from Rosie's bank, Mrs. O'Brien had spoken in all sincerity. She was perfectly convinced in her own mind that every one of her children would always do exactly as he should do. She was willing to acknowledge that the poor dears might occasionally make mistakes, but such mistakes, she was certain, were mistakes of judgment, not of principle. Give them time, she begged, and in the end they would do the right thing. She'd stake her word on that!

Ellen's own attitude was one of annoyance, not to say resentment, that she had been forced to raise money for the curls in so troublesome a manner. Rosie's reproachful glances and Terry's

revelings irritated but in no way touched her. In fact, she seemed to think that, in appropriating Rosie's savings, she had been acting entirely within her rights. She would never have been guilty of touching anything belonging to an outsider but, like many selfish people, she had as little respect for the property of the members of her own immediate family as she had for their feelings. It was quite as though she conscientiously believed that the rest of the O'Briens had been placed in this world for the sole purpose of adding to her comfort and convenience. It always surprised her, often it bored her, sometimes it even grieved her that they did not share this view. It seemed to her nothing less than stupidity on their part not to.

So, despite her mother's promises, despite George Riley's hopes, Rosie knew perfectly well that her savings would never be refunded. They were gone and that was to be the end of them. Thanks to kind George Riley, Rosie had weathered the first storm of disappointment and had learned that, notwithstanding a selfish unscrupulous sister, life was still worth living. Neither then nor later did she definitely forgive Ellen the theft—how could she forgive when Ellen, apparently, was conscious of no guilt?—but she tried resolutely not to spend her time in vain regrets and useless complainings. The days passed and life, like the great river that it is, flowed over the little tragedy and soon covered it from sight.

The school year slowly drew to a close and at last Mrs. O'Brien felt free to make a request about which she had been throwing out vague hints for some time.



"Here, baby darlint, go to sister Rosie."

"Rosie dear," she began with an imploring smile, "now that vacation's come and you don't have to go back any more to school, won't you, like a good child, help your poor ma and take care of your little sister Geraldine? Here, baby darlint, go to sister Rosie."

Mrs. O'Brien held out the baby, but Rosie backed resolutely away.

"Now see here, Ma, you just needn't begin on that, because I won't. I guess I do enough in this house without taking care of Geraldine: I wash all the dishes, and that old Ellen O'Brien hardly ever even wipes them; and I do the outside scrubbing; and I go to the grocery for you six times a day; and I help with the cooking, too; and I always carry up Jarge's supper to the cars; and I take care of Jackie. Besides all that, I got my paper route. I guess that's enough for any one person."

Mrs. O'Brien conceded this readily enough. "Of course it is, Rosie dear, and I'm not sayin' it ain't. You're a great worker, and a fine little manager, too. I used to be a manager meself, but after ye've been the mother of eight, and three of them dead and gone—God rest their souls!—things kind o' slip away from you, do ye see? What was it I was sayin' now? Ah, yes, this: now that summer's come, if only ye'd help me out with Geraldine, p'rhaps I could catch up with me work."

Like a darlint, now."

Mrs. O'Brien, shifting Geraldine from one warm arm to the other, smiled ingratiatingly; but Rosie only shook her head more doggedly than before.

"No, Ma. The rest of the people in this house don't do things they don't want to do, and for once I'm not going to either. I tell you I'm not going to begin lugging Geraldine around!"

"You poor infant!" Mrs. O'Brien crooned tearfully, "and does nobody love you? Ah, now, don't cry! Your poor ma loves you even if your own sister Rosie don't!"

Responsive to the pity expressed in her mother's tones, Geraldine raised a fretful wail, but Rosie, though she felt something of a murderess, still held out.

"I tell you, Ma, Jackie's my baby. I've taken good care of him, and that's all you can ask."

Mrs. O'Brien sighed in patient exasperation. "But, Rosie dear, can't you see that Jackie's a big b'y now, well able to take care of himself?"

"Take care of himself! Why, Ma, how you talk! Don't I have to wash him and button his shoes and put him to bed?"

"Well, I must say, Rosie, it's high time he did such things for himself—a fine, healthy lad going on six! Why, yourself, Rosie, hadn't turned six when you began mothering Jackie!"

It was not a subject Rosie cared to argue, so she retired in dignified silence. But her mother's words troubled her. In her heart she knew that Jackie was a well-grown boy even if in many things he was still a baby. But why shouldn't he still be a baby? The truth was Rosie wanted him to be a baby; it delighted her to feel that he was dependent on her; it was her greatest pleasure in life to do things for him. And if she was willing to serve him, why, pray, should other people object?

Unfortunately, though, certain disturbing changes were coming over Jackie himself. Within a few months he had burst, as it were, the chrysalis of his babyhood and come forth a full-fledged small boy with all a small boy's keenness to be exactly like all other small boys. Rosie's interest in his welfare he had begun to resent as interference; her supervision of him he was openly repudiating; and, worst of all, he was showing unmistakable signs of becoming fast friends with Joe Slattery, youngest member of the family and neighbourhood gang of the same name. Rosie had done her best to check the growing intimacy, but in vain. So long as school continued, Jack could meet Joe in the school-yard, and Rosie had been helpless to interfere. But now, for the coming of vacation, she had a project carefully thought out. In her own mind she had already arranged picnics at the zoo, excursions to the woods, jaunts to the park, that would so occupy and divert the attention of Jack that he would soon forget Joe and the lure of the Slattery gang.

What time, may one ask, would Rosie have for this work if she burdened herself with Geraldine? None whatever. No. Geraldine was her mother's baby, and if her mother didn't insist on Ellen's relieving her a little, why, then she would have to go on alone as best she could. With her everlasting excuse of business college, Ellen did little enough about the house anyway. Rosie hardened her heart and, as the family gathered for midday meal, was ready with a plan for that very afternoon.

She broached the subject at the table. "Say, Jackie, do you want to come with me this afternoon? I'm going somewheres."

"Oh, I dunno."

Rosie's heart sank. But a short time ago he would have jumped down from his chair and rushed over to her with an eager: "Oh, Rosie, where you going? Where you going?" Now all he had to say was an indifferent, "I dunno."

Rosie made one more effort to arouse his old enthusiasm. "Me and Janet are going up to Boulevard Place."

She waited expectantly, and Jack finally grunted out in bored politeness: "That so?"

A moment later his indifference vanished at a vigorous shout from outside: "Hi, there, Jack! Where are you?" It was Joe Slattery's voice.

"I'm th'u," Jack announced, gulping down a last bite. "I got to go."

"Where you going, Jackie?" Rosie tried not to show in her voice the anxiety she felt.

"Oh, nowheres. Don't you take hold o' me, Rosie, 'cause I'm in a hurry."

Rosie went with him to the door, still keeping her hand on his shoulder. "Please tell me where you're going."

"You just let go my arm! I'll kick if you don't!"

Jack struggled violently, broke away, and, escaping to a safe distance, scowled back at Rosie angrily. "'Tain't none o' your business where I'm going! Guess I can go where I want to!"

"Oh, Jackie, Jackie! Is that the way to talk to your poor Rosie?"

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Joe Slattery, who had, of course, instantly espoused his friend's cause, now spoke: "He's goin' in swimmin'! That's where he's goin' if you want to know it!"

"Swimmin'! You mustn't, Jackie, you mustn't! You'll get drown-ed! Sure he will, Joe! He don't know how to swim one bit!"

Joe grinned mockingly. "Guess he can learn, can't he?"

Rosie paused distractedly, then clutched at the only straw that floated by. "See here, Jackie, you can go with Joe and you can look on, but listen: if you promise me you won't go in, I'll give you a whole nickel!"

Jack looked at Joe and Joe looked at Jack. Then with the eye farthest away from Rosie, Rosie thought she saw Joe screw out a small wink. Thereupon Jack turned to Rosie with a frank, guileless smile.

"All right, Rosie. You give me a nickel and I won't—honest I won't."

"You promise me faithfully you won't go in?"

"Sure I won't, Rosie! Cross my heart!"

Rosie drew out one of her hard-earned nickels and gave it to him. He and Joe promptly hurried off. [54]

"Now, remember!" Rosie called after them, beseechingly; but they seemed not to hear, for they made her no answer.

Rosie went back to the table almost in tears. "Jackie's gone off with that Joe Slattery and they're goin' in swimmin' and I just know he'll get drown-ed!"

"You don't say so!" ejaculated Mrs. O'Brien. "Why didn't you tell me, Rosie dear, before they got started?"

"Tell you!" Rosie's tears changed to scorn. "Why'd I tell you? You know very well how much you'd do! You always let every one do just what they want!"

Mrs. O'Brien blinked reproachful eyes. "Why, Rosie, how you talk! If you'd ha' told me that Jackie was goin' in swimmin' I'd ha' gone out to him and said: 'Now, Jackie dear, mind the water! Don't go in the deep places first!' I give you me word, Rosie, I'd ha' said it if it were me last breath!"

Rosie lost all patience. "I know very well that's exactly what you'd say! That's all the sense you got! That's all the sense that anybody in this house has got! And I suppose by this time Jackie's drown-ed, and if he is I want to die, too!"

Mrs. O'Brien looked at her in amazement. "Why, Rosie dear, what a flutter ye do be puttin' yourself into! Ah, now I see. It's because Jackie's your first chick! Take me word for it, darlint, when ye're the mother of eight ye won't be carryin' on so. Come to think about it, I remember meself over Mickey—God rest his soul!—the first day he went swimmin'. Mickey was just turned seven, and Terry here was toddlin' about on the floor, and yourself was in me arms no bigger than poor wee Geraldine. [55]

"'Where's Mickey?' says I to Mrs. Flaherty, who was livin' next door.

"'Mickey?' says she. 'Why, didn't I see Mickey start off with the b'ys? They be gone swimmin',' says she.

"'Swimmin'!' says I, and with that I lets out a yell. 'He'll be drown-ed!' says I. 'Me poor Mickey'll be drown-ed!'

"'Be aisy, Mrs. O'Brien,' says she; 'or ye'll be spoilin' yir milk and then what'll ye do?' And she was right, Rosie, was Mrs. Flaherty, for Mickey got back safe and sound, to be carried off two years later with scarlet fever!"

Mrs. O'Brien nodded her head complacently and poured herself another cup of tea.

Rosie, her face still tragic and woebegone, turned to her brother. "Will you do something for me, Terry?"

"What?"

"Follow Jackie out and see that he don't get into deep water."

Terry looked at her as if she were crazy. "Sorry, Rosie, but I got something more to do than trail Jack around. Besides, he's not going to get hurt. It'll be good for him." [56]

Rosie washed the dinner dishes in silence, thinking to herself what a cold-blooded family she had. There was poor wee Jackie out there drowning, for all they knew, and not one of them willing to stretch forth a helping hand. She escaped as soon as she could to seek the sympathy of her friend, Janet McFadden.

Another blow was in store for her. Janet heard her out and then said: "But, Rosie, don't all boys go swimming?"

Rosie was ready to weep with vexation. "What do I care what all boys do? This is Jack!"

"Well," said Janet, with maddening logic, "even if it is Jack, I guess Jack's a boy."

Drawing herself up to her greatest height, Rosie looked her friend full in the face. "If that's all you got to say, Janet McFadden, I guess I had better be going. Good-bye."

"Don't you want me to help with your papers this afternoon?" Janet called after her.

"No!" Rosie spoke brusquely, then added lamely: "I'm in a hurry today."

"Oh, very well!" Janet lifted her head and tightened her lips. "I'm sure I don't want to go where I'm not wanted."

"So she's mad at me, too!" Rosie told herself as she hurried off, feeling more miserable than before. [57]

She got her papers and went about delivering them, nursing her grief in her heart, till she came to old Danny Agin's cottage. Then she talked and Danny, as usual, listened quietly and sympathetically.

At first he had nothing to say. He screwed his head about thoughtfully, squinted at his pipe, tapped it several times on the porch rail, blew through the stem, then finally cleared his throat.

"It's just this way, Rosie: I know exactly how ye feel. Jack's yir own baby, as it were; but, whist, darlint, he can't be always taggin' after ye, don't ye see? He's a pretty big lump of a b'y now, and if I was you I'd just let him run and play by himself when the mood takes him. Then, when he comes back, just talk to him like nuthin' was the matther, and upon me word, Rosie, he'll love ye all the more for it."

"But, Danny," Rosie wailed, "what if he was to get drownd-ed?"

Danny reached over and patted her on the arm confidentially. "Ah, now, Rosie, what if we was all to get drownd-ed? You know it happened wance. Noah was the gintleman's name. From all accounts 'twas a fearful experience. But 'twas a long time ago, and since then any number of us have escaped. Why, Rosie dear, I've never yet been drownd-ed meself, and in me young days I was mighty fond of the wather. So cheer up, darlint, for the chances are that Jackie'll come out all right." [58]

Rosie dried her eyes listlessly. It seemed to her they were all in conspiracy against her. Yes, she was sure of it.

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## CHAPTER VII

[59]

### HOW TO KEEP A DUCK OUT OF WATER

JACK was home in good time for supper.

"Ah, now, do you see, Rosie?" Her mother pointed to him in triumph. "It's just as I told you. Here he is safe and sound. But, Jackie dear, mind now: the next time don't ye go into the deep water until ye know how to swim."

Ellen glanced at him amusedly. "Been in swimmin', kid?"

To Rosie the question seemed both stupid and inane, for Jack's face had a clean, varnished look that was unmistakable, and his hair had dried in stiff, shiny streaks close to his head.

He was hungry and ate with zest, but he said little and carefully avoided Rosie's eye. Very soon after supper he slipped off quietly to bed. Rosie did not pursue him. She was waiting for George Riley, upon whom she was pinning her last hope.

Presently he came but, before she had time to get his advice, she was hurried upstairs by Jackie himself, who called down in urgent, tearful tones:

"Rosie! Oh, Rosie! Come here! Please come! Come quick!"

The little front bedroom with its sloping walls and one dormer window was Ellen's room, theoretically. Actually, Rosie shared Ellen's bed, and Jack's little cot stood at the bottom of the bed between the door and the bureau. [60]

Rosie felt hurriedly for matches and candle. "Now, Jackie dear, what's the matter? You're not sick, are you? Tell Rosie."

"It hurts! It hurts!" Jack was sitting up, wailing dolefully. He reached toward Rosie in a helpless, appealing way that warmed her heart. Whatever was the matter, it was bringing him

back to her.

"What is it hurts, Jackie?"

"My back! It burns! I tell you it's just burnin' up!"

Rosie gently lifted off his nightshirt and held the candle close.

"Jackie! What's happened to your back and shoulders? They're all red and swollen! What did those Slattery boys do to you?"

"They didn't do nuthin', Rosie, honest they didn't. Ouch! Ouch! Can't you do something to make it stop hurting?"

"Wait a minute, Jackie, and I'll call Jarge Riley. Jarge'll know what to do."

George came at once and as quickly recognized Jack's ailment. "Ha, ha, Jack, old boy, how's your sunburn? Jiminy, you've got a good one this time!... Say, how's the water?"



Rosie gently lifted off his nightshirt and held the candle close.

"Ugh-h-h!" moaned Jack. "It hurts!" Then with a change of voice he answered George enthusiastically: "Dandy! Just as warm and nice as anything!"

George sighed. "Golly! Wisht I was a kid again! There sure is no place like the old swimmin'-hole in the good old summer-time!"

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Rosie glared indignantly. "Jarge Riley, ain't you ashamed of yourself! It's dangerous to go in swimming and you know it is! Jackie's never going in again, are you, Jackie?"

Jack snuffled tearfully: "My back hurts! Can't some o' you do something for it?"

Rosie turned stiffly to George. "What I called you up here for was to ask you what's good for a sunburnt back."

"Excuse me," murmured George meekly. "Let's see now: We ought to put on some oil or grease, then some powder or flour."

"Will lard do?" Rosie still spoke coldly.

"Yes, but vaseline would be better. There's a bottle of vaseline on my bureau. Do you want to get it, Rosie?"

Rosie hurried off and returned just in time to hear George say: "Oh, you can go in again in two or three days."

Rosie blazed on him furiously. "Jarge Riley, what are you telling Jackie?"

"I?" He spoke with an assumption of innocence and that look of guilelessness which Rosie was fast learning to associate with male deceit. "I was just telling him it would take a couple o' days for his back to peel. Then he'll be all right again." [62]

Rosie looked at him in scorn, but made no comment. She resolved one thing: George Riley should have no more moments alone with Jack. When the time came, she made him go downstairs for the flour-shaker, then curtly dismissed him.

"I guess you can go now, Jarge. Jackie wants to go to sleep. Now, Jackie dear, just lie on your stummick and you'll be asleep in two minutes."

George hesitated a moment. "Didn't you say you wanted to see me about something, Rosie?"

Rosie looked at him steadily. "If ever I said that it was before I knew you as well as I know you now. Now they isn't anything I want to say to you."

George gasped helplessly and departed, and Rosie, after settling Jack comfortably, blew out the candle.... So even George Riley had joined the conspiracy against her! Well, she was not done fighting yet.

She insisted upon making an invalid of Jack the next morning, keeping him in bed and carrying up his breakfast to him. All day long, she waited on him, hand and foot, loved, amused, coaxed, threatened, bribed him, until by evening she had him weak and helpless, ready to agree to anything she might suggest.

At supper Mrs. O'Brien beamed on him sympathetically and remarked to Ellen, who was just home from business college: "Ellen dear, do you know the awful back o' sunburn poor wee Jack's got on him? Rosie's been nursing him all day." [63]

Ellen glanced at Terry and laughed. "Do you remember, Terry, how you used to come home after your first swim every summer?"

Jack looked up eagerly. "Oh, Terry, did you used to get sunburned, too?"

Terry nodded. "Sure I did. Every fella does."

Jack's face took on an expression of heavenly content.

"Is it peeling yet?" Terry asked.

"No, but it's cracking." Jack's tone was hopeful.

Rosie moved uneasily. "Terence O'Brien, I just wish you'd look out what you're saying, and you too, Ellen! It's dangerous to go in swimming, and Jackie's never going again, are you, Jackie?"

Jack hesitated a moment, then murmured a weak little "No."

Mrs. O'Brien nodded approvingly. "Ah, now, ain't Jack the good b'y to promise sister Rosie never to go in swimmin' again!"

Ellen chuckled. "At least until his back's well!"

Rosie flew at her sister like an angry little clucking hen. "Ellen O'Brien, you just mind your own business! Come on, Jackie, we're through. We're going out in front by ourselves, aren't we?"

Jack, apparently, wanted to remain where he was; but when Rosie whispered, "And I've got another penny for you," he slipped quietly down from his chair. [64]

When you know that this was Jack's fifth penny for that day, you have some idea of what the struggle was costing Rosie. A week's wages seemed in a fair way of being eaten up in a few days. It was a fearful drain on her resources, but anything, Rosie told herself, to keep him out of the clutches of the Slattery gang!

By the third day his back was dry and peeling. After dinner, as Rosie was coming home from the grocery, she found him at the front gate boasting about it to Joe Slattery.

Rosie interrupted politely: "Jackie, will you come into the house a minute? I got something to ask you."

Jack looked at her kindly. "All right, Rosie. You go on in and I'll be in in a minute."

The dismissal was so friendly that Rosie could not gainsay it. She hurried around to the back door and then rushed through the house to the front door, which she slipped open wide enough to see and to hear what was going on at the gate. Joe Slattery's voice carried distinctly.

"Say, Jack, what do you say to goin' down now? Aw, come on! Let's."

Rosie did not have to ask herself what Joe Slattery was proposing; she knew only too well. Breathless, she awaited Jack's answer. It came with scarcely an instant's hesitation.

"All right. Let's."

Jack was out of the gate and off before Rosie could push open the front door.

"Jackie! Jackie! Where you going? Wait for Rosie!"

"Me and Joe got to go down and see a fella. We'll be back soon, won't we, Joe?"

"Sure we will, Rosie. We'll be back in ten minutes."

Rosie shook her head reproachfully. "Jackie, Jackie, you're telling Rosie a story, you know you are! You're going swimming and you promised me you wouldn't! Oh, Jackie, how can you, after the nickel I gave you this morning, and the seven cents yesterday, and the nickel the day before, and the nickel of the first day you went with Joe? Oh, Jackie, how can you take poor Rosie's money and then act that way?"

Jack had nothing to say, but Joe Slattery was able to answer for him.

"Aw, go on, Rosie O'Brien—Jack's goin' in swimmin' if he wants to! I guess you ain't his boss! Come on, Jack!"

Joe threw his arm about Jack's shoulder and together they marched off.

Rosie put forth one last effort: "Jackie O'Brien, you listen here: If you go swimming with Joe Slattery, I——" She searched about frantically for some threat sufficiently terrifying. She paused a moment, then hit upon something which, a few months earlier, would have worked like magic. "If you do, *I'll never button your shoes again! Never again!*"

Jack glanced back insolently over Joe's shoulder. "Aw, go on! What do I care? Anyway, it's summer-time and I'm goin' barefoot!"

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## CHAPTER VIII

### A LITTLE MOTHER HEN

FOR Rosie this was the end. This was defeat and she accepted it as such. Slowly and tearfully she dragged herself into the house.

"Ma, Ma, after all I've done, there he's gone!"

Mrs. O'Brien looked up in concern. "Who did you say was gone, Rosie?"

"Jackie! He's gone off swimming again with that old Joe Slattery!"

"Is that all it is, Rosie?" Mrs. O'Brien seemed much relieved. "You gave me quite a turn."

"But, Ma, what am I going to do?"

"Well, Rosie dear, what do you want to do?"

"I want to save Jackie from those old Slatterys."

Mrs. O'Brien sighed sympathetically. "Ah, I'm afeared you can't do that, Rosie. Jack's a b'y and you know how it is: b'ys do like to run around with other b'ys."

"But what if he gets all sunburnt again and maybe drownd-ed?"

"Ah, now, but maybe he won't."

There were times when, to Rosie, her mother's easy-going optimism was maddening. Today it seemed to her the very sort of thing you might expect to find in a hot, untidy kitchen cluttered up with clothes-horses and steaming with fresh ironing. The rickety old baby-carriage, draped in mosquito-netting, stood near the ironing board, and Mrs. O'Brien, as she changed irons, would give it a push or two. Geraldine was whimpering miserably, and little wonder, Rosie felt.

Mrs. O'Brien, on the other hand, seemed surprised and grieved that she was not cooing herself comfortably to sleep. "Ah, now, baby, what can be ailin' ye? Can't you see your poor ma is working herself to death to get your nice clean clothes all ready for you? Now stop your cryin', darlint, or your poor ma won't be able to iron right, and then what'll sister Ellen say when she comes in? Ho, ho, Ellen's a Tartar, dear, she is that! Now you wouldn't want your poor ma to be scolded by Ellen, would you? Indeed and you wouldn't! So hush now like a good baby, and don't be always cryin'...."

Rosie stood it as long as she could, then her heart overflowed in indignant speech: "Of course she's crying in this horrible hot kitchen! Why wouldn't she? And they's flies in her mosquito-netting, too!"



Mrs. O'Brien paused in her ironing to shake her head in mournful reproach. "Why, Rosie, how you talk! Where else can I put the poor child but right here? Upstairs in Ellen's room and in my room it's just like an oven. Jarge's room, downstairs here, is cool enough, but I can't use that, for Jarge pays good money for it and besides lets Terry sleep with him. No, no, Rosie, I can't impose on Jarge."

Rosie's blue eyes snapped. "Well, why can't you put her in the front room? That's cool."

"Why, Rosie! You know very well why I can't. Ellen won't let me. When a girl's a young lady like Ellen, she's got to have a place for gintlemin callers, and how would she feel, she says, if her gintlemin friends was to smell Geraldine!"

"Smell Geraldine! Maggie O'Brien, I'd think you'd be ashamed o' yourself! Geraldine'd be all right if you changed her and washed her often enough! You can bet nobody ever smelled Jackie! It's just your own fault about Geraldine, and you know it is!"

"Rosie dear, why do you be so hard on your poor ma? I'm sure I wash her whenever I get the chance. I'm always washin' and ironin' somethin'!"

"Yes. You're always washing and ironing Ellen's things!"

"Why, Rosie, how you do be talkin'! When a girl's a young lady she's got to have a good supply of fresh skirts and clean shirt-waists. Men like to see their stenogs dressed clean and pretty."

"Aw, what do I care how men like their stenogs? All I want to say is this: If you got a baby, you ought to wash it!"

"Yes, Rosie dear, but what'd you do if you'd been like your poor ma and had had eight babies? Ah, you don't know how wearyin' it is, Rosie!"

Rosie rushed out of the kitchen, unable longer to endure the discussion. But she was back in a few moments, carrying towels and a large white basin.

"Why, Rosie dear, are you really goin' to give poor little Geraldine a nice——"

"Maggie O'Brien, if you say a single word to me I won't do a thing!" Rosie glared at her mother threateningly.

"Mercy on us, Rosie, how you talk! I won't say a word! I promise you on me oath I'll be as quiet as a mouse! You won't hear a sound out o' me, will she, baby darlint? I'll be like the deaf and dumb man at the Museum. He talks with his fingers, Rosie. You'd die laughin' to see him...."

At the cooling touch of water, little Geraldine quieted her whimpering and began to smile wanly. The sight of her neglected body made Rosie's anger blaze anew.

"Maggie O'Brien, I don't believe you've touched this baby for a week! You ought to be ashamed o' yourself! Just look at how chafed she is, and her body all over prickly heat, too!... Where's the corn-starch?"

"Rosie dear, I'm awful sorry, but we're out o' corn-starch. I've been meanin' this two days to have you get some."

"Well, I'd like to know what I'm going to put on Geraldine!"

"Couldn't you run over to the grocery now?"

"No, I can't! It's almost time for my papers. I know what I'll do: I'll borrow Ellen's talcum."

"Oh, Rosie, Ellen wouldn't like that!"

"I don't care if she wouldn't! I guess she helps herself to other people's things. Besides, if she's so particular about her gentlemen friends, she ought to be glad to have Geraldine all powdered up with violet talc."

"Don't tell me, Rosie, that you mean to be puttin' Geraldine in the front room! Ellen'll be awful mad!"

"Let her be! When she begins to ramp around, you just *sick* her on to me! I'll be ready for her! Besides, I guess Geraldine's got some rights in this house!"

On the floor of the front room, between two chairs, Rosie made a cool little nest, protected with mosquito-netting. The tired baby sighed and turned and was asleep in two minutes.

"You poor little thing!" Rosie murmured as she stood a moment looking down at the dark circles under Geraldine's closed eyes and at the cruel prickly heat that was creeping up her neck. "You poor little thing!"

She went back slowly and thoughtfully to the kitchen. Before her mother she paused a moment, then looked up defiantly. "Ma, has Geraldine a clean dress to go out this afternoon in the baby-buggy?"

Mrs. O'Brien's face began to beam with delight. "Ah, now, do you mean to say——"

Rosie cut her off shortly. "Maggie O'Brien, if you say one word to me I'll drop the whole thing!"

Mrs. O'Brien stopped her ironing to stretch out a timid, conciliatory hand. "Rosie dear, why do you always be so sharp to your poor ma? I won't say a word, I promise I won't. Geraldine's things is at the bottom of the basket, and the moment I finish this waist of Ellen's I'll get at them."

Rosie felt a sudden pang of shame, but a foolish little pride made her keep on scolding.

"Well, I got my papers to attend to now, but see that you have those things ready by the time I get back."

"Indeed and I will!" Mrs. O'Brien declared with head-shaken emphasis.

All afternoon on her paper route Rosie thought of poor, neglected little Geraldine with her chafed body and sad, tired eyes. It wasn't her fault, poor baby, that she had come eighth in a family when every one was too busy and hard-worked to pay attention to her.... But it was a shame—that's what it was! I just tell you when there's a baby around, some one ought to take proper care of it!... Rosie wanted dreadfully to fasten blame somewhere, and the person naturally responsible would seem to be her mother.

For some reason, though, she couldn't work up much of a case against Mrs. O'Brien. That poor soul had enough to do, and more than enough, without ever touching Geraldine. She was not, it is true, the best manager in the world, and she was dreadfully helpless in the hands of unscrupulous people like, say, her own daughter Ellen; but when all was said and done, she was fearfully hard driven, early and late, and never a day off. And yet how cheerful and uncomplaining she was! How loving and kind, too, never remembering the cross words you gave her nor the short, ill-natured answers. No matter how you had been acting, she would call you "dear" again, the moment you let her....

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Moreover, even if she did not wash Geraldine as often as she should, Heaven knows it was not to save herself. Maggie O'Brien would have gone through fire and flood for the benefit of any of her children, living or dead, and Rosie knew this. No, no. The things slighted were not slighted because she was lazy and selfish, but because there were not hours in the day for her one pair of hands, willing but not very skilled, to do all there was to do in the crowded little household.

But if it was once granted that her mother was unable to give Geraldine proper care, was the child, Rosie asked herself, never to receive such care? In her heart Rosie knew the one way possible and at last forced herself to consider it. Could she take this baby and raise it as she had Jackie?... To have Geraldine for a morning or an afternoon would be a pleasure; but all day and every day—that was another matter. Rosie knew how time-consuming it was to be a mother. She knew what it meant to look after a baby's food and its naps and its baths and its clothes. And such things were worse now than in Jackie's time. It would never do to raise another baby in the haphazard fashion Jackie had been raised. The care of babies was an exact science now. Out of curiosity Rosie and Janet had once attended a few meetings of the Little Mothers' Class at the Settlement, so Rosie knew. She sighed. Among other things, she supposed she would have to become a regular member of that class.... Dear, dear, what time would be left for all those lovely vacation picnics which she had been planning for herself and Janet and Jackie?... Jackie!... She had forgotten: *there wasn't any Jackie now.*

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Rosie stopped, expecting again to be swallowed up in that ancient grief. But it scarcely touched her. Instead, she found herself looking at Jackie with the critical eyes of an outsider. He was pretty big. Perhaps he did not need her any longer. George Riley and Danny Agin and Janet McFadden and Terry and her mother—hadn't each of them said the same thing? Rosie had wanted to make herself believe that they were all in league against her, but deep down in her heart she knew they were not and had always known it. Now at last she was ready to confess the truth: Jack did not need her any longer.... And poor little Geraldine did.

Of course, though, she would never love Geraldine. All the love in her heart she had poured out upon Jackie, and there simply wasn't any left. How could there be? It was merely that, in any case, she must fill up the barren days remaining with something. Why not with Geraldine?

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It would, however, be rather pleasant to see Geraldine grow plump and happy under her wise care. Ever since hot weather the poor birdie had not had half enough sleep. Rosie would not be long in remedying that. And it would surprise her much if she did not have the little chafed body well within a week....

When you take a baby to raise, it's a satisfaction to get a pretty one. Geraldine promised to be very pretty. Her hair was growing out in loose little ringlets like Rosie's own, and her eyes, too, were like Rosie's, only bluer. Perhaps, when Rosie fattened her, she would have a dimple. Rosie herself had a lovely dimple that was much admired. Let's see: was it in the right cheek or the left? Rosie made sure by smiling and feeling for it. Yes, she really hoped that Geraldine would develop a dimple. Was there anything on earth sweeter than a dimpled baby?... The baby-buggy was a rickety old affair that had done service for Jackie and for little Tim that was gone. Rosie did wish they could afford a nice new up-to-date go-cart. No matter, though. Having any sort of thing to push about, would give her and Janet all the excuse they needed to promenade for hours up and down Boulevard Place.

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Not that Rosie was looking forward with any pleasure to her new undertaking. Heavens, no! She shook her head emphatically. Henceforth it was duty, not pleasure, to which she would devote her life. You know how it is in this world: though our hearts, alas, are breaking, we must all do our duty.

She found Geraldine refreshed and happy after her long nap. She dressed her carefully in the clean clothes that were waiting and settled her comfortably in the old carriage. Then, when they were ready to start, she turned to her mother.

"I want to tell you something, Ma: I'm going to take care of Geraldine this summer. Then maybe you won't have to work so hard."

Mrs. O'Brien laughed and cried and hugged Rosie to her bosom.

"Oh, you darlint, you darlint! What's this ye're tellin' me!... Ah, Rosie, if I do say it, ye're the best child that ever stood in shoes! Geraldine darlint, do ye hear what sister Rosie says?"

Mrs. O'Brien paused a moment, then spoke more quietly: "And, Rosie dear, I've been sorry about this Jackie business—I have that. It's a turrible thing when a little mother hen has only one chick, to have that chick turn out a goslin'! But take me word for it, Rosie, Geraldine'll niver disapp'int ye so. Ye'll niver take to water, will ye, baby dear?"

Rosie choked a little. "I—I guess we better be going. We got to stop for Janet."

They started off, and Mrs. O'Brien, in a fresh ecstasy of delight, called after them: "Ah, look at the blissed infant, as happy as a lamb with two mothers!"

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## CHAPTER IX

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### JANET'S AUNT KITTY

JANET McFADDEN, after one searching look in Rosie's face, rushed forward eagerly.

"I'm so glad to see you! Where have you been all this time?"

Rosie dimpled with pleasure. Wasn't it sweet of Janet not to refer to the coldness of their last meeting? That was Janet right straight through: always ready to be insulted on the first provocation, but just as ready, once she knew you still loved her, to let bygones be bygones.

"Well, you see, Janet, Jackie's been sick. No, not really sick, but sore. His back was all sunburnt. He'd been in swimming for the first time. You know boys always go in swimming and get sunburnt the first day. But he's all right now and I don't have to bother about him any more."

Janet blinked in surprise and started to say something when the expression on Rosie's face checked her. She paused, then exclaimed, rather fatuously: "How sweet Geraldine looks!"

"Doesn't she!" Rosie spoke enthusiastically. "Say, Janet, don't you think she's a nice baby?"

"I do indeed!" Janet wagged her head impressively. "You know yourself I always did think she was a nice baby and I never could make out why you didn't like her more."

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"Janet McFadden, how you talk! Of course I like Geraldine! I love her!" Rosie bounced the baby-carriage vigorously and made direct appeal to Geraldine herself: "Doesn't sister Rosie love her own baby? Of course she does! And she's going to take care of her all summer, isn't she? because ma's too busy."

"Why, Rosie!" Janet began.

Rosie faced square about and with one look challenged Janet to show further surprise.

"Why—why, isn't that nice!" Janet murmured meekly.

"Of course it's nice and we're going to Boulevard Place every afternoon, aren't we, Geraldine? We're going there now and Janet can come with us if she wants to."

Janet wanted to, but she had to refuse. "I can't today, Rosie. I've got to help my mother. But tomorrow afternoon—will you stop for me then? I'll expect you."

In this way friendship was restored. Not having to bear the strain of an insistent questioning from Janet, its restoration was simple. Something had occurred to change Rosie's attitude in regard to her small brother and sister and upon this something she was not disposed, evidently, to be communicative. Well, Janet was not inquisitive. Besides, even if this subject of conversation was taboo, conversation was not in any danger of early extinction. When together, Janet and Rosie always talked—not perfunctorily, either, but with much emphasis and many headshakings. Goodness me, they never stopped talking! After only a few hours' separation, each had a hundred things to tell the other. By the very next day Janet had a bit of news, that was to furnish them an exciting topic for weeks to come.

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When Rosie called for Janet the following afternoon, her knock was answered by Tom Sullivan, who instantly blushed a glowing crimson and with difficulty stammered: "Yes, Janet's home."

Come on in."

Rosie found Janet and her mother entertaining Mrs. Sullivan, who was Dave McFadden's sister and therefore Janet's aunt.

At sight of Rosie, Mrs. Sullivan exclaimed gushingly: "If there ain't Rosie O'Brien! You sweet thing! Come right here and kiss me!"

Rosie had to submit to the caress although she knew it was intended as a slight to Janet. That was one of Aunt Kitty Sullivan's little ways. Aunt Kitty was a fat, smiling, middle-aged woman who was going through life under the delusion that her face still retained the empty prettiness of its youth.

"I was just a-saying to Janet," Aunt Kitty began, "that she ought to be making herself more attractive. As long as she goes about looking like a scarecrow, she never will have a beau! Ain't that right, Rosie?"

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Aunt Kitty smiled upon Rosie that meaning smile with which one conscious beauty appeals to another. Rosie did not respond to it. From the bottom of her heart she despised Aunt Kitty for the persistence with which she tormented Janet. When Rosie came in her tirade must have been going on for some time, for Janet looked tense and angry and her mother badly flustered.

Mrs. McFadden, hard-worked and worn and shabby, could not openly resent her sister-in-law's little pleasantries, for Kitty Sullivan was the prosperous member of the family. The chance that had given her a sober, frugal, industrious husband had also given her a certain moral superiority over all women whose husbands were not sober or frugal or industrious. Mrs. McFadden did not question this superiority; she accepted it humbly. Far be it from her, poor drudge that she was, to dispute the words of a woman who could afford good clothes and a weekly ticket to the matinée. So all she said now in Janet's defence was:

"Kitty, I wish you wouldn't be putting such notions into Janet's head. She's too young to have beaux."

"Too young!" scoffed Mrs. Sullivan. "I guess I begun havin' beaux when I was a good deal younger than Janet is now! Why, nowadays a girl can't begin too young havin' beaux, or the first thing she knows she's an old maid! Ain't that right, Rosie?"

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Rosie turned her head away, mumbling some unintelligible answer. Tom, blushing until his freckles were all hidden, came to her rescue.

"Aw, now, Ma, why can't you let up on Janet? She ain't done nuthin' to you!"

Mrs. Sullivan looked at her son reprovingly. "Tom Sullivan, you just mind your own business! What I'm saying is for Janet's own good. And I must say, Mary McFadden, it's your fault, too. You ought to be dressing Janet better now that she's getting big."

Mrs. McFadden sighed apologetically. "I'm sure I dress her as well as I can, Kitty."

"Well, then, all I got to say is you must be a mighty poor manager, with Dave making good money and you yourself working every day!" As she finished, Mrs. Sullivan smiled and dimpled with all the malicious triumph of a precocious child.

Rosie felt shamed and troubled. To Mrs. Sullivan's taunt there was one answer that everybody present knew, but that neither Mary McFadden nor Janet would ever give, and that Rosie, as an outsider, could not give. But even so, Mrs. Sullivan was not to go unanswered. Tom, blushing with mortification, jumped to his feet.

"Ma, you're the limit! You ought to be ashamed o' yourself! Uncle Dave makes good money, does he? Yes, and he boozes every cent of it, and Aunt Mary here has got to work like a nigger to pay the rent and keep herself and Janet, and you know it, too."

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"Tom Sullivan, you shut up!" Mrs. Sullivan's voice rose to an angry scream. "How dare you interrupt me! You deserve a good thrashing, you do, and you're goin' to get it, too, as soon as your father comes home!... Dave boozes, does he? Well, all I got to say is this: he never boozed before he got married, and if he boozes now it's a mighty queer thing!"

Rosie stood up to go. "Say, Janet, you promised to come with me this afternoon. Get your hat."

"Yes," advised Mrs. Sullivan; "put on that old black sailor hat that makes you look like a guy. Mary McFadden, if I had a girl I wouldn't let her out on the street in a hat like that!"

Rosie and Janet started off and Tom called after them: "Wait a minute! I'll come, too!"

"No, you don't!" his mother ordered. "You stay right where you are! You don't get out o' my sight till I hand you over to your dad!"

Once safe on the street, Rosie put a sympathetic arm about Janet's shoulder. "Even if she is your aunt, Janet, I think she's low-down and I hate her!"

"Pooh!" Janet tossed her head in fine scorn. "In my opinion she ain't worth hating! She ain't nuthin'! I consider her beneath my contemp'! The truth is, Rosie, I don't mind her buzzin' around any more than I do a fly! She'd die if she didn't talk; so I say let her talk. If she couldn't she'd probably do something worse. My mother feels the same way. We get tired of her sometimes, but

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we stand her because she's my dad's own sister.... Of course, though, some of the things she says is perfectly true. I ain't pretty. You are, Rosie, but I ain't and I know it, and that's all there is about it."

Janet spread out her hands in simple candour and glanced at her friend. Then, involuntarily, she gave a little sigh. It was not a sigh of envy. She really did accept as a matter of fact that she herself was not pretty and that Rosie was. Where Rosie was plump and rounded and graceful, Janet knew that she was flat and long and lanky. Her arms were long, her fingers were long, her face was long. Her dark hair, too, was long, but with nothing in texture or colour to recommend it. She wore it pulled straight from her forehead and hanging behind in two stiff plaits.

With her old black hat, her colourless face, her faded clothes, she gave the impression of a very shabby, serious little person. And she was both. Rosie, on the other hand, though as poorly dressed, seemed anything but shabby and serious, for she was all life and colour, like some little roadside flower, which, in spite of dusty leaves, raises aloft a bright, fresh bloom.

Janet might bravely dismiss her aunt with a wave of the hand, but Rosie insisted upon repeating herself.

"I don't care what you say, Janet, I think she's low-down the way she talks to you and your mother! Now Tom's nice. That was fine the way he spoke up. You don't think his father'll lick him, do you?"

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"Uncle Matt?" Janet laughed. "Nev-er! Uncle Matt's just crazy about Tom. They're like two kids when they're together. And that reminds me, Rosie—goodness me, I was forgetting all about it!" Janet paused to give full flavour to her bit of news. "What Tom came over for this afternoon was to tell me that Uncle Matt has promised to give him and me tickets for the Traction Boys' Picnic—you know it's coming in two weeks now—and Tom says he's going to try to beg another ticket for you!"

"Is he really, Janet? Now isn't he just too kind!"

"Kind? I should say he is! He's bashful, of course, and people laugh at him because he's got red hair, but he's just as generous as he can be. You remember last year I went with him, too. Why, do you know, last year his father had six customers who bought their tickets and then turned right around and said: 'But we can't go, so you just give these tickets to some one who can.' Uncle Matt had enough tickets for the whole family and two more besides. He sold those two and give us all ice-cream sodas on them."

"Did he really, Janet! That just proves what I always say: in some ways I'd much rather have my father be a conductor than a motorman. A motorman never gets a chance at a ticket. I'm glad Jarge Riley's a conductor. I bet he sells a good many, don't you?"

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"Of course he will, Rosie! I hadn't thought of Jarge. If a customer gives Jarge back a ticket, of course he'll pass it on to you—I know he will. Gee, Rosie, you're lucky to have a fella like Jarge Riley boarding with you. He sure is a dandy."

To this last Rosie agreed readily enough but on the priority of her claim to any tickets she set Janet right. "If he gets only a couple, he'll give Ellen first chance."

Janet sighed. "Say, Rosie, is he still dead gone on Ellen?"

Rosie sighed, too, and nodded. "Ain't it funny with a fella that's got so much sense about other things?"

Janet sighed again. "I don't like to say anything against Ellen, because she's your sister, but, as you say yourself, it certainly is funny."

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## CHAPTER X

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### ROSIE RECEIVES AN INVITATION

ROSIE did not see George that night, but she brought up the subject next day at dinner. It was Sunday, so the whole family was assembled.

"Are you selling many tickets, Jarge?"

"Yes, a good many, and one of my customers give me back two."

"Oh, Jarge, did he really? What are you going to do with them?"

George glanced timidly in the direction of Ellen. It was plain at once what he wanted to do with them. It was also plain that Ellen was not going to give him much encouragement. To get the

support of the family, George made his invitation public. "I was hoping that Ellen would like to go with me."

Ellen glanced up languidly. "Thanks, Mr. Riley, but I don't see how I can."

George, swallowing hard, forced out the question: "Why not?"

"Well, if you insist on knowing, it's this: I don't care to make a guy o' myself going out with a fella that don't come up much above my shoulder."

Mrs. O'Brien threw up astonished hands and cried out: "Fie on you, Ellen, fie, for sayin' such a thing!"

Rosie blazed and spluttered with indignation: "Ellen O'Brien, you ought to be ashamed o' yourself to talk like that to a nice fella like Jarge Riley! If you had any sense you'd know that he's worth a whole cart-load of the dudes that you and Hattie Graydon run after!"

Rosie got up from her chair and, stepping over to George's place, slipped her arm about his embarrassed neck. Then she put her cheek against his. "Don't you care what that old Ellen says, Jarge. You're not little at all! You're plenty big enough! Besides, little men are much nicer!"

Ellen laughed maliciously. "It's a pity George don't ask you."

The red again surged up George's neck; he gulped; sent one hurt glance in Ellen's direction, then spoke to Rosie: "Rosie, I've got tickets for the Traction Boys' Picnic and I'd love like anything to take you. Have you got anything else on for Friday night next week?"

"Friday night, did you say, Jarge? Why, for Friday night they ain't nuthin' 'd suit me better! Thanks ever so much!"

Rosie, still behind George's chair, shot an annihilating glance at Ellen. That young woman, a trifle piqued perhaps but still amused, tossed her head and laughed.

"Ma, I don't think it's right the way Rosie's getting a grown-up fella and me not even engaged yet! I don't think you ought to allow it!"

"Ellen, Ellen, your tongue's entirely too long!" Mrs. O'Brien looked at her reprovingly, but Ellen, in a sudden change of mood, heeded her not. She was gazing at Rosie with speculative eyes. When she spoke, it was in a tone from which all banter and ill-humour had vanished.

"Ma, if Rosie does go with George Riley, there's just one thing: she's got to have a new dress. The poor kid hasn't a stitch to her back. She ought to have a little pink dimity. She's just sweet in pink. Lucky, too, there's a sale on tomorrow at the Big Store. So you needn't say a word—I'm going to get her something. And I'll trim her a hat, too."

Mrs. O'Brien protested that she hadn't the price of a ten-cent hat, let alone a dress, but Ellen, as usual, was firm, and Rosie knew that she was now destined to go to the picnic prettily costumed. Rosie would have liked to nurse a while longer her indignation against Ellen but, as Ellen was the only person in the house who knew how to trim a hat out of little or nothing and how to whip together a pretty little dress, Rosie was forced to change her manner of open hostility to one of a more friendly reserve.

On the whole Rosie was jubilant. "I'm sure I don't know why it is," she said to Janet McFadden, "but people are pretty nice to me, aren't they?"

"Nice?" echoed Janet with long-drawn emphasis. "Well, I should think they are!... Say, Rosie, listen:"—Janet paused a moment—"do you think Tom and me and you and Jarge could all go together? Do you think Jarge'd mind?"

Rosie considered the request carefully before answering. Then she spoke as kindly as she could: "I'm sure I don't know, Janet. Perhaps he'd like it all right, but, then again, perhaps he wouldn't. Don't you know, men are so queer nowadays. Anyway, though, I tell you what: I'll ask him."

"Will you, Rosie?" Janet's gratitude was almost pathetic.

Later, in presenting the case to George himself, Rosie's manner lost its air of Lady Bountiful, and she pleaded Janet's cause with an earnestness for which Janet would have worshipped her.

"Aw, now, Jarge, please! Poor Janet won't be in our way and she would love to be with us. Tom Sullivan don't talk much and he's got red hair, but he's awful nice, really he is. I told you he was trying to get me a ticket before you invited me. And besides, Jarge, if we get tired of them we can give them the slip for a little while."

As soon as Rosie paused for breath, George said: "Of course we'll let Janet and Tom Sullivan come with us if you want them. This is to be your party and you're to have things your own way."

Rosie looked her adoration. "Oh, Jarge, you're just too kind to me, really you are!"

The new dress was a great success. It was a little rosebud dimity, pink and pale green, which Ellen designed in pretty summer fashion to make the most of Rosie's well-turned little arms and graceful neck. On a ten-cent bargain counter Ellen had found a hat of yellow straw which was just the thing to shape into a little bonnet and trim with a wreath of pink rosebuds and two soft

green streamers which hung down on either side.

Ellen planned and worked and was happier than Rosie herself over each new effect. Mrs. O'Brien, hovering about, beamed with approval.

"Ellen's an artist with her needle," she declared over and over again. "She is indeed. How she does remind me of me own poor dead sister Birdie! There was a milliner in Dublin would have give her two eyes to get Birdie into her shop."

Mrs. O'Brien was right. Ellen was an artist with her needle and took all an artist's joy in her own creation. As she worked on Rosie's costume, she showed none of that impatient, overbearing selfishness which marked her so disagreeably at other times, but was gentle, frank, and affectionate. Once when she pricked Rosie's shoulders by accident she kissed the hurt away, and Rosie, surprised and touched, threw her arms impulsively about her neck.

"Why can't you always be like this to me, Ellen? I'd just love you dearly if you were."

Ellen laughed a little shamefacedly. "Ain't I nice all the time, Rosie? Well, I'm afraid it's that old business college. It gets on my nerves. I suppose I ought to be studying now, but I'm not going to. I'm not going to stop until I finish this for you."

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On the afternoon of the picnic, Ellen was so proud of Rosie's appearance that for once she forgot her haughtiness to George Riley. "Now tell the truth, George, aren't you glad it's Rosie instead of me?"

George gave Ellen one sick look, gulped, then said bravely: "Rosie sure is mighty pretty!"

"Pretty? I should say she is! See her now. Don't she look like a little flower—a sweet-pea or something? And do you know, George, if I was to dress that way, with my size and my height, I'd look like a guy! Yes, I would."

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## CHAPTER XI

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### THE TRACTION BOYS' PICNIC

THEY started off in time to make the half-past-five boat. George was at his dressiest, so close-shaven that he looked almost skinned and resplendent in new tan shoes, green socks, a red tie, and a pink shirt. It was a striking combination of colour and one that made Ellen clutch at her mother in despair. George carried a shoe-box of sandwiches, for Rosie, always a thrifty little housewife, insisted that whatever money they had to spend was not going for the commonplace necessaries of life.

Janet McFadden and Tom Sullivan, with a similar shoe-box, were waiting for them at the corner. Janet, in her old black sailor hat, looked dreadfully neat and clean, but for some reason even dingier than usual. It was Janet's first view of Rosie's finery. Shaking her head slowly, she gazed at Rosie several moments before she spoke. Then she said:

"Well, Rosie O'Brien, I must say you certainly do look elegant!"

Tom Sullivan was so flustered by the close vision of Rosie's loveliness that, when he opened his mouth to say something, he could only splutter unintelligibly and then blush furiously at his own embarrassment.

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It is surprising, when one stops to think about it, how delightful a mere street-car ride downtown really is. As Rosie sat there with her plain but faithful friend on one side—hereafter she must always try to be especially kind and gentle to Janet—and on the other her sporty, grown-up escort, she had one of those rare moments of perfect content and happiness. Old gentlemen smiled at her absent-mindedly as she brushed aside the green streamers which the wind was forever blowing across her face; young girls examined her critically; a mother across the way distracted the attention of a weeping child by pointing her finger and saying: "Oh, Eddy, look over there at that pretty little girl! She's lookin' straight at you, and what'll she say if she sees you cryin'!"... It was really a lovely, lovely world, and Rosie honestly and truly hoped that everybody in it was happy.

They reached the boat at that delightful moment when the bell is ringing and the deckhands are threatening to pull in the gang-plank in spite of the rushing crowds still arriving. By the time they had pushed their way to the upper deck, the gang-plank was in, the band was striking up a gay march, and with a lurch and a turn the *Island Princess* was off.

"O-oh!" murmured Rosie happily, and Janet demanded tensely, of no one in particular: "Isn't this just grand!"

Mothers and wives bustled about to get folding chairs and campstools, but the young folk,

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scorning so soon to sit down, promenaded arm in arm. Tucking Rosie's hand under his elbow, George joined the ranks of the promenaders, and Janet and Tom Sullivan followed his lead at a respectful distance.

At the stern, seated off by themselves, was a group of picnickers who hailed George as an old friend and waved at him inviting arms and handkerchiefs.

"Let's go over and say 'Howdy,'" George suggested.

There were some ten of them, girls and young fellows about George's own age. George took off his hat to them all and, with a flourish, presented Rosie.

"Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you my lady friend, Miss Rosie O'Brien. Rosie, won't you shake hands with my friend, Mr. Callahan, and Miss Higgins, and Miss McCarthy, and Miss Mahony, ..."

Rosie, feeling eighteen years old and perfectly beautiful, went the rounds to an enchanting chorus of, "Pleased to know you, Miss O'Brien," "You sweet little thing!" "Excuse me, Miss Rosie, but I must say George Riley knows how to pick out a pretty girl!..."

George then presented Janet, and Janet, too, went the rounds, looking like a sleep-walker with tight-set muscles and staring eyes.

"And this," concluded George, giving Tom Sullivan a little push, "is Matt Sullivan's boy. You fellows all know Matt—he's on the East End run." [96]

With blinking eyes and a crimson embarrassment that mounted to ears and scalp, Tom passed about a nerveless, sodden hand.

After a few more pleasantries, George, gathering together his forces, flourished his hat and said: "Well, so long, friends! See you later."

"Weren't they nice!" Rosie remarked enthusiastically, and Janet, in humble gratitude, said: "That was awful kind of you, Mr. Riley, introducing Tom and me."

"Kind nuthin'!" George declared. "Aren't you my friends, I'd like to know? Aren't all Rosie's friends my friends?"

Unable to express in words how deeply moved she was by the loftiness and nobility of this sentiment, Janet could only look at Rosie, sigh gloomily, and shake her head.

They ate their little picnic supper as soon as they landed, topped off with ice-cream, and then, unencumbered with shoe-boxes, sought out the allurements of sideshows, aërial and subterranean thrillers, and dancing pavilion. Rosie insisted that they go into nothing that cost over ten cents. By adopting this principle and making frequent excursions to the dancing pavilion, which was free, they were so well able to husband their resources that George's two dollars and Tom Sullivan's fifty cents carried them through the evening.

It seemed to Rosie she had never enjoyed so perfect a picnic. All the thrillers really thrilled. Capitana, the giantess snake-charmer, was actually a giantess, and the snakes she wound about her fat neck were fully as long and as spotted and as green as the posters made out. And so on through everything they tried. [97]

"I've never had such a good time in my life!" Rosie declared, as they hurried off to the ten-o'clock boat.

"Me, too!" gasped Janet in solemn, sepulchral tones.

Looking at the strained expression of happiness on Janet's face, Rosie suddenly thought of something new that would fittingly crown the day's adventures. Out of her own abundance she would give Janet another crumb that would make her eternally grateful.

"Say, Jarge," she whispered coaxingly, "will you do something for me?"

George looked down at her indulgently. "Of course I will. Anything you want."

"Well then, listen, Jarge: Will you take Janet all the way home and be real nice to her and pretend she's your girl and pet her real, real hard. Nobody ever pets Janet, and she never has a good time except when she's with me. And I'll take Tom Sullivan."

George laughed a good-natured "All right," and Rosie, turning around, said to Janet: "Jarge don't want me any more, do you, Jarge? He wants you, Janet, don't you, Jarge, want Janet? So will you let Tom Sullivan take me?" [98]

"Oh, Rosie!" Janet threw incredulous eyes to heaven and clutched her hands together in a joy that was serious as grief.

Rosie pushed her up to George and George, capturing her cold fingers, drew them through his arm. Then Rosie, glowing all over in virtuous self-approval, dropped behind with Tom Sullivan.



## THE LOAN OF A GENTLEMAN FRIEND

THE wives and mothers, with sleepy, crying children, cluttered up the lower decks. The young people by some common instinct seemed all to be drawn to the quiet and moonlight of the upper deck. There Rosie's party found them, a thousand couples more or less, each couple sitting somewhat apart from its neighbours, but frightfully close to itself.

"I suppose they're all engaged," Rosie remarked to Tom Sullivan, and even in the moonlight Tom blushed furiously.

George and Janet found the unoccupied half of a deck bench, not too far from the rail, and Rosie and Tom seated themselves on campstools some distance behind. They were pretty far in on deck and so could see very little beyond the backs of the great half circle of couples. But backs, in their way, are very expressive, and Rosie soon found herself deeply interested in the romances of which these various backs were soon giving most unmistakable hints. Every couple that sat down seemed to go through precisely the same emotional experience. A properly equipped statistician could soon have reduced the whole thing to a matter of minutes and seconds. [100]

Take what would be an average couple: They seat themselves like ordinary people in their right minds and, for a moment, that is what you suppose they really are. But only for a moment. Although they may be the only couple on the bench, almost immediately you see them crowding against each other as if to make room for a fat lady with a baby. Then to get more room the man drops his arm—the arm next the girl—over the back of the bench, where it lies a few moments lifeless and inert. The position is uncomfortable, evidently, for soon he tries to bring it back. Too late. The invisible fat lady with the baby has, in the meantime, wedged the girl right under the man's shoulder, and his arm and hand, in circling back, circle naturally about her. She, poor little soul, seems not to know what has happened. Her tired head sinks like a weary bird—sinks on his breast. She sleeps. At any rate, she looks like it. Then she wakes. She wakes gradually. Her profile slowly rises and, as it rises, lo! his descends until—until—Well, you know what always occurs when his profile meets her profile full-face.

Every time they saw it happen, Rosie held her breath for a moment, then murmured: "They must be engaged, too!"

Tom Sullivan stood it as long as he could, then burst out: "Aw, go on! You don't have to be engaged to kiss!" [101]

Rosie looked at him, scandalized and shocked. "Why, Tom Sullivan, how you talk! You ought to be ashamed o' yourself!"

"Well, you don't!" Tom insisted doggedly.

Rosie, drawing herself away from a person of such free-and-easy morals, returned to the backs of the last couple to see whether their little drama had completed itself. As she looked, the final act opened. The man whispered something—from what happened when all the other men had whispered something, Rosie decided he must be asking the girl if she were chilly. She, like all others before her, presumably was, for the man took off half his coat, the half near her, and drew it around her shoulders. What became of his shirt-sleeved arm, or what, in fact, thereafter became of the rest of both of them, no mere onlooker could ever know. The half-coat, raising high its collar, served as an effectual screen against the gaze of a curious world, and the only thing left for a student of human nature was to hunt a new couple.

One of the marvels of a picnic boat is that there are always new couples. Rosie found one immediately and was already engrossed in it when Tom Sullivan, clutching her excitedly, cried out:

"Look! Look! Didn't I tell you!"

Rosie looked, and what she saw seemed for a moment to make her heart stop. George Riley and Janet McFadden—think of it! How long the exhibit had been going on Rosie knew not, but Tom Sullivan had discovered them just as Janet's profile was rising and George's descending. In another instant— [102]

"There!" shouted Tom Sullivan in triumph. "Didn't I tell you so! Now you can't say they're engaged!"

Rosie stood up hurriedly.

"This is a perfectly horrid boat and I wish I could get off! And I tell you one thing, Tom Sullivan: I'm going downstairs. I won't stay up here any longer. It's disgraceful, that's what it is!"

"Aw, don't go down!" Tom begged. "It's fun up here."

But Rosie was already started and Tom had to follow.

"Say, Rosie," he chuckled confidentially over her shoulder as she climbed down to the next

deck, "did you see old Janet? Gee! I bet it was the first time a fella ever kissed her!"

Had Rosie seen old Janet? Yes, Rosie had, and the mere thought of the perfidious creature sent Rosie hot and cold by turns. Oh, to think of it! After all she had done for Janet out of the innocent kindness of her heart, to have Janet face about and treat her so! Why, she was nothing but a thief, a brazen thief!...

It was true that, in a sense, George did not belong to Rosie: he belonged to Ellen O'Brien if Ellen would once make up her mind to possess him; but as between Rosie and Janet he certainly belonged to Rosie. And Janet knew it, too! And he knew it! Oh, what a weak character his was, thus to be tempted by the first fair face! Fair face, indeed! The first ugly face! Yes, ugly! Not even her own mother could call Janet anything else!

[103]

Rosie found uncomfortable places for herself and Tom among the wives and mothers who, heavy-eyed and dishevelled, were waiting impatiently to land. Shining over them was no glamour of moonlight. They were plain, homely, hard-worked women—exactly what Janet McFadden would be some day, if George Riley had but sense enough to know it. Rosie picked out the homeliest of them all and wished she had George down beside her so that she could say to him:

"Do you see that woman? Well, that's what your dear Janet's going to look like when she grows up!"

Rosie had a mental picture of herself at that same future period, with golden hair and lovely clothes and heaps and heaps of beautiful jewels. If she could only give George a glimpse of the great contrast which in a few years there would be between her and Janet, then he'd feel sorry! He'd probably get down on his knees and beg her pardon and she, flipping back some expensive lace from her wrist, would smile at him kindly and drawl out:

"Oh, that's all right, Mr. Riley. I never think of you any more. You know how it is when a person has so many wealthy friends. I'm sorry, but I got to go now, for my automobile is waiting. Good-bye...."

[104]

But meanwhile the moonlight was still shining on the upper deck and Rosie felt perfectly sure that, by this time, Janet was tucked away in George's coat. Rosie stood the suspense as long as she could, then jumped up to investigate.

"You wait here for me, Tom," she ordered; "I'll be back in just a minute."

She hurried off to the upper deck and, of course, found conditions exactly as she knew they would be. The only thing that showed above George's coat collar was the tilted edge of Janet's old black sailor hat. Rosie stepped up quite close to the guilty pair and cleared her throat, but they heeded her not.

"All right!" Rosie warned them in her own mind. "Just keep on and you'll both be sorry some day!"

Then she told herself for the fiftieth time what a fool she had been, and she made a mighty vow never again to loan a gentleman friend to any one whomsoever.

When she got back to Tom Sullivan, Tom had a bag of peanuts which he offered her at once. "You like peanuts, don't you, Rosie? It's my last nickel, except carfare. Aw, go on, take some."

Not to seem unfriendly, Rosie accepted a handful. Crunching the shells between her fingers comforted her a little. It was the sort of treatment she would like to give some people—at any rate, it was the kind they deserved. She didn't exactly name the peanuts, but she gave them initials. To the small ones she gave the initial *J*, to the large ones *G*.

[105]

"Do you suppose those two are spoonin' up there yet?" Tom asked finally.

"What two?"

"Why, George Riley and Janet." And Tom Sullivan, who was supposed to be bashful, looked at Rosie with a meaning smile.

Rosie returned the glance with fire and daggers. "Don't you move your old chair any closer to me, Tom Sullivan!"

"Aw, now, Rosie——" Tom began, but Rosie cut him short, for the landing-bell was sounding and it was time for them to pick up their disreputable friends.

George and Janet were all for acting as if nothing unusual had happened, and Rosie scorned them afresh for the useless hypocrisy.

The journey home was stupid and unpleasant. The cars were crowded and people were ill-natured and rude and everything in general was horrid. The wind kept blowing Rosie's streamers into her eyes until she was ready to tear them off.... Would they never get home?

Janet McFadden, her dull black eyes fixed in a dream, heeded nothing. But at the corner where their ways parted Rosie saw to it that she heard something. When Janet offered farewells, Rosie called out with unmistakable emphasis:

[106]

"Good-night, *Tom!* I've had a very pleasant time with *you!*"

Like Janet, George Riley seemed to think that everything was as before. He himself was quiet, with the drowsy languor that follows an evening's excitement, and he seemed to be attributing Rosie's silence to the same cause.

When they got home, Rosie tried to show him his mistake. The gas in the little hallway was burning low, and George turned it high to light Rosie upstairs.

Rosie started off without a word.

"Aren't you going to kiss me good-night, Rosie?"

At that Rosie turned slowly about and gazed down upon him with all the hauteur of an offended queen. "There's just one thing I want to tell you, Jarge Riley: because you kiss Janet McFadden, you needn't think you can kiss *any* girl!"

"Why, Rosie!" George began. But Rosie was already gone.



"Because you kiss Janet McFadden, you needn't think you can kiss any girl."

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## CHAPTER XIII

[107]

### JANET EXPLAINS

By ten o'clock next morning Janet McFadden was at the door asking for Rosie. Rosie did not, of course, ever care to see Janet again, but as she had come Rosie could scarcely deny herself.

She found her one-time friend looking pinched and worried—conscience-stricken, no doubt—and little wonder.

"I'm going to the grocery, Janet. Do you want to come with me?"

Hardly outside the gate, Janet began: "You're not mad at me, Rosie, are you?"

"Mad?" Rosie spoke the word as if it were one with which she was unfamiliar.

"I didn't think you'd care, Rosie, honest I didn't. I thought you'd understand."

"Understand what?" There was a certain coldness in the tone of Rosie's inquiry, and Janet, feeling it, seemed ready to wring her hands in despair.

"Why, Rosie, all we talked about was you—honest it was! Jarge said you were just like his own little sister to him, and I told him I loved you more than I would my own sister if I had one."

"Huh!" Rosie grunted, recalling the tilt of Janet's black sailor hat over George's shoulder. It had looked then as if they were talking about her, hadn't it now? [108]

"Honest, Rosie!"

"Yes, of course. I suppose now you were talking about me when you——" Rosie pursed her lips and Janet, understanding her meaning, blushed guiltily.

"Aw, now, Rosie, listen: all I wanted was to have Tom Sullivan see."

"Well, he saw all right. So did I. So did everybody. And it was disgraceful, too!"

Janet groped helplessly about for words. "I don't exactly mean on account of Tom himself."

"Oh!"

"Please, Rosie," Janet begged; "don't talk to me that way.... You know Tom's mother, my Aunt Kitty. You know the way she makes fun of me because I'm ugly and lanky. She's always saying that I'm an old maid already and that I'll never get a boy to look at me. So I just wanted her to hear about a nice fella like Jarge Riley hugging me and kissing me."

Rosie looked at Janet in astonishment. She had certainly expected Janet to make up a better story than that.

"Well, I must say, Janet McFadden, this is news to me! Since when have you got so particular about what your Aunt Kitty thinks or doesn't think? I always supposed she was beneath your contempt'."

"No, no, Rosie, it isn't that! I don't care what she thinks or what she says either, if only she wouldn't go blabbing it around everywhere!" With a sudden gust of passion, Janet clenched her hands and breathed hard. "Oh, how I hate her!" [109]

Rosie had nothing to say and, after a pause, Janet continued more quietly:

"It's this way, Rosie: You know my old man. He's all right except sometimes when he comes home not quite himself. You know what I mean."

Yes, Rosie knew. In fact, like the rest of the world, she knew a great deal more than Janet supposed about Dave McFadden's drunken abuse of his wife and child.

"He's all right when he's straight, Rosie, honest he is."

Never before had Janet confessed in words, even to Rosie, that her father wasn't always sober. It was the fiction of life that she struggled most valiantly to maintain that this same father was the best and noblest of his kind. Poor Janet! In spite of herself Rosie experienced a pang of the old pity which thought of Janet's hard life always excited. But Janet was not striving to appeal to her thus. Slowly and painfully she was forcing herself to lay bare the little tragedy that shadowed her days....

"When he comes home that way he says awful things to me. He says I got a face like a horse and arms as long as a monkey's. He'd never think of things like that if it wasn't for Aunt Kitty. You know he thinks everything Aunt Kitty says is wonderful because she's supposed to be the bright one of the family and used to be pretty. And, Rosie, she ain't got a bit o' sense. All she can do is make people laugh by making fun of somebody. She never cares how much she hurts any one's feelings. I—I know I'm ugly, but—can I help it?..." Janet's face was quivering and her eyes were swimming in tears. "I don't see why Aunt Kitty's got to talk about it, do you? Even if I am ugly, I guess—I guess I got feelings like anybody else.... It's only when dad's full that he starts in on it and begins to yell around until everybody in the building hears him. And I know just as well he'd never think of it if only Aunt Kitty would let up on me a little. So I thought—— Oh, you understand now, don't you, Rosie? That's the reason I did it, honest it is. You believe me, Rosie, don't you?" [110]

Believe her? Who wouldn't believe her? Long before she had finished speaking, the citadel of Rosie's affections had been stormed and retaken and Rosie, abject and conquered, was ready to cry for mercy.

"And when I told Jarge Riley about it," Janet continued, "he was just as nice. He pretended he wanted to kiss me anyhow, but he didn't, Rosie, honest he didn't. It was only because I was your friend that he wanted to be nice to me...."

Of course, of course. At last Rosie was seeing things as they really were, and seeing them thus made her heartsick when she remembered how she had spoken to kind old George Riley. How could she ever put herself right with him?... She would be carrying his supper up to the cars at six o'clock. There would be only an instant of time, but an instant would be enough for her to say: "Oh, Jarge, I've just been happy all day long thinking about the good time you gave me yesterday!" [111]

Me and Janet have been talking about it. Thanks, thanks so much!" And George Riley, if she knew him at all, instead of recalling her foolish words of last night, would grin all over and gasp out: "Aw, Rosie, that wasn't nuthin' at all!" That was the sort of fellow George was!...

"But listen here, Rosie," Janet's voice was continuing in tones of humble entreaty; "if I'd ha' known it would ha' made you mad, I wouldn't have asked Jarge Riley—honest I wouldn't. You believe me, don't you, Rosie?"

Tears were in Rosie's throat and self-abasement in her heart. Words, however, came hard. Fortunately she could slip her arm about Janet's neck in the old sweet, intimate fashion and Janet would understand that all was well between them.

"And, Janet dear, are you sure that Tom'll tell his mother?"

"Yes, I'm sure, because I made him promise not to."

"Why, Janet!"

"Sure, Rosie. You see Aunt Kitty'll ask him all about things and he'll tell about you and how pretty you looked and about Jarge Riley, and then Aunt Kitty'll begin making fun of me and that'll make Tom mad and he'll tell Aunt Kitty not to be so sure, and then she'll see he's holding back something and she'll tease until she gets it out of him.... Oh, Rosie, I tell you I know her just as well! I can just hear her! And when Tom tells her how mad you are, that'll make her believe the rest.... But honestly, Rosie, I didn't know you was mad till Tom told me."

[112]

"Tom!" Rosie was indignant at once. "Do you mean to say Tom Sullivan told you I was mad? Well, the next time you see Tom Sullivan you tell him for me to mind his own business!" Rosie paused a moment, then drew Janet closer to her. "Mad? What's eating Tom Sullivan? Friends like you and me, Janet, don't get *mad!*"

And Janet McFadden, shaking her head in horror that any one should even suggest such a thing, declared emphatically: "Of course not!"

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## CHAPTER XIV

[113]

### ON SCARS AND BRUISES

A FEW mornings later Rosie was seated on the front steps, shelling peas, when Janet passed the gate.

"Aren't you coming in?" Rosie called out.

At first Janet was not, but on Rosie's second invitation she changed her mind. As she reached the steps, Rosie discovered the reason of her hesitation. She had a black eye. She carried it consciously, but with such dignity, as it were, that Rosie could not at once decide whether Janet expected her to speak of it, or to accept it without comment.

Janet herself, after an introductory remark about the weather, broached the subject.

"What do you think about the eye I've got on me? Ain't it a beaut?"

It certainly was, and Rosie expressed emphatic appreciation.

"And how do you suppose I got it?" Janet pursued.

"I couldn't guess if I had to!"

Rosie's answer was tactful, rather than truthful. In her own mind she had very little doubt whence the black eye had come. But it would never do to say that she supposed it had been given Janet by her father during one of the drunken rages to which he was subject. With one's dearest friend one may be frank almost to brutality, but not on the subject of that friend's family. There are reserves that even friendship may not penetrate. So, with an exaggeration of guilelessness, Rosie declared:

[114]

"I couldn't guess if I had to! Honest I couldn't!"

Janet had her story ready:

"You know how dark the halls in our building are. Well, I was just going downstairs, when a boy sneaked up behind me, and pushed me, and I slipped, and hit my face against the banister. And I think I know who it was, too!"

Rosie was by nature too simple and direct to simulate with any great success the kind of surprise that Janet was forever demanding of her. Fortunately this time it did not matter, for, while Janet was speaking, Rosie's mother had appeared with an armful of darning. Unlike Rosie,

Mrs. O'Brien was always in a state of what might be termed chronic surprise. She paused now before seating herself, to remark in shocked tones:

"Why, Janet McFadden, what's this ye're tellin'? Mercy on us, ain't b'ys just awful sometimes! But I'm thinkin' your da'll soon settle that lad!"

Janet shook her head violently.

"Mrs. O'Brien, I wouldn't dare tell my father that boy's name for anything! My father'd just murder him—honest he would! It just makes my father crazy when anybody touches me! He ain't responsible, he gets so mad—really he ain't! So you can see yourself I got to be mighty careful what I tell him. Besides, I ain't dead sure it was that boy, but I think it was."

[115]

Mrs. O'Brien's interest in the situation equalled Janet's own.

"I see exactly the place you're in, Janet, and I must say it's wise, the stand you take."

Mrs. O'Brien bit off a strand of darning cotton, and carefully stiffened the end.

"You see," Janet continued, "it's this way with me. I'm an only child, and you know yourself how men act about their only child."

"I do, indeed, Janet, and I feel for you." From her sympathetic understanding of Janet's problem, one would never have supposed that Mrs. O'Brien herself was the mother of a large family, and had been the child of a larger one. She held up a sock impressively. "You're quite right, Janet. Your da might do somethin' awful. There's no holdin' back some men when they take it into their heads that their only child has been mistreated."

Rosie sighed inwardly. She had very little of that histrionic sense that prompts people to assume a part and play it out in all seriousness. At first such a performance as the present one wearied her. Why in the world do people pretend a thing when they know perfectly well that they are pretending? Then, as the moments passed, she grew interested in spite of herself, for the acting of her mother and Janet was most convincing. At last she was not quite sure that it was acting. She was brought back to her senses by Janet's turning suddenly to her with the exclamation:

[116]

"Ain't they all o' them just awful, anyhow!"

No need to ask Janet of whom she was speaking. It was an old practice of hers, this glorifying her father in one breath, and in the next vilifying men in general. Rosie protested at once:

"Why are they awful? I think they're nice."

Janet looked at her in kindly commiseration.

"Well, then, Rosie, all I got to say is—you don't know 'em."

"I don't know them! Well, I like that!" Rosie was indignant now. "I guess I know them as well as you do!" Rosie paused, then concluded in triumph: "Don't I know my own brother Terry? I guess he's all right!"

"Terry," Janet repeated, with a significant headshake. "Now I suppose, Rosie, you think you and Terry are great friends, don't you?"

"I don't think so; I know so."

Janet laughed cynically.

"Yes, I suppose you and him are great friends as long as you run your legs off for him. But listen to me, Rosie O'Brien! Do you know what he'd do to you if you was to lose one of his paper customers? He'd beat the very puddin' out of you! I guess I know!"

[117]

"Janet, you're crazy!"

"Crazy? All right, Rosie, have it your own way. But I leave it to Mis' O'Brien if I ain't right."

That lady, being, as it were, pledged to Janet's support, instead of vindicating her own son, made the weak admission:

"Well, I must confess there's somethin' in what Janet says."

At Janet's departure, Rosie looked at her mother scornfully.

"Ma, don't you really know how Janet got that black eye?"

Mrs. O'Brien dropped her darning in surprise. At every turn life seemed to hold a fresh surprise for Mrs. O'Brien.

"Why, Rosie! What a question to ask your poor ma! Do I look like I was born yesterday?"

Mrs. O'Brien did not; but, even so, Rosie insisted upon a direct answer.

"Well, then, if you really must know, Rosie dear, I'll be glad to tell you. That brute of a Dave McFadden has been knockin' her down again."

Rosie clucked her tongue impatiently. "Maggie O'Brien, there's one thing I'd like to ask you.

When Janet knew how she got that black eye, and you knew how she got it, and she knew perfectly well that you knew, why in the world did you both go pretending something else?"

Mrs. O'Brien looked at her daughter in patient despair.

[118]

"My, my, Rosie, what a child ye do be! Wouldn't it be awful of me to go insultin' poor little Janet by saying: 'Ho, ho, Janet, that's a fine black eye yir da has given you!'"

Rosie squirmed in exasperation. "But why do you got to say anything? Why do either of you got to say anything?"

"Why do I got to say anything?" In Mrs. O'Brien, surprise had now turned to amazement. "Why, Rosie dear, what's this ye're askin' me? Haven't I always got to say somethin'? Wasn't it for talkin' purposes that the Lord put a tongue in me head?"

"But couldn't you talk about something else besides that black eye?"

"I could not. Take me word for it, Rosie, that black eye was the one thing of all to talk about. Don't you see, dear, 'twas that was taking up Janet's entire attention, for it was on her mind as well as on her face. So not to make it awkward for the poor child, I simply had to talk and let her talk."

Rosie still shook her head obstinately. "Even if it was on her mind, I don't see why she had to go make up that silly story that nobody believes, and that she don't believe herself. She always does."

Mrs. O'Brien's face broke into a smile of understanding.

"Ah, Rosie, I see now what's troublin' you. You don't see why poor Janet wants to cover up that brute of a Dave."

[119]

This was exactly what was troubling Rosie, as she agreed readily enough.

"And, Ma," she continued, "do you suppose if my father beat me, I'd go around pretending he was the best ever? Well, I wouldn't!"

"Your poor da, did you say, Rosie? May God forgive you for havin' such a thought! Why, that poor lamb wouldn't hurt a fly—he's that gentle! Ah, Rosie, it's on yir knees ye ought to be every night of yir life, thankin' God for the kind o' father I picked out for you!"

"I am thankful, but I wouldn't be if he was like Dave McFadden. And I wouldn't pretend I was, either."

"Ah, it's little ye know about that, Rosie, for just let me tell ye—ye'd be exactly like Janet if ye were in Janet's shoes."

"I bet I wouldn't!"

"Rosie, ye couldn't help yirself. Ye'd have to stand up for him even if he was a brute."

"Why would I have to?"

"Because he's your da. Is it possible, Rosie dear, that ye don't yet know 'tis a woman's first duty to stand up for a man if he's her da, or her brother, or her husband, or her son? Mercy on us, where would we be if she didn't? Have ye ever heard me, all the years of your life, breathe a whisper against Jamie O'Brien?"

[120]

"I should think not!" To Rosie this seemed a very poor example of the principle in question. "How could you? Dad never even beats the boys, let alone you and me!"

Mrs. O'Brien smacked her lips pensively. "No, he don't beat me." She sighed slowly. "I mean *now* he don't."

Rosie looked at her mother with startled eyes. "Ma, what do you mean?"

Mrs. O'Brien sighed again, and took up her darning. "Nuthin' at all, Rosie. I don't know what I'm sayin'. I can't gab another minute, for I must finish this sock. So run off, like a good child, and don't bother me."

"But, Ma"—Rosie's voice dropped to a whisper, and a look of horror came into her face—"do you mean he used to—beat you?"

"Rosie dear, stop pesterin' me with your questions. Far be it from me to set child against father, and, besides, as you know yourself, he's behavin' now. What's past is past. I've said this much to you, Rosie, so's to give you a hint of the ragin' lions that these here quiet, soft-spoken little lambs of men keep caged up inside o' them. Oh, I tell you, Rosie dear, beware o' that kind of a man, for you never know when the lion in him is goin' to break loose and leap out upon you. Ah, I know what I'm sayin' to me everlastin' sorrow!"

"Why, Ma, are you crazy! Dad has never laid a finger on you, or on any one else, and you know he hasn't!"

[121]

Rosie scanned her mother's face in hope of discovering a little family joke, but Mrs. O'Brien met her gaze with sad, truthful eyes as guileless as a baby's.

"All right, Rosie dear, maybe your poor ma is crazy. But I wonder now ye've never noticed the scar on me right shoulder, nor asked the cause of it."

"What scar?"

"Have you never seen it, Rosie?"

Mrs. O'Brien began unbuttoning her waist to exhibit the scarred shoulder. Then she paused, thought a moment, and changed her mind.

"No. As ye've never noticed it, Rosie, it wouldn't be right of me to show it to you now. The sight of it might make you bitter. But you surprise me that you've never seen it. It's a foot long at least, and two fingers deep, and itches in rainy weather."

"Why, Ma!" Rose's eyes were fixed, and her mouth a round, blank question mark.

"Upon me word of honour, Rosie!"

For a moment Rosie was too shocked to go on. Then she gasped: "How—how did it happen?"

"How did it happen, do you ask? That, Rosie, is a secret that'll go with me to the grave. This much I'll tell you—'twas made with a butcher-knife. But who gave the blow, I wouldn't confess under torture. Now, Rosie dear, don't tempt me to say another word, for I'm done." [122]

Mrs. O'Brien lifted her head high, took a long breath, and began a serious attack on the sock.

Rosie questioned further, but in vain.

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## CHAPTER XV

 [123]

### THE BRUTE AT BAY

HER own father!... All afternoon as she went about delivering papers, Rosie's mind kept going over this amazing revelation. Not for an instant did she question the truth of it. An exuberance of imagination very often led her mother to embroider fancifully the details of a story, but surely not this time. This time that scar, that awful scar, was evidence enough of what had taken place.

To think that Rosie had never even suspected that side of her father's nature! She shuddered at her own innocence. To her, her father had always seemed all gentleness and meekness. Gentleness and meekness, indeed! Why, with that raging lion ramping and tearing about inside of him he was little better than a wolf in sheep's clothing!

At first Rosie dreaded ever seeing him again. She doubted whether, at sight of him, she could conceal sufficiently the abhorrence that she felt. Then she began to want to see him, as one wants to see the animals in the carnivora building at feeding time. It is a racking experience, but one likes to go through it. Rosie's final decision was to take one look at the beast, hear for herself the sound of its roar, then flee it forever. [124]

A good time to see Jamie O'Brien was after supper, in the cool of the evening, when he slipped off his shoes, unloosened his suspenders, and sat him down in the peace and quiet of the back yard. He had a broken-down old arm-chair, which he knew how to prop against the ancient little apple-tree and support with a brick at its shortest leg. For one-half hour every summer evening, when the old chair was properly braced, and his sock feet were stretched out at ease on a soap-box, Jamie O'Brien knew comfort, utter and absolute. It was the moment when, like old King Cole, he called for his pipe.

"Rosie dear, like a good child, will you bring me me pipe and a few matches?"

Rosie, busied in the kitchen over the supper dishes, always knew just when this call was coming, and always had her answer ready: "All right, Dad. Just wait till I dry my hands and I will."

Tonight she gave the usual answer in the usual cheerful tone, for she felt that it behooved her to meet deceit with deceit if she was to catch the beast unaware. So she got Jamie his pipe, and later came out again and perched on the arm of his chair.

"Say, Dad," she began.

She took a peep at him from the corner of her eye. Heaven knows he did not look fierce. He was a plain, lean, little man, of indeterminate colouring, with sparse hair, sparser mustache, and faded blue eyes, that had a patient, far-away look in them. His face was thin and worn, with lines that betokened years of labour borne steadily and without complaint. He was a silent man and passed for thoughtful, though contemplative would better express his cast of mind. He looked at things and people slowly and quietly, as if considering them carefully before committing himself. Then, when he spoke, it would be some slight remark, brief and commonplace. [125]



When Rosie began: "Say Dad," he waited patiently. After several seconds had elapsed, he turned his head slightly and said: "Well, Rosie?"

He gave her a faint smile, and patted her hand affectionately. Ordinarily, at this place, Rosie would have slipped an arm about his neck, but tonight she held back.

"Say, Dad," she opened again, in a coaxing, confidential tone, "did you have a good run today?"

The world in general supposes, no doubt, that, to a motorman, one day's run must be much like any other. Rosie knew better.

Jamie very deliberately relit his pipe before answering. Then he said: "Yes, it was all right, Rosie."

Rosie waited, as she knew from his manner that something more would finally come. Jamie gazed about thoughtfully, then concluded: "They was a flat wheel on the rear truck."

Rosie was all sympathy. "Oh, Dad, I'm so sorry! It must ha' been horrid riding all day on a flat wheel." [126]

Jamie took a puff or two, then announced: "I didn't mind it."

"Well, Dad, did you report it?"

Jamie scratched his head, as if in an effort to remember, and at last said: "Sure."

After a decent interval, Rosie began again: "Say, Dad, what'd you think of a man who chased his wife with a hatchet?"

Rosie thought it would be a little indelicate to come right out with butcher-knife. Hatchet was near enough, anyway. Rosie's idea was that her father would betray himself by defending the husband. When he did, she expected to tell him that she knew all. Her imagination did not carry her beyond this. She was prepared, however, for something horrible.

Jamie O'Brien turned his head almost quickly. "With a hatchet, did you say, Rosie?"

"Yes, Dad, with a hatchet."

"That's bad. And is it some one around here that we know?"

"No, it ain't anybody. I was just saying, what would you think of a man who did that?"

"And it ain't some one we know?"

With a wave of his pipe, Jamie dismissed all hypothetical hatchets, and returned to the more sensible contemplation of the sky line.

Rosie felt that she was being trifled with. She gazed at her father meaningly. [127]

"Well, what would you say to a man who chased his wife with a butcher-knife?"

Again Jamie took an exasperating time to answer, and again his answer took the form of the question: "Is it some one we know, Rosie?"

Rosie threw discretion to the winds. "I'm sure you ought to know whether it's some one we know!"

Jamie blinked his eyes slowly and thoughtfully. "I don't seem to place him, Rosie."

Rosie left him in disgust. Brutality is bad enough, but hypocrisy is worse. She went as far as the kitchen door, then turned back. She would give him one more chance.

Again smiling, she put her arms about his neck. "Say, Dad, if you was to get awful mad at me, what would you do?"

"At you, do you say, Rosie? Well, now, I don't see how any one could get awful mad at you."

Rosie's patience was about exhausted, but she restrained herself. "But, Dad, if I was to do something awful bad—steal ten dollars, or run away from home!"

Jamie looked at Rosie, then at the sky line, then at the soap-box, then back at Rosie. Surely now a brutal threat was coming.

"Why, Rosie dear, I don't think you'd ever do anything like that!"

Huh! What kind of an answer was that for a father to give his child? Rosie straightened her back, and without another word departed. She felt that her worst fears were justified. Any man as difficult to trap as Jamie O'Brien was a dangerous character. [128]

She nursed her resentment the rest of the evening. Just before she went to sleep, however, she decided, as a matter of scrupulous justice, to suspend final judgment until she should have seen for herself that damning evidence of his brutality, namely, the scar on her poor mother's right shoulder. Yes, she would find some excuse for seeing it at once.

The next morning, while her mother was preparing to go to market, of itself the opportunity came.

"Rosie dear," Mrs. O'Brien called down from upstairs, "I need your help. One of me corset strings is busted."

Rosie found her mother seated at the bureau, half dressed, fanning herself with a towel. A full expanse of neck and shoulders was exposed, so that Rosie, busied at her mother's back, was able to scan minutely all that there was to scan. She looked and looked again, and by patting her mother affectionately, was able to add the testimony of touch to that of sight.

In due time her mother departed, and Rosie, left alone, turned to the mirror and gazed into it several moments without speaking.

"Well!" she said at last. "What do you know about that!"

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She shook her head at the round-eyed person in the mirror, and the round-eyed person nodded back, as deeply impressed with the inexplicability of things as Rosie herself.

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## CHAPTER XVI

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### WHAT EVERY LADY WANTS

ALL morning Rosie moved about the house preoccupied and silent, heaving an occasional sigh, murmuring an occasional "Huh!"

At dinner she paid scant attention to her mother's market adventures, and with difficulty heard Terry's orders concerning a new paper customer. Her mind was too fully occupied with a problem of its own to be interested in anything else.

On the whole it was a strange problem, and one that, after hours of thought, remained unsolved. By mid-afternoon Rosie was ready to cast it from her in disgust but she found that she could not. Like a bad conscience, it stayed with her, dogging her steps even on her paper route.

It had the effect of colouring everything that she saw or heard. When she handed a paper to Mrs. Donovan, the policeman's wife, who exclaimed: "What do you think of the beautiful new hammock that Mr. Donovan has just gave me?" Rosie remarked in a tone that was almost sarcastic: "Oh, ain't you lucky!" and to herself she added cynically: "And I'd like to know who gave you that black-and-blue spot on your arm!"

She found one of the Misses Grey pale and haggard under the strain of a hot-weather headache. Rosie forced her unwilling tongue to some expression of sympathy; but, once on her way, she told her disgruntled self that what she had wanted to say was: "Well, Miss Grey, I must say, if I didn't know you was an old maid, I'd ha' taken you for a happy married woman!"

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Near the end of the route, she found old Danny Agin waiting, as usual, for his paper. His little blue eyes twinkled Rosie a welcome, and his jolly cracked voice called out: "How are you today, Rosie?"

For a moment Rosie gazed at him without speaking. Then she shook her head, and sighed.

"You look all right, Danny Agin, just as kind and nice as can be, but I guess Mis' Agin knows a few things about you!"

Danny blinked his eyes several times in quick succession. "What's this ye're sayin', Rosie?"

"Oh, nuthin'. I was only saying what a nice day it was. Good-bye."

Rosie started resolutely away, then paused. She really wanted some one with whom to talk out her perplexity, and here was Danny Agin, a man of sound sense and quick sympathy, and her own sworn friend and ally.

Rosie turned back and, seating herself on the porch step at Danny's feet, looked up into Danny's face.

"What's troublin' you, Rosie dear?" Danny's tone was kind and invited confidence.

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Rosie shook her head gloomily. "Danny, I'm just so mixed up that I don't know where I'm at. You know Janet McFadden? Well——"

Rosie took a long breath and, beginning at the beginning, gave Danny a full account of yesterday's discussion. She brought her story down to that very morning when her mother had called her upstairs to tie the broken corset string. At this point she paused and sighed, then looked at Danny long and searchingly.

"And, Danny, listen here: *There wasn't any scar at all!* I hunted over every scrap of both shoulders and I felt 'em, too, and they were just as round and smooth as a fat baby! And she said:

'A foot long at least and two fingers deep.' And she even said it itched in rainy weather! Now what do you know about that?"

Danny slowly shook out the folds of a large red handkerchief, dropped it over his head and face, and bowed himself as though in prayer. No sound came from behind the handkerchief, but Danny's body began to shake convulsively. Either he was sobbing, or—

"Danny Agin, are you laughing?"

Danny slowly raised his head and, drawing off the handkerchief, began wiping his eyes.

"Laughin', is it? Why, it's weepin' I am! Don't you see the tears?"

Rosie looked at him doubtfully. "I don't see what you're weeping about."

Danny shook his head mournfully. "It's a way I have, Rosie. A thought came over me while we was talkin' and off I went. And—and here it comes again!"

Danny reached for his handkerchief, but too late. The thought seemed to hit him full in the stomach, and back he fell into his chair, rolling and spluttering.

"Danny Agin, you are laughing!"

Danny wiped his eyes again. "Perhaps I am this time, Rosie. I'm took different at different times."

Rosie frowned on him severely. "Well, I think you were laughing the first time and you needn't deny it. And, what's more, I don't see anything to laugh at."

"Whisht now, darlint, and I'll tell you. I'll talk to you like man to man. 'Twas thought of the ladies."

"What ladies?"

"All o' them. They're all the same."

"Who are all the same?"

"The ladies, Rosie. Janet and your ma, and the rest o' them!"

"Danny, I don't see how you can say that. Ma and Janet are not a bit the same. They're exactly different. There's ma who's got a kind husband, and she goes telling that he chases her with a butcher-knife, and there's Janet whose father is a drunken brute, and she goes pretending he's the best ever."

"Precisely, Rosie. You couldn't have expressed it better. Now you'll understand me when I tell you that they all want the same thing, which is this: They want to be beat, and they don't want to be beat. Now let me say it to you again, Rosie: They want to be beat, and they don't want to be beat. There!"

Rosie put her hands to her head in distraction. "Danny Agin, I don't know what you're talking about!"

"I'm talkin' about the ladies."

"Well, then, what I want to know is this: How can they want a thing when they don't want it?"

It was Danny's turn to look distracted. "Rosie, Rosie, ye'll drive me mad with yir questions! If I could tell you how they do, I would and gladly. But I can't. All I can tell you is they do."

"But, Danny, what sense has a thing like that got? 'They want to be beat, and they don't want to be beat.' That's exactly like saying: It's winter and it's summer at the same time. It's not good sense to say a thing like that."

"Sense, Rosie?" Danny looked at her reproachfully. "It's not sense I'm talkin' about. It's not the logic of the ladies I'm impressin' on you, mind—it's their feelin's. I'm tellin' you the kind o' man every lady's on the lookout for—a fine brute of a fella that would as soon knock her down as look at her, and yet would never raise a finger against her."

Rosie's hands dropped limply into her lap. "Danny Agin, do you know sometimes I get so mixed up that I feel just like I was crazy! That's how I feel now."

Danny nodded sympathetically. "Small wonder, Rosie. 'They want to be beat, and they don't want to be beat.' I defy any man to say that over fifty times and not go mad! And what would you say, Rosie, to a poor man havin' to live, day in and day out, for forty years with an everlastin' conthradiction like that? Ah, Mary's a fine woman, but I tell you, Rosie, in all confidence, I've had me own troubles. Many's the time I've seen her just achin' for a good sound beatin', but, if ever I'd laid the tip o' me finger upon her, her heart would ha' broke, and she'd ha' felt the shame of it the longest day of her life. And they're all the same, Rosie; take me word for it, they're all the same. They want their menfolks to be lions, and they want them to be lambs."

*Lions and lambs!* Her mother's very words! Upon Rosie the light began to break. "Why, Danny!" she gasped.

"Take yir own case, Rosie dear. There's yir own da, a meek lamb of a man—"

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"But, Danny, I like my father because he's so kind!"

"Whisht, now, darlint, and listen. Wouldn't it be fine if he was the size of that sthrappin' polisman, Pete Donovan, with the lump of a diamond in his shirt front as big as an egg, and a great black mustache coverin' the red lips of him, and a roar in his voice that'd send the b'ys a-scatterin' for blocks around!"

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The figure evoked was certainly one of heroic proportions, and Rosie, as she gazed at it, involuntarily gave a little sigh.

Danny chuckled. "Ha, ha, Rosie! Ye're like the rest o' them!"

"No, I'm not, Danny Agin! Honest I'm not! I'm glad my father's kind. I wouldn't love him if he wasn't, and you needn't think I would!"

Rosie struggled hard to convince Danny, but in vain. The more she protested, the louder Danny chuckled.

"Only think, Rosie dear, the pride in yir heart, if this great brute of a man, rampin' about like a lion, tearin' to pieces everybody that stood in his way, in yir own prisence, wee bit of a woman that ye are, should turn into a tame lamb!"

"Oh, Danny!"

In spite of herself, Rosie faced the world with something of the conscious air of a lion-tamer. Danny's chuckle recalled her to herself, and she watched him with growing resentment, as he continued:

"You see, Rosie, it's this way: The worse brute a man is, the greater glory he brings to the woman that tames him. Rosie, me advice to any young man that is courtin' a girl is to roar—not to roar at her, mind, but at everybody else when she's within hearin'. What a fine feelin' it must give a girl to have a roarin' bull of a young fella come softly up to her and eat out of her hand! And think of the great game it is to keep him tame! Rosie, take me word for it, these here soft-spoken men like yir own poor da and like meself—I take shame to confess it—make a great mistake. Many's the time it had been better for me peace of mind afterward had I let out a roar just for appearances' sake. I see it now."

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Danny wagged his head and sighed.

"It's lucky for you, Rosie, that you have me to tell you all this, for ye'd never hear it from the ladies themselves. They never let out a whisper about it, but carry on just like Janet and yir own ma. Ah, don't tell me! I know them! They's some kind of a mystic sisterhood among them—I dunno just what, and in some few things they never give each other away."

"Don't they, Danny?"

"They do not."

Rosie regarded the old man thoughtfully. One could see the very processes of a new idea slowly working in her mind. Danny watched her curiously. At length he asked: "Well, Rosie, what is it?"

Rosie paused impressively before answering: "I was just thinking, Danny Agin, that you're right about yourself, but you're making a great mistake about my father." Rosie nodded significantly. "He's not as quiet as you think he is, in spite of his quiet ways. Sometimes he's just awful."

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For a moment Danny was taken in. "Why, Rosie, aren't you just afther tellin' me about the scar that wasn't there?"

"Yes, and I'm sorry now I told you." There was a gleam in Rosie's eye which declared very emphatically that the sequel to that story would never again be related. "Listen here, Danny Agin! Now I understand—if my mother made up something about that scar, it was just to hide something else that was worse!"

"Why, Rosie! Ye don't say so!" For a moment Danny looked at her in astonishment. Then he lay back with a wheezy guffaw. "Rosie, ye'll be the death o' me yet! I suppose if the truth was known, Jamie beats yir ma every night of her life to a black-and-blue jelly! Don't he now?"

Rosie covered herself with an air of distant reserve. "I'm not going to tell you what he does. That's a family matter. But I will say one thing: You think Terry's awful nice, don't you? Everybody does. But do you know what he'd do to me if I was to lose one of his paper customers? He'd just beat the puddin' out o' me—yes, he would!"

"Why, Rosie!" Danny looked shocked. "What's this ye're sayin'? I thought you and Terry were great friends."

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"Great friends? Oh, yes, we're great friends all right. You can always be great friends with a fellow like Terry as long as you run your legs off for him. But just let something happen, and then —"

Rosie ended with a "Huh!" and shook her head gloomily.

Danny gasped. "You don't say so, Rosie!"

There was the sound of an opening screen, and Danny, knowing that his wife must be coming, with a wheezy chuckle called out:

"Mary, Mary, do ye know who's here? It's Rosie O'Brien, and she's one of ye! She's fallen into line!"

Mrs. Agin came out on the porch, and stood for a moment looking from Danny to Rosie. She was a tall, gaunt old woman with thick white hair and thick eyebrows, which were still dark. She gave one the impression of great tidiness and cleanliness, together with the possibility of that caustic speech which so often characterizes the good housekeeper.

Rosie appealed to her eagerly: "Mis' Agin, I think Danny's just awful!"

Mrs. Agin glanced sharply at Danny, and then, with a seemingly clairvoyant understanding that the subject under discussion related somehow to the eternal war of the sexes, she went over to Rosie's side at once.

"What's he been sayin' to you, dear?"

"He's making fun of me because I told him if I was to lose one of my paper customers, Terry would beat me. And he would, too!"

Mrs. Agin turned on Danny severely. "Take shame to yourself, Dan Agin, to be teasin' Rosie O'Brien!"

"And listen here, Mis' Agin," Rosie continued. "He's been sayin' just awful things about us!"

"About us, Rosie? Do you mean about both of us?"

"About all of us, Mis' Agin—us ladies."

Rosie sat up very straight and severe.

Danny seemed to think the situation amusing, but he was the only one who did. Mrs. Agin glared at him darkly.

"Dan Agin, what's this ye've been sayin' to Rosie?"

Danny continued to shake with silent mirth, so Rosie answered for him:

"He says what all of us ladies wants is this: We want to be beat, and we don't want to be beat. Now, isn't that the silliest thing you ever heard, Mis' Agin? And he says when we marry a brute of a man, we pretend that he's kind and nice, and when we marry a nice, kind man, we let on he's a brute."

"Dan Agin, what do ye mean, puttin' such nonsense into Rosie's head? Answer me that now!"

"And listen, Mis' Agin," Rosie went on. "Just because he's that kind of a man himself, he thinks everybody else is. And they're not! Every one thinks my father's so quiet and nice, but I guess I know him! Sometimes he's just awful! And Terry, too! But Danny here, he thinks they're every one of them just as harmless as he is. I guess he's so scared himself that that's the reason he tries to make out that other men are, too!"

Mrs. Agin glared at Danny a moment in silence. Then she spoke:

"Dan Agin, how dare ye go blastin' the reputation of decent men! There are others like ye, do ye say? There are not! There's not another woman in Ameriky that's stood what I've stood for forty years! Ah, many's the time it was just one black murtherin' look I was cravin' from ye to bear out me story that I had married a man, instead of a joke! And did ever I get it from ye, Dan Agin! I did not—bad cess to ye for a soft-hearted, good-for-nuthin' of a man that'd let a woman thrample ye in the dust if she wanted to! 'Twas yir luck that ye little deserved to marry a decent, quiet woman like meself!"

"Ye're right, Mary!" Danny murmured meekly. "Ye're a fine woman!"

"Hold yir tongue, Dan Agin, or, cripple that ye are, I'll be givin' you the lickin' that I've wanted to give you these forty years every time ye've let me have me own way when I oughtn't have had it!"

Rosie stood up to go. "I have one more paper to deliver, Mis' Agin, so I'll have to say good-bye. If Terry was to know that I stopped to talk before I had delivered all my papers, he'd beat me half to death."

Mrs. Agin smiled on her affectionately. "Good-bye, Rosie dear. And mind, now, if ever again Danny goes talkin' such nonsense, ye're to call me, and I'll soon settle him. Now run along, or that brute of a Terry'll be after you."

"Good-bye, Rosie," Danny called out, in a tone of hypocritical meekness that made Rosie's blood boil anew.

Rosie stopped and turned about to give him the look of scorn that he deserved.

"Danny Agin, you just ought to be ashamed o' yourself the way you treat poor Mis' Agin!"

"I am, Rosie," Danny gasped in a voice of mock tears exasperating beyond words.

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## CHAPTER XVII

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### ROSIE PROMISES TO BE GOOD

ROSIE hurried away, furious at Danny, and furious also at her own father. Any man who puts his womenfolk to such shame ought to be choked! In spite of certain drawbacks, Janet McFadden's lot was happier than Mrs. Agin's, or than Rosie's own. At least no one ever called into question Dave McFadden's ability to govern his own household. This was so patent to the world at large that Janet could actually go about pretending that her father was a sentimental weakling. Happy, happy Janet!

It made Rosie shudder in self-disgust to think of the many damning admissions that she had made Janet. Well, at any rate, she would never again be caught. She had learned a thing or two since yesterday. Moreover, she would lose no time in setting Janet right. She would stop to see Janet now on her way home. That scar story would make Janet open her eyes! And Rosie would not foolishly situate it on a spot as easy of detection as her mother's right shoulder. Nev-er!

A woman who was sweeping the steps in front of the tenement where the McFaddens lived, made the friendly inquiry: "Lookin' for Janet?"

Rosie nodded.

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"Better not go up," the woman advised. "Dave McFadden's just come in soused again."

Rosie paused.

"Is he beating Janet?"

"No, I don't think so. Janet knows pretty well how to take care of herself. Gee, you ought to see her dodge him! She's a wonder! He wouldn't ha' caught her last time if she hadn't slipped."

Rosie started on, and the woman called after her: "I tell you, you better not go up! Dave sure is out lookin' for trouble!"

The warning was a kindly one, but Rosie saw no reason for accepting it. The truth was that, in her present mood of resentment against the Danny Agins and Jamie O'Briens of life, she felt that it would be a relief to see a man who was confessedly out looking for trouble.

The McFaddens lived on the fourth floor back. Their door was open, so Rosie could hear that something was going on as she climbed the third flight of stairs. When she reached the top, her courage faltered. Had the McFadden door been closed, very probably she could not have forced herself to knock; but, as it was open, if she slipped along the dark hall quietly, she could take a peep inside before announcing herself.

"Daddy!" she heard cried out suddenly. It was Janet's voice. "My arm! You're hurting me! Please let go! I'll be good!"

"Arguin' with your own father, eh?" Dave's thick voice boomed and rumbled. "Well, I'll learn you a lesson!"

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"But, Daddy," Janet coaxed; "wait a minute! The door's open! Please let me shut it! Some one will hear us! Please let go of me just a minute!"

Then, just as Rosie reached the door, there was a scuffle inside, and Janet must have escaped her father's clutches, for instantly the door slammed. It slammed so nearly into Rosie's face that, with a gasp, she turned and fled. Down the three flights of stairs she ran, past the woman on the front steps without a word, and on to the safety of home as fast as her panting heart could carry her. There, spent and breathless, she murmured to herself:

"Well, anyhow, I'm mighty glad it ain't me, 'cause I can't dodge worth a cent!"

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That night after supper, while Rosie was washing dishes, when Jamie O'Brien called: "Rosie dear, like a good child, will ye bring me me pipe and a few matches?" Rosie sang out in tones positively vibrating with feeling: "Yes, Daddy darling, I will! I'll bring them this very minute!"

Later she perched herself on the side of her father's chair, and put an arm about his neck.

"Good old Daddy! Did you have a good run today, dearie?"

Jamie sucked his pipe hard and, after thinking a while, answered: "Pretty good."

"And, Daddy dear, did they take off that car that had a flat wheel?"

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This was a question that required considerable deliberation. Rosie waited, and at last had her reward.

"Sure they did."

"Oh, Daddy!" Rosie hugged him suddenly, and kissed his thin, leathery cheek. "I just love you so much! I wouldn't change you for any other father in the world!"

After getting the full purport of this declaration, Jamie remarked: "That's good!"

Rosie slipped impulsively from the arm of the chair into Jamie's lap. It was not a comfortable arrangement for Jamie, but he was a patient soul, and made no outcry.

Rosie snuggled up to him affectionately. "Say, Daddy," she whispered, "if I was awful bad, what would you do to me? Wouldn't you just beat me?"

Jamie relit his pipe, took one puff, examined the sky line, then shook his head knowingly: "I would that! But, Rosie dear, you mustn't be bad, you know."

Rosie took a long, shivery breath. "Oh, Daddy, please don't beat me! I'll be good, honest I will!"

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## CHAPTER XVIII

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### ON THE CULTURE OF BABIES

MIDSUMMER came and with it a great suffocating blanket of heat which brought prostration to the world at large and to little Rosie O'Brien a new care and a great anxiety.

"I don't mind about myself," she murmured one breathless sultry morning as she served George Riley his late breakfast. Even George, who paid scant attention to weather, looked worn and pale.

Rosie sat down opposite him as he began eating and stared at him out of eyes that were very sad and very serious.

"It's Geraldine, Jarge. I don't know what I'm going to do. The poor birdie was awake nearly all night. I hope you didn't hear us. I don't want to disturb you, too."

George shook his head. "Oh, I slept all right. I always do. But it was so blamed hot that when I got up I felt weak as a cat." He bolted a knifeful of fried potatoes, then asked: "What's ailing Geraldine? Ain't her food agreeing with her?"

Rosie sighed. It was the sigh of a little mother who had been asking herself that same question over and over. "It's partly that; but I think the food would be all right if only other things were all right. You're a man, Jarge, so you don't understand about babies. It's Geraldine's second summer and she's teething. Her poor little mouth's all swollen and feverish. It would be bad enough in cold weather, but in this heat she hardly gets a wink of sleep.... I tell you, Jarge, if we don't do something for her real quick, she's just going to die!" Rosie dropped her head on the table and wept.

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"Aw, now, 'tain't that bad, is it, Rosie?"

"Yes." The answer came muffled in tears. "It's just awful, Jarge, the way they go down. They'll be perfectly well, and then before you know what's happening they just wilt, and you can't do anything for them. And if Geraldine dies, I—I want to die too!"

"Aw, Rosie, cheer up! She ain't going to die!" George's words were brave but his face was troubled. "I suppose, now, if she was only in the country, she'd be all right, wouldn't she?"

Rosie wiped her eyes and sighed. "Is it cool in the country, Jarge?"



Rosie stared at him out of eyes that were very sad and very serious.

"You bet it is—just as cool and nice! The grass is green and wind's always a-blowin' in the trees and you can hear the gurgle of the creek down at the bottom of the meadow. And at night you can sleep on the big upstairs porch, if you want to, and you always get a breeze up there. And you needn't be afraid of mosquitoes and flies, either, 'cause mother always has things screened in with black mosquito-netting. Oh, I tell you it's just fine in the country!"

George paused a moment, then laughed a little apologetically. "Leastways, Rosie, that's how I always think of the country now. Of course we do have sizzling weather out there just as much as we do here; but it's different, somehow. Out there you get a chance to cool off. They ain't them ever-lasting paved streets all around you, sending out heat like a furnace night and day just the same.... Do you know, I ain't felt like myself for three weeks! If I was back home now I tell you what I'd do: I'd go down to the creek and take a dip and then I'd come in and, by gosh, maybe I wouldn't sleep!"

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Rosie sighed again. "Well, no use talking about the country. It's the city for ours, even if Geraldine does die."

Tears again threatened and George hastened to give the comforting assurance: "Aw, now, Rosie, it ain't that bad, I know it ain't. Besides, this weather can't keep up forever. We'll be having a thunderstorm any time now, and that'll cool things off." Then, to change the subject: "What does your mother say about Geraldine?"

"Pooh!" Rosie tossed her head in fine scorn. "I'd like to know what my mother knows about babies!"

George protested. "She ought to know something. She's had a few herself."

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"Jarge Riley, you listen to me." Rosie looked at him fixedly. "With some women, having babies don't mean one blessed thing! They just have 'em and have 'em and have 'em, and that's all they know about them. Take me, now, and I'm twelve, and take ma, and I don't know how old she is, but she has had eight children, so you can judge for yourself, and right now she's so ignur'nt about the proper care and feeding of babies that I wouldn't dare trust Geraldine to her alone for twenty-four hours!"

Rosie paused impressively, then concluded with the damning statement: "All the time she was taking care of that baby she never once boiled a nipple! Never once!"

George blinked his eyes in puzzled thought. "Do you got to boil 'em?"

For a moment Rosie glared unspeakable things. Then she answered with crushing emphasis: "You certainly do!"



George moved uneasily. "No hard feelings, Rosie. I was just askin'."

Rosie was magnanimous. "I'm not blaming you, Jarge. You're a man and not supposed to understand about sterilizing. But I do say it's disgraceful in a mother of eight.... Why, do you know what ma was feeding Geraldine when I took hold of her? Nothing but that old-fashioned baby-food that nobody but ignur'nt people use now. It's the first thing they hand out to you at the drug-store, if you don't know the difference. It makes babies fat but it don't give them one bit of strength, and people like ma suppose if a baby's fat, of course, it's all right. Oh, such ignur'nce!" Rosie sighed wearily and cast long-suffering eyes to heaven. [151]

Balancing a conciliatory knife on his finger, George appealed to her as man to man: "Now, Rosie, see here: I'm not saying that you don't know all about babies, 'cause I think you do. I know the way you been finding out things at the Little Mothers' Class and I know the way you study that book. But facts is facts, Rosie, and after all, your ma has raised five kids out of eight, and that ain't so bad."

"Go on." Rosie looked at him challengingly.

George had no more to say.

Rosie had. "Jarge Riley, you know as much about babies as a rabbit! Don't you know that Geraldine is a bottle-baby?"

An expression of helpless wonderment spread over George's face. "Why, Rosie, ain't they all bottle-babies? Seems to me I always seen 'em give bottles to all of 'em."

"All of them bottle-babies! Jarge, you're more ignur'nt than I supposed. Why, every last baby my mother's had except Geraldine has been a breast-baby!"

The pink of an unexpected embarrassment mounted to George's shiny cheekbones. [152]

Rosie surveyed him critically. "I suppose, now that you come to think about it, it seems to you they must all be breast-babies, too. Tell me, ain't that so?"

"Search me if it ain't!" George spoke in candid bewilderment.

"That just shows how much you know and yet you're willing to sit there and argue with me. Now I suppose you think it takes as much brains to raise a breast-baby as a bottle-baby." There was a question in Rosie's tone but George, breathing hard, had no opinion to hazard. After a moment of impressive silence, Rosie continued: "Any ordinary, ignur'nt, healthy woman, with lots of good milk, can raise a baby, but when it comes to bottle-feeding——"

Rosie broke off suddenly and her face took on the expression of a listening mother.

"Rosie! Rosie!" Mrs. O'Brien's voice called. "Geraldine's awake and is crying for you."

Rosie paused long enough to say, in parting: "There's lots more I could tell you, Jarge, if I had time."

"Oh, don't mind me, Rosie. Just run along. I'm sure Geraldine needs you." George spoke with a certain relief. The weight of the new knowledge that Rosie had already imposed upon him seemed as much as he could bear for the present.

Rosie left him. She felt cheered and comforted, as talking out her troubles with George always cheered and comforted her. Dear old George! Rosie didn't know what she would do without him. [153]

It was well that she had the consciousness of his friendly interest to support her, for the day was to prove a trying one. Not a breath of air stirred, and Geraldine, languid and feverish, tossed and fretted unceasingly. Ordinarily Rosie could have given her whole attention to the ailing baby, but today she had to take her mother's place as cook for dinner, since a large family washing required all of Mrs. O'Brien's time and strength. If Geraldine would only have fallen off to sleep, Rosie could have managed simply enough; but the poor child could not sleep. So Rosie spent a frantic morning running back and forth between kitchen and front room.

"Why, Rosie, what ails you? You're not eating a bite," her father remarked during dinner.

"It's too hot to eat," Rosie murmured.

"Give me your meat!" Jack cried out. "Please, Rosie!"

Without a word, Rosie passed him her plate.

In mid-afternoon, when it was time for Rosie to go about her business of delivering papers, she entrusted the care of Geraldine to Janet McFadden. For several days now she had been employing Janet for this duty. Out of her own earnings she was paying Janet two cents a day, and she did not grudge the money. Janet was the one person to whom she was willing to entrust Geraldine at this critical time. Janet knew as much about babies as Rosie herself, for she had gone to the Little Mother classes with Rosie and had faithfully studied the book. So Rosie started out with the feeling that she need not hurry back. [154]

She loitered along slowly; after the rush of home it was good to loiter. Even the blazing sun was restful compared with home and its unending demands. Rosie covered the ground at snail's pace, resting at the least provocation of shade, and stopping to look at the least hint of anything

happening or likely to happen.

It was five o'clock when she reached home again, and time to give Geraldine her afternoon bath. Mrs. O'Brien was still at the ironing-board and Rosie had to shift clothes-horses to find a place on the floor for the big basin.

"Ah, now, and ain't Rosie the kind sister to be giving Geraldine a nice bath!" Mrs. O'Brien began in her usual tone and manner. "Your poor ma wishes there was some one to give her a nice bath!" She rambled on while Rosie splashed Geraldine and then began wrapping her in a towel.

"I wouldn't moind it so much if only it cooled off of nights." Mrs. O'Brien wiped her moist face with her apron, and sighed. "It's played out I am, Rosie. I can't stand another minute." She took a long, uncertain breath and dropped heavily into a chair.

Rosie, with Geraldine in her arms, paused in the doorway. She, too, wanted to escape from the hot kitchen, but something in her mother's tone held her. [155]

Mrs. O'Brien swayed listlessly in her chair. "It's sick at me stomach I'm feelin'. The smell o' the kitchen goes agin' me.... Rosie dear——" Mrs. O'Brien broke off to look at Rosie a moment in silent appeal. "Rosie dear, do ye think just for tonight ye could cook the supper for me? I hate to ask you—I do that, for ye've had a hard day of it with poor wee Geraldine fretting her life away. And I'm not forgetting that ye helped me this noon. I wouldn't be asking another thing of you today if I could help it, but I'm clean tuckered out ironin' them last shirt-waists for Ellen, and I tell ye, Rosie, I feel like I'd faint if I thried to stand up in front of that stove."

Tears of self-pity came to Rosie's eyes and she wanted to cry out: "And what about me? Don't you suppose I'm tired, too?" But the sight of her mother's face going suddenly pale and of her hands beginning to shake, checked her, and she said, quietly enough: "All right, Ma, I will. You take Geraldine and go out in front. Maybe it's a little cooler there."

Mrs. O'Brien started off, murmuring gratefully: "Ah, Rosie dear, ye're a darlint and I don't know what I'd do without you!"

Rosie, left to herself, instead of taking comfort at thought of her own nobility of conduct, leaned miserably against the kitchen door and burst into tears.... "I don't see why I always got to do all the disagreeable things in this house, and I always do got to, too! I—I—I'm tired, I am!" [156]

She sobbed on awhile brokenly, then slowly dried her eyes, for it was half-past five and time to set to work for supper.

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## CHAPTER XIX

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### CRAZY WITH THE HEAT

ROSIE was spoken of in the family as a good cook, but this afternoon there was so little of any housewifely pride left in her that she fried the potatoes as carelessly as Ellen would have fried them, and she scorched the ham. She set the table after some fashion, and then, when all was ready, went through the house calling, "Supper's ready! Supper's ready!"

As the family straggled in, Rosie went on to her next duty of putting George Riley's supper into a tin pail.

"Better hurry," Terence warned her. "You'll be missing Jarge's car."

"I can't hurry any faster," Rosie murmured; but she did, nevertheless, snatch up the pail and start off.

It seemed to her the street was even hotter and more breathless than the smoky kitchen. The late afternoon sun was still beating down on pavements and houses and people, fiercely, unceasingly, as it had been since early morning, and all things alike looked worn and dusty and utterly fatigued. Little shop-girls were trailing listlessly home, their hats crooked, their black waists limp with perspiration, their hair hanging about their pale faces in shiny, damp strings. Yet, tired as they were, they were still attempting forlorn, giggly little jokes and friendly greetings. [158]

One girl called out in passing: "Gee, Rosie, ain't this the limit?" Another asked facetiously: "Well, kid, how does this weather suit you?" and a third stopped her to exclaim breathlessly: "Say, Rosie, ain't you just crazy with the heat!"

Rosie reached the corner in good time for George's car. There was a slight congestion in traffic and George had a moment or two before dashing back to his place on the rear platform. He looked dirty and hot. His collar was in a soft welt, his face streaked with dust and perspiration. His expression, usually good-natured, was gloomy and irritable.

"What you got tonight?" he asked, lifting the lid of the pail. "What! Ham again? Ham! What do you think I am? It's ham, ham, ham, every night of the week till I'm sick and tired of it! Here! Take it back—I don't want it! I'll buy me something decent to eat!"

"Why, Jarge!" Rosie had never heard him talk that way before. She hadn't supposed he could talk that way to her. The unexpectedness of it was like a blow. For the first time in their acquaintance she shrank from him. Her face quivered, her eyes filled with tears. "Why, Jarge!" she stammered again.

The motorman of George's car sounded his gong in warning and George, without another word, dropped the pail at Rosie's feet and jumped aboard. [159]

Rosie, dazed and crushed, stood where she was until the car disappeared. At first she was too hurt to cry out; too surprised by the suddenness of the attack to formulate her protest in words. One thing only was clear, namely, that George Riley had failed her. She could never again believe in him blindly, implicitly, as heretofore. There she had been supposing him so much better than any one else, and he wasn't at all. Probably he wasn't as good!... One little corner of her heart pleaded for him, whispering that poor George must have forgotten himself for the moment because, like the rest of the world, he was crazy with the heat. But Rosie silenced the whisper by exclaiming passionately: "Even if he was, I don't see why he had to go and take it out on me! I'm sure I'm not to blame!"

After a pause her heart again sought weakly to excuse him by suggesting that perhaps Mrs. O'Brien did serve fried ham with a certain monotonous regularity. Rosie was not to be taken in by that. "Well," she demanded grimly, "what does he expect on a five-dollar-a-week board, with meat the price it is! Lamb chops and porterhouse steak?" After that her heart said nothing more, realizing, apparently, that so long as Rosie cared to nurse her grievance, she could find reasons in plenty. And Rosie did care to nurse it, and by the act of nursing soon changed it from a feeling of bewildered woe to one of mounting indignation.... If George Riley wanted to act that way, very well, let him do so. But he better not think that she, Rosie O'Brien, would stand for any such treatment, for she just wouldn't! [160]

At home she was able to explain quietly enough that George hadn't wanted any supper. Jack at once called out: "Give me his ham! Aw, please, now, Rosie, give it to me! Give it to me!"

"No, Jackie, you're too little to have meat at supper," Rosie explained. "This is for Terry. Here, Terry."

Terence accepted the windfall with a gallant, "Thanks, Rosie." Then he added: "But don't you want a piece of it yourself?"

"No, Terry, I'm not hungry. Besides, ma has saved me a little piece."

"And here it is, ye poor lamb." Mrs. O'Brien touched her affectionately on the cheek. "Sit right down and eat it before Geraldine wakes. Ye've hardly had a bite all day."

Rosie took her place at the table and tried to eat. It was no use; and suddenly, as much to her own surprise as to the others', she burst out crying.

"Mercy on us!" Mrs. O'Brien threw up astonished hands. "What's happened now?"

"N-nothing," Rosie quavered, pushing her plate away and dropping her head upon the table.

"What's ailin' you, Rosie?" her father asked gently. [161]

"E-E-Ellen's got to do the dishes tonight. I-I-I'm too tired."

"I'm awful sorry," Ellen began, "but tonight, Rosie, I got to go out early. I got to go over to Hattie Graydon's for a note-book."

"Note-book nuthin'!" Terence glared at Ellen angrily. "That's the way you get out of everything, with your note-books and your Hattie Graydons and your old business college! Listen here, Ellen O'Brien: you'll do those dishes tonight or I'll know why!"

"Huh!" snorted Ellen. "From the way you talk, a person would suppose you were my father."

"Wish I was your father for ten minutes—long enough to give you a good beatin'!... Who do you think you are, anyway? A real live lady? Everybody else in the family's got to work, but not you!"

"Ah, now, Terry," Mrs. O'Brien expostulated, "you mustn't be talkin' that way to your poor sister Ellen. She's got her own work to do at school and I'm sure it's hard work, ain't it, Ellen dear?"

"Say, Ma, you fade away!" Terence waved his hand suggestively. "What you don't know about Ellen's a-plenty! Just look at her, the big lazy lump! There she's been sitting in a comfortable cool room all day long with a fan in one hand and a pencil in the other and her mouth full of chewing-gum, pretending to study, and you and Rosie have been up here in this hot little hole working like niggers. Aw, why do you let her fool you? Why don't you make her do something?" [162]

Ellen, her head tossed high, appealed to her mother. "Ma, will you please explain to Mr. Terence O'Brien that I'd be perfectly willing to wash and wipe the dishes every night of my life if it wasn't for my hands. If ever I'm to be a stenog, I've got to take care of my hands."

"What about Rosie's hands?" Reaching over, Terence drew one out from beneath Rosie's face and held it up. At that moment it was a pathetic little hand, shaken by sobs and wet with tears, but its roughened skin and short, stubby nails were evidence enough of the work that it did.

"Well, what about them?" Ellen, at least, was unmoved by the exhibit. "Rosie's not going to be a stenog, is she?"

Terence almost choked in fury, but before he could find an answer sufficiently crushing, his father spoke.

"See here, Ellen, we've had talk enough. You'll be doing the dishes tonight before you go after the note-book. That ends it."

"Very well!" Ellen flounced out of the room, then flounced back. "But if I don't get my certificate next month, you'll know whose fault it is!"

"Ain't she the limit?" Terry addressed his inquiry to the gas-jet, and small Jack, taking up the word, called after her: "Ellen, you're the limit! You're the limit!"

"Fie on you, Jackie!" Mrs. O'Brien said reprovingly. "You mustn't be talkin' that way to your sister."

But Jack, hopping about the kitchen like mad, kept shouting, "You're the limit! You're the limit!" until there was a sudden wail from the front of the house.

"Now see what ye've done, ye naughty b'y! Ye've waked up Geraldine!"

Jack subsided abruptly and Rosie, with a sigh, stood up.

Her mother looked at her compassionately. "Sit where you are, Rosie dear, and rest, and I'll take care of Geraldine."

"No, I'll go."

Rosie carried the child outside to the little front porch, where she rocked and crooned in the gathering darkness until Geraldine grew quiet. Then she put her to bed and later, at the proper time, gave her a last bottle. After that Rosie's day was done.

To be near Geraldine, Rosie was sleeping downstairs for the present, on the floor of the front room. Just as George Riley got home she was ready to retire.

"Good-night, everybody," she said.

George, looking a little sheepish, called after her: "Aren't you going to kiss me good-night, Rosie?"

Without turning back, Rosie made answer: "It's too hot to kiss." Then she told herself grimly: "There, now! I guess that'll jar him! If he thinks he can treat me like a nigger and then kiss me good-night, he's mightily mistaken." She closed the door of the room with a determined click and stood for a moment with her head high. Then she sank to the floor, a very miserable little heap of a girl who sobbed to herself: "But I wish he wasn't so mean to me!"

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## CHAPTER XX

### A FEVERED WORLD

It was a sultry, oppressive night, hard enough for adults to endure and fearfully weakening to teething babies. The next day the heat continued and Geraldine fretted and drooped until Rosie was frantic with anxiety.

"Rosie dear, you're all pale and thin," her mother remarked, and Janet McFadden, looking at her affectionately, said: "Now, Rosie, why don't you let me deliver your papers for a couple of days? You're fagged out."

"No," Rosie said. "If you'll keep on coming over in the afternoon while I'm away, that's help enough."

"But, Rosie, I could do your papers easy enough. I know all your customers."

"'Tain't that, Janet. Of course, you know them. And I thank you for offering, for it sure is the hottest time of the day. But it's my only chance to get away from home for a little while and I think I'd just die if I didn't go."

So she went, as usual, though her feet dragged heavily and her eyes throbbed with a dull headache.

On the better streets the houses were tight shut to keep out the heat; but the doors and windows of the tenements were open, and Rosie could see the inside of untidy rooms where lackadaisical women lounged about and dirty, whiny children played and wrangled. Hitherto Rosie's thrifty little soul had sat in hard judgment on the inefficient tenement-dwellers, but today she looked at them with a sudden tenderness.

Poor souls, perhaps if all were known they would not be altogether to blame. Perhaps they, too, had once longed to give their babies the chance of life that all babies should have. Perhaps it was their failure in this, through poverty and ignorance, that was the real cause of their apathy and indifference. Rosie felt that she was almost going that way herself. Then, too, the husbands of many of these women were selfish and brutal; and surely it was enough to break a woman's spirit to have the man she had loved and trusted turn on her like a fiend. Rosie knew!

Not that she herself was angry any longer with George Riley. Goodness, no! It wasn't a question of anger. She simply had no feeling for him one way or another. How could she, when it was as if the part of her heart he had once occupied had been cut out of her with a big, bloody knife! She merely regarded him now as she would any stranger. She would be polite to him—she tried always to be polite to every one—polite, yes; but nothing more. So when she handed him his supper-pail that evening at the corner, she said, "Good-evening." Common politeness required that much, but she did not feel that it required her to hear or to understand his plaintive, "Aw, now, Rosie!" as she turned from him.

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No! Without doubt all that should ever again pass between them was, "Good-morning" or "Good-evening." And it was all right that it should be so. She wouldn't have it otherwise if she could. She told herself this as she walked home, repeating it so often that she quite persuaded herself of its truth. Yet, when Terry happened upon her unexpectedly a few moments later, he looked at her in surprise.

"What's the matter, Rosie? What you cryin' about?"

"N-nuthin'," Rosie quavered. "I—I guess I'm worried about Geraldine."

"Aw, don't you worry about Geraldine," Terry advised kindly. "This weather's got to break soon and then Geraldine'll be all right."

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## CHAPTER XXI

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### THE STORM

TERRY was right. The change came the very next afternoon. Rosie had finished her papers and was on her way home when suddenly the wind rose and great masses of black storm-clouds came driving across the sky. Thunder rumbled, lightning crackled, and in a few minutes rain came swishing down in great long, splashy drops.

Instead of running for shelter, Rosie obeyed the impulse of the moment and stood where she was. She clutched a lamp-post to keep from being blown away, and then, turning her face to the sky, let the sweet, comforting rain wash down upon her and soak her through and through.

It was like a great, cool, refreshing shower-bath: it washed the dusty earth clean once again; it brought back a crispness to the air; it loosened the nervous tension under which all living things had been straining for days.

The clouds broke as suddenly, almost, as they had gathered. Watching them, Rosie sighed and shivered. "Oh, but that was nice!" Her hair was plastered over her head in loose, wet little ringlets, and her clothes hung tightly about her body. When she walked, her old shoes oozed and gurgled with water. She hurried home; yes, actually hurried, for it was cool enough to hurry; and besides, her wet clothes were beginning to chill her.

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Janet McFadden met her with shining eyes. "Oh, Rosie, what do you think? She's asleep! And she's just took her bottle, too—all of it, without waking up! Oh, I'm so happy!"

Rosie looked at Janet affectionately. "You've been awful good, Janet, helping me this way."

"Good—nuthin'!" Janet scoffed. "Aren't you paying me good money?... But, Rosie, listen here about Geraldine: I wouldn't be a bit surprised if things'd be all right now. Those old teeth are certainly through. I let her bite my finger on both sides, just to see."

Perhaps Janet was right. Perhaps things were arranging themselves. Rosie's heart sang a tremulous little song of happiness as she rubbed herself dry and put on fresh clothes. The world wasn't such a bad place after all, and the people in it weren't so bad, either. There was Janet—good, kind Janet—and Terry, and nice old George Riley—Rosie stopped short to scowl at herself in amazement. Then she repeated, defiantly, *nice old George Riley*. For he *was* nice! And he

always had been nice, too! What if he had forgotten himself once? Hadn't other people as well? Hadn't everybody, Rosie herself included, been crazy with the heat?

As Rosie looked at things now her only surprise was that George hadn't forgotten himself oftener! Come to think of it, he had kept his temper better than any one else in the family.... Dear old George! Rosie wanted to put her arms about his neck that instant and tell him how much she loved him.

Her first way of doing this was by saying to him as she handed him his supper-pail at six o'clock: "Oh, Jarge, what do you think? Geraldine's been asleep all afternoon!" This was a greeting very different from a cold, "Good-evening, Jarge," and George would understand the difference.

He did. His face beamed with understanding. "I'm awful glad, Rosie; honest I am!" Then as he ran back to his car he called out: "Rosie, wait up for me tonight. I've got something to tell you—something fine!"

"All right, Jarge, I will!" Rosie spoke with all her old-time enthusiasm, and waved him a frantic farewell.

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## CHAPTER XXII

### A CHANCE FOR GERALDINE

AFTER finishing her household duties and preparing Geraldine's last bottle, Rosie had nothing more to do but to enjoy the cool of the evening with the rest of the family. They were seated on the little front porch, Mrs. O'Brien and Jamie on chairs and Terence on the porch steps. Rosie took her place opposite Terence to await the arrival of George Riley.

In good time he came, bursting with his bit of news. "Hello, Rosie! Hello, everybody!" he called out before he was inside the gate. He had a letter in his hand which he waved excitedly in Rosie's face.

"See this, Rosie? It's from mother; and what do you think? You and Geraldine are to go out to the country for two weeks and maybe three! What do you say to that?"

For a moment Rosie had nothing to say. Then she gasped: "Why, Jarge, what do you mean?"

"And you're to start tomorrow, Rosie, on the eleven o'clock train, and dad'll be at the station to meet you. You'll know him 'cause he looks just like the farmers in the Sunday papers, with a big straw hat and thin whiskers. And he drives an old white horse—Billy's his name."

"Mercy on us, Jarge Riley, how you talk!" Mrs. O'Brien leaned forward in excitement. "What's this ye're sayin'?"

George laughed and started over again. "You see, Mis' O'Brien, Rosie and me was talking the other day about babies and the country, and then Geraldine began crying and I thought to myself, 'Well, I'll just write to mother and see.' I wrote that morning, and here's the answer. The postman gave it to me as I was starting out this afternoon."

"That's it, is it?" Mrs. O'Brien seemed to understand perfectly. To Rosie, however, the news still sounded too good to be true.

"Jarge, do you mean your mother has invited Geraldine and me out to the country for a couple o' weeks?"

"Sure, that's what I mean. And you're to start tomorrow——"

"Oh, Jarge, and can Geraldine sleep on the upstairs porch where the breeze always blows and they's no mosquitoes or flies?"

"O' course she can, and you can, too!"

Rosie was laughing and crying together. "Do you hear that, Ma? She's going to have a chance to sleep and get back her strength and then she'll be able to pull over this horrible teething time, and then she won't—she won't have to die!"

Rosie put her arms about George's neck and covered his cheek with tears and kisses. Then suddenly she paused.

"But, Jarge, I don't know whether I can go! What about my papers?"

George laughed. "Aw, let the papers go blow! Anyway, can't Janet McFadden take them?"

Rosie appealed to Terry. "Can she, Terry?"

Terry nodded. "Sure she can. Don't you worry about those papers. Me and Janet'll get on all right. You take Geraldine and skip off and stay away as long as Mis' Riley wants you."

George spread out his hands. "So you see, Rosie, everything's arranged. You're to start tomorrow on the eleven——"

"But, Jarge, wait a minute! We can't start tomorrow 'cause our things aren't ready. A whole lot of Geraldine's clothes and mine, too, got to be washed."

"Can't you take 'em with you and wash 'em in the country?"

"Oh, Jarge!" The suggestion was evidently a horrible one, for Mrs. O'Brien and Rosie spoke together.

George looked troubled. "But, Rosie, you got to start tomorrow. Didn't I tell you that dad and Billy are going to drive down to meet you?"

Mrs. O'Brien stood up. "Make your mind easy, Jarge. Rosie'll be ready on time. I'll go in this minute and do that washin' now, and the things'll be all dry and ready for ironin' by early mornin'."

Rosie gasped. "Why, Ma, it's going on ten o'clock!"

"Rosie dear, I don't care what o'clock it's going on. If it's the last mortal thing I ever do for you, I'm going to do that washin' tonight, for, if I do say it, ye're the best child that ever trod shoe-leather."

Jamie O'Brien's tilted chair came down on the porch floor with a thud, while Jamie remarked solemnly: "You're right, Maggie; she is!"

Mrs. O'Brien moved toward the door. "Come on, Rosie dear, and help me gather the things."

Rosie started up, then paused to glance from one to another of them. In the soft glow of the summer night she could see that they were all looking at her with the same expression of love and tenderness. Rosie choked. "I don't see why—everybody's—so kind—to me!"

She turned back to George. "And I've been just horrible to you, Jarge! You'll forgive me, won't you? I guess it was the weather."

"Aw, go on!" George spoke with a gruffness that deceived nobody. "I guess it's been the weather with all of us!"

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## CHAPTER XXIII

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### HOME AGAIN

GEORGE Riley protested vigorously: "But I tell you she's only a little girl and she's got a baby and a big basket and I don't know how many other things and some one's just got to help her!"

With anxious headshakes Terence and Janet McFadden corroborated all George Riley said, but the gatekeeper was firm. "Only passengers this side the fence," he repeated.

So the three friends had to wait while the long train slowly disgorged. Terence stood guard on one side of the gate, George Riley on the other, while Janet pressed a tense searching face through the bars of the high division fence. The first arrivals were the dapper quick young men with new leather bags and walking-sticks who, in their eagerness to arrive, always drop off a train before it stops. After them came more men and the more agile of the women passengers. Then the general rush and crush: the fussy people laden down with parcels; old ladies struggling to protect their small handbags from the assaults of porters; distracted mothers jerking their broods hither and thither; middle-aged men murmuring to wives and daughters, "No rush! No rush! Plenty of time!"

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"Maybe she missed the train!" Janet McFadden suggested tragically.

The crush subsided, the last stragglers passed through the gate, and then, just as Janet remarked gloomily, "Well, I was perfectly sure she wasn't coming!" a little girl with a baby in her arms alighted from a coach far down the track and stood where she was while the conductor piled the ground about her with boxes and parcels and baskets innumerable.

"There she is! There she is!" Janet and Terence cried out together.

The gatekeeper looked at them a little less sternly. "Well, I guess you can come in now."

Janet dashed through the gate with her arms raised high, calling out a joyful "Rosie! Rosie!" George Riley and Terence followed close on her heels, and in a moment Rosie and the baby were

enveloped in a cloud of hugs and kisses.

"Oh!" Rosie gasped, "but it's nice to be back! And I'm so glad to see you all!... Here, Jarge, you take that heavy box and be awful careful. It has jelly in it and canned fruit and I made them all myself, too! Your mother taught me how.... You take the big basket, Terry. That's our clothes. And I think you can take the basket of vegetables in the other hand. Janet'll take that bundle, won't you, Janet? They's two dressed chickens in it and I plucked them myself, too. Mis' Riley showed me how. And you take the shoe-box, Janet. It's full of cookies. Hold it straight so's not to break them.... I'll take that last basket in my other hand. You can't guess what's in it, can they, Geraldine? It's Geraldine's little pussy cat! We just couldn't leave it, could we, baby? Geraldine named it herself. She named it Jarge."

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"After me, I suppose," George said, and they all laughed as if this were a mighty fine joke.

"Now are we ready?" Rosie asked, making a quick count of bundles and baskets. "I'm not leaving anything, am I?"

George groaned. "I should hope not! Tell you one thing: I can't carry any more. Say, Rosie, what have you filled your jelly glasses with? Rocks?"

This was another fine joke and it carried them out of the station and all the way to the cars.

"Now watch me play the Rube," George whispered with a wink. When the conductor came for their fares, George fumbled in his pocket, counted the change laboriously, then asked for an impossible transfer. The conductor tried patiently to explain, at which George slapped him on the shoulder and roared out: "Aw, go on! I'm a railroad man myself!" At this everybody laughed and the conductor and George became friends on the spot.

At the home corner, small Jack was waiting and, before Rosie was fairly off the car, he was calling out excitedly: "Hello, Rosie! Hello! What did you bring me from the country?"

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"Oh, you darling Jackie! I'm so glad to see you!" Rosie kissed him on both cheeks, then answered his question. "A little turtle! It's in a box at the bottom of the vegetable basket that Terry's carrying."

Jack danced up and down in delight. "Oh, Rosie, can't I have it now? Please!"

"No, no, Jackie, you must wait till we get home."

"Aw, Rosie, all right for you!" Jack looked at her reproachfully, then shouted out: "Come on! Come on! Let's hurry home!"

At home Mrs. O'Brien and Jamie were waiting for them with outstretched arms.

"Ah, Rosie," her mother exclaimed, with fluttering hands and streaming eyes; "I'm that glad to see you, I'm weepin'! And will ye look at wee Geraldine as fat and smilin' as a suckin' pig! Ah, Geraldine darlint, come to yir own ma!"

Jamie O'Brien, less demonstrative than his wife, patted Rosie's head gently. "It's mighty glad I am to have you back. Why, do you know, Rosie, since you've been gone there hasn't been a soul in the house to hand me a pipe of an evening!"

"You poor old Dad!" Rosie began sympathetically. She would have said more but small Jack interrupted.

"Now, Rosie, give me my turtle! You promised you would!"

"Of course I did," Rosie acknowledged, "and I'll get it for you right now. Here, Terry, let me have the vegetable basket." Rosie thrust her hands among the onions and cabbages and drew out a small pasteboard box generously pierced with air holes.

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"Here it is, Jackie dear."

Jack pulled off the string, tore open the box, and gaped in wide-eyed delight. "Oh, Rosie, thanks! thanks! It's a beaut!" For one moment mere possession was enough, on the next came an overpowering desire to exhibit his treasure before an admiring and envious world.

"Say, Rosie, I got to run down and see Joe Slattery. I'll be back in a minute."

Mrs. O'Brien put out a detaining hand. "No, you won't be going down to see any Joe Slattery! Dinner's ready and you'll be comin' in with the rest of the family this minute. Come along, Rosie dear."

Rosie paused. "Can't we keep Janet, Ma? Is there enough?"

Mrs. O'Brien nodded her head emphatically. "Sure there's enough and, if there ain't, we'll make it enough."

"Thanks, Mis' O'Brien, but I don't believe I better stay." Janet spoke regretfully. "You know my mother ain't very well these days and I don't like to leave her alone too long."

"Why, Janet!" Rosie looked at her friend in sudden concern. "Is your mother sick?"

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Janet shook her head. "I don't know what's the matter with her. It seems like the hot weather



and the work and the worry have been too much for her. But I'll be back, Rosie, at three o'clock for our papers. I got two new customers, didn't I, Terry? And, Rosie, what do you think? Terry gave me an extra nickel for each of them."

Janet started off and Mrs. O'Brien exclaimed: "Now, then, for dinner! All of yez!"

"See you later, Rosie," George Riley remarked, opening the door of his own room.

Mrs. O'Brien called after him excitedly: "Why, Jarge lad, where's this you're going? Aren't you sitting down with the rest of us?"

"I ain't more than had my breakfast," George explained; "and I think I better get in a little nap before I start out on my next run." He nodded to Rosie, smiled, and shut his door.

"Poor Jarge!" Mrs. O'Brien threw sympathetic eyes to heaven and sighed.

Rosie looked at her mother quickly. "Is there anything the matter with Jarge?"

"Poor fella!" Mrs. O'Brien went on in the same lugubrious tone. "He's as honest as the day and I'm sure I wish him every blessing under heaven. Never in me life have I liked a boarder as much as I like Jarge. He's no trouble at all, at all, and it was mighty kind of his mother inviting you and Geraldine to the country. No, no, Rosie, you must never make the mistake of supposing I'm not fond of Jarge!"

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"Ma," Rosie begged; "tell me what's the matter!" She stopped suddenly and two little points of steel came into her blue eyes. "Is it Ellen? Has she been doing something to him again?"

Mrs. O'Brien looked grieved. "Why, Rosie, I'm surprised at you—I am that, to hear you talk that way about your poor sister Ellen. And such a bit of news as I've got about Ellen, too! Sit down now and, when I serve you, I'll tell you."

There was no hurrying Mrs. O'Brien and Rosie, knowing this, said no more. At heart she gave a little sigh. It was as if a shadow were overcasting the bright joy of her home-coming. She had arrived so full of her own happiness that she had failed to see any evidence of the care and worry which, she realized now, had plainly stamped the faces of her two dearest friends. Poor Janet McFadden! For one reason or another it had always been poor Janet. And now, apparently, it was to be poor George Riley as well.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

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### GEORGE TURNS

"Now!" Everything was on the table and there was no further excuse for Mrs. O'Brien's not seating herself. She dropped into a chair and beamed upon Rosie triumphantly. "And just to think, Rosie dear, that you don't yet know about Ellen! Ellen's got a job! She's starting in on eight dollars a week and she's to go to ten in a couple of weeks if she's satisfactory. And you know yourself that twenty dollars is nothing for a fine stenographer to be getting nowadays. And twenty a week means eighty a month and eighty a month means close on to a thousand a year! Now I do say that a thousand a year is a pretty big lump of money for a girl like Ellen to be making!"

Mrs. O'Brien's enthusiasm was genuine but scarcely infectious. Terence jerked his head toward Rosie with a dry aside: "She started work yesterday on a week's trial."

Mrs. O'Brien looked at her son reprovingly. "Why, Terry lad, how you talk! On trial, indeed! As if a trial ain't a sure thing with a girl that's got the fine looks and the fine education that Ellen's got!"

"Fine education—rats! I bet she knows as much about stenography as a bunny!"

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His mother gazed on him offended and hurt. "Since you're such a wise young man, Mister Terence O'Brien, perhaps you'll be telling us how much you know about it, yourself."

Terry's answer was prompt: "Not a blamed thing! But I tell you what I do know: I know Ellen, and you can take it from me she's a frost."

Rosie sighed plaintively. "But where does Jarge come in? What's the matter with Jarge."

Terence answered her shortly: "Oh, nuthin'. Ellen only played him one of her little tricks last week and he's mad."

"And I must say," Mrs. O'Brien supplemented, "Jarge does surprise me the way he keeps it up. After all, Ellen's only a young girl and he ought to remember that every young girl makes a mistake now and then."

"What mistake did she make this time?" Rosie spoke as quietly as she could.

"It's a long story," her mother said. "Since you've been gone she met a fella named Finn, Larry Finn, and we all thought him very nice, he was that polite with his hair always brushed and shiny and smooth. He had a good job downtown——"

"You know his kind, Rosie," Terry interposed; "a five dollar a week book-keep—silk socks but no undershirt. Oh, he was a great sport! Ellen was crazy about him."

"Terence O'Brien, have ye no manners to be takin' the words out of yir own mother's mouth! Now hold yir tongue while I explain to Rosie." Terence subsided and Mrs. O'Brien started in afresh: "Well, as I was saying, this Finn fella took a great fancy to Ellen and was coming around every night to see her. He took her to the movies and gave her ice-cream sodas and they were getting on fine. Then last week he was going to take her to the Twirler Club's Annual Ball."

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"The Twirlers' Ball!" Rosie looked at her mother questioningly.

That lady waved a reassuring hand. "Oh, the ball was all right this year—perfectly nice and decent. Ellen found out about it beforehand. Not like last year! No drunks was to be allowed on the floor and none of them disgraceful dances. Oh, if it had been like last year, I'd never have consented to Ellen's going! You know that, Rosie!"

"Huh!" grunted Terry.

His mother paid no heed to him. "As I was saying, Rosie, the night before the ball, Larry had to come excusing himself because they had just told him he would have to stay working till all hours the next night. So there was poor Ellen, who might have had her pick a week or two earlier, left high and dry at the last moment. I tell you, Rosie, it would have wrung your heart to see the poor girl's disappointment. A girl of less spirit would have given up, but not Ellen. Ellen was going to that ball and you know how firm Ellen is once she makes up her mind. So she just asked Jarge Riley to take her."

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"Ma! Do you mean to say she had the cheek to ask poor Jarge after the way she's been treating him all these months!"

"Ah, ah, don't look at me that way, Rosie! Of course I mean it. Why shouldn't she ask him? He's a nice fella and, besides that, he's a friend of the family."

"Say, Terry, what do you know about that?" Rosie appealed to her brother sure that he, at least, would understand the humiliation she felt both at Ellen's manœuvre and at their mother's calm acceptance of it.

Terry did understand and gave her the sympathy of a quick nod and a short laugh. "What do you expect? You know Ellen."

"Well, all I got to say is: it's a shame!" Tears of indignation stood in Rosie's eyes. "She treats him like a dog and then, when it suits her, she makes use of him. It's an outrage—that's what it is! I suppose he went, of course. Poor Jarge is so easy."

Mrs. O'Brien nodded her head. "Sure he went. He didn't want to at first because he didn't like Ellen mixing up with the Twirlers. When she insisted, he said, all right, he'd go."

"Is that all?" Rosie asked.

"All!" echoed her mother. "Bless your heart, no! It's hardly the beginning!"

Rosie sighed.

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"Aw, Ma," Terry protested, "look at you! You're tiring Rosie all out and it's only her first day home. Why don't you spit it out quick?"

"Terry, Terry, that's not a nice way to talk, telling your poor ma to spit it out! Shame on you, lad, for using such a word!"

"Well, what happened at the ball?" Rosie begged.

"I was coming to that, Rosie dear, when Terry interrupted me. As I was saying, who showed up at the ball quite unexpected-like but Larry Finn. When Ellen saw Larry she turned to Jarge and says to him that, if he wanted to go home early, he needn't wait for her, that Larry would take care of her."

"Oh, Ma!" Rosie's eyes grew bright and her cheeks a deeper pink. "Do you mean to say after letting poor Jarge take her and pay her admission she turned around and treated him like that!"

Mrs. O'Brien lifted disclaiming hands. "Mind now, I'm not trying to defend Ellen, but I do say she's only a young girl and young girls make mistakes now and then."

"Well,"—Rosie tried to speak quietly—"what did Jarge do?"

"What did Jarge do? Something awful! Now remember, Rosie dear, I'm not trying to run Jarge down. He's a nice fella and he's a kind fella and I've never had a boarder that was so easy to please and, as I've told you before, it was mighty good of him having his mother invite you and Geraldine to the country. But I must say he did act something scandalous that night."

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Mrs. O'Brien paused to shake her head impressively and Rosie, in desperation, appealed to Terence. "Tell me, Terry, what did he do?"

Terry grinned. "What did he do? Why, he laid for Larry Finn and, when Larry and Ellen came out, he punched Larry's face for him!"

"It was something awful!" Mrs. O'Brien again declared. "Every day for a week poor Larry had to carry a black eye with him down to the office. And you know yourself the way other men laugh at a black eye. And he's not been here to see Ellen since and Ellen's awful mad and, besides that, no one else has been coming, for the word has gone out that Jarge'll kill any fella that's fool enough to be showin' his face."

"Well, it's just good for her, too!" Ellen's unexpected plight was the one thing in the whole situation that gave Rosie any satisfaction. However, she gloated on it only for a moment. "But about Jarge, Terry—did he get pulled in that night?"

Terry shook his head. "No. You see the ball was ending up in a free-for-all, just like the Twirlers always do, and the cops were so busy inside that there was no one left to pay any attention to a little thing like Jarge's scrap."

"And I must say," Mrs. O'Brien continued, "I'm sorry for that poor Larry Finn, for it wasn't his fault at all, at all. It was Ellen's own arrangement."

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"That's so," Rosie agreed. "By rights Ellen's the one that ought to have got beat up."

"Why, Rosie, I'm surprised to hear you say such a thing and about your own sister, too!"

Mrs. O'Brien's surprise was lost upon Rosie, who was looking intently at her father. "Say, Dad, what do you think of a girl doing a trick like that on two decent fellows?"

Jamie O'Brien, who had said nothing up to this, took a drink of tea, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and slowly cleared his throat. "It's me own opinion, Rosie, it's a very risky game that Ellen's playing."

"Risky? It's worse than risky: it's dishonest."

Rosie started to push back her chair, but her mother stretched out a detaining hand. "Wait a minute, Rosie. You haven't yet heard what I'm trying to tell you."

Rosie's eyes opened wide. "Is there any more?"

"To be sure there is, Rosie. You've only heard the beginning."

Rosie dropped back in her chair a little limply. What more could there be?

Mrs. O'Brien breathed hard and long; she sighed; she gazed about at the various members of her family. At last she spoke:

"I don't know what's come over Jarge since that night. You know yourself what an easy-going young fella he's always been, never holding a grudge, always ready to let bygones be bygones. Well, he's never forgiven Ellen from that night on. He scowls at her like a storm-cloud every time he sees her and last week, Rosie—why, you'll hardly believe me when I tell you what he said to her last week. We were all sitting here at the table: your poor da over there, and Terry in his place, and Jack beside him, and meself here. Ellen made some thriflin' remark about how silly a girl is to marry herself to one man when she might be going around having a good time with half a dozen—nuthin' at all, you understand, just the way Ellen always runs on, when, before I knew what was happening, Jarge jumped to his feet and pounded the table until every dish on it was rattlin'. 'That's how you feel, is it?' says he, glaring at poor Ellen like a mad bull. 'Well, if that's your little game,' says he, 'I've been a goat long enough. Not another thing will I ever do for you, Ellen O'Brien, not another blessed cent will I ever spend on you until you tell me you'll marry me and set the date. And what's more,' says he, 'I'll give you one month from today to decide,' says he. 'I'll be going back to the farm in September,' says he, 'so it's time I knew pretty straight just where we stand. So no more foolin', me lady,' says he. 'It's to be yes or no to Jarge Riley and that's the end of it.'"

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"Good for Jarge! Good for Jarge!" Rosie cried, clapping her hands in excitement. "He was able for her that time, wasn't he?"

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"Able for her, Rosie? Well, I must say it's a mighty strange way for a young fella to talk that's courtin' a girl. Your own poor da never talked that way to me, did you, Jamie dear? I wouldn't have stood it! I give you me word of honour I wouldn't!"

Terry chuckled and Rosie, glancing at her meek quiet little father, also smiled for an instant. Then her face again went grave.

"How did Ellen take it? Did she tell him once for all she'd never have him?"

"Bless your poor innocent heart, no!" Mrs. O'Brien was astonished at the mere suggestion. "That'd be a strange thing for a girl to tell a man! Of course, though, it ain't likely that Ellen ever will have him. Jarge is all right, understand, but take Ellen with her fine looks and her fine education and it's me own opinion that some of these days she'll be making a big match. Especially now that she's going around to them offices downtown where she'll be meeting lots of

rich business men."

"Of course, Ma, that's the way you look at it and the way Ellen looks at it. Neither of you thinks of poor old Jarge one little bit."

"Nonsense, Rosie. I like Jarge and so does Ellen. But you mustn't be blaming a girl like Ellen for not throwing over a good useful beau like Jarge until she's made sure of some one better. It's fine for Ellen to have Jarge to fall back on." [191]

"To fall back on!" Rosie echoed.

Jamie O'Brien slowly pushed away his chair and cleared his throat. "It's me own opinion," he announced gravely, "that Jarge is too good for Ellen by far."

"You bet he is!" Rosie declared fiercely.

Mrs. O'Brien looked hurt and grieved. "I don't see how you can all talk that way about poor Ellen. Besides his other virtues, you'll soon be telling me that Jarge is a good-looker!"

"A good-looker!" Rosie cried. "Ma, how can you talk that way? His looks are all right and Jarge himself is all right."

Mrs. O'Brien fumbled a moment. "It's not that I meself object to his looks, understand, but Ellen, being so fine looking herself, is mighty particular. She likes them big and handsome and stylish and dressy."

"Like Larry Finn," snickered Terry.

Mrs. O'Brien pretended not to hear.

Rosie, with sober quiet face, pushed back her chair and began clearing the table.

"No, no, not today, Rosie," her mother insisted. "You're not going to start right off with dish-washing. You're company for one day at least, ain't she, Jamie? So take Terry and Jack out in front and tell them about the country. Jack wants to hear all about the pigs and cows, don't you, Jackie dear?" [192]

"Not just now," Jack answered truthfully. "I got to go out and see a fellow. But thanks for that turtle, Rosie."

Rosie paused a moment in doubt until her father nodded encouragingly and Terry, putting an arm about her shoulder, drew her away.

"I sure am glad to see you home again," he said when they were alone.

Rosie looked up at him affectionately. "And I'm glad to be home, Terry. But I'm awful sorry about poor Jarge."

"Don't you worry about Jarge," Terry advised. "If Ellen did take him it would be the worst thing that ever happened him."

"I know, Terry, but I can't bear to have him so unhappy."

"Well, take it from me, he'd be unhappier if he got Ellen."

Rosie paused a moment. "Say, Terry, is she worse since she's got a job?"

Terry answered shortly: "She's the limit! She's making a bigger fool than ever of ma. Wait till you see her tonight."

"I don't want to see her. She always rubs me the wrong way and makes me say things I don't want to say. But I do want to see poor old Jarge.... Say, Terry, don't it beat all the way a good sensible fellow like Jarge goes crazy over a girl like Ellen? How do you account for it?" [193]

Terry shook his head. "Search me."

"They always do," Rosie continued.

"Well, I tell you one thing, Rosie: I be blamed if ever I fall in love with a girl that ain't nice!" Fourteen years old looked out upon the world firmly and resolutely. "Not on your life!"

"I wouldn't either, Terry, if I was you! 'Tain't sensible!" And twelve years old shook her head sagely.

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## CHAPTER XXV

### DANNY AGIN ON LOVE

At three o'clock Janet appeared and Rosie and she started out together. Rosie had been gone only three weeks but, in that short time, changes had come about, events had occurred, which had altered irrevocably the face of her little world. Within the limits of her own short paper route the whole cycle of existence had turned. Life had been ushered in, life had passed out, and that closest of human pacts which is the promise of life to succeeding generations had been entered into.

Janet McFadden was voluble. "It turned out to be twins at the Flannigans, Rosie, and they just had an awful time. The doctor said that poor Mis' Flannigan was too hard-worked before they came and that's why they're so weak and sickly. Ain't it just tough the way poor little babies have to pay up for things like that?... And you know about Jake Mullane dying last week, don't you? It was sunstroke and I suppose he had been drinking and he just went that quick. They certainly had a swell funeral with six carriages and plumes and tassels on the horses and Lucy and Katie and even the baby dressed in black. But doesn't it kind of scare you, Rosie, to think of a big strong man like Jake being dead and buried before you can turn around?... And, say, Rosie, I do wish you had been here to see the wedding! It was just beautiful! Bessie had a veil and pink roses and smilax and Ed Haskins hired three carriages for the day. There were white ribbons on the whips and little white bows behind the horses' ears. Maybe you think they didn't look swell! They rode around town from ten o'clock in the morning until midnight. Jarge Riley saw them coming home and he says they were lying all over each other fast asleep. I'm not surprised at that, are you? Bessie's in her own little flat now. It isn't any bigger than a soap-box but she's got it all fixed up and pretty. She took me through and showed me her dishes and everything. They furnished on twenty-five dollars down and a dollar a week for a year. I guess Ed Haskins is going to be a good provider all right...."

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Janet chatted on, pausing only to let people greet Rosie. Rosie's progress that afternoon was something of a reception. Every one who saw her stopped to call out: "Back again, Rosie? Awful glad to see you!" or, "Hello, kid! How's the country?" It gave Rosie the very pleasant feeling that she had been missed during her absence.

At the end of the route when they came to Danny Agin's cottage, they found old Mary Agin near the gate, busied over her flowers. At sight of Rosie, she stood up, tall and gaunt, and held out welcoming hands.

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"Ah, Rosie dear, it's glad I am to see you! And himself will be glad as well when he hears you're back." Mrs. Agin was an undemonstrative old woman but she bent now and kissed Rosie on the forehead.

"How is Danny, Mis' Agin?" Rosie asked. "Is he pretty well?"

"Pretty well, do ye say? Ah, Rosie—" and Mary Agin paused while her eyes half closed as if in pain.

"I forgot to tell you," Janet whispered; "Danny's been awful sick."

"And for two weeks," Mary Agin said, "the great fear was on me day and night that he'd be shlippin' away and me left a sad lonely old woman with nobody to talk to but the cat.... Will ye come in and see him, Rosie? The sight of you will do him a world of good, for he's mighty fond of you and he's been askin' for you every day. Just run along in for a minute and say 'Howdy.' Janet'll wait out here with me."

Rosie found Danny propped up at the bedroom window. The colour of his round apple cheeks had faded, their plumpness had fallen in, but on sight of Rosie the twinkle returned to his little blue eyes and he raised a knotted rheumatic hand in welcome.

"Is it yourself, Rosie O'Brien? Come over and give an old man a kiss and tell him you're glad he's not dead yet."

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"Oh, Danny, don't talk that way," Rosie pleaded. She kissed his cheek, which was rough with a stubby growth of beard, then stood for a moment with her arms about his neck.

"It's the merest chance that ye find me here," Danny said; "but now that I am here I suppose I'll stay on awhile longer. But I almost got off, Rosie. 'Twas Mary that pulled me back. Poor girl, she couldn't stand the thought of not having some one to scold. 'Twould be the death of her." Danny blinked his eyes and chuckled.

"Danny, you oughtn't to talk that way about poor Mis' Agin!" Rosie shook her head vigorously. "She loves you, Danny, you know she does!"

"To be sure," Danny agreed. "'Whom the Lord loveth, He chases,' and Mary has been chasin' me these forty years. But she's a good woman, Rosie—oh, ho, I never forget that!" Danny paused a moment, then added with a wicked little grin: "And if I was to forget it, she'd be on hand herself to remind me of it!"

As always, when they were alone, Danny was a good deal of the naughty small boy saying things he should not say, and Rosie a good deal of the helpless shocked young mother begging him to mind his manners. She looked at him now sadly and yearningly. "Oh, Danny, I don't see how you can talk that way and poor Mis' Agin's just been nursing you night and day."

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"Pooh!" scoffed Danny. "Take me word for it, Rosie, when ye've been married forty years, ye'll

expect to be nursed night and day and no back talk from any one. But, for love of Mike, darlint dear, let's talk of something else! I've had nuthin' but Mary for the last couple of weeks. Not another face have I seen and ye know yourself that Mary's face was niver intinded for such constant use!"

Rosie gasped and swallowed and tried hard to find some fitting reproof. Failing in this she sought to distract her friend from further indiscretions by changing the subject. "Hasn't Janet been in to see you, Danny?"

"Janet?" Danny spoke as though with an effort to recall the name. "Yes, I suppose Janet has been in. I dunno."

"Danny, I don't see how you could forget."

"I don't forget but I don't just exactly remember."

"Danny, you're always saying things like that and I don't know what you mean. Either you remember or you don't remember and that's all there is to it." Rosie looked at him severely. "I don't think it's a bit nice of you to pretend not to remember Janet. She's my dearest friend and besides that she's a very nice girl."

Danny agreed heartily: "Oh, Janet's a fine girl—she is that! In fact"—and Danny paused to make Rosie a knowing wink—"she might very well be Mary's own child. Just look at the solemn face of her that hurts when she laughs!"

"Danny, Danny, you mustn't talk that way, and you wouldn't either if you knew the hard time poor Janet has at home!"

"Wouldn't I now? Don't I know the hard time poor Mary Agin has at home and don't I say the same of her? Rosie, take me word for it, there are some women are born for a hard time. They like it. Since Mary's been waiting on me, hand and foot, she's been a happy woman. In the old days when I was a spry, jump-about kind of man, making good money and no odds from any one, Mary was a sad complainin' creature, always courtin' disaster and foreseein' trouble. And look at her now: with a penny in her pocket where she used to have a dollar and a cripple in a chair instead of a wage-earnin' husband, and never a word of complaint out of her mouth!" Danny ruminated a moment. "The rheumatiz has been pretty hard on me, Rosie dear, but I tell you it's been the makin' of a happy woman!"

Close as they were to each other, Rosie was often in doubt as to the exact meaning of Danny's little quirks of thought. She looked at him now, trying to decide whether his remarks deserved reproof or acceptance. Danny watched her with twinkling amusement. At last he burst out laughing.

"Ah, Rosie dear, don't trouble yir pretty little head for ye'll never make it out! And, after all, what does it matter if ye don't? With you, darlint, the only thing that matters is this: that it's yourself that cheers a man's heart with your lovin' ways and your sweet pretty face."

How Danny had worked around to this sentiment, Rosie could not for the life of her tell. His words, however, suggested a question that called for discussion.

"It seems to me, Danny, you think all men like girls with loving ways."

Danny's answer was prompt: "I do that, Rosie! You can take an old man's word for it and no mistake."

Rosie shook her head thoughtfully. "I don't see how you make that out. Take Ellen now: she hasn't very loving ways; she snaps your head off if you look at her; but she's got beaux all right—more than any girl on the street, and poor old Jarge Riley's gone daft over her. Now how do you make that out?"

"Ah, that's a different matter," Danny explained airily. "You see, Rosie, there be two classes of men, sensible men and fools, and most men belong to both classes. Now a sensible man knows that a sweet loving woman will make him a happy home and a good mother to his children. Any man'll agree to that. So I'm right when I tell you that all men love that kind of a woman, for they do. But let a bold hussy come along with a handsome face on her and a nasty wicked temper, and before you count ten she'll call out all the fool there is in a man and off he goes after her as crazy as a half-witted rooster. Ah, I've seen it time and again. Many a poor lad that ought have known better has put the halter about his own neck! Have you ever thought, Rosie dear, of the queer ch'ices men make when they marry?"

"Danny, I don't know what you mean."

Danny's eyes took on a far-away look. "Take Mary and me. For forty years now I've been wonderin' what it was that married us."

"Why, Danny!" Rosie's expression was reproachful. "Didn't you love Mary?"

"Love her, do you say? Why, of course I loved her! Didn't me knees go weak at sight of her and me head dizzy? But the question is: why did I love her or why did she love me? There I was a gay dancing blade of a lad and Mary a serious owl of a girl that had never footed a jig in her life and would have died of shame not to have her washin' out bright and early of a Monda' mornin'. Now what was it, I ask you, that put love between us?"

Danny appealed to his young friend as man to man. Rosie, however, was not a person to grant the purely academic side of any question that was perfectly clear and matter-of-fact.

"Why, you loved her, Danny, and she loved you and that's all there was to it."

For a moment Danny looked blank. Then he chuckled. "Strange I didn't think of that before!" His eyes began to twinkle. "I'll wager, Rosie dear, ye've never lain awake o' nights wondering what it was that made the world go round, have you now?"

Rosie's answer was emphatic: "Of course not! I'm not so silly!"

Danny laughed. "I thought not."

Rosie went back to serious matters. "But, Danny, I can't understand about Jarge Riley and Ellen. Why is he so crazy about Ellen?"

Danny drew a long face. "The truth is, I suppose he loves her."

"But why does he love her?"

Danny's eyes opened wide. "Is it yourself, Rosie O'Brien, that's askin' me why?"

"I don't understand it at all," Rosie continued. "I've got a mind to give Jarge a good talking to. He just ought to be told a few things for his own good."

"I'm sure he'll listen to you." There was a hint of guile in Danny's voice but Rosie refused to hear it.

"He always does listen to me. We're mighty good friends, Jarge and me.... Yes, I'll just talk to him tonight. I'll put it to him quietly. Jarge has got lots of sense if only you talk to him right."

"Of course he has," Danny agreed. "And, Rosie dear, I'm consumed with impatience to hear the outcome of your conference. You won't fail to stop in and tell me about it tomorrow—promise me that!"

Rosie promised. She bid her old friend good-bye and left him, her mind already full of the things she would say to George Riley.

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## CHAPTER XXVI

### ELLEN

"I DON'T know what's keepin' poor Ellen," Mrs. O'Brien remarked as the family gathered at supper that evening. "They're awful busy at them down-town offices, I'm thinkin'. Ellen was expectin' to be home at six o'clock sharp but something important must have come in and they need her. Ah, say what you will, a poor girl's got to work mighty hard these days."

"Huh!" grunted Terry.

There was a slam at the front door, at sound of which Mrs. O'Brien's face lighted up. "Ah, there she is now, the poor dear!"

Yes, it was Ellen. She swept at once into the kitchen and stood a moment glowering on the family with all the blackness of a storm-cloud. Then, without a word, she flung herself into a chair.

"Why, Ellen dear," her mother gasped, "what's ailin' you?"

Beyond twitching her shoulders impatiently, Ellen made no answer.

"How do you do, Ellen?" Rosie spoke formally, in the tone of one not at all certain as to how her own civility would be received.

Ellen glanced at her sharply. "Huh! So you're back, are you?"

"Ellen, Ellen," Mrs. O'Brien cried reprovingly, "is that the way you talk to poor little Rosie and her just in from the country? And she brought you two nice dressed chickens and a basket of fine fresh vegetables and a box—"

Ellen cut her mother short with an impatient, "Aw, Ma, you dry up!"

"What's the matter, Ellen?" Terry drawled out. "Lost your job?"

For answer Ellen snatched off her hat and flung it angrily into the corner.

"Ellen, Ellen!" Mrs. O'Brien cried. "Your new hat!" She started forward to rescue the hat, then

paused as the significance of Terry's question reached her understanding. Her fluttering hands fell limp, her face took on an expression at once scared and appealing. "Oh, Ellen dear, you haven't lost your job, have you? Don't tell me you've lost your job!"

Ellen scowled at her mother darkly. "You bet your life I've lost my job! I wouldn't have staid in that office another day for a thousand dollars! They're nothing but a set of old grannies—every one of them!"

"Oh, Ellen!" Mrs. O'Brien dropped back helplessly into her chair. A look of overwhelming disappointment settled on her face; her mouth quivered; her eyes overflowed. "Oh, Ellen," she repeated, "how does it come that ye've lost it?" [206]

"Well, I guess you'd have lost it, too!" Ellen glared about the table defiantly. "Any one would with that old foggy, old man Harrison, worrying you to death with his old-maidish ways. He thinks people won't read his old letters if every word ain't spelled just so and every comma and period put in just right. The old fool! I'd like to know who cares about spelling nowadays! I did one letter over for him today six times and the sixth copy he tore up right in front of my face for nothing at all—a t-h-e-i-r for a t-h-e-r-e and a couple of little things like that. I tell you it made me hot under the collar and I just up and told him what I thought of him."

"Ellen!" Mrs. O'Brien gasped weakly.

"Well, I did!" Ellen repeated. "I just says to him, 'Since you're so mighty particular, Mr. Harrison, I don't see why you don't do your own typing!'" Ellen stood up and, indicating an imaginary Mr. Harrison, showed her family the pose she had taken.

"Well," asked Terry, "what did he say?"

"What did he say? He flew off the handle and shouted out: 'There's one thing sure: I'll never have you type another letter!' Just that way, as if I was nothing but an old errand boy! And after I had just done over his old letter for him six times, too!" Aggrieved and injured, Ellen appealed to her father: "Say, Dad, what do you know about that?" [207]

Jamie O'Brien slowly cleared his throat. "Is that the way they teach you at the Business College to talk to your employer?"

The reproof in Jamie's words was entirely lost upon Ellen. She tossed her head scornfully. "Oh, us girls are on to his kind all right! We give it to them straight from the shoulder! That's the only way to treat 'em—the fussy old women! Then they respect you!"

"Ellen, Ellen, Ellen," Mrs. O'Brien wailed forlornly, "what makes you talk that way?"

Terence drew Ellen back to her story: "Well, Sis, after that, what did you say and what did he say?"

Ellen's ill humour was fast disappearing. Under the magic of her own recital, she was beginning to see herself in a new and flattering light. Instead of the inefficient stenographer who, a few moments before, had sought to hide her discomfiture in a bluster of abuse, she was now a poor deserving working-girl who had been put upon by an unscrupulous employer. Conscious of her own worth and made courageous by that consciousness, she had been able, it now seemed to her, to hold her own in a manner which must excite the admiration of her family.

"Well, when he used such language to me, I saw all right what kind of a man he was and I just gave it to him straight. 'I see what you're after,' I says to him. 'You think you're going to bounce me before my week's up and you think I'm so meek that I'll leave without saying a word! But I just won't!' I says to him. 'You hired me for a week and if you think you can throw me out without paying me a week's salary, you're mighty mistaken! I've got a father,' I says to him, 'and he'll make it hot for you!'" [208]

Upon Mrs. O'Brien at least the effect of the story was almost terrifying. "Ellen, Ellen," she wailed, "what makes you talk so? You didn't really say that to the gentleman, did you?"

"I didn't, eh?" Ellen tossed her head defiantly. "You just bet I did!"

"Then what did he say?" It was Terry who again asked the question that would help the narrative on.

Ellen smiled triumphantly. "He had nothing more to say to me. He just called the book-keeper over to him and says: 'Pay this young woman a week's wages and let her go.' Yes, that was every word he said. Then, without even looking at me, he turned his back and began sorting the papers on his desk. Fine manners for a gentleman, I say!"

Before she finished, every member of the family had looked up in quick surprise.

"Do you mean," Mrs. O'Brien quavered, "do you mean, Ellen dear, that he paid you?"

Ellen glanced at her mother scornfully. "Of course I mean he paid me! Here!" She opened her handbag and exhibited a wad of bills. "One five and three ones! Pretty good pay for two days' work—what?" [209]

Mrs. O'Brien turned devout eyes to heaven. "Thank God, Ellen dear, he paid you! I was a-fearin' all your hard work was going for nuthin'! Thank God, you'll be able to start in this week payin'



your board like you intended."

Ellen looked at her mother coldly. "Say, Ma, what do you think I am? I told you I'd begin paying three dollars a week as soon as I got a good steady job. Well, have I got a good steady job? No. In fact, I'm out of a job. So you'll just have to wait like everybody else."

"But, Ellen dear,"—Mrs. O'Brien stretched out an appealing, indefinite hand—"what's this you're saying when you've got the money right there? It's only Tuesda' now and if you start out bright and early tomorrow hunting a new job, what with your fine looks and your fine education, you'll be sure to land one by the end of the week. And then, don't you see, there won't be any break in your payroll at all."

Ellen waved her mother airily aside. "Say, Ma, you don't know anything about it. If you think I'm going to start out again tomorrow morning, you make a mighty big mistake. I'm going to take a couple of days off, I am. I think I deserve them. I guess I've earned my living for this week. Besides, I've got some shopping to do. I need a new hat and a lot of things."

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"A new hat, Ellen? What's this ye're sayin'? Why, ye've not been wearing this last one a day longer than two weeks. It's a beautiful hat if ye'd not abuse it." Mrs. O'Brien lifted it carefully from the floor where it still lay and held it up for general inspection. "Why, Ellen, ye don't know how becomin' it is to you. Just the other morning, while I was shelling peas, Jarge Riley says to me——"

"Just cut out George Riley!" Ellen interrupted sharply. "I don't care what George Riley says! I'm going to get some decent clothes and that's all there is about it!"

Terry grunted derisively. "Say, Rosie, ain't we winners?"

Ellen flushed, conscious for the first time of Terry's disapproval. She looked at him angrily, then turned to her mother. "Now, Ma, just listen to that! He's always nagging at me and you never say a word!"

"Terry, Terry," Mrs. O'Brien murmured wearily, "why do ye be talkin' that way of your own sister? The next time she gets a job, I'm sure she'll begin payin' board the first thing, won't you, Ellen dear?"

"Say, Ma, you and Ellen are a team." Terry eyed his mother meditatively. "You take her guff every time. Not a day goes by that she don't pay you dirt, but you keep on trusting her just the same."

"Ah, Terry lad, how can you talk so? Perhaps Ellen has made a few mistakes, but you oughtn't to forget she's your own sister."

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"I don't." Terry spoke shortly and rose from his chair. "Come on, Rosie, no use hanging around here any longer."

Rosie hesitated. "I think I'll wait to do the dishes first. Ma's all tired out."

"Indeed, and you'll do no such thing!" Mrs. O'Brien declared. "You're company for today, Rosie, so make the most of it."

"Ellen will do the dishes, won't you, Ellen dear?" Terry spoke facetiously with his mother's intonation.

"Of course Ellen will," Mrs. O'Brien said. "I'm sure she will, for if she's not working tomorrow she'll not be having to save herself."

Rosie, willing to accept this assurance, allowed Terry to draw her away from the kitchen and out to the little front porch. "But you know, Terry, of course she won't."

Terry laughed a little grimly. "Of course not!" He paused a moment in thought. "Say, Rosie, don't it beat all the way she goes along doing just as she pleases? Hardly any one calls her bluff. I can see just how it was in that office today. She put up such an ugly fight that they were glad to shell out an extra five spot that she hadn't begun to earn just to get rid of her. And look at her here at home. She wouldn't hand out a nickel to the rest of us if we were starving. She'd spend it on an ice-cream soda for herself."

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Rosie sighed. "I don't mind about us. We can take care of ourselves. But poor old Jarge Riley, Terry. Living right here with us wouldn't you suppose he'd get to know her?"

"Well,"—Terry spoke in a tone somewhat didactic—"you forget one thing, Rosie: Jarge is in love."

"But why is he in love?" Rosie persisted.

Terry shook his head gloomily. "Search me."

## ROSIE URGES COMMON SENSE

"WHY is he in love?"

The question kept repeating itself to Rosie as she sat on the porch steps while day slowly faded and twilight deepened into night. Mrs. O'Brien and Jamie came out after a time and Rosie talked to them about the country, telling them of all the marvels of farm and roadside. But through it all her mind kept reverting to the problem which had met her so promptly on her return.

"When you know Mis' Riley," she told her mother, "then you understand Jarge from start to finish. She's jolly and kind and she'll do anything in the world for you if she likes you. And, my! how she works! Jarge's father is all right, but all he does is talk. No matter what there is to do, he always wants to stop and talk. In the mornings he just nearly used to drive Mis' Riley and me crazy. I can tell you we were always busy and he ought to have been, too, and he did used to get real tired just talking about all he had to do. Of course Grandpa Riley was awful good to me and Geraldine and I don't like to say anything about him, but I understand now why Jarge has to save so hard and why poor Mis' Riley has to work so hard. And I know one thing: when Jarge does go back to the farm and take hold of things, he and his mother'll make that old farm pay. They're not afraid of hard work, either of them, and they've both got good sense, too.... Say, Dad, what do you think of Ellen the way she treats Jarge?"

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"Ellen?" Jamie O'Brien's tilted chair came down with a thud and Jamie cleared his throat to answer. "How would you want her to be treating him?"

"Well, I don't want her to treat him like a dog! Jarge is too good!"

"Don't you be worryin' about Jarge," Jamie advised. "It's just as well for him that Ellen does treat him so." To Rosie this seemed a subject for further discussion, but not to Jamie. He balanced back his chair and relapsed into an abstracted silence from which Rosie's protests were unable to arouse him.

It had been a long and exciting day and Rosie was tired. If she had not felt that George would be expecting to see her when he got in from his run, she would have said good-night early and slipped quietly off to bed. But George would be expecting her. In the morning they had had very few words together and Rosie knew that there were a hundred things about the farm and about his mother that George wished to hear. So she stifled her yawns and waited.

Talk flickered and went out. At last Jamie O'Brien tapped his pipe on the porch rail and, going in, said: "Good-night, Rosie. It's mighty fine to have you back." In a few moments Mrs. O'Brien followed Jamie and Terry followed her.

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One by one the street noises grew quiet. Mothers' voices called, "Johnny!" "Katie!" "Jimmie!" and children's voices answered, "All right! I'm a-comin'!"; doors slammed; lights began to twinkle in bedroom windows. Rosie's little world was preparing for sleep. Every detail of that world was familiar to her as her mother's face. Like her mother's face, heretofore she had taken it for granted. Tonight, coming back after a short absence, she saw it anew with all the vividness of fresh sight and all the understanding of lifelong acquaintance. It was her world and, with a sudden rush of feeling, she knew that it was hers and that she loved it. Now that she was back to it, already her weeks in the country seemed far off and vague.... Had she ever been away?

George came at last. He looked thin and worn and he seated himself quietly with none of his old-time gaiety.

"Well, Rosie," he began, "how does it seem to be back?"

Rosie sighed. "I had a beautiful time in the country, Jarge, but I'm glad to be back—honest I am."

"But don't you miss the quiet of the country? I don't believe you'll be able to sleep tonight with all the noise."

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Rosie laughed. "Jarge, you're like all country people. You think the country's quiet and it's not at all. It's fearfully noisy! It's like living on a railroad track! Why, do you know, the first night I was there, I was hours and hours in going to sleep—I was so scared!"

"Scared, Rosie? What were you scared about?"

"The racket that was going on. I didn't know what it was at first. Then Grandpa Riley came out and told me it was only the locusts and the tree-toads and the frogs. For a long time, though, I didn't see how it could be."

George lay back and laughed with something of his old abandon. "If that don't beat all! So they scared you, Rosie?"

"And chickens, Jarge! Why, chickens are the noisiest things! If they are not squabbling with each other, they're talking to themselves! And ducks—ducks are even worse! Jarge, do you know, I call a street like this quiet compared to the country!"

George's laugh grew heartier. "If that ain't the funniest thing I ever heard!"

"It's true, Jarge!" Rosie was very serious but her seriousness only added to George's mirth.

"All right, kid, have it your own way. But it's kind of a new idea: the city's quiet and the country's noisy, is that it?"

"Oh, I don't say the city's exactly quiet." Rosie picked her words carefully. "All I mean is, you don't notice the noises in the city like you do the noises in the country. The city noises are not such strange noises." [217]

"Oh! That's it, is it? I see!" and George slapped his knee in lusty amusement.

"Jarge," Rosie began slowly, "there's something I want to talk to you about."

"Well, here I am. There'll never be a better time."

"It's about Ellen, Jarge."

George's laugh stopped abruptly.

"I don't like to say anything about her, Jarge, because she's my own sister...." Rosie paused and sighed. "You're in love with her, Jarge, aren't you?"

"Yes, Rosie, I'm afraid I am. And I'm afraid I've got it bad, too."

"Jarge dear, tell me one thing: why are you in love with her?"

George shook his head. "Search me. I don't know."

"But, Jarge, she ain't the kind of girl you ought to be in love with."

"That so?" George's voice showed very little interest.

"Why, you ought to be in love with a nice girl, Jarge—I mean a girl that would love you and pet you and save your money and take good care of you. That's the kind of girl you want, Jarge." [218]

"Is it?" George's tone was still apathetic.

"Sure it is. Now, Jarge, look at the whole thing sensibly. What do you want with a girl like Ellen? She doesn't think of any one but herself and all she's after is getting beaux and spending money. What would you do with her if you had her? Why, she'd clean out your savings in two weeks, and then where would you be and where would your mother be and where would the farm be?"

George sighed heavily. "I suppose you're right, Rosie, but that don't seem to make any difference. I don't know why I want her, but I do. I want her so bad I lay awake nights and I ain't never laid awake before in my life. No use talking, Rosie, it's Ellen or no one for me."

"But, Jarge dear, why can't you be sensible? You're sensible in other things."

"See here, Rosie, you don't know what you're talking about!" George spoke sharply but not unkindly. "A fellow don't fall in love with a girl because he wants to or because he ought to or because she'd make him a good wife. I don't understand why he does; I don't know a thing about it. He just does and that's all there is to it!"

"But, Jarge," Rosie persisted, "if he knows it ain't best for him, I should think he just wouldn't let himself fall in love."

"Didn't I just tell you a fellow himself has nothing to do with it!" For a moment George lost his temper, then he laughed a little sheepishly. "I don't blame you, Rosie, for not understanding. It sounds terrible foolish and I guess it is foolish. But it's how we're made and that's all there is about it. Some of these days you'll get caught yourself and then you'll understand." [219]

George reached over and gave Rosie's hand a confidential little squeeze. Rosie did not return the pressure. She even drew her own hand away a little coldly.

"It's all very well, Jarge Riley, for you to pretend that falling in love is so terribly mysterious, but I want to tell you one thing. I know better! It's as common as onions! Why, everybody does it! I guess I've seen 'em—out in the parks and on the street and in the cars and everywhere! And, besides that, I can tell you something else: if they'd only use a little common sense when they are in love they wouldn't make such fools of themselves. Yes, Jarge Riley, and you're just the very person I mean! There you are, wanting to make love to Ellen and what do you do? The very things that make her laugh at you! If you'd use one grain of common sense you'd get on with her as well as the rest of the fellows. But no, says you, a man can't possibly use common sense in love! Jarge Riley, you're as silly as a chicken and what's more, since I've been in the country, I know exactly how silly chickens are!"

"Why, Rosie!" George was too much taken back by Rosie's tirade to do more than gape in helpless astonishment. [220]

"I mean just what I say!" Rosie assured him severely. "I was sorry for you at first, but now I don't pity you at all. If you're going to be stubborn, you don't deserve to be pitied."

"Well, Rosie, what do you want me to do?"

George's tone was so conciliatory that Rosie's manner softened. "All I ask you, Jarge, is to be sensible."

George sighed and laughed. "Sounds easy, don't it? Now you think it would be sensible for a farmer like me not to think any more about a girl like Ellen. That's it, ain't it?"

Rosie answered promptly: "Yes, Jarge, that would certainly be the most sensible thing you could do."

"Rosie, that's the one thing I can't do, whether I'd like to or not. I'm sorry, though, because I don't want you to think I'm only stubborn."

It was Rosie's turn to sigh. "You're an awful hard person to help, Jarge. You pretend you're perfectly willing to be sensible, yet the minute I tell you how you draw back." Rosie sighed again.

"But at least, Jarge, you might be sensible in other things." She turned on him with sudden energy. "And do you know, Jarge, if you were sensible in other things, I think you might easy enough make Ellen like you! Why not?"

"Ain't I sensible in other things?" George spoke a little plaintively.

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"I should say not! Everything you do gives Ellen another chance to laugh at you and make fun of you. Take the other night at the Twirlers' dance. Now if you had gone about that thing right you could have made Ellen and all the other girls just crazy about you. You needn't think Ellen wouldn't like to have a beau that can lick everybody in sight. She would. Any girl would. But all you did was make her mad."

George groaned. His prowess at the Twirlers' was not a pleasant memory. When he spoke, his tone was a little sullen. "What is it you want me to do?"

"I only want you to act sensible."

"Well, then, tell me this: how's a born fool to act sensible?"

"When he don't know how to act sensible himself," Rosie answered, "there's only one thing for him to do and that is to take the advice of some one who does know."

George laughed. "Meaning yourself, Rosie?"

"Sure I mean myself. I don't mind saying that I consider myself very far from a born fool. I'm not a bit ashamed of being sensible. Janet McFadden always says that I'm not very smart but that I've got lots of common sense. Danny Agin thinks so, too. He often consults me about things." Rosie nodded complacently.

George chuckled. "I'm with Janet and Danny all right. I always did swear by you, Rosie!"

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"Then why don't you do as I tell you?" Rosie faced him squarely. "It would be very much better for you!"

For a moment George looked at her in affectionate amusement. Then his face grew serious as her own. "All right, Rosie, I will. You're right: I have made a bad mess of things with Ellen. It couldn't be worse. So here's my promise: for the rest of the time I'm here, I'll do just exactly as you say."

Rosie beamed her approval. "And I promise you, Jarge, you won't be sorry!"

In all formality they shook hands over the bargain.

"Now then," George began briskly, "what's the first thing I'm to do?"

Rosie hesitated. "I haven't exactly thought it out yet."

"Huh! So it ain't so awful easy even for you to be sensible!" He peeped at her slyly.

"I want to think things over carefully," Rosie explained, "and I want to ask Danny Agin's advice." George gave a grunt of protest, so Rosie hastened to add: "Of course I won't use your name. I'll just put the case to Danny in a sort of general way and, before he guesses what I really mean, he'll be telling me what I want to know. Oh, I wouldn't mention your name for anything!"

George chuckled. "I'm sure you wouldn't!" He stood up. "Well, good-night, kid. It's time for both of us to get to bed. And say, Rosie, I'm awful glad you're back. I've had a bad time since you've been gone. Everything's went wrong. Now you're back, I feel better already.... Good-night."

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They were all glad she was back! In the sunshine of so much appreciation, Rosie's heart felt like a little flower bursting into bloom.

## JANET USES STRONG LANGUAGE

NIGHT brought back to Mrs. O'Brien her usual serenity. Given a little time she always worked around to serenity, even after blows such as Ellen's lost job. The next morning, while George Riley ate his breakfast, she was able to talk about it without a trace of her first despair.

"Have you heard, Jarge, the frightful experience poor Ellen had at that office? Her boss was one of them unreasonable fussy old men that would worry any poor girl to death. Ellen stood it for two days and then she told him she'd just have to give up. They were so awfully sorry to lose her that they paid her a whole week's wages. I tell her she done quite right not trying to stick it out under such conditions. 'Twould make an old woman of her in no time. As I says to her, 'The game ain't worth the candle. And what's more,' says I, 'what with your fine looks and your fine education you won't be any time getting another job.' And she won't. I'm sure of that. She was awfully afraid we'd be blaming her, but 'Make your mind easy,' I says to her. 'You've done just exactly what your poor da and I would have advised you to do.' Oh, I tell you, Jarge, in these days a poor girl has to mind her P's and Q's or they'll impose on her! You know that's so, Jarge."

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Rosie sighed. Three weeks had made no change in her mother's character. Whatever Ellen or any of her children might be guilty of, within twenty-four hours Mrs. O'Brien would be sure to find them blameless and even praiseworthy.

Rosie was glad to see that George Riley, in spite of his infatuation, was not entirely taken in. He smiled to himself a little grimly. "So she's lost her job already, has she?"

Mrs. O'Brien demurred: "'Tain't quite fair to the poor girl to say she lost her job. What Ellen done was this: she resigned her position."

George glanced at Rosie and she, to make sure he understood, wrinkled her nose and shook her head. "I'll tell you about it sometime," she remarked carelessly.

"She's off shopping this morning," Mrs. O'Brien continued. "I told her not to go back to them offices for a couple of days. She needs a little rest and once she gets a good steady job goodness knows when she'll ever again have a moment to herself. So I'm wanting her to get her shopping done while she can."

"You see, Jarge," Rosie explained; "she needs a lot of new clothes and now that she's making money she can buy them herself. She's going to get a new hat, too. She doesn't like that last new hat." Rosie tried to use a tone that would sound guileless to her mother and yet tell George all there was to tell.

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With her mother at least she was successful. "You must remember," Mrs. O'Brien went on, "a girl in her position has got to dress mighty well or they'll be taking advantage of her. So I says to her, 'Now, Ellen dear, just get yourself a nice new hat and anything else you need. Don't mind any board money this week.' You know, Jarge, she's going to begin paying three dollars a week regular. Don't you call that pretty fine for a poor girl who is just starting out in life? You mustn't forget, Jarge, that all you pay yourself is five dollars a week."

"Yes, but the difference is he really pays it!" Rosie could not resist stating this fact even at risk of hurting her mother's feelings.

The risk was a safe one. Mrs. O'Brien only smiled blandly. "'Tis no difference at all, Rosie dear. Come next week, Ellen'll be really paying it, too. She gave me her word she would."

A mother's faith in her offspring is touching and very beautiful. It is even more: it is as it should be. Nevertheless it is usually wearisome to outsiders. In this case, Rosie's point of view was that of an outsider. She stood her mother's eulogy of Ellen as long as she could and then, to avoid an outburst, she fled. She ventured back once or twice but not to stay, as Ellen continued to be the theme of her mother's conversation and George, poor victim, seemed not to realize how bored he was.

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Rosie began to think that her second day home was in a fair way of being spoiled. As the morning wore away she found another grievance.

"Terry," she said, "I don't know what has become of Janet. She promised to be here first thing this morning. I suppose her father's been beating her up again."

"Did you know," Terry asked, "that Dave McFadden got pulled in while you were away? He was fined ten dollars."

"Wisht he'd been sent up for ten years!" Rosie declared. "Mis' McFadden and Janet would be much better off without him!"

Dear, dear! Taken by and large this poor old world is pretty full of trouble! Rosie sighed deeply, wondering how she was going to bear the burden of it all.

She waited for Janet until afternoon, when it was time for her to go about her business as paper-carrier. She was sure now that something serious had happened to Janet. To the child of a

man like Dave McFadden something serious might happen almost any time. On the first part of her route Rosie gave herself up to all sorts of horrible imaginings. Then, in the excitement of a long talk with Danny Agin on the subject of George Riley, she forgot Janet and did not think of her again until she reached home.

Janet was there on the porch awaiting her.

"Poor Janet's in trouble," Mrs. O'Brien began at once.

This was evident enough from the expression of Janet's face.

"What is it, Janet? What's happened?" Rosie put a sympathetic arm about Janet's shoulder and peered anxiously into her somber eyes.

"Her poor ma's been took sick," Mrs. O'Brien continued.

"Oh, Janet, I'm sorry! Is it serious?"

"Horspital," Mrs. O'Brien announced.

"Hospital!" Rosie repeated. Then it was serious! "When did it happen, Janet?"

"This morning." Janet spoke quietly in a tired colourless voice.

"Were you at home, Janet?"

"No. On the street."

"Did they send for an ambulance?"

"Yes."

"Did they take you to the hospital, too?"

"Yes."

"Well, Janet, what did the doctor say?"

"He said lots of things."

"Didn't he say your mother would be all right soon?"

"He said that depends."

"What does it depend on, Janet?"

Janet laughed, a weak pathetic little laugh that had no mirth in it. "He said she might get well again if she didn't have to work or worry any more. Huh! It's easy to say a thing like that to a poor woman that's got to work or starve, but it would be a good deal more sensible if they'd say right out: 'You better go drown yourself!'"

"Why, Janet!" Mrs. O'Brien's hands went up in shocked amazement.

"I mean it!" Janet insisted fiercely. "Do you suppose my mother works like she does because she wants to? I'd like to see that doctor married to a drunk and have some one say to him: 'Now don't work or worry and you'll be all right.'"

Mrs. O'Brien was much distressed. "Why, Janet dear, you surprise me to be talkin' so about that poor doctor."

"The doctor!" Janet turned on Mrs. O'Brien passionately. "I'm not talking about the doctor! I'm talking about my father!" She paused an instant, then flung out a terrible epithet which even in the mouth of a rough man would have been shocking.

Instinctively Rosie shrank and Mrs. O'Brien raised a startled, disapproving hand.

Janet tossed her head defiantly. "I don't care!" she insisted. "It's all his fault, the drunken brute, and if my mother dies tonight, it'll be him that's murdered her!" She ended with a sob and hid her face on Rosie's shoulder.

Mrs. O'Brien, still scandalised, opened her mouth to speak. But the right word which would express both reproof and commiseration was slow in coming, and at last she was forced to meet the difficulty by fleeing it. "I—I think I must be going in. I think I hear Geraldine. Sit still, Rosie dear." And then, her heart getting the better of her, she ended with: "Poor child! She's not herself today! Comfort her, Rosie!"

Rosie scarcely needed her mother's admonition. "There now, Janet dear, don't cry! Your mother's going to be all right—I know she is! She's been sick before and got over it."

Janet was not a person of tears. She swallowed her sobs now and slowly dried her eyes. "I'm sorry I used such strong language, Rosie, honest I am. And before your mother, too! You've got to excuse me. I know it wasn't ladylike."

"That's all right, Janet. You really didn't mean it."

"Yes, I did mean it," Janet declared truthfully. "If you only knew it, Rosie, there are lots of times

I don't feel a bit ladylike! I often use cuss words inside to myself. Don't you?"

No, most emphatically, Rosie did not! She was saved, however, the necessity of having to acknowledge so embarrassing an evidence of feminine weakness by Janet's further pronouncement:

"I tell you what, Rosie, when you come to a place where you want to smash things up, a good big cuss word just helps an awful lot! Don't you think so?"

Rosie cleared her throat a little nervously. "Yes, Janet, I suppose it does."

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"You bet it does! And what's more, women have got just as much right to use it as men, haven't they?"

Rosie wanted to cry out: "I don't think they want to! I know I don't!" but, under Janet's fiery glance, the words that actually spoke themselves were: "Yes, of—of course they have."

With the hearty agreement of every one present, there was no more to be said on that subject. Janet turned to another.

"Rosie, will you do something for me? Come and stay all night with me. I'll be so lonely I don't know what I'll do."

Rosie's heart sank. If she spent the night with Janet, she'd have no chance to talk to George Riley, for she'd be gone long before he got home. Besides, there was Dave McFadden, and the thought of sleeping near him was almost terrifying.

"But, Janet dear, how about your father?"

"Oh, I suppose he'll come in soused as usual. But you won't be bothered. I'll get him off to bed before you come and he'll be safe till morning. Please say you'll come, Rosie. I need you, honest I do."

That was true: Janet did need her. George Riley would have to wait.

"All right, Janet. I'll come."

"Thanks, Rosie. I knew you would." Janet paused. "And, Rosie, do you think you could lend me a quarter? I've got to have some money for breakfast. Mother had a dollar in her pocket but I forgot about it at the hospital."

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"I haven't a cent, Janet, but I'll raise a quarter somewhere, from Terry or from dad, and I'll bring it with me tonight."

Janet stood up to go. "Come about eight o'clock, Rosie."

Rosie looked at her friend compassionately. "Why don't you stay here for supper?"

Janet shook her head. "I'd like to but I don't think I'd better. He probably won't come home, but he might come and I better be on hand."

Janet started off slowly and reluctantly. Twice she turned back a face so woebegone and desolate that it went to Rosie's heart and, after a few moments, sent her flying for comfort to her mother's ample bosom.

Mrs. O'Brien gathered her in as if were the most natural thing in the world. "What is it, Rosie darlint? What's troublin' you?"

"Ma," she sobbed, "you're well, aren't you?"

"Me, Rosie dear, am I well, do you say?" Mrs. O'Brien looked into Rosie's tearful eyes in astonishment.

"Yes, Ma, you! I want you to be well—always—all the time! You see, Ma, Janet's poor mother \_\_\_"

"Ah, and is it that that's troublin' you?" Mrs. O'Brien crooned, rocking Rosie from side to side as though she were Geraldine. "Don't you be worryin' your little head about your poor ma. I'm fine and well, thank God, and your poor da is well, and Terry's well, and Jackie's well, and poor wee Geraldine is well, and dear Ellen's well, and we're all—"

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"Ellen!" snorted Rosie, her tears abruptly ceasing to flow and her body drawing itself away from her mother's embrace.

"Dear Ellen's well, too," Mrs. O'Brien in all innocence repeated.

"Oh, I know she's well all right!" Rosie declared in tones which even her mother recognised as sarcastic.

"Why, Rosie," Mrs. O'Brien began, "I'm surprised—"

But Rosie, without waiting to hear the end of her mother's reproach, marched resolutely off with all the dignity of a high chin and a stiff military gait.

## THE CASE OF DAVE McFADDEN

PROMPTLY at eight o'clock Rosie reached the tenement where the McFaddens lived. Janet was on the front steps waiting for her.

"Shall we sit out here awhile?" Janet said, making place for Rosie beside herself.

Rosie hesitated a moment. "Is your father home?"

"Yes. He came in an hour ago. I got him off to bed as soon as I could. He's asleep now."

"Are—are you sure he won't wake up and make trouble?"

Janet laughed. "Yes, I'm sure. We won't hear anything from him till morning except snorts and groans. I guess I know."

On the steps of the neighbouring tenements there were groups of people laughing, talking, wrangling. The electric street lamps cast great patches of quivering jumping light and heavy masses of deep pulsating shadow. Janet and Rosie, seated alone, were near enough their neighbours not to feel cut off from the outside world and yet, in the seclusion of a dark shadow, far enough away to talk freely on the subject uppermost in their thoughts.

"You've never heard me say anything about my father before, Rosie, you know you haven't." Janet paused to sigh. "Mother never has, either. We've both always let on that he's all right and we've covered him up and lied about him and done everything we could to keep people from knowing how he really treats us. If this hadn't happened to mother, I wouldn't be talking yet. Say, Rosie, ain't women fools? That's the way they always act about their own men folks. They're willing to shoot any other man for nothing at all, but they let on that their own men are just angels. You know—the way I've always done about dad. But, since today, seems like I don't care any more. And I've made up my mind to one thing: he's going to hear the truth from me tomorrow morning if he kills me for it."

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"Janet!" Rosie did not relish at all the thought of being present at a family conference of so private a nature.

"Yes, and you're going to hear it, too, Rosie. If we were alone, he might pay attention or he might not. But with an outsider hearing things he'll know quick enough that I mean business."

"Janet, I don't know how you can talk that way. He's your father, you know."

Janet nodded grimly. "Yes, he's my father all right. You know it and I know it, but he seems to have forgotten it. I'll remind him of it tomorrow."

Rosie reached out a little timidly. "I don't like to interfere, Janet, but it seems to me you're only making things harder for yourself. Don't you know it makes you kind o' sick inside to let yourself get so mad at any one?"

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Janet sighed wearily. "Yes, I suppose it does, but I've been that way so long I don't know how it feels to be any other way."

Presently Rosie said: "Tell me, Janet, has he always boozed like this?"

Janet shook her head. "No, not always. I can remember when things were different. I was a pretty big kid, too. We had a little house like yours and good furniture. You know he's a fine machinist and makes good money. He used to make four dollars a day. He can always get work yet but he don't keep it like he used to."

"And didn't he booze then, Janet?"

"Yes, a little but not very much. Ma says he'd come home full maybe once a month and smash things around, but after that he'd sober up and be all right for a long time. Oh, we were comfortable then and ma and me had good clothes and if ma didn't feel very well she'd hire some one to do the washing. I remember I had a pretty jumping rope and a big ball. It wasn't more than five or six years ago. And look at us now!"

Rosie sighed sympathetically. "I wonder what it was that started him that way?"

Janet was able to tell. "You know, Rosie, that's a funny thing. Miss Harris from the Settlement was in here one day asking ma and I heard what ma said. Dad fell and broke a leg and was laid up for a long time. Then they found it hadn't been set right and they broke it over again. So that kept him out of work ever so many more weeks. They had always been spenders, both of them, and they hadn't so very much money put by, so, just to keep things together while dad was idle, ma began going out to work. She's a fine cleaner and laundress, so of course she could always get good places. Then, after dad got well, she kept on working because they were in debt and then—I don't know how it happened—the first thing ma knew dad was drinking up his money and

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she's been working ever since. He used to pay the rent but he don't even do that any more."

Janet talked on as she had never talked before. Not much of what she said was new to Rosie, for the private life of the poor is lived in public, and Mrs. Finnegan has no need to explain to the neighbours the little commotion that took place in her rooms the night before, since the neighbours have all along known as much about it as herself. What Rosie had not known before was Janet's real attitude toward her father. Janet's likes had always seemed to Rosie a little fearsome in their intensity; her hate, as Rosie saw it now, was appalling. Compared to Janet's feelings, Rosie's own appeared childish, almost babyish. If brought to trial, she would, no doubt, have fought for them, but like a kitten rather than a tiger. In Janet the tiger was already well grown.

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Listening to Janet, Rosie shuddered. "I wish you wouldn't talk that way, Janet. It's kind of murderous!"

"Murderous?" Janet repeated. "What if it is? That's just how I feel sometimes. Right now when I think of ma lying there in the hospital, for two cents I'd go upstairs and choke him to death! What would it matter, anyway, if he never woke up? Just one less drunkard in the world—that's all. I guess there'd be plenty enough of them left."

Rosie held out imploring hands. "Janet, if you keep on talking like that I'll have to go home! I'll be too scared to sleep with you!"

Janet was contrite. "Aw, now, Rosie, don't say that. I'm only talking, and I won't even talk any more tonight. Anyhow, it's time for bed."

The McFadden home consisted of two rooms: a front living room and a small back bedroom. The living room was everything its name implied: it had in it sink, wash-tub, stove, eating table, and the bed where Janet and her mother slept. The little back room, lighted and ventilated from a shaft, was where Dave slept.

The sound of him and the smell of him filled both rooms and seemed to rush out into the hallway as Janet and Rosie pushed open the door.

"Ugh!" Rosie gasped, and Janet, who had struck a match and was reaching for a candle, paused to say, over her shoulder: "If you want me to, I'll shut his door."

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Rosie would have liked nothing better but a humanitarian consideration restrained her. "Wouldn't he smother in there with the door shut?"

"Maybe he would."

Janet spoke so indifferently that Rosie felt that she herself must bear the whole burden of responsibility.

"Guess you had better leave it as it is, Janet. I suppose I'll be able to stand it once I get used to it."

Rosie said this, but in her own mind she was perfectly sure she could never sleep in such an atmosphere. She repeated this to herself many times and very emphatically, while she was undressing and afterwards when she was in bed.

"If you're careful," Janet instructed her, "and lie over just a little bit near the edge, you won't hit the broken spring. Now good-night, dear, and sleep tight."

Sleep tight, indeed, with that brute in there snorting like an engine and one's back nearly broken in two stretching over sharp peaks and yawning precipices! My! what would Rosie not have given to be at home in her own bed! Not that her own bed was any marvel of comfort. It was not. But it was her own—that was the great thing. People like their own things—their own beds, their own homes, their own families. How Rosie loved hers! There was her father for whom her heart overflowed in a sudden gush of tenderness. Jamie O'Brien was so quiet and unobtrusive that Rosie often forgot him. It needed the contrast of a Dave McFadden to awaken in her a realization of his gentle worth. And, if you only knew it, there wasn't a more generous-hearted soul on earth than Maggie O'Brien. And where was there a prettier or a sweeter baby than Geraldine? And Jackie was a nice kid, too. He was! And Terry— Terry's nobility of character could only be expressed orally with a sigh, graphically with a dash.... Of course there was Ellen.... I suppose every family has to have at least one disagreeable member.... Wouldn't it be a great idea if all families just bunched together their disagreeable members and sent 'em off somewhere alone where they wouldn't be of any further nuisance? To the Great American Desert, for instance! To such a scheme Rosie would gladly contribute Ellen and Janet might contribute her father. The longer Rosie considered the plan, the more sensible it seemed to her. She was surprised she hadn't thought of it sooner. She would discuss it with Janet in the morning.... Yes, morning—morning. Then dream and waking flowed together and she felt Janet patting her arm and she heard Janet's voice saying, "Morning! It's morning, Rosie! Wake up!"

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Rosie opened her eyes with a pop. "Why, I've been asleep, haven't I?"

"I should think you had!" Janet told her. "You've been laughing and talking to yourself to beat the band. It's time to get up now. I want you to go to the grocery and, while you're out, I'll get him up."

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## JANET TO HER OWN FATHER

WHEN Rosie got back from the grocery, Dave McFadden was washing his face at the sink. He paid no attention to Rosie and, in fact, seemed not to see her until he sat down to breakfast. Then he looked at her in surprise.

"Why, hello, Rosie! Where did you come from?"

He was a large powerfully built man, dark, with sombre cavernous eyes and a gaunt face. His voice was not unkind nor was his glance.

Rosie spoke to him politely: "Good-morning, Mr. McFadden."

"Rosie's been here all night," Janet announced.

"All night!" Dave looked around a little startled. "Where's your mother?"

"My mother?" Janet spoke indifferently. "Oh, she's at the hospital. She's been there since yesterday morning. I tried to tell you about her last night."

Dave put down his coffee cup heavily. "What's the matter with her?"

"The doctor said it was overwork and worry."

"Overwork and worry! What are you talking about? They don't put people in the hospital for overwork and worry!" Dave spoke with a rising irritation. "Can't you tell me something that's got some sense to it?"

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Janet answered casually as though relating an adventure that in no way touched herself. "I can tell you the whole thing if you want to hear it. We were on the street going to Mrs. Lamont's for the washing when suddenly ma jumped and her hands went up and she shook, and I looked where she was looking because I thought there must be a snake or something on the sidewalk. Then, before I knew what was happening, she screamed and fell and her eyes began rolling and she bit with her mouth until her lips were all bloody and her head jerked around and—and—it was awful!" With a sob in which there was left no pretence of indifference, Janet put her hands before her face to shut out the horror of the scene.

The details were as new to Rosie as to Dave. Janet had not even hinted that it was *this* which had happened to her mother.

Dave McFadden breathed heavily. "Then what?"

Janet took her hands from her face and, with a fresh assumption of indifference, continued: "Oh, a crowd gathered, of course, and after while a policeman came, and then the ambulance. And while we were in the ambulance she—had another. And when we got to the hospital—another. It was awful!" Janet dropped her head on the table and sobbed.

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"Well?" demanded Dave gruffly.

Janet stifled her sobs. "They undressed her and put her to bed and gave her something and she went to sleep. Then the doctor took me into another room and wrote down what he said was a history of ma's case and he asked me questions about everything."

Dave McFadden's sombre gaze wandered off unhappily about the room. "What did you tell him?"

Janet's answer came a little slowly: "I told him everything."

Dave looked at her sharply. "Tell me what you told him!"

"All right. I'll tell you." There was a hint of unsteadiness in Janet's voice but no sign of wavering in her manner. Her eyes stared across at her father as sombre almost as his own. "He said from the looks of her he thought ma was all run down from overwork and worry. I told him she was. Then he asked me why and I told him why.... I told him my father made good money but boozed every cent. I told him my mother had to support herself and me and even had to feed my father. I told him that when my father was sober he was cross and grouchy but he didn't hurt us and that, when he came home drunk, he'd kick us or beat us or do anything he could to hurt us."

With a roar like the roar of an angry animal, Dave McFadden reached across the table and clutched Janet roughly by the shoulder. "You told him that, you—you little skunk!"

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His fury, instead of cowering Janet, roused her to like fury.

"Yes!" she shouted shrilly. "That's exactly what I told him and it's exactly what I'm going to tell everybody! I'm never going to tell another lie about you, Dave McFadden! Do you hear me? Never!"

At the unexpectedness of her attack, Dave's anger and strength seemed to flow from him like water. His clutch relaxed; he fell back weakly into his chair. For a moment confusion covered him utterly. Then he tried to speak and at last succeeded in voicing that ancient reproach with which unworthy parenthood has ever sought to beguile the just reproof of outraged offspring: "And is this the way you talk to your own father? Your—own—father!" Had he been a little drunk, he would have wept. As it was, even to himself, his words seemed not to ring very true.

Janet regarded him scornfully. "Yes, that's exactly the way I talk to my own father!" She paused and her eyes blazed anew. "And there's one thing, Dave McFadden, that I want to tell you." She stood up from the table and walked around to her father's place. "When you come in sober, as cross as a bear and without a word in your mouth for any one, ma and me hustle about to make you comfortable and don't even talk to each other for fear of riling you. Yes, we're so thankful you're not drunk that we crawl around like two little dogs just waiting to lick your hand and tell you how good you are. Then, when you come home drunk, wanting to kill some one, we do our best to coax you in here to keep you from getting mixed up with the neighbours. We're terribly careful to save the neighbours, and why? So's you won't get arrested. But do we ever save ourselves? There's never a time when I'm not black and blue all over with the bruises you give me—kicking me and pinching me and knocking me down."

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In his senses Dave McFadden was not an unkind man, but most of the time he was not in his senses. Janet's tirade now seemed to be affecting him much as cheap whiskey did. He staggered to his feet and raised threatening hands.

"You little slut! If you don't shut up, I—I'll choke you!"

But Janet was far past any intimidation. She stood her ground calmly. "All right! Go ahead and choke! The thing I've made up my mind to tell you, Dave McFadden, is this: I'll never again lick your boots when you're sober nor run from you when you're drunk. Kill me now if you want to! Go on! You've probably killed ma and if she's lying there in the hospital dead this minute, I wish you would kill me! Then you could go drown yourself and that would be the end of all of us!"

Dave McFadden groaned. "For God's sake," he implored, "can't you let up on me?"

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Janet looked at him steadily. "Have you ever let up on us?"

He stared about helplessly and asked, with the querulousness, almost, of a child: "What is it you want me to do? Do you want me to go to the hospital to see her?"

Janet laughed drearily. "They wouldn't let you in. I asked the doctor did he want you to come and he said, no, the sight of you would probably give her another attack."

Dave shuffled uneasily. "Then I suppose I might as well go to work."

"Yes," Janet agreed, "you might as well go to work. But before you go, will you please give me a quarter? I borrowed a quarter from Rosie to buy your breakfast."

Dave put his hand in his pocket and found a quarter. He flipped it across the table. "Here's your money, Rosie."

"And if you want me to get any supper for you," Janet went on, "you'll have to give me some money, too."

Dave hesitated. He was not accustomed to paying the household expenses. Before he realized what he was saying, he asked: "Hasn't your mother any money?" Under the instant fire of Janet's scorn, he saw his mistake and reddened with shame.

"Yes," Janet told him grimly, "she's got one dollar and I'll see you starve to death before I touch one cent of it for you! If you want any supper, you pay for it yourself; and you'll pay for mine, too, if I get any. If I don't get any, it won't be the first time."

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Dave slowly emptied his pocket. He had a two-dollar bill, a fifty-cent piece, and some small change. "Here," he said, offering Janet the bill and the fifty-cent piece. "Will that suit you?"

Janet took the money but refused to be placated. "It ain't what will suit me or won't suit me. You know as well as I do what's fair and square, and that's all there is to it. And while we're on money," she continued, "I might as well tell you if you don't pay five dollars on the rent we'll be dispossessed next Monday. On account of ma being sick so much lately we've dropped behind four weeks and the agent won't wait any longer."

Dave swallowed hard. "This is all I got till Saturday."

"Are you sure you'll have any more on Saturday?"

Dave looked hurt. "Won't I have a whole week's wages?"

"I don't know." Janet spoke without any feeling as one merely stating a fact. "Most weeks, you know, you're in debt to the saloon, and when you pay up there on Saturday afternoon you haven't much left by night."

Dave smothered an oath. It was plain that he thought he had done a very handsome thing in passing over the greater part of his money. It was also plain that he had expected a grateful "Thank you." And what did he feel he was receiving? An insult! He looked at Janet in sullen

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resentment. "You're a nice one, you are, talking that way to your own father! I tell you one thing, though: you wouldn't talk that way if your mother was around. She's got a heart, she has! All you've got is a turnip!"

At mention of her mother, Janet choked a little. "My mother don't think my heart's a turnip and Rosie don't, either. All I've got to say is, if it looks like a turnip to you, it's because you've changed it into one yourself."

To this Dave made no answer. Without further words he could better preserve the expression of grieved and unappreciated parenthood. Whatever he may have done or may not have done in the past, just now he had been noble and generous. And would his own child acknowledge this? No! He bore her no grudge; his face very plainly said so; but he was hurt, deeply hurt. Under cover of the hurt, he opened the door quietly and made his escape.

In Janet the fires of indignation flickered and went out, leaving her cold and lifeless. She threw herself into a chair and folded her hands.

"You certainly did give it to him straight, Janet!" Rosie spoke in tones of deep admiration.

Janet laughed scornfully. "Give it to him straight! Oh, yes, I gave it to him straight all right!" She shivered and clenched her hands. "I can talk! That's where we come in strong. Take the women in this tenement and they've all got tongues as sharp as ice-picks. Any one of them can talk a man to death. But what does it all amount to? Nothing! I tell you, Rosie, they've got the bulge on us, for, as soon as we make things hot for them, all they've got to do is clear out!" Janet sighed unhappily. "Then they pay us back by not coming home and when they get injured or pulled in it all comes out that it's our fault because we haven't made home pleasant for them. Huh! They always make it so awful pleasant for us, don't they?"

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Rosie felt helpless and uncomfortable. Her own life had problems of its own but, compared to Janet's, how trivial they seemed, how inconsequential. And, by a like comparison, how inviting her own home suddenly appeared. She thought of it, ordinarily, as an overcrowded untidy little house where everybody was under every one else's feet. Not so this morning. This morning it was home as home should be, the centre of a very real family life supported by a father's industry and a mother's devotion. They were poor, of course, but not overwhelmingly so, for they had enough to eat and enough to wear. And, best of all, they loved each other. In the past Rosie had not always known this, but she knew it now. They loved each other and, without thinking anything about it, they were ready to stand by each other. Beneath all family discord there was a harmony, a family harmony, the burden of which was: all for one and one for all. A wave of homesickness swept over Rosie. She wanted to be off without the loss of another moment. Her hands reached out eagerly for the many tasks, the dear, the wearying tasks that were awaiting them.

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"Well, Janet, I'm sorry, but I think I must go. You know Geraldine has to have her bath and I've got to go marketing. If you hurry, though, I'll help with the dishes first."

"No," Janet said. "You run along if you have to. I can do the dishes alone."

Rosie paused a moment longer. "You know if you want to you can come and have dinner with us, Janet."

Janet shook her head. "Thanks, but I won't have time. I've got to go to all of mother's customers and tell them she's sick, and I go to the hospital early in the afternoon."

"Then when will I see you?"

"I don't know unless you come and sleep with me again tonight."

"I don't see how I can, Janet." At that moment the thought of spending another night away from her beloved family was more than Rosie could bear. "You know, Janet, I've got so many things to do at home. Geraldine needs me all the time and so does ma and——"

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"Yes, yes, Rosie, I understand. And I don't blame you one bit for liking it better at home."

"I didn't mean that at all!" Rosie declared; "honest I didn't!"

"That's all right," Janet assured her. "I like it better over at your house myself. It was good of you coming last night. I was kind o' scared last night and I didn't want to be alone with him."

Rosie was concerned. "You won't be scared tonight, will you?"

"Do you mean of him?"

Rosie nodded.

"No. And what's more, Rosie, I don't believe I'll ever again be scared of him. He's not going to bother me any more. Couldn't you see that this morning?... Funny thing, Rosie: I used to think if only I wasn't afraid of him I'd be perfectly happy and now, when I'm not afraid of him any longer and when he'll probably never touch me again, I don't seem to care much."

Rosie shook her head emphatically. "Well, I tell you one thing, Janet McFadden: I care. I couldn't go to sleep tonight if I thought you were here alone getting beaten up."

Janet looked at her friend affectionately. "You needn't worry about me. I'll be all right. Good-bye, Rosie dear, and thanks."

"Good-bye, Janet, and come when you can."

From the speed with which Rosie hurried home, it would never have been guessed that she was merely returning to a round of endless duties and petty worries. Her eyes shone, her little woman face was all aglow with the joyous eagerness of one whose course was leading straight to happiness.

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## CHAPTER XXXI

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### DANNY'S SUGGESTION

MRS. O'Brien received her daughter with open arms.

"Ah, Rosie dear, I'm glad to see you! And I can't tell you the fuss they've all been making at your absence.... Yes, Geraldine darlint, sister Rosie's come back at last."

Rosie took the baby and hugged and kissed her as though she had not seen her for weeks. "And are you glad to see Rosie?" she crooned.

"She is that!" Mrs. O'Brien declared. "And himself, Rosie, was complainin' the whole evening about your not being here. And Terry, too, he kept askin' where you were. And Jarge Riley, Rosie! Why, Jarge is fairly lost without you! He was in early this morning and just now when I was startin' to get him his breakfast, he stopped me. And what for, do you think? He wanted to wait to see if you wouldn't be coming back. Why, Rosie, I do believe that b'y thinks that no one can boil coffee or fry eggs equal to yourself!"

Rosie glowed all over. "Ma, is he really waiting for me?... Here, Geraldine dear, you go to ma for a few minutes. Rosie's got to get Jarge Riley's breakfast. I'll be back soon, won't I, Ma?"

"And, Rosie dear, before you go, such a bit of news as I have: Ellen's got a new job! They sent for her from the college. Now I do say it's a fine compliment for any girl to be sent for like that. Ah, they know the stuff that's in Ellen! As I says to her last night——"

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"Tell me the rest some other time," Rosie begged. "You know Jarge is waiting."

"To be sure he is," Mrs. O'Brien agreed. "He's in his room. Give him a call as you go by."

In answer to her summons George appeared at once, collarless and in shirtsleeves with the drowsiness of an interrupted nap in his eyes. He beamed on Rosie affectionately.

"I thought you'd be coming."

"It was awful good of you waiting for me, Jarge."

"Good—nuthin'! Guess I know who can cook in this house!"

Conscious worth need not be offensive. Rosie answered modestly: "Oh, I cook much better than I used to, Jarge. I learned ever so much from your mother. I know how to make pie now. We used to have pie every day in the country."

"I know." George sighed pathetically.

Rosie was all sympathy. "I'll make you a pie this week, honest I will. Which would you rather have, rhubarb or apple?"

George weighed the choice while Rosie set out his breakfast.

"Guess you might make it rhubarb this time," he decided at last; "and apple next time."

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"Now then," Rosie said, pouring his coffee, "you eat and I'll sit down and talk to you. I wanted to talk to you last night, but you know I had to go off with poor Janet."

George looked at her seriously. "I don't like your staying over there all night. I don't think it's safe. Dave's all right when he's sober, but they say he ain't sober much nowadays."

"It was all right last night, Jarge. Janet had him in bed and asleep before I got there."

"Well, even so...." George grumbled on.

"H'm," Rosie remarked a little pointedly. "Er—do you remember, Jarge, what I was going to talk to you about last night?"

George looked at her inquiringly. "Was it anything special?"

"Don't you remember what you asked me to ask Danny Agin?"

"I didn't know I asked you to ask him anything." George spoke in candid surprise.

"Oh, Jarge, what a poor memory you've got!" Rosie shook her head despairingly. "You told me what a mess you had made of things with Ellen and you asked my advice about what you ought to do and told me to talk it over with Danny Agin. Now do you remember?"

George did not seem to remember things in just the order that Rosie gave them, but he was gallant enough not to say so and, furthermore, to show his acceptance of her version by an interested: "Oh, is that what you mean?"

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Rosie leaned toward him eagerly. "Don't you want to hear what Danny said?"

"Sure I do."

"Well, Danny and me went over things very carefully and I agree with Danny and Danny agrees with me. So, if you've got any sense, you'll do just exactly what we tell you to."

George looked a little dubious. "Don't know as I'm so awful strong on sense. Shoot away, though. I'd like to hear what you want me to do."

Rosie began impressively: "Danny says that the mistake you're making is not going out and getting another girl. Ellen's so sure of you that of course she don't take the least interest in you. All she's got to do is crook her little finger and you're Johnny-on-the-spot. Now if you were to get another girl and treat her real nice, Ellen wouldn't be long in taking notice. That's the way girls are." Rosie wagged her head knowingly.

George dropped his knife. "Aw, shucks! Is that all you got to say?"

Rosie's manner turned severe. "Now, Jarge Riley, you needn't say, 'Aw, shucks!' What's more, I guess Danny Agin and me together have got more sense than you have any day and we don't think it's shucks! Now you listen to what I say and maybe you'll learn something."

But George still seemed unwilling to learn. "Aw, what do I want to go chasing girls for? I don't like 'em, and besides, 'tain't nuthin' but a tomfool waste of time and money!"

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Rosie was scornful. "Is it because you're afraid of spending a cent?"

George met the charge calmly. "I wouldn't be afraid to spend all I make on the right girl, but with all the places I got to put money, just tell me, please, what's the sense of my throwing it away on some girl I don't care beans about?"

"So's to get a chance at the girl you do care beans about!" Rosie was emphatic. "Now I tell you one thing Jarge Riley: I don't think much of Ellen and I think it would be a good deal better for you if she never would look at you, but you're in love with her and you think you've got to have her, and I've promised you I'd help you. Now: Are you going to be sensible or aren't you?"

George refused to commit himself. Instead he asked: "How much do you reckon this fool scheme would cost a fellow?"

Rosie was ready with a detailed estimate. "It would come to from five to thirty cents every day."

"Every day!" George was fairly outraged at the suggestion. "Do you mean to say you've got the cheek to expect me to go sporting some fool girl every day?"

Rosie was firm. "That's exactly what I mean. I suppose you think the way to make love to a girl is to give her an ice-cream soda once a month. Well, it just ain't!"

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George continued obstinate. "I'm not saying I know how to make love to a girl because I don't and, what's more, I don't care. But I'll be blamed if I'm willing to do more than one ice-cream soda a month for any girl alive!"

Rosie caught him up sharply: "Not even for Ellen?"

"Ellen! Ellen's different! I'd like to do something for her every day of her life."

"H'm! What, for instance?"

"Well, I ain't got much money, so I can't do very big things, but I'd like to take her to the movies or on a street-car ride or buy her some peanuts or candy or all kinds o' little things like that. I know they ain't much in themselves, but if a fellow does them all the time, it seems to me a girl ought to know that he's thinking about her a good deal."

"Oh, Jarge, you're such a child!" Rosie smiled on him in womanly amusement. "First you say you don't know how to make love and then you tell just exactly how to do it! Now listen to me: The way to make love to any girl is to treat her just like you'd like to treat Ellen. If anything on earth is going to make Ellen wake up, it'll be just that. And the very things you know how to do are the very things I was going to tell you to do! A bag of peanuts is plenty for a walk and that's only five cents. Then a night when you go to the movies would be ten cents and, if it was hot, you'd probably want ten cents more for an ice-cream soda afterwards and that would make twenty cents. If you took a car ride and back, that would be twenty cents and a treat would be another ten cents. And you'd be getting your money's worth while you were doing it and perhaps you'd get Ellen, too."

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George was not very happy over the prospect. "As you've got everything else fixed up for me," he grumbled, "I suppose you've got the girl picked out, too. But I tell you one thing: I won't take after one of them Slattery girls, no matter what you say! If a fellow was to give one of them an ice-cream soda once, he'd have to marry her!"

Rosie put out a quieting hand. "Now, Jarge, don't be silly! You don't have to take one of the Slattery girls or any other girl that you don't want to take. You can just suit yourself and no one's going to say a word to you.... What kind of girl do you think you'd like? Do you want a blonde? Well, there's Aggie Kearney, she's a blonde."

"Aw, cut out Aggie Kearney! What do you think I am!"

"Well, maybe you want a brunette. What about Polly Russell?"

"Aw, cut out Polly Russell, too! You know what I think of that whole Russell bunch!"

Rosie looked a little hurt. "I must say, Jarge, even if you don't want Polly, you needn't snap my head off. Make your own choice! I'm sure there are enough girls right in this neighbourhood for any man to pick from. How do you like 'em? Do you like 'em fat or do you like 'em thin? Or maybe you don't want an American girl. Well, there are those Italians around the corner and down further there's that nest of Yiddish. All you've got to do is make up your mind about the kind of girl you want. There's plenty of all kinds."

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"Aw, get out! I tell you I don't want any of them!" By this time George had grown very red in the face and his voice had risen to a volume better suited to the outdoors than to a small room.

Rosie looked distressed. "You needn't talk so loud, Jarge. I'm not deaf.... I must say, though, after all the trouble I've taken, ... And poor old Danny Agin, too, ..." Rosie felt for her handkerchief.

"Well," George complained, "I don't see why you go offering me the worst old snags in town! Why don't you pick out a few nice ones?"

Rosie swallowed quite pathetically and blinked her eyes toward the ceiling. It has been observed that gazing fixedly at the ceiling very often conduces to inspiration. Apparently it was to be so with Rosie. The expression on her face slowly changed. She turned to George a little shyly.

"I was just wondering, Jarge, whether, maybe, I wouldn't do."

It must have been an inspiration! To attribute such a suggestion to anything else would be to credit Rosie with a depth of guile which only supreme feminine art could have compassed.

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George at least saw no guile. His face glowed. He actually shouted in an exuberance of relief. "Would you, Rosie? That'd be fine! We'd have a bully time together!" Then he paused. "But, Rosie, do you think you're big enough? I wouldn't think Ellen would get jealous of a little girl like you."

Rosie shook her head reassuringly. "Don't you worry about me. I'm plenty big enough. Besides, I don't count. You're the only one that counts. All you've got to do is make love to almost any one. If it's some one you like, then it'll be all the easier for you."

"Well, you know I like you all right, Rosie." The heartiness in George's tone was unmistakable. "I just love to spend money on you, Rosie! That's a great idea! Who thought of it, Danny or you?"

"Not Danny," Rosie answered promptly. "I thought of it myself—I mean," she added, "I thought of it just now. And you think it's a good idea, do you, Jarge?"

"Good? You bet your life I think it's good! Why, do you know, Rosie, when you began talking about Aggie Kearney and Polly Russell and those Ginneys around the corner, you made me plumb sick! I was ready to throw up the whole thing! I sure am glad you happened to think about yourself on time!"

"H'm!" murmured Rosie.

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"I mean it!" George insisted. "Let's start out tonight! What shall it be, a street-car ride or the movies?"

"Just as you say." Rosie, with sweet deference, put the whole thing into George's hands. "They're going to give the 'Two Orphans' at the Gem. Three reels. I saw the posters this morning. But you decide, Jarge. Whatever you say will be all right."

With a fine masterfulness George made the decision. "Well, I say movies for tonight." He reached across the table and patted Rosie's face. "Don't forget, kid, you're my girl now. And I tell you what: I'm going to show you a swell time!"

"It's just as you say, Jarge," Rosie murmured meekly.

## THE SUBSTITUTE LADY

ROSIE now entered upon a season of unparalleled gaiety. It was as if she were being rewarded for her generosity in thinking not of herself nor of her dislike for the object of George's fancy but only of George and of his happiness. It had been something of a struggle in the first place to advise a course of action which really might awaken in Ellen an appreciation of George's worth. Well, Rosie had advised it in all frankness and sincerity. That the putting into practice of this advice was working out to Rosie's own advantage is neither here nor there. If, in the campaign which she and Danny had planned, there had to be a substitute lady, why, as an after-thought, should not Rosie herself be that lady?

With George, Rosie never forgot that the relationship was a substitute one. Whenever he did something particularly lover-like, she would commend him as a teacher commends an apt pupil: "Jarge, you certainly are learning!" or, "I don't care what you say, Jarge, but if you were really making love to me and acted this beautiful, you sure could have me!"

In giving him hints about new attentions, she never made the matter personal. She would say, casually: "Now there's one thing a girl just loves, Jarge, and you ought to know it. It's to have her beau do unexpected things for her. I mean if he's used to giving her candy every night, it just tickles her to death to get up some morning and find a little package waiting for her. And if he goes to the trouble of sticking in a little note that says:

"My dearest Sweetheart, I couldn't wait until to-night to give you this...."

why, she just goes crazy about him. Whatever you do, Jarge, you mustn't forget that girls love to get notes all the time."

This particular instruction Rosie had frequently to repeat before George put it into execution. "Aw, now, Rosie," he used to plead, "you know perfectly well I ain't nuthin' of a letter-writer."

But Rosie was firm. "Do as you like," she would say, "but you can take it from me they ain't nuthin' like letters to make a girl sit up. You're practising on me, so you might as well practise right. Besides, it's not hard, really it's not. You don't have to be fancy. Why, I once heard a girl tell about a letter that she thought was great and all it said was, 'Say, kid, maybe I ain't crazy about you!' Now is it so awful hard to tell a girl you're crazy about her if you are? And that's all that any love-letter says anyhow."

"Seems to me," George grumbled one day, "for a kid you know an awful lot about love-letters."

"Of course I do," Rosie told him. "I know just the kind I'd like to get and that's the kind every girl would like to get."

All such discussions took place in the privacy of their pseudo-courtship. Who would have the heart to be censorious if, to the outside world, Rosie began to bear herself with something of the air of a lady who has a knight, of a girl who has a beau? It would have been beyond human nature for Rosie not to remark periodically to Janet McFadden: "What do you suppose it is that makes Jarge Riley treat me so kind? He just seems to lie awake nights to think up nice things to do."

Janet, being a true friend, would give a long sigh and murmur: "Don't it beat all, Rosie, the way some girls have beaux from the beginning and some don't. I suppose it runs in your family. You know Tom Sullivan is always asking about you. Whenever I go to Aunt Kitty's or when Tom comes to our house, the first thing he says is, 'How's Rosie O'Brien these days?' If only he wasn't so bashful, he'd invite you to the movies—you know he would. Of course he asks me because we're cousins, but I tell you one thing, Rosie: you're the one he'd like to take."

What Janet was always saying about Tom Sullivan's devotion to Rosie was perfectly true but, nevertheless, it was so generous in Janet to acknowledge it that Rosie was always ready to declare: "Aw, now, Janet, you needn't go jollyin' me like that! Tom likes you awful well and you know he does."

Rosie never talked to Janet about her own round of pleasure without stopping suddenly with a feeling of compunction and the quick question: "But, Janet dear, how are things going with you? How's your poor mother and is your father still on the water wagon?"

News about Mrs. McFadden was slow in changing. For days she lay in the hospital, weak and broken, not wishing to come back to life and without interest in herself or her husband or even her child. A case like this takes a long time, the nurse would tell Janet and Janet had only this to repeat in answer to Rosie's inquiries.

With Dave McFadden it was different. There the unexpected was happening. It was a week before Janet risked speaking of it. Then, in awe-struck tones, she confided to her friend.

"Say, Rosie, what do you think? He hasn't had a drink since the day you stayed all night with me. I don't know how long he can stand it. He looks awful and he makes me give him about ten cups of tea at night. I don't believe he sleeps more than half an hour." Not relief so much as a new kind of fear showed in Janet's face and sounded in her voice. "And, Rosie, he's just terrible to

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live with, because he never says a word.... Don't it beat all the way you long and long for a thing and then, when you get it, it turns out entirely different! There I used to suppose I'd be perfectly happy if only he'd stop boozing but now, when I wake up at night and hear him rolling around and groaning, why, do you know, Rosie, it scares me to death. It's just like he's fighting something that I can't see. And the worst is I can't do anything to help him but get up and make him some more tea."

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Both Rosie and Janet were too familiar with Dave's type to hail as a happy reformation those first days of struggle. They stood back and waited, grateful for each day won but as yet not at all confident of the morrow.

"He certainly is trying," Rosie would say, and Janet would repeat, a little dubiously, "Yes, he's trying."

A day came when she looked tenser and more breathless than usual. "What do you think, Rosie? He handed me over fifteen dollars this week and ten last week that I didn't tell you about. I didn't want to too soon. All he said was, 'You take care of this till your mother comes home.' I'm paying up the back rent and I've started a savings account at the Settlement."

Rosie's eyes opened wide. "Well now, Janet, he certainly does deserve credit!" As Janet made no comment, Rosie demanded: "Don't you think he does?"

Janet's answer was disconcerting. "Why does he deserve credit for doing what he ought to do?"

Rosie was a little hurt. "When a person does right, I don't see why you're so afraid of giving them a little credit."

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"Rosie O'Brien, you're just like all the women! Let a good-for-nothing drunk sober up for a day or two, and they all go saying, 'The poor fellow! Ain't he fine! Ain't he noble! He certainly does deserve credit!' But do you ever hear them giving any credit to the decent hard-working men who support their families every day of the year? I've never heard you say that your father deserved credit!"

This was rather startling and Rosie could only answer stiffly, though somewhat lamely: "My father's different!"

"I should think he was different! And when he hands over money which goes to support his own family, I see you and your mother and the rest of you falling down on your knees and saying: 'Oh, thank you, dear father! You are so noble!' Well, that's what you expect me to do to my old man and that's what he expects, too, because for a week or so he's been paying the bills he ought to pay. And when I don't say it I wish you'd see how injured he looks."

Rosie could not meet the logic of Janet's position, but logic is not everything in this life. "I don't care what you say, Janet," she persisted, "I don't think it would hurt you one bit to say 'Thank you' to him."

Janet started to answer again, then stopped with a laugh. "Tell you what, Rosie, I promise you this: I'll say 'Thank you' to him as soon as you say 'Thank you' to your father for the three meals you eat every day, for the clothes you wear, for the house you live in."

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It was Rosie's turn to flare up. "Janet McFadden, you're crazy! Haven't I a right to all those things? Don't I do my share of work in the family?"

"Yes, Rosie, you do and I'm not saying that you haven't every right to them. But why don't you see that I've got the same right? Don't I work as hard as you? And hasn't my poor mother worked harder than your mother has ever worked? My father's got out of the way of supporting us, so I'm not surprised that he thinks he's a wonder when he does it for a couple of days, but search me if I see why you should think so, too, when your father has always supported you without saying a word about it." Janet paused, then ended with a rush: "Oh, don't you see, it would choke me to say 'Thank you' to him with ma lying there in the hospital like a dead woman! Why hasn't he always done this? There's nothing he can do now to make up for all those years. It's too late! Even if she does get well, she'll never be the same. The nurse told me." Janet hid her face in her arm and dry gasping sobs began to shake her body.

"Aw, now, Janet, don't!" Rosie begged. "I see what you mean and I don't blame you—honest I don't."

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The issue that Janet had raised was a little beyond Rosie's understanding, but Rosie did realize that Janet was right. Janet's point of view often startled and dismayed her. As on this occasion she would always begin disputing it vehemently and end meekly accepting it.

If Rosie did not make Janet her confidante in regard to the attentions she was receiving from George, it was because the true inwardness of that affair was in the nature of a secret between her and Danny Agin. Rosie was tremendously fond of Janet but, after all, Janet was not her only friend. Danny Agin, too, had certain rights that must not be forgotten. Besides, it must be confessed, it was sweet to hear Janet's "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" over what seemed to be each new evidence of George's devotion.

Danny Agin was watching as keenly as Janet the little comedy which he himself had set in motion.

"So she looked at you like a black thunder-cloud, did she?" he had said, with a chuckle, when Rosie had related Ellen's surprise and involuntary chagrin at George's deflection.

"Yes," Rosie told him. "And, do you know, Danny, when she tried to guy Jarge, he was able for her. She called him a craddle-robber and he says: 'I'm not so sure of that. Let's see: I'm about six years older than Rosie. That means when she's eighteen I'll be twenty-four. That ain't so bad.' And oh, Danny," Rosie ended, "I wish you could have seen how mad Ellen was!"

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Danny laughed. "I do see her this minute!" He mused awhile, his eyes blinking rapidly. "It's this way, Rosie: in any case it's a fine arrangement for Jarge, for it has a sort of double-barrelled action. Maybe it'll bring Ellen around. That would suit him fine. But, by the same token, if it don't bring her around, it won't very much matter, for, before he knows what he's about, Jarge'll be wakin' up to the fact that he's havin' just as good a time with another girl as he'd ever be havin' with Ellen and, once he knows that, good-bye to Ellen and her tantrums!"

"Do you really think so, Danny?" Rosie put the question anxiously.

"Do I think so? I do. What else could I think with the sight I've had of all the lads I've ever known fallin' in love and most of them fallin' out again?"

As usual, Danny's words gave Rosie something to cogitate. "Are you perfectly sure, Danny, they do sometimes fall out again?"

Danny raised his right hand to heaven. "I'd be willin' to take me oath they do! In fact, Rosie darlint, it would shame me to tell you how often they do!"

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## CHAPTER XXXIII

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### ELLEN'S CAREER

DANNY was a wise old bird whose chirpings were well worth listening to. What he prophesied for George seemed likely enough of realization. The new affair, though confessedly pseudo, was cheering from the first. This was to be expected so long as Ellen, notwithstanding her scoffing, was a little miffed. Rosie saw, though, that, in spite of being miffed, Ellen was still perfectly sure that she did not want George for herself. The only feeling she seemed to have in the matter was annoyance that he should no longer be wanting her. At first Ellen was so outspoken in this annoyance that Rosie was able to whisper triumphantly: "You see, Jarge! Didn't I tell you!"

There were other things occurring just at this time which served to keep Ellen irritable and sensitive. Her experience in stenography was, throughout, unfortunate and was making her see in almost everything that happened a slight to herself. To Mrs. O'Brien's prolonged amazement, the heads of various firms continued their insulting treatment of Ellen, discharging her on the slightest provocation or no provocation whatever, and never giving the poor girl, so her mother declared, anything like a fair trial.

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"Now what I would like to know is this:" Mrs. O'Brien would begin in the evening as soon as Jamie, poor man, was quietly settled for his bedtime pipe; "how can they know what Ellen can do or what she can't do, never giving her a decent show? The last six places she's been at they've only kept her a day or two days at most. It's me own opinion they don't want a good stenographer. I believe they're jealous of her! I tell you, Jamie O'Brien, it's fair disgraceful, and if I was a man, which I'm thankful to say I ain't, I'd go down there and give them fellas a piece of my mind!"

To Ellen herself, Mrs. O'Brien was, as usual, both sympathetic and voluble. "Don't you mind what them fellas say to you, Ellen dear," she would advise at each fresh disappointment. "You've had as fine a schoolin' as any of them and there'll come a day when they'll all have to acknowledge it. And when they talk to you again about your spelling, you can tell them for me they're mighty smart if they're able to prove what's the right and what's the wrong way to spell a word nowadays. If I was you I wouldn't worry me head one minute about a thrifle like spelling. I'd just go ahead me own way and remember I was a lady and, take me word for it, some of these days you'll hit an office that is an office with fine men at the head of it, able to know good work when they see it and willin' to give credit for it!"

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Ellen shared to a great extent her mother's belief in her own ability, and she tried to share likewise Mrs. O'Brien's firm conviction that there was a deep-laid plot to keep her down. In her mother's presence it was easy enough to believe this, but Ellen was too quick-witted to deceive herself all the time and, as the days went by and her failure in stenography grew more and more apparent, she began to lose her air of aggressive confidence and to show in a new sullenness of manner the chagrin and the disappointment she was feeling.

There was no dearth of trial places, as the supply of offices in need of stenographers seemed to

be unlimited. So, in the matter of actual earnings, Ellen was doing pretty well. Indeed, her first experience was repeated more than once and she was overpaid in order to be got rid of more quickly. At such times she took the money greedily in spite of the attendant mortification. Mrs. O'Brien saw no cause for mortification but would declare complacently: "Ha, ha, the villians! 'Tis conscience money, no less, that they're paying you! They know they haven't given you a fair show! But don't you mind them, Ellen dear. The right office is comin' yet—you can depend on that!"

Mrs. O'Brien's faith was steadfast and at length had its reward. Ellen came home one evening flushed and triumphant. "Well," she announced, "I've struck it right at last!" Her eyes sparkled with renewed assurance. "No more running around for me, a day here and a day there! I'm fixed! Eight dollars a week to begin on and fifty cents advance every month!"

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"I'm not one bit surprised!" Mrs. O'Brien cried. "I knew just how it would be! Now tell us all about it!"

"It's a real estate office," Ellen explained; "Hawes & Cranch. Mr. Hawes is my man. I'm to take his dictation in the morning and get the work out in the afternoon and attend to his private phone. It's a big office. They've got two other stenographers and a book-keeper. By tomorrow Mr. Hawes is going to have my desk put into his room. He's an awful nice man. He says he never had any one who took his dictation better and he says I certainly do understand all about business punctuation."

"I'm sure you do!" Mrs. O'Brien agreed heartily.

"And I wasn't there more than a couple of hours when he said he knew I'd suit and the position was mine if I wanted it."

"Do you hear that!" Mrs. O'Brien gasped. "I'm not one bit surprised!"

"And he apologized for starting me so low. He said it was a rule in their office. He talked like I ought to be getting twenty a week easily."

"And so you ought!" Mrs. O'Brien declared. "And I must say, Ellen dear, if I'm any judge of men, this Mr. Hawes is a fine fella! Mind you're always respectful to him!"

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Ellen laughed. "He's not that kind of man at all! He's just as friendly as he can be."

For a moment her mother was anxious. "I hope, Ellen dear, he's not too friendly."

Ellen tossed her head. "Even if he was, I guess I know how to take care of myself!"

In Mrs. O'Brien confidence was restored. "Of course you do, Ellen dear. I trust you for that."

Terry looked at Ellen sharply. "Say, Sis, is this fellow married?"

"Er-a-not exactly," Ellen stammered. "I wasn't going to mention it, but since you ask me I might as well tell. They say he's divorced."

"Divorced!" That was a word to startle Mrs. O'Brien's soul. "You don't say so, Ellen! I'm sorry to hear it! I'm not so sure you ought to stay with him."

Ellen laughed. "Ma, you make me tired! Divorce is so common nowadays, it don't mean a thing! Besides, it wasn't his fault. Miss Kennedy, one of the other stenographers, told me so."

Mrs. O'Brien was plainly relieved. "I must say I'm glad to hear that. I suppose now she was one of them dressy, lazy, good-for-nuthin's that nearly drove the poor fella mad with her extravagance. There are such women and a lot of them!"

One of the first results of Ellen's new position was an utter indifference to George Riley and Rosie and to their little comedy. It was not so much that she intentionally ignored them as that she did not see them even when she looked at them—at any rate, did not see them any more than she would have seen two chairs that occupy so much space and are not to be stumbled over. There was one subject now and one only that filled her mind to the exclusion of all others. This was her new employer. She talked about him constantly, first as Mr. Hawes, then as Philip Hawes, and soon as Phil. It was "Phil this" and "Phil that" throughout breakfast and supper.

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In no one but her mother did Ellen arouse any great enthusiasm, but Mrs. O'Brien was a host in herself and in questions and ejaculations more than made up for the indifference of the others.

To his kindness to Ellen during office hours, Hawes was soon adding social attentions outside office hours, inviting her to places of amusement in the evening and taking her off on Sunday excursions.

"He is certainly a very kind-hearted gentleman," Mrs. O'Brien repeatedly declared; "and it would give me much pleasure to take him by the hand and tell him so."

This was a pleasure somewhat doubtful of realization as circumstances kept preventing the kind-hearted gentleman from making an actual appearance at the O'Brien home. He wanted to come; he was very anxious to meet Ellen's family; but he was a busy man and could not always do as he would like to do. Ellen had to explain this at length, for even Mrs. O'Brien, easy-going as she was, protested against an escort who hadn't time either to come for his lady or to bring her home.

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"I don't see why you can't understand!" Ellen would exclaim petulantly. "Now listen here: wouldn't it take him half an hour to come out here for me, and another half hour for us to get back to town, and another half hour for him to bring me home, and another half hour for him to get back to town himself? That'd be two whole hours. Now I say it would be a shame to make that poor man spend all that time on the cars just coming and going."

At first Mrs. O'Brien would insist: "But, Ellen dear, beaux always do that way! For me own part I don't think it's nice for you to be comin' home so late alone. You've never done it before. I don't mind you to be going downtown to meet him if he's a busy man, yet I must say, Ellen dear, ..."

But Ellen was expert at making her mother see reason and Mrs. O'Brien was soon explaining to George Riley or to any one who would listen: "I do like to see a girl considerate of a poor tired man, especially if he's a fine hard-workin' fella like this Mr. Hawes. So I says to Ellen, 'Ellen dear,' says I, 'it's all very well to be accepting the attentions of a nice gentleman, but remember,' says I, 'he's a tired man with a load of responsibility on his shoulders and he'd much better be resting than spending all his time on the street cars just coming and going. This is a safe neighborhood,' says I, 'and nowadays girls and women are always coming home alone.' Now I ask you truthfully, ain't that so?"

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It probably was; nevertheless the attitude of the rest of the family continued to be rather cold and skeptical. "Ain't it a great beau we got now?" Terry would remark facetiously. "Seems like he's afraid to show himself, though. Say, Sis, do you have to pay your own carfare?"

To Rosie's surprise, George Riley paid no heed to the newcomer. Rosie herself felt that Ellen's absorption in her employer marked very definitely the failure of Danny Agin's experiment. Ellen never had and never would care two straws about George Riley and now, with something else to occupy her mind, she had forgotten even the slight pique which Rosie's little affair had at first excited. Rosie wondered whether honesty required her to point this out to George. She tried to once or twice, but George was so slow at understanding what she was talking about that at last she desisted.

The truth was, George was having so good a time playing his and Rosie's little game that he was in a fair way of forgetting that it was a game. Not that he was falling in love with Rosie. Rosie was only a little girl of whom he was tremendously fond and to his northern mind, as to Rosie's, the idea that a man should fall in love with a little girl was a preposterous one. His affection for her was founded solidly on the approval of reason. It had not in it one bit of the wild unreason which characterized his feeling for Ellen. They were pals, he and Rosie, who understood and appreciated each other and who enjoyed going off on little larks together. Since these larks had become a regular thing, life for George had regained its normal zest, as it does for any man once fresh interests begin to occupy the leisure moments heretofore given up to a fruitless passion. A look, a word, would have awakened the old passion, but for the present no look was being given, no word spoken.

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So Rosie, seeing George happy, could only sigh, hoping it wasn't cheating on her part not to tell him the truth. Except for this scruple of conscience, she was very happy herself. Her little world was jogging comfortably along: Geraldine was well; for Janet McFadden life seemed to be brightening; and for Janet as well as Rosie the waning summer was affording many treats. Janet's cousin, Tom Sullivan, was making a good deal of money on summer jobs and was squandering his earnings lavishly on his two lady friends.

"Just think, Rosie," Janet announced one day, "Tom wants to give us another picnic! You know I've always told you how generous he is."

"I know he is," Rosie agreed. "Tom sure is nice. It wouldn't surprise me one bit if he grows up as nice as Jarge Riley. What's this new picnic, and when is it to be?"

"For Labour Day. He says he'll pay Jackie to take your papers and that you and me and him will all go downtown to the parade. After the parade we'll eat supper at a restaurant and after that we'll go to the movies." Janet paused, then concluded impressively: "He made two whole dollars last week and he's willing to blow in every cent of it on us!"

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"You don't say so!" Rosie shook her head and clucked her tongue in amazement as deep as Janet's own.

"You'll come, won't you, Rosie?"

Rosie hesitated. "I'll come if I can. I mean I will if Jarge Riley hasn't something on. If he's off on Labour Day afternoon, of course he'll want me and I'll have to be with him."

"Of course," Janet agreed. "But maybe he won't get off. I wonder how soon he'll know?"

"I'll ask him tonight," Rosie promised. "Let's see: today's Thursday and Labour Day's next Monday. I ought to be able to let Tom know early on Saturday."

"I think I'm going to be off," George told her that night in answer to her inquiry. "I switch around to a late run tomorrow night, but I won't know until tomorrow whether I'm going to keep it regular. What do you want to do tomorrow night? Ride down with me on my last trip? Then we'd stop and get a soda on the way home."

"Thank you, Jarge, I think that would be very nice. And you can write me a little note about

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Labour Day and hand it to me when I get on the car."

George's face fell. "Won't talking be good enough?"

"No, Jarge, it'll be better to write. You're doing beautifully in your letters but you must keep them up."

George sighed but murmured an obedient: "All right."

The next evening Rosie was at the corner in good time and, promptly to the minute, George's car came by. It was an open summer car with seats straight across and an outside running board. Rosie climbed into the last seat, which was so close to the rear platform where George stood that it was almost as good as having George beside her. When there were no other passengers on the same seat, George could lean in and chat sociably.

"Here's a letter for you," he announced, as Rosie settled herself. He gave her a little folded paper and at the same time slipped a dime into her hand with which, in all propriety, she was to pay her carfare.

"I'll answer your note tomorrow," Rosie said.

Duty called George to the front of the car and Rosie peeped hastily into his letter. "*My dear little Sweetheart,*" it ran; "*Say, what do you think? I'm off Labour Day afternoon, so we can go to the Parade. Say, kid, I'm just crazy about you. George.*"

So that settled the Tom Sullivan business. Rosie felt a little sorry about Tom because Tom did like her. It couldn't be helped, though, for a girl simply can't divide herself up into sections for all the men that want her. She would let Tom down as easily as possible. It might comfort him to take her to the movies. Rosie could easily manage that by suggesting a time when George Riley was busy.

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The car was pretty well filled on the down trip, so George had little time for chatting. Rosie was patient as she knew that, on the return trip, the car would be empty or nearly so.

"All out!" George cried at the end of the route, and everybody but Rosie meekly obeyed.

George was about to pull the bell, when Rosie called: "Wait, Jarge! There comes a girl!"

The girl was half running, half staggering, and George stepped off the car to help her on. As the light of the car fell on the girl's face, Rosie jumped to her feet, crying out in amazement: "Ellen!"

Yes, it was Ellen, but not an Ellen they had ever seen before—an Ellen with hat awry and trembling hands and a face red and swollen with weeping.

"George!" she sobbed hysterically, "is that you! I'm so glad! You'll take me home, won't you? I haven't got a cent of carfare!"

George helped her into the seat beside Rosie and started the car. Then he leaned in over Rosie and demanded:

"What's the matter, Ellen? What's happened?"

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## CHAPTER XXXIV

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### THE KIND-HEARTED GENTLEMAN

FOR several moments Ellen sobbed and shook without trying to speak. Then, instead of answering George's question, she turned solemnly to Rosie. "Oh, kid," she begged, "promise me you'll never have anything to do with a man like Philip Hawes!" There was an unexpected tenderness in her tone but this, far from touching Rosie, stirred up all the antagonism in her nature. Why, forsooth, should Ellen be giving her such advice? Was she the member of the family who was given to chasing men like Philip Hawes? Rosie sat up stiffly and turned her face straight ahead.

Upon George the effect of Ellen's words was different. He leaned farther in, his neck surging with blood, his little eyes growing round and fierce. "What do you mean, Ellen? Has that fellow been insulting you?"

Ellen was sobbing again and swaying herself back and forth. "Oh, George, I'm so humiliated I feel like I could never hold up my head again!"

George's strong fist was clenching and unclenching. "What did that fellow do to you?"

"It was my own fault!" Ellen wailed. "He was perfectly right: I knew what he was after all along. Any girl would know. But I was so sure I could hold my own all right. Oh, what fools girls are!" Ellen went off into another doleful wail. "Of course he had given hints before and I had always let

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on I didn't understand him. But tonight he came right out with it. He put it straight up to me and when I wouldn't, oh, I can't tell you the awful things he said!"

George breathed hard. "So he's that kind of a scoundrel, is he?"

"And, George," Ellen wept, "I'm not that kind of a girl! Honest I'm not! Am I, Rosie?"

Rosie, frozen and miserable, with a sickening realization of how things were going to end, was still looking straight ahead. She wanted to answer Ellen's question with a truthful, "I am sure I don't know what kind of a girl you are!" but something restrained her and she said nothing.

Ellen seemed hardly to expect an answer, for she went on immediately: "I've been a fool, George, an awful fool; I see that now; but I've always been straight—honest I have! You can ask everybody that knows me!"

George was breathing with difficulty. "I'd like to get at that Hawes fellow for about five minutes! Will he be in his office tomorrow, around noon?"

Ellen wrung protesting hands. "No, George, you won't do any such thing! I won't let you! You'll only get pulled in! Besides, he was right! Leastways, he was in some things! Of course I knew what he was always hinting about but honest, George, I didn't know the rest!"

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"What didn't you know?"

"I didn't know my work was so bad that he'd been getting it done over every day! I know I'm pretty poor at it. I know perfectly well why I was never able to keep a job. But he kept saying that I suited him just right and I was such a fool that I thought I did.... And, George, we were having supper at one of those sporty places out on the Island. I knew it wasn't a nice place, but I thought it was all right because I had an escort. And he kept talking louder and louder until the people at the other tables could hear and they began laughing and joking. Then some one shouted, 'Throw her out!' and I got so frightened I could hardly stand up. I don't know how I got away. And, George, I hadn't enough money in my bag for a ticket on the boat and some man gave me a dime...."

The car went on with scarcely a stop the whole way out. Occasionally the motorman looked back, inquisitive to know what the matter was but too far away to hear. Some time before they reached the end of the route, Ellen had finished her story. The recital relieved her overwrought feelings; her sobs quieted; her tears ceased. By the time they alighted from the car, her manner had regained its usual composure.

She and Rosie waited outside the office until George had made out his accounts and deposited his collections. Then all three started home.

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For half an hour Rosie had not spoken. Neither of the others knew this, for Ellen, of course, had been too engrossed in herself, and George too engrossed in her, to notice it. Rosie was with them but not of them. She walked beside them now close enough to touch them with her hand but feeling separated from them by worlds of space. Her heart was like a little lump of ice that hurt her every time it beat. She waited in a sort of frozen misery for what she felt sure was coming. At last it came.

"George," Ellen began. There was a note of soft pleading in her voice that Rosie had never heard before. "Oh, George, I wonder if you'll ever forgive me for the way I've been treating you?"

"Aw, go on!" George's words were gruff but their tone fairly trembled with joy.

"I mean it, George," Ellen went on. "I've been as many kinds of a fool as a girl can be and I'm so ashamed of myself that I can hardly talk."

"Aw, Ellen," George pleaded.

"And I've been horribly selfish, too, and I've imposed on ma and Rosie here until they both must hate me." Ellen paused but Rosie made no denial. "And I've treated you like a dog, George, making fun of you and insulting you and teasing you. And, George, of all the men I've ever known you're the only one that's clean and honest right straight through. I see that now."

Ellen began crying softly, making pathetic little noises that irritated Rosie beyond measure but were like to reduce George to a state of utter helplessness.

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"Aw, Ellen," he begged, "please don't talk that way!"

But Ellen wanted to talk that way. She insisted on talking that way. Her pride had been dragged in the dust but, by this time, she was finding that dust, besides being choking, is also warm and friendly and soothing. Enforced humiliation is bitter but, once accepted, how sweet it is, how comforting! Witness the saints and martyrs, and be not surprised that Ellen O'Brien finally acknowledged as true all the charges her late admirer had made. The fact was he had been too gentle with her! She was worse, far worse than even he had supposed. She didn't see how any one could ever again tolerate the mere sight of her!

"Oh, George, how you must hate me!" she murmured brokenly.

"Hate you!" George protested breathlessly. "Why, kid, I'm just crazy about you!"

Rosie, listening, caught her breath sharply. Her phrase, which she had laboured hard to teach

him! But where had he got the deep vibrating tone with which he spoke it? Rosie had never heard that before.

After a moment, Ellen quavered: "Even—even yet, George?"

"Even yet!" George cried in the same wonderful voice that sent little thrills up and down Rosie's back. "Why, Ellen girl, don't you know that ever since the first day I saw you you've been the onliest girl for me!"

His arm was around her now, straining her to him, and Rosie knew, but for her own presence, he would be kissing her.

"I—I don't see why, George."

"But it's so, Ellen, it's so!"

They walked on a few moments in silence. Then George began soberly: "Of course, Ellen, you know I'm only a farmer and you know you've always said you'd never live in the country."

"George, don't remind me of all the foolish things I've said! Please, don't! Why, if I could go to the country this minute, I'd go and never come back! I hate the city! I wish I'd never have to see it again!"

George gasped an incredulous, "Really, Ellen? Do you really mean it?"

"Yes, really!" Ellen declared vehemently and George, untroubled to account for this sudden revulsion of feeling, threw up his head with a joyous laugh.

When they reached home, George said to Ellen: "Don't you want to sit out here on the porch a little while?"

Nobody invited Rosie to stay. She hesitated a moment, then said primly: "Good-night, everybody."



She read it again by the light of the candle.

"Good-night," they chorused politely, as they might to any stranger.

Rosie started in, then turned back. "And, Jarge, I forgot to tell you about Monday afternoon. I'm sorry I can't go with you but Tom Sullivan invited me first."

"That so?" George said, and from his tone, Rosie knew that he didn't understand what she was talking about. Worse still, he wasn't interested enough to find out.

Rosie dragged herself slowly upstairs. In the bedroom, when she felt for matches, she discovered that her hand was still clutching the note which George had given her earlier in the evening. She read it again by the light of the candle. "... *Say, kid, I'm just crazy about you!*..." Jackie turned over in his sleep and Rosie hastily blew out the candle for fear he should open his eyes and see her tears.

She groped her way to bed in the dark and wept herself miserably to sleep.

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## CHAPTER XXXV

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### ELLEN MAKES AN ANNOUNCEMENT

THE next morning at breakfast Ellen declared herself. She addressed her mother, but what she had to say was for the whole family.

"I just want to tell you, Ma, I'm done with stenography forever. 'Tain't my line and I know it and I should have known it long ago. Now you needn't argue because that's all there is about it."

Mrs. O'Brien looked at Ellen blankly. "Why—why, Ellen dear," she stammered, "what's this I hear you saying?"

Ellen repeated her announcement slowly and distinctly.

"But, Ellen," Mrs. O'Brien protested, "how can you talk so and the beautiful way you've been getting on and the beautiful way Mr. Hawes has been treating you? And what will Mr. Hawes say—poor, kind-hearted gentleman that he is! Oh, Ellen dear, with your fine looks and your fine education I beg you not to throw it all away!"

Mrs. O'Brien mopped her eyes with her apron and pleaded on. It did not occur to her to ask the reason for Ellen's sudden decision. After all, sudden decisions were merely characteristic of Ellen. Terence, however, peered at his sister sharply.

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"Huh! Seems to me stenography was all right yesterday! What's happened to make you change your mind? Did that Hawes fellow say something to you last night at the Island?"

Ellen had decided that the family were not to know the details of the previous night's adventure and, before they came down in the morning, she had pledged Rosie to secrecy. Yet some sort of explanation had to be offered. She looked at Terry now with a candour that was new to her and that did much to win his support.

"Terry," she began slowly, with none of her usual aggressiveness, "you always thought my going to that business college and trying to do office work was foolish. You've said so all along. I didn't use to believe you were right but I do now. I'd never do decent office work in a hundred years. I'm sorry all the money you and dad had to put up and I'll pay you back if I can."

"Gee!" murmured Terry in astonishment, "you sure must have got some blowing up to make you feel that way about it!"

"Well, that's the way I do feel," Ellen said quietly.

"But, Ellen," Mrs. O'Brien wailed, "you don't mean it—I know you don't! Why, what'll you do if you throw up this fine position with Mr. Hawes? Nowadays a girl can't sit at home and do nothing! She's either got to work or get married." Mrs. O'Brien paused with a new idea which her own words suggested to her. "Is it—is it that you're getting married?"

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Ellen spoke quickly: "Ma, I expect to work and I'm going to work. But I'm going to do something I can do well."

"That you can do well!" echoed Mrs. O'Brien. "I don't rightly catch your meanin', Ellen. Here you've landed a fine position and your boss is a nice friendly gentleman and now you're turning your back on it all to take up something else! I don't understand you at all, at all! And to think," Mrs. O'Brien concluded brokenly, "of the skirts and shirtwaists that I've stayed up all hours of the night to iron for you, just to keep you lookin' sweet and clean down at that office!"

"Ma, I'm sorry to disappoint you—honest I am. But, don't you see, it's just this way: I've made a bad mistake and the sooner I get out of it the better it will be for me. What I ought to do is something I can do."

"Something you can do, indeed! And will you tell me, me lady, what is it you can do so much better than stenography?"

Ellen flushed but answered firmly: "I can trim hats."

"Trim hats!" screamed Mrs. O'Brien. "What's this ye're sayin'? Do you mean to tell me that



you're willing to be a milliner when you might be a stenographer? Why, anybody at all can go and be a milliner!"

"Anybody can't be a fine milliner. And you needn't think there isn't good money in millinery. The head of a big millinery department gets a couple of thousand a year!"

Mrs. O'Brien blinked her eyes. "Has some one been offering you that kind of a position?" Her tears ceased to flow. Once again she beamed on Ellen with all her old-time pride. "Ah, Ellen, you rogue, you're keeping something back! Come, tell me what's happened!"

Ellen sighed helplessly. "Ma, I'm trying to tell you, but you make it awful hard for me. You go off every minute and don't give me a chance to finish."

Mrs. O'Brien folded her hands complacently. "Ellen dear, I won't utter another syllable—I promise you I won't. Now tell me in two words what's happened."

"Well, Ma, it's this: I'm through with stenography and I'm going in for millinery, which I think I can do better."

"But where, Ellen, where are you going in for it? That's the great p'int!"

"I'm going to try Hattie Graydon's aunt first. She always says that not one of the girls in her shop begins to have the taste that I've got, and one time she told me if ever I wanted a job to come to her."

The happy look in Mrs. O'Brien's face slowly faded. Tears again filled her eyes. "And is that all you've got to tell me?"

"Yes, Ma, that's all. I'm going down to see Miss Graydon this morning."

"Oh, Ellen, Ellen, to think of your doing a thing like that without asking the advice of a soul! You're a foolish, headstrong girl!"

Ellen dropped her eyes. "George Riley thinks I'm doing right."

Mrs. O'Brien looked up sharply.

"Jarge Riley indeed! And may I ask what Jarge Riley's got to with it?"

"George and me are friends again. I thought I better tell you."

In Mrs. O'Brien amazement took the place of grief. "Ellen O'Brien, do you mean to tell me that you've took up with Jarge Riley when you might have had a gentleman like Mr. Hawes?"

The flush that her mother's words excited was one of anger as well as embarrassment. "Ma, you listen to me: I've never once told you that I might have Mr. Hawes! You've made that up yourself!"

"Made it up myself, indeed! when he's been taking you out night after night and treating you like a real lady!"

"And what's more," Ellen went on vehemently, "George Riley's worth twenty Philip Hawses!"

Mrs. O'Brien looked at her sharply. "Is it that you're going to marry Jarge Riley?"

Ellen, breathing hard, made answer a little unsteadily: "Yes."

Mrs. O'Brien dropped back limply into her chair. "Mercy on us!" she wailed, "and is this the end of your fine looks and your fine education—to marry a farmer like Jarge Riley! Why, you could have had him without any business college or nothing!"

Ellen stood up and Mrs. O'Brien, her face woe-begone and tragic, made one last appeal: "Ellen O'Brien, I ask you in all seriousness, are you determined to throw yourself away like that?"

Ellen was nothing if not determined. "I'm going down to Miss Graydon's now," she said in a casual tone which ended all discussion; "and me and George will probably get married in the spring."

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## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE HAPPY LOVER

IT was several days before Mrs. O'Brien regained her usual complacency. "'Tain't that I've got anything against you, Jarge," she explained many times to her prospective son-in-law. "I'm really fond of you and I treat you like one of me own. But what with her fine looks and her fine education I was expecting something better for Ellen. Why, Jarge, she ought to be marrying a

Congressman at least. Now I ask you frankly, don't you think so yourself?"

For George the situation was far from a happy one. To be the confidant of Mrs. O'Brien in this particular disappointment was embarrassing, to say the least. Moreover, certain of Mrs. O'Brien's objections were somewhat difficult to meet and yet they had to be met and met often, for Mrs. O'Brien harped on them constantly.

"And, Jarge dear, if you do go marry her and carry her off to the country, what will you do with her out there? Tell me that, now! For meself I can't see Ellen milkin' a cow."



To be the confidant of Mrs. O'Brien in this particular disappointment was embarrassing, to say the least.

George tried hard to explain that milking cows was not the only activity open to a farmer's wife; that, in all probability, Ellen would never be called on to milk a cow. His protests were vain, for, to Mrs. O'Brien, milking a cow stood not so much for a definite occupation as for a general symbol of country life. George might talk an hour and very often did and, at the end of that time, Mrs. O'Brien would sigh mournfully and remark: "Say what you will, Jarge, I tell you one thing: I can't see Ellen milkin' a cow."

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Moreover, life with Ellen was not at once the long sweet song that George had expected. Not that she was the old imperious Ellen of biting speech and quick temper. She was not. All that was passed. She was quiet now, and docile, anxious to please and always ready for anything he might suggest. Would she like a street-car ride tonight? Yes, a street-car ride would be very nice. Or the movies or a walk? She would like whatever he wanted. Her gentleness touched him but caused him disquiet, too, because he could not help realizing that a great part of it was apathy. One thing pleased her as much as another, which is pretty nearly the same as saying one thing bored her as much as another.

"But, Ellen," he protested more than once, "you don't have to go if you don't want to!"

"Oh, I want to," she would insist in tones that were far from convincing.

George could not help recalling the eager joy with which Rosie used to greet each new expedition. Why wasn't Ellen the same, he wondered in helpless perplexity. He went through all the little attentions which Rosie had taught him and a thousand more, and Ellen received them with a quiet, "Thanks," or a half-hearted, "You're awful kind, George."

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"Kind nuthin'!" he shouted once. "I don't believe you care one straw for me or for anything I do for you!"

His outburst startled her and, for a moment, she faltered. Then she said: "I don't see how you can say that, George. I think you're just as good and kind as you can be."

"Good and kind!" he spluttered. "What do I care about being good and kind? What I want is love!"

"Well, don't I love you?" She looked at him beseechingly and put her hand on his shoulder. Her caresses were infrequent and this one, slight as it was, was enough to fire his blood and muddle his understanding.

"You do love me, don't you?" he begged, pulling her to him, and she, as usual, submitting without a protest, said, yes, she did.

A word, a touch, and Ellen could always silence any misgiving. But such misgivings had a way of returning, once George was alone. Then he would wish that he had Rosie to talk things over with. He was used to talking things over with Rosie. For some reason, though, he never saw Rosie now except for a moment when she handed him his supper-pail each evening at the cars. At other times she seemed always to be out on errands or on jaunts with Janet and Tom Sullivan. George looked upon Tom as a jolly decent youngster and he was pleased that the intimacy between him and Rosie was growing. But at the same time he could not help feeling a little hurt that Rosie should so completely forget him. True, he was bound up heart and soul in Ellen and now he was her accepted lover. That, it seemed to him, ought to be happiness enough and he told himself that it was enough. Then he would sigh and wonder why he wasn't as light-heartedly gay as he used to be when he and Rosie went about together. Rosie, apparently, had entirely forgotten what good chums they once had been. Well, after all, he couldn't blame her, for she was only a child.

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George did not know and probably never would know that Rosie was watching him and watching over him with all the faithfulness of a little dog and that she knew all there was to know of the situation between him and Ellen.

George had set the latter part of September as the time for his return to the country. For four long years he had been working and saving for this very event. Several times before he had been about to leave but always, at the last moment, some untoward circumstance had crippled his finances and he had been forced to stay on in the city another few months. Now for the first time he could go and now he was loath to go. But he had made his announcement and all his little world was standing about, waiting to see him off and to bid him god-speed.

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He was ashamed to acknowledge even to himself the indecision that was tugging at his heart. "Don't you think, Ellen," he ventured at last, "it might be just as well if I waited till Christmas?"

"Oh, George!" Ellen looked at him with a shocked expression. "I don't see how you can say such a thing after the way you've been waiting all these years! Besides, what would your poor mother say if you didn't come now that you could? You've told me yourself how the burden of things has fallen on her more and more and how anxious you are to relieve her."

"I know," George acknowledged; "but, Ellen girl, don't you see I can't bear to leave you now I've got you. I've had you for such a little while!"

"Won't you have me just the same, even if you are in the country? Besides, you'll be getting things ready for me by spring."

George took a sharp breath. "But I want you now!"

Ellen looked at him gravely. "See here, George, there's no use talking that way. You've got to work and I've got to work, and if we don't get our work done this winter it'll be all the worse for both of us when spring comes. Your father's expecting to hand over the management of the farm to you this fall and it's up to you to take it. Ain't I right?"

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George sighed. "I suppose you are."

"Then don't be foolish. Besides you can come down and see me at Thanksgiving."

George gasped. "Why, Ellen, I expect to see you before that! I could come in and stay over Sunday 'most any week."

"No, George, you mustn't do that! I won't let you!" Ellen spoke vehemently. "It would only cost you money and you know perfectly well you need every cent of cash you've got! Once you're back in the country you won't be getting in three dollars a day ready money. No! You'll come to see me Thanksgiving and not before."

Ellen was right. It would be necessary for him to hoard like a miser his little stock of money until the farm should once again be on a paying basis.

George sighed gloomily and went about his preparations for departure.

## THE SISTERS

ELLEN and Rosie saw him off. Rosie wept openly.

"And, Jarge," she said, kissing him good-bye, "give your mother and your father my love, but especially your mother. Tell her that I love her and that I think of her every day. You won't forget, will you? And tell her that Geraldine is fat and well and has been ever since we got home from the country."

"Good-bye, George," Ellen said quietly. Her face was pale and there was a strained expression about eyes and mouth.

"Oh, Ellen!" George gave her one last wild kiss and rushed madly through the gate.

His coach was far down the train shed and Rosie and Ellen soon lost sight of his hurrying figure. They stood together at the gate and waited until the train started.

As it pulled away Ellen sighed deeply. "Thank goodness he's gone!" She leaned against the grating and laughed hysterically.

Rosie, who had been dabbing her eyes with a wet handkerchief, looked up blankly. "Ellen O'Brien, what do you mean? Are you glad he's gone?"

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"You bet I'm glad!" Ellen's silly high-pitched laugh continued until silenced by Rosie's look of scornful fury.

"Ellen O'Brien, you're worse than I thought you were!"

Ellen faltered a moment, then reached toward Rosie appealingly. "Don't be too hard on me, Rosie. You don't know the awful time I've had. I feel like I've been dead. I haven't been able to breathe. I don't mean it was his fault. I think as much of him as you do—really I do. He's good and he's kind and he's honest and he's everything he ought to be. But if he'd ha' stayed much longer I'd ha' smothered."

Rosie, accusing angel and stern judge rolled into one, demanded gravely: "And now that he's gone what are you going to do?"

"What am I going to do?" Ellen's laugh was still a little beyond her control, but it had in it a note of happy relief that was unmistakable. "I'm going to live again—at least for the little time that's left me."

"What do you mean by 'the little time that's left you'?"

"From now till Thanksgiving; from Thanksgiving till spring." For an instant Ellen's face clouded. Then she cried: "But I'm not going to think of spring! I'm going to have my fling now!"

Rosie looked at her without speaking and, as she looked, it seemed to her that the Ellen of other days rose before her. It was as though a pale nun-like creature had been going about in Ellen's body, answering to Ellen's name. Now, at George's departure as at the touch of a magic wand, the old Ellen was back with eyes that sparkled once again and cheeks into which the colour was returning in waves. Yes, she was the old Ellen, eager for life and excitement and thirsting for admiration. But the old Ellen with a difference. Now, instead of estranging Rosie utterly with careless bravado, she strove to win her understanding.

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"You don't know how I feel, Rosie; you can't, because you and me are made differently. You're perfectly happy if you've got some one to love and take care of—you know you are! With me it's different. I don't want to take care of people and work for them and slave for them. I want to have a good time myself! I'm just crazy about it! I know I ought to be ashamed, but can I help it? That's the way I am. Do you think I'm very awful, Rosie?"

Rosie answered truthfully: "I'm not thinking of you at all. I'm thinking of poor Jarge."

Ellen gave a sigh of relief. "Thank goodness I can give up thinking of him for a while." She began patting her hair and arranging her hat. "Do I look all right, Rosie? I got to hurry back to the shop. A feather salesman is coming today and Miss Graydon wants me to take care of him. He'll probably invite me out to lunch."

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"And are you going?" Rosie asked slowly.

Ellen took a long happy breath. "You bet I'm going!"

"Ellen O'Brien, if you do, I'll tell Jarge! I will just as sure!"

For an instant Ellen was staggered. Then she recovered. "No, Rosie, you'll do no such thing! What you'll do is this: you'll mind your own business!"

Rosie tried to protest but her voice failed her, for the look in Ellen's eye betokened a will as strong as her own and a determination to brook no interference.

Ellen started off, then paused to repeat: "You'll mind your own business! Do you understand?"

Ellen walked on and Rosie called after her, a little wildly: "I won't! I won't! I tell you I won't!"

But she knew she would.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII

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### ELLEN HAS HER FLING

It is hard to be the self-appointed guardian of another's interests, for one's standing is not, as it were, official. In the weeks that followed Rosie felt this keenly. She gave up protesting to Ellen, for Ellen's curt answer to everything she might say was always: "You mind your own business!" Though she would not accept Ellen's dictum that George's business was not hers, yet she was soon forced to give up direct action and to seek her end through the interference of others. She tried her mother.

"I don't care what you say, Ma, Ellen's just as crooked as she can be, acting this way with other fellows when she doesn't even deny that she's engaged to Jarge. And you ought to stop it, too! There, the very first week he was gone, she went out three nights hand-running with that feather man from St. Louis. You know she did! And now she's got that new little dude with an off eye and, besides, Larry Finn's come back. I tell you it ain't fair to Jarge and you're to blame, too, if you don't stop it!"

Mrs. O'Brien shared with Rosie the conviction that an engaged girl ought not so much as raise her eyes to other men. She was done forever with all men but one. Ellen, for some reason, did not feel this instinctively and, if a girl does not feel it instinctively, how is she to be made to feel it? Mrs. O'Brien sighed. Unknown to Rosie she had tried to speak to Ellen. Ellen had not let her go very far.

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"Say, Ma, you dry up!" she had told her shortly. "I guess I know what I'm doing."

"I'm sure you do," Mrs. O'Brien had murmured in humble apology; "but, Ellen dear, be careful! There's a lot of people know you're engaged to Jarge and I'm afraid they'll be talkin'."

"Let 'em talk!" was Ellen's snappish answer.

So when Rosie approached her mother on the same subject, Mrs. O'Brien hemmed and hawed and ended by offering a defence of Ellen which sounded hollow even to herself. "As for that feather fella, Rosie dear, you mustn't get excited about him. It's a matter of business to keep him jollied. Miss Graydon wants Ellen to be nice to him. And, as I says to Ellen, 'If that's the case,' says I, 'of course you've got to accept his little attentions. Miss Graydon,' says I, 'is your employer and a girl ought always to please her employer.' As you know yourself, Rosie, Ellen's certainly getting on beautifully in that shop. Miss Graydon told me herself the other night that she had never had a girl so quick and tasty with her needle and when I told her about me own poor dead sister, Birdie, she said that explained it."

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"But, Ma," Rosie cried, "what about poor Jarge?"

"Jarge? Why, Jarge is all right. He's out there in the country and you know yourself he's crazy about the country. And more than that, Ellen writes him a picture postcard every week. She gave me her word she'd do it. I couldn't very well insist on her writing a letter, for you know her long hours at the shop and it wouldn't be right to ask her to use her eyes at night. 'But, Ellen dear,' says I to her, 'promise me faithfully you'll never let a week go by without sending him a picture postcard.' And she gave me her word she wouldn't."

Mrs. O'Brien could always be depended on to obscure reason in a dust of words, especially at times when it would be embarrassing to face reason in the open. After three or four attempts to arouse her mother to some sort of action, Rosie had to give up. She felt as keenly as ever that George was being basely betrayed, but she saw no way to protect him. She had not written to him since he left, but she wrote every week to his mother on the pretext that Mrs. Riley was deeply interested in Geraldine and must be kept informed of Geraldine's growth and health. Rosie always put in a sentence about Ellen: "Ellen's very busy but very well," or "Ellen's hours are much longer now than they used to be and she hasn't so very much time to herself, but she likes millinery, so it's all right,"—always something that would assure George of Ellen's well-being and excuse, if necessary, her silence. Rosie hated herself for thus apparently shielding Ellen but, in her anxiety to spare George, she would have gone to almost any length.

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A sort of family pride kept her from confiding her worries to Janet McFadden. Soon after George's departure she had remarked to Janet: "You oughtn't to be surprised because you know the kind of girl Ellen is. She's just got to amuse herself. Besides, you can't exactly blame her because poor Jarge'd want her to have a good time." This attitude had not in the least deceived

Janet, but Janet was too tactful to question it.

The reasons for not talking to Janet did not apply to Danny Agin, who, being old and of another generation, was philosophical rather than personal and had long since mastered the art of forgetting confidences when forgetting was more graceful than remembering. So at last Rosie opened her heart to Danny.

"Now take an engaged girl, Danny."

Rosie paused and Danny, nodding his head, said: "For instance, a girl like Ellen."

Rosie was glad enough to be definite. "I don't mind telling you, Danny, that it's Ellen I'm talking about. I just don't know what to do about it and maybe you'll be able to help me."

Danny listened carefully while Rosie slowly unfolded her story. "And, Danny," she said, as she reached the present in her narrative, "that St. Louis fellow's just dead gone on her—that's all there is about it. He's sending her picture postcards every day or every other day. I can't help knowing because they come to the house. I suppose he doesn't like to send them to the shop where the other girls would see them. He used to sign the postcards with his full name but now he only signs 'Harry.' Now, Danny, do you think it's nice for a girl that's engaged to let another fella send her postcards and sign 'em 'Harry'?"

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Danny ruminated a moment. "Well, if you ask me, Rosie, I don't believe that's so awful bad."

"But, Danny, that ain't all! Listen here: last week he sent a big box of candy from Cleveland and this morning another box came from Pittsburg. And there was a postcard this morning and what do you think it said? 'I just can't wait till Saturday night!' And it was signed, 'With love, Harry.' Now, Danny, what can that mean? I bet anything he's coming to spend Sunday with her and, if he does come, what in the world am I to do about it?"

Danny patted her hand gently. "Rosie dear, I don't see that you're to do anything about it. Why do you want to do anything? Isn't it Ellen's little party?"

Rosie shook off his hand impatiently. "I don't care about Ellen's side of it! I'm thinking about Jarge! This kind of thing ain't square to him, and that's all there is about it!"

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"Of course it ain't," Danny agreed. "But, after all, Rosie, if Ellen prefers Harry to Jarge, I don't see what we can do about it."

"But, Danny, she's engaged to Jarge!"

"Well, maybe she'll get disengaged."

Rosie shook her head. "You don't know Jarge. Jarge is a fighter. And I'll tell you something else: once he gets a thing he never gives it up. Now he's got Ellen or he thinks he's got her and he's going to keep her, too. You just ought to see him when he's around Ellen. He's awful, Danny, honest he is! He's so crazy about her that he forgets everything else. If he thought she was fooling him, I think he might kill her—really, Danny. And she's afraid of him, too. Why, if she wasn't afraid of him, she'd break her engagement in a minute and tell him so. I know that as well as I know anything. She expects to marry him. She's scared not to now. But that don't keep her from letting those other fellows act the fool with her. And if Jarge hears about them, I tell you one thing: there's going to be the deuce to pay. Excuse the language, Danny, but it's true."

Danny was impressed but not as impressed as Rosie expected. "That's worse than I thought," he admitted; "but I don't see that there's any great danger. Jarge is in the country and not likely to pop in on her, is he?"

"No," Rosie answered, "he's not coming till Thanksgiving."

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"Thanksgiving, do you say? Well, that's four weeks off. Plenty of things can happen in four weeks."

In spite of herself, Rosie began to feel reassured. "But, Danny," she insisted, "even if it's not dangerous, don't you think it's crooked for a girl that's engaged to let other men give her presents and take her out?"

"Maybe it is and maybe it ain't. I dunno. It's hard to make a rule about it. You see it's this way, Rosie: When a girl's engaged she's usually in love with the fella she's engaged to, or why is she engaged to him? Now, when she's in love, she don't want presents from any but one man. Presents from other fellas don't interest her. So, you see, there's no need to be makin' a rule, for the thing settles itself. Now if Ellen is getting presents from this new fella, Harry, it looks to me like she ain't very much in love with Jarge."

"That's exactly what I'm telling you, Danny. She's not."

"So the likelihood is, she's not going to marry Jarge." Danny concluded with a smile that was intended to cheer Rosie.

"I wish she wasn't," Rosie murmured. Then she added hastily: "No, I don't mean that, because it would break Jarge's heart!"

Danny scoffed: "Break Jarge's heart, indeed! Many a young hothead before Jarge has had a broken heart and got over it!"

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"But, Danny," Rosie wailed, "you don't know Jarge!"

There were such depths of tenderness in Rosie's tone that Danny checked the smile which was on his lips and made the hearty declaration: "He sure is a fine lad, this same Jarge!"

"Well, Danny, listen here: if Harry comes on Saturday, shall I tell Jarge?"

Danny looked at her kindly. "Mercy on us, Rosie, what a worryin' little hen you are! If you ask me advice, I'd say: Let Saturday take care of itself."

Rosie wiped her eyes slowly. "It's all very well for you to talk that way. But I tell you one thing: if Jarge was your dear friend like he's mine, you wouldn't want to stand by and see this Harry fella cut him out."

Danny gave a non-committal sigh and looked away. "I don't know about that, Rosie. I think it might be an awful good thing for Jarge if Harry did cut him out."

"But, Danny," Rosie cried, "think how it would hurt Jarge!"

Danny's answer was unfeeling. "There's worse things can happen to a man than being hurt."

Rosie's manner stiffened perceptibly. "Very well, Mr. Agin, if that's how you feel about it, I guess I better be going."

"Ah, don't go yet," Danny begged.

Rosie, already started, turned back long enough to say, with frigid politeness: "Good-bye, Mr. Agin."

At the gate, her heart misgave her. Danny, after all, had spoken according to his lights. It was not his fault so much as his limitation that he should judge George Riley by the standard of other young men. Rosie would be magnanimous.

"I got to go anyhow, Danny," she called back sweetly.

Danny's chuckle reached her faintly. "But you're coming again, Rosie dear, aren't you? You know I'll be wanting to hear about Saturday."

Danny was old and half sick, so Rosie felt she must be patient. "All right," she sang out; "I'll come."

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## CHAPTER XXXIX

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### THE WATCH-DOG

THAT night at supper, Ellen remarked casually: "Harry's coming to town on Saturday, and if he comes up here, I want you all to treat him nice."

Mrs. O'Brien glanced at Rosie a little nervously. "But, Ellen dear," she asked, "why does he want to be coming up here?"

Ellen smiled on her mother patronisingly. "It looks like he wants to call on me."

Mrs. O'Brien lifted hands in vague protest. "But tell me, now, do you think Jarge——" She hadn't courage to finish her sentence.

Terence looked over to Rosie with a sudden chuckle. "Say, Rosie, wouldn't it be fun if Jarge happened in? Let's drop him a line. Gee! Maybe he wouldn't do a thing to that St. Louis guy!"

"Ma!" Ellen admonished, sharply.

"Terry lad," Mrs. O'Brien began, obediently, "I'm surprised at you talkin' this way about the young gentleman that's coming to see your poor sister Ellen on Saturday night."

Terence pushed away his plate and began writing an imaginary postcard with a spoon. "Dear Jarge," he read slowly; "Won't you please come in on Saturday night? We're arranging a little surprise for Ellen. Yours truly, Terence O'Brien. Gee!" Terry murmured thoughtfully, "I wish he would come! It sure would be worth seeing!"

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"Now, Terry," Mrs. O'Brien begged, "promise me you'll do nuthin' so foolish as that! You know yourself the awful temper Jarge has on him, an' if he was to come I'm afeared there'd be something serious. Don't you think, Ellen dear," she went on a little timidly, "that perhaps you'd better tell Mr. Harry not to come this week?"

Ellen looked at her mother defiantly. "I don't see why. This week's as good as any other for me."

"Well, then, don't you think that perhaps he'd better make you a little call down at the shop? With so many children and things the house is a wee bit untidy."

"It's his own idea to come up here." Ellen paused, a trifle embarrassed. "He says he wants to meet the family."

"H'm!" murmured Terry. "He's not like your old friend, Mr. Hawes, is he, Ellen?"

Ellen flushed. "No, Terry, he's not a bit like Mr. Hawes."

Small Jack piped up unexpectedly. "Is he like Jarge, Ellen?"

"No, he's not like George, either."

"Can he fight?"

Ellen tossed her head. "I should hope not! Harry Long is a gentleman!" Seeing that this was not a very strong recommendation to her brothers, she added: "But, unless I'm very much mistaken, he's plenty able to take care of himself. He's a fine swimmer, too."

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"Is he a sport, Ellen?" Terry asked.

"He's certainly an elegant dresser, if that's what you mean. Just you wait and see."

Friday's letter put Ellen into something of a flurry.

"Ma, Harry thinks it would be awful nice if you would invite him to supper tomorrow night. He's coming to the shop in the morning. Then he'll take me out to lunch and we'll go somewheres in the afternoon, and he wants to know if we can't come back here for supper. He thinks that would be a good way for him to meet the whole family."

"Mercy on us!" Mrs. O'Brien wailed. "With all I've got to do, how can I get up a fine supper for a sporty young gent like Mr. Harry? Can't you keep him out, Ellen? I don't see why he's got to meet the family. We're just like any other family: a father, a mother, and five children."

"But, Ma, he makes such a point of it. I don't see how we can refuse. Besides, you know he's been pretty nice to me taking me out to dinner and things."

"If he was only Jarge Riley now," Mrs. O'Brien mused, "I wouldn't mind him at all, at all, for he wouldn't be a bit of trouble. Poor Jarge was always just like one of the family, wasn't he?"

Ellen drew her mother back to the subject of the moment. "So can I tell him to come?"

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Mrs. O'Brien sighed. "Oh, I suppose so. That is, if Rosie'll help me. I tell you frankly, Ellen, I simply can't manage it alone."

Mrs. O'Brien called Rosie to get the promise of her assistance. Rosie listened quietly, then, instead of answering her mother, she turned to her sister.

"Ellen, I want to know one thing: Have you told this Harry about Jarge Riley?"

Ellen frowned. "I don't see what that's got to do with tomorrow's supper."

Rosie took a deep breath. "It's got a lot to do with it if I'm going to help."

For a moment the sisters measured each other in silence. Then Ellen broke out petulantly:

"Well, then, Miss Busybody, if you've got to know, I haven't! And, what's more, I'm not going to!"

"You're not going to, eh? We'll see about that." Rosie turned to her mother. "Ma, I'll help you tomorrow night. We'll have a good supper. But I want to give you both fair warning: if Ellen don't tell this Harry about Jarge Riley, I will! She's trying to make a goat of both of them and I'm not going to stand for it."

"Ma!" screamed Ellen, "are you going to let her meddle with my affairs like that? You make her mind her own business!"

"Rosie dear," begged Mrs. O'Brien, "don't go excitin' your poor sister Ellen by any such foolish threats. You'd only be causin' trouble, Rosie, and I'm sure you don't want to do that. And, Ellen dear, don't raise your voice. The neighbours will hear you."

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"I don't care!" Ellen shouted. "She's nothing but George's little watch-dog, and I tell you I'm not going to stand it!"

"Perhaps, Ellen dear," Mrs. O'Brien ventured timidly, "it might be just as well if you did tell him about Jarge."

Ellen burst into tears. "You're all against me, every one of you—that's what you are! You're so afraid I'll have a good time! Isn't George coming on Thanksgiving and aren't we to be married in the spring? I should think that would suit you! But, no, you've got to spoil my fun now and it's a mean shame—that's what it is!"

"Ah, now, Ellen dear, don't you cry!" Mrs. O'Brien implored. "I'm sure Rosie is not going to interfere, are you, Rosie?"



Rosie regarded her sister's tears unmoved. "I'm going to do exactly what I say I am, and Ellen knows I am."

Ellen straightened herself with a shake. "Very well," she said shortly. "I guess I can be mean, too! You just wait!"

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## CHAPTER XL

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### MR. HARRY LONG EXPLAINS

ROSIE was more than true to her promise. She prepared a good supper and, in addition, made the kitchen neat and presentable, scrubbed Jack until his skin and hair fairly shone with cleanliness, and, long before supper time, had Mrs. O'Brien and Geraldine, both in holiday attire, seated in state on the front porch to receive Ellen and her admirer.

When Jack, who was perched on the front gate as family lookout, saw them coming, he rushed back to the kitchen to give Rosie warning and Rosie had time to slip behind the front door and, through the crack, to witness the arrival.

"And, Ellen dear," Mrs. O'Brien exclaimed in greeting, "do you mean to tell me that this is your friend, Mr. Harry Long! If I do say it, Mr. Long, I'm mighty pleased to see you! As I've said to Ellen, many's the time, 'Why don't you bring your friend out to see me? Bring him any time,' says I, 'for the friends of me children are always welcome in this house.' And himself says the same thing, Mr. Long."

The florid well-built young man who gave Rosie the impression of bright tan shoes, gray spats, a fancy vest, and massive watchfob, waited, smiling, until Mrs. O'Brien was done and then remarked in friendly, cordial tones: "Just call me Harry, Mrs. O'Brien. I'm plain Harry to my friends."

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"Well, I'm sure you're among friends when you're here," Mrs. O'Brien said with a downcast look of melting coyness. "But I fear you won't think so if I keep you standing much longer. Won't you sit down, Mr.—I mean, won't you sit down, Harry? You see, Harry," she continued, "I'm taking you at your word. And now I must introduce Jackie to you. Jackie's me second b'y. Now, Jackie dear, shake hands with Mr. Long and tell him you're glad to see him. The baby's name, Harry, is Geraldine. Besides her, I've got Terence who's a fine lad—oh, I know you'll be glad to meet Terry!—and Rosie who's next to Terry and who's helping me with the supper tonight so's to give me a chance to say 'How do you do' to you. Ah, if I do say it, I've a fine brood of children and never a word of bickering among them.... Now, Jackie dear, like a good b'y, will you run upstairs and tell your da to come down this minute, that we're waiting for him, and then run into the kitchen and ask sister Rosie if the supper's ready."

Rosie slipped hurriedly back to the kitchen and then, through Jack, summoned the family in.

When she was presented to the newcomer, she added to her first impressions the smooth pinkish face of a city-bred man who had never been exposed to the real violence of sun and wind, a cravat pin and seal ring that were fellows to the watchfob, and hands that bore themselves as if a little conscious of a recent visit to the manicure.

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As Rosie gathered in these details, she saw, in contrast, the figure of George Riley: the roughened weatherbeaten face, the cheap ill-fitting clothes, the big hands coarsened with work, the heavy feet. Ellen, of course, and girls like Ellen would be taken in by the new man's flashy appearance and easy confident manner, but not Rosie. Rosie hated him on sight! She knew the difference between tinsel and solid worth and she longed to cry out to him: "You needn't think you can fool me, because you can't! Any one can dress well who spends all he makes on clothes! But how much money have you got salted away in the bank? Tell me that, now!"

She had to shake hands with him, but when he stooped down to kiss her, she jerked away and glared at him like an angry little cat.

"Why, Rosie!" Mrs. O'Brien exclaimed in shocked tones, "is that the way you treat a family friend like Mr. Harry?"

"Family friend!" stormed Rosie; "I've never laid eyes on him before and neither have you!"

Mrs. O'Brien's embarrassment deepened. "Rosie, I'm ashamed of you! Is that the way for you to be treatin' a gentleman who's taking supper with us? I tell you frankly I'm ashamed of you!"

Jamie O'Brien cleared his throat. "See here, Maggie, Rosie's perfectly right. There's no call for her to be kissing a stranger. She's too big a girl for that."

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Mrs. O'Brien looked at her husband blankly. "Jamie O'Brien, how you talk! Do you think it's

becoming to call a man a stranger who's sitting down with you at your own table?"

Jamie turned to his guest politely. "I'm sure, Mr. Long, I don't know what all this noise is about. I'm like Rosie here. I've never seen you before to me knowledge. But that's neither here nor there. You're here now and you're welcome, and I hope we'll be friends. So let us drop the argument and sit down."

It was an awkward beginning, but Jamie refused to be embarrassed and, after a moment of silence, the others tried hard to follow his example.

Harry was evidently bent on pleasing.

"Ever been in St. Louis, Mr. O'Brien?" He spoke with a proprietorial air as one might of a household pet, pronouncing the name of his city Louie. "Fine place, St. Louie!"

"For meself," Jamie answered unexpectedly, "I never much cared for it. It's a hot hole!"

Ellen flushed. "Why, Dad!"

Jamie looked up impatiently. "What's the matter now?"

"Dad, don't you know that St. Louie is where Harry lives?"

"I do not!" Jamie answered truthfully. "And, if you ask me, Ellen, I don't see why I should." [326]

"Jamie O'Brien!" Mrs. O'Brien gasped, "what's come over you? I haven't heard you talk so much at table in ten years!" She turned to her guest. "Would you believe me, Harry, there are weeks on end when I never get a word out of him! Sometimes I think I'll forget how to talk meself for lack of some one to exchange a word with! And to think," she concluded, "that Jamie's been in St. Louie! I give you me word of honour I never heard that before! Tell me, Jamie, when was it?"

Jamie ruminated a moment. "It must have been before we were married."

Mrs. O'Brien nodded her head. "That just proves what I always say: little a woman can know about a man before she marries him."

She talked on and Harry gave her every encouragement, laughing heartily at her anecdotes, asking further details, and making himself so generally pleasant that, before supper was half done, the opening embarrassment was forgotten and Mrs. O'Brien was exclaiming: "Well, Harry, I must say one thing: I feel like I'd known you forever!"

Harry glanced at Ellen. "Shall we tell them?"

Ellen drew a quick breath. "We've got to sometime," she murmured.

Harry beamed on Mrs. O'Brien. "I'm mighty glad to hear you say that, Mrs. O'Brien. There's nothing would please me better than to have you like me. In fact, I'm hoping you like me well enough to take me for a son-in-law!" [327]

Mrs. O'Brien gasped: "What's this you're saying, Harry?"

Rosie, pale and tense, stood up. "Ellen," she said, looking straight at her sister, "have you told him about Jarge Riley?"

Ellen laughed a little unsteadily. "Yes, Rosie, I told him. And I see now you were right. It wasn't fair to Harry not to tell him. And I want to apologize for getting so mad."

"Yes, Rosie was right," Harry repeated, smiling at her kindly. "Rosie must have known I was dead gone on Ellen and meant business."

Rosie was not to be taken in by any such palaver as that. "No, Mr. Long, you're mistaken. I was only thinking about Jarge Riley. Ellen's going to marry him in the spring."

Harry still smiled at her ingratiatingly. "She's not going to marry him now, Rosie. She can't because, don't you see, she married me this afternoon!"

"What!" Rosie, feeling suddenly sick and weak, crumpled down into her chair, a nerveless little mass that gaped and blinked and waited for the world to come to an end.

There was a pause broken at last by an hysterical laugh from Ellen. "Don't look at me like that, Rosie! I should think you'd be glad I was married to some one else!"

Ellen's words brought Rosie to her senses. "I am glad!" she cried. "You never cared two straws about Jarge, anyhow! But why did you have to be so crooked with him? When he finds out the way you've done this, it'll just break his heart! I guess I know!" [328]

Jamie O'Brien cleared his throat. "Rosie, you talk too much! Will you just hold your tongue a minute while I find out what all this clatter's about. Mr. Long, sir, will you be so good as to explain things?"

There was no smile on Jamie's face and Harry, looking at him, seemed to realize that it was not a time for pleasantries.

"I hope, Mr. O'Brien," he began soberly, "that you'll forgive me for not taking things more slowly. I expected to until this morning when Ellen told me about this Riley fellow. Then I sort of

lost my head. I was afraid of delays and misunderstandings. I've been just crazy about Ellen. The first time I saw her I knew she was the girl for me and I came to town today to tell her so. I suppose she knew what I was going to say and down at the shop, the very first thing, she began telling me about Riley. Mighty straight of her, I call it. She had got herself engaged to him but she didn't want to marry him, and it just seemed to me that the easiest way out of things was for us to get married right quick. So we hustled over the river and got to the courthouse just before closing time. It was really my fault, Mr. O'Brien. I made Ellen do it."

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Jamie looked at Ellen thoughtfully. "I don't believe you'd have made her do it if she hadn't wanted to do it."

"You're right, Dad," Ellen said; "I did want to. I didn't know how little I cared about George or any one else until Harry came along. George is good and kind and all that, but we'd never have made a team. I knew it perfectly well and I was wrong not to tell him so."

Jamie nodded his head. "You're right, Ellen. You've treated him pretty badly."

Her father's apparent blame of Ellen brought Mrs. O'Brien back to life and to speech. "Jamie O'Brien, I don't see how you can talk so about poor Ellen! You know yourself many's the time I've said to you, 'I can't see Ellen milkin' a cow.' For me own part I think she's wise to choose the life she has."

"Do you know the life she's chosen?" Jamie asked quietly. "I'm frank to say I don't." He turned to Harry. "Since you're me son-in-law, Mr. Long, perhaps you'll be willing to tell me who you are."

"Oh, Dad!" Ellen murmured, and Mrs. O'Brien whispered, "Why, Jamie!"

Harry flushed but answered promptly: "I'm twenty-six years old. I'm a St. Louie man. I'm a travelling salesman for the Great Ostrich Feather Company, head office at St. Louie. I'm on a twenty dollar a week salary with commissions that usually run me up to thirty dollars."

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Harry paused and Jamie remarked: "Plenty for a single man. You might even have saved a bit on it, I'm thinking."

Harry hesitated. "No," he said slowly; "I'll tell you the truth. I've been kind of a fool about money. I haven't saved a cent."

Rosie sat up suddenly. "I knew it!" she cried.

"Rosie!" whispered Mrs. O'Brien. "Shame on you!"

"Well, I just did!" Rosie insisted.

Her father, paying no heed to her, went on with his catechism: "But even if you didn't save anything, I'm thinking with that salary you're not in debt."

"Dad!" murmured Ellen in an agony of embarrassment.

"Be quiet, Ellen, and let your husband talk."

The flush on Harry's face deepened. "I'm sorry to say I have a few debts—not many. I've been paying them off since I've known Ellen."

"There!" cried Mrs. O'Brien in triumph. "Do you hear that, Jamie!"

"Since you've known Ellen," Jamie repeated. "How long may that be?"

"I think it's nearly a month."

"H'm! Nearly a month.... Well, now, Mr. Long, since you've got a wife and a few debts, is it your idea, if I might ask you, to start housekeeping?"

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"Dad!" Ellen cried; "I don't see why you put it that way! We've got everything planned out."

Jamie was imperturbable. "I'd like to hear your plans, Ellen."

"We're not going housekeeping. I hate housekeeping, anyway. We're going boarding."

"Boarding, do you say?" Jamie ruminated a moment. "If you were to ask me, Mr. Long, I'd tell you that twenty dollars won't go far in supporting a wife in idleness."

"Ellen don't want to be idle, Mr. O'Brien. It's her own idea to keep on with millinery, and of course I can get her into a good shop in St. Louie."

It was Mrs. O'Brien's turn to feel dismay. "Do you mean to tell me, Ellen, that, as a married woman, you're keeping on working?"

Ellen's answer was decided. "I'd rather do millinery than housekeeping. Millinery ain't half as hard for me. I told Harry so this afternoon and he said all right."

"But, Ellen dear," wailed Mrs. O'Brien, "people'll be thinking that your husband can't support you!"

Ellen laughed. "As long as I know different, that won't matter."

Jamie gave Ellen unexpected support. "Maggie, I think Ellen's right. It'll be much better to be a

good milliner than a poor housekeeper." Jamie paused and looked at the young people thoughtfully. "Well, you're married now, both of you, and perhaps you're well matched. I dunno. Ellen's been a headstrong girl, never thinking of any one but herself and, from your own account, Harry, you're much the same. You've both jumped into this thing without thinking, but you'll have plenty of time for thinking from now on. Well, it's high time you both had a bit of discipline. It'll make a man and a woman of you. I don't altogether like the way you've started out, but you're started now and there's no more to say. So here's my hand on it, Harry, and may neither of you regret this day!"

Jamie reached across the table and the younger man, in grateful humility, grasped his hand. "Thank you, Mr. O'Brien," he said simply. "You've made me see a few things."

Ellen got up and went around to her father's chair. "I have been thoughtless and selfish, Dad. I see that now. I hope you'll forgive me." There were tears in her eyes, and her lips, as she put them against her father's cheek, trembled a little.

Harry turned himself to the task of winning his mother-in-law. "Is it all right, Mrs. O'Brien?"

All right, indeed! Who could resist so handsome a son-in-law? Certainly not Mrs. O'Brien. She broke out in tears and laughter.



They all looked at Rosie, who sat, oblivious of them, staring off into nothing.

"Ah, Harry, you rogue, come here and kiss me this minute!... Why," she continued, "do you know, Harry, I had a presintimint the moment you entered the gate! 'What a fine-looking couple!' says I to meself. And the next minute I says, 'I wouldn't be a bit surprised if they made a match of it!' Why, Harry, I've never seen a fella come and turn us all topsy-turvy as you've done! Here I am talkin' me head off and Jamie O'Brien's been doing the same! Do you mind, Ellen, the way your da's been talkin'? You're not sick, are you, Jamie?"

Jamie chuckled quietly. "It's just I'm a little excited having a daughter run off and get married."

"Oh, Dad!" Ellen begged.

"I suppose," Jamie went on, "Rosie'll be at it next."

They all looked at Rosie, who sat, oblivious of them, staring off into nothing.

"What's the matter, Rosie?" her father asked.

Rosie roused herself. "I was just thinking about Jarge. Who's going to tell him?"

"Ellen, of course," Jamie said. "Ellen'll have to write him."

"But will she do it?" Rosie persisted.

A look of annoyance crossed Ellen's face. "Of course I will. I'll have plenty of time because I'm not going to St. Louie for a week. I'll write him tomorrow."

Rosie looked at her sister curiously. She wanted to say: "You know perfectly well you won't write him tomorrow or the next day or the day after. You'll put it off from day to day and at last you'll go, and then you'll never think of it again and poor Jarge'll come down here on Thanksgiving expecting to find you, and then we'll have to tell him." [334]

This is what Rosie wanted to say. But she restrained herself. When she spoke, it was in a different tone. "All right, Ellen, I won't bother you again. What dad says is true: you and Harry are married and that's all there is about it. I hope you'll both be happy." Rosie hesitated a moment, then walked over to Harry's chair. "And, Harry, I'm sorry I was rude to you when you tried to kiss me. You see, I didn't know you were Ellen's husband."

Rosie hadn't intended to be funny, but evidently she was, for a shout of laughter went up and Harry gathered her in with a hug and a kiss.

"You're all right, Rosie!" he whispered. "I like you for the way you stand up for George!"

*For the way she stood up for George!...* Tears filled Rosie's eyes. She had tried faithfully to guard George's interests like the little watch-dog Ellen had called her. But George would never know. How could he? All he would know now was that he had been betrayed.

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## CHAPTER XLI

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### THE GREATEST TEACHER IN THE WORLD

ROSIE kept her promise faithfully. During the week that elapsed before Ellen's departure, she was careful not to mention George Riley's name. The time for discussion of any subject that might prove unpleasant to Ellen was past. Ellen was going, never to return—at any rate, never as one of them in the sense that she had been one of them and, for their own sakes as well as for hers, it behooved them all to make those last days as frictionless as possible. The approaching separation did not bring Rosie any closer to Ellen nor Ellen any closer to her, but it made them both strangely considerate of one another and also a little shy.

Like Rosie, Terence and Jack regarded Ellen's going with deep interest but with very little feeling. Between them and her there had always been war and there probably always would be if they continued to live under the same roof. They had their mother's word for it that Ellen was their own sister and that they ought to love her, but they did not for that reason love her nor did she love them. Yet they did not question that pretty fallacy which their mother offered them as an axiom, namely, that love is the inevitable bond between brothers and sisters, since boys and girls, like men and women, have a way of keeping separate the truths of experience and the forms of inherited belief. With Rosie they instinctively called a truce. Ellen will soon be gone, their attitude said, so let's not fight any more. To show their sincerity, Terry polished Ellen's shoes and asked if there was anything more he could do, and Jack ran numberless errands without once asking payment. [336]

Mrs. O'Brien more than made up for the indifference of the rest of the family. Her grief at Ellen's departure was very genuine and very loud. Ellen had always seemed to her mother a paragon of beauty and talent and now she had made a fine match and was going off to St. Louie, poor girl, where she'd be far away from her own people in case of illness or distress. Mrs. O'Brien was so nearly overcome at the actual moment of farewell that Jamie and Terry had to drag her off to a soda fountain before the train was fairly started.

Ellen, too, was affected at the last as Rosie had never seen her affected. She kissed Rosie, then looked at her a moment sadly. "Say, kid," she said, "I'm sorry we haven't been better friends. I'm afraid it was my fault."

Rosie gulped. "I was as much to blame as you. I see it now."

Ellen touched Rosie's cheek impulsively. "If ever I get a home of my own in St. Louie, will you come and make me a visit?" [337]

Rosie's thought was: "If ever you get a home of your own, you'll never remember me." Her spoken answer, though, was all that it should be: "Ellen, I'd love to."

Rosie, you see, knew Ellen's character pretty well. What she did not know and could not as yet know was this: that the Ellen of tomorrow might not be quite the Ellen of today; that life probably

held experiences for Ellen that would at last make her look back on home and family with a new understanding and a feeling of genuine tenderness.

Ellen's train pulled out and Rosie watched it go with a sigh of relief. The chapter of Family Chronicles entitled Ellen was finished. That is, it was finished so far as any new interest was concerned. Yet, like the hand of a dead man touching the living through the clauses of a last will, so Ellen, though gone, continued to touch Rosie on a spot already sensitive beyond endurance.

Rosie had not spoken of George Riley during Ellen's last week. She had tried to suppress even the thought of him. Now the time was come when she had again to think of him, and she was so tired and weary of the whole problem that she felt unequal to the task of working out its solution.

"Do you know, Danny," she remarked that afternoon to her old friend, "I'd give anything to go off somewheres where I don't know anybody and where nobody knows me. I'm just so tired of this old town that I don't know what to do."

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Danny nodded sympathetically. "I'm thinking you're in need of a little change, Rosie. Maybe you could go out to the country for a day or two at Thanksgiving."

Rosie knew perfectly well what Danny meant but, for conversational reasons, she asked: "Where in the country, Danny?"

"Well, I was thinking of the Riley farm. I'm sure Mrs. Riley would be crazy to have you."

Rosie shook her head. "I can't go out there because Jarge is coming here." She paused a moment. "He's coming to see Ellen. You know, Danny, he thinks he's engaged to Ellen."

"What!" Danny's little eyes blinked rapidly. "Don't he know yet that she's married to the other fella?"

"How can he know when no one's told him? Ellen said she would, but of course she didn't."

Danny's expression grew serious. "Rosie dear, he ought to be told! He ought t' have been told at once! You don't mean to say, Rosie, you'll let him come down on Thanksgiving without a word of warning?"

Rosie shrugged her shoulders. "I don't see that it's any of my business."

Danny looked at her sharply. "Why, Rosie dear, what's come over you?"

Rosie sighed. "I don't know, Danny. I'm just kind o' tired of things." She made a sudden change of subject. "Wisht I didn't have to go to school! I hate school this year. I don't see why I have to go, anyway. I'm not going to be a teacher."

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There was no mistaking Rosie's dejection and Danny, instead of scoffing it away, accepted it quietly.

"I'm sorry to hear you say that about school, Rosie. I was thinkin' you'd be in High School next year."

"I would be, if I passed. Ellen went through High School, and now Terry's in the first year, and of course dad wants me to go, too. But I don't see why I should. You know, Danny, I'm not very bright in school. I'm not a bit like Janet. I've got to work awful hard just barely to pass. I don't think I'd have passed last year if Janet hadn't helped me. But I can cook and do a lot of things that Janet can't do. I know perfectly well I could never be a teacher, so I don't see the use of keeping on at school."

"You surprise me, Rosie!" Danny peered at her earnestly. "Do you think that's the only reason for going to school—so's to be a teacher?"

Rosie nodded. "I don't see any other."

"And what do you want to be, Rosie?"

"I don't want to be anything."

"Don't you want to do something?"

"No."

"But, Rosie dear, that's no way to talk. You know you can't sit through life with folded hands, doing nothing."

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Rosie protested: "But, Danny, I don't expect to do nothing. I know I have to work and I do work, too. You ask ma. I take care of Geraldine night and day, and you needn't think it isn't a big job taking care of a baby, because it is. And I used to take care of Jarge Riley, too. Old Mis' Riley herself told me I took as good care of him as she did. And she meant it, too. Oh, I could just work forever for Geraldine and Jarge."

Danny looked at her a few moments in silence. "Rosie dear," he said gently, "pull your chair over close. I want to talk to you."

Rosie obeyed and, after a slight pause, Danny continued: "You're troubled about Jarge, aren't you, Rosie?"

Rosie's eyes filled with tears. "I suppose I am, Danny."

"Rosie," Danny asked slowly, "are you in love with Jarge?"

The question startled Rosie. She stared blankly through her tears. "Why, Danny, how can you say a thing like that? I'm only a little girl and Jarge is a grown man!"

"But you'd like to take care of him all the time, wouldn't you, Rosie?"

Rosie nodded. "You bet I would! If I could have just Jarge and Geraldine, I wouldn't care how hard I'd have to work! I'd do anything for both of them. Don't you know, Danny, I just feel like they're *mine*!"

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"I thought so, Rosie." Danny sighed and cleared his throat. "Now listen carefully, Rosie, what I've got to say. As you say yourself you're only a little girl now, but in a few years you'll be a big girl, as big as Ellen is today. And then perhaps, Rosie, you'll be marrying some one."

"No, Danny, no!" Rosie cried. "I don't want to be marrying some one, honest I don't!"

Danny waved aside the interruption. "As I was saying, perhaps you'll be marrying some one, and then after while you'll be having babies of your own."

"Oh, Danny!" A look of wonder, almost of ecstasy, spread over Rosie's face. Instinctively her arms reached out for the precious burden of the future. "Do you really mean it, Danny?" she whispered. "My *own*!"

"Yes, Rosie, I mean it. And you'll be a wonderful mother, for you'll know how to feed your children properly and take proper care of them. But in one way, Rosie, I fear you'll be a pretty poor mother."

The light in Rosie's eyes went out. "Why do you say that, Danny?"

"You won't be able to help them in their schoolin' and they'll probably all turn out poor ignur'nt b'ys and girls, with no opportunity to rise in the world. And if they do get on in school, they'll soon be scornin' their poor mother and lookin' down on her because she hasn't had the education she might have had. And when their father sees how they feel, I'm afeared he'll begin feelin' the same and thinkin' he'd made an awful mistake marryin' such an ignur'nt woman."

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"Oh, Danny, stop! Stop!" Tears of self-pity already filled Rosie's eyes.

"So I say to you, Rosie, if I was a little girl, I'd want to keep on going to school even if I didn't expect to be a teacher. And for that matter, darlint, isn't a mother the greatest teacher in the world? Aren't you yourself Geraldine's teacher every day of your life?"

Rosie's eyes stretched wide in surprise. "Danny, I believe you're right! A mother is a teacher, isn't she?"

"Sure she is, Rosie. And the better her own education is, the better chance she has of being a good teacher. That stands to reason, don't it now?"

Rosie nodded slowly. "Do you know, Danny, I never thought of that before." She ruminated a moment. "Really and truly it just seems like every girl in the world ought to have a good education. I always did think that ignorant mothers were awful and they are, too."

"You're right, Rosie, they are. They're a hindrance to their children instead of a help."

Rosie took a deep breath. "Wouldn't it just be wonderful to have a baby really and truly your own?" She gazed off into space. Then her expression changed. "But, Danny, I'll never marry."

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"Is that so?" Danny started to laugh, then checked himself.

"You see, Danny, it's this way: Maybe you're right. Maybe I am in love with Jarge. Anyway, I know I'll never love anybody else half as much as I love him."

"If that's the case," Danny remarked casually, "the only thing for you to do is to marry Jarge."

"Danny!" Rosie looked at him reproachfully. "I don't think it's kind of you to make fun of me that way. I know I'm only a kid."

"I didn't mean to marry him this minute," Danny explained. "I expected you to take your time about it—after you had finished school and were grown up and all that."

"Oh!" Rosie sat up very straight. She spoke a little breathlessly. "But, Danny, won't Jarge be too old then?"

Danny drew a long face. "I had forgotten all about that, Rosie. To be sure he will. He must be ten or fifteen years older than you this minute."

"No, Danny, no! He's not! He's only six years older—about six and a half. I'm thirteen now. I had a birthday last month. And he's nineteen and a half. I know because he's four months older than Ellen."

"Six years, do you say?" Danny mumbled. "Well, now, that's a good many, Rosie. Let's see: when you're eighteen, he'll be twenty-four. H'm. At twenty-four a lad's getting on, ain't he? Of course a lot of them don't marry nowadays till thirty but, if they'd ask me advice, I'd tell them to

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settle down with the right girl by the time they're twenty-five.... Yes, Rosie, you're right: Jarge'd be pretty old. Six years is a pretty big difference."

Rosie tossed her head. "I'm not so sure about that! Let's see now: Harry Long is twenty-six and that makes him seven years older than Ellen, and I'm sure Harry and Ellen look fine together! No one would ever think of calling Harry old! Why, he don't look a bit old!"

Danny shrugged his shoulders. "Well, Rosie, have it your own way!"

"Danny Agin, how you talk! Have it my own way, indeed! It isn't my way, it's just facts!"

Danny looked bored. "Well, anyway, it's all in the future, so why are we arguin' now? You'll be falling in love and probably falling out again with half a dozen lads before you're eighteen, and by the time you're twenty you'll probably be happily married to some one you've never yet laid eyes on. That's how it goes. And in that case, you'll have long since forgotten all about poor old Jarge Riley."

"Is that so?" Rosie spoke rather coldly, not to say sarcastically. However, she did not dispute Danny's word. If that was his opinion, he was, of course, welcome to it. By the same token, Rosie claimed a like privilege for herself. The way she pressed her lips together told very plainly that her opinion differed somewhat from Danny's. [345]

Presently Danny opened on another subject. "Now about Jarge Riley: If you ask me advice, Rosie, I think you had better write him a letter. It would be a bad thing to have him come down here not knowin' about Ellen."

Rosie's face changed. "But, Danny, it would be an awful hard letter to write and, besides, it isn't my business."

"That's so," Danny agreed. "Perhaps now you'd better not meddle. When I suggested it, it was only because I was thinkin' that you and Jarge were such good friends that you'd be wantin' to spare him a little. But, after all, he's a man, so he might as well come down and find things out for himself. It'll be an awful shock, but no matter. Besides, maybe Ellen'll write him. In fact, I'm sure she will."

"Ellen!" Rosie snorted scornfully. "Ellen never yet has done anything she hasn't wanted to do and I don't see her beginning now!"

"We've all got to begin some time," Danny remarked.

Rosie pointed her finger impressively. "Danny Agin, I know Ellen O'Brien Long better than you do and, when I say she'll never write a line to Jarge, I guess I know what I'm talking about."

"I'm sure you do," Danny murmured meekly. "If you say she won't, she won't. I wouldn't question your word for a hundred dollars. If you tell me that Jarge is not to get a letter, then it's settled. He won't get a letter." Danny sighed. "Poor Jarge! I do feel sorry for him! It'll be an awful shock to him!" Danny sighed again. "But, of course, every one has to take a few shocks in this life. Ah, me!" [346]

Rosie sighed, too. "If I was to write him, Danny, what would I say?"

Danny wagged his head. "It'd be a pretty hard letter and, as you say yourself, why should you?"

"I know it would be hard," Rosie agreed, "but, if I wanted to write it, I guess it wouldn't be too hard for me. Only I'm not quite sure what to say."

Danny squinted his little eyes thoughtfully. "Well, Rosie, if I was writing such a letter, to begin with I'd tell me bad news as quickly as I could and have it over with. Then, if it was some one I was real fond of, I'd tell him what I thought of him. It don't hurt any one to be told he has a friend or two. Then I'd fill in with all the family news and talk I could, so's he wouldn't feel lonely. At first he wouldn't have eyes for anything but the bad news, but, after while, he'd begin to take comfort from the rest of the letter and, if it was written with lots of love and feelin', I'm thinkin' there'd come a time when he'd be readin' that part over and over and over again, I dunno how many times, and takin' a little more comfort from it each time."

Rosie stood up a little breathlessly. "Good-bye, Danny. I must hurry home. I've got something to do." [347]

"Don't be runnin' off," Danny begged. "Besides, I'm not done yet with the letter. As I was sayin', I wouldn't try to finish it in one sitting. I'd write at it as much as I could every day and in a week's time it'd be a good big letter."

"But, Danny, Thanksgiving's not more than three weeks off!"

"Three weeks, do you say? That's bad. The poor lad ought to be given two weeks' notice at least. So if any one was to write him, they'd better begin at once. They'd have to write every day for a week pretty steadily."

"Is that all, Danny?"

"It's all I think of just now. If you was to sit awhile longer, Rosie, maybe something more would come to me."



"I don't believe I better, Danny. I'm awful busy. I must get home."

"But you'll stop awhile tomorrow, darlint, won't you? Promise me you will."

Rosie thought a moment. "It's this way, Danny: I'm a little behind in school and I've got to catch up. And, besides that, I'll be very busy for a week on something else. I don't believe I'll have time to stop tomorrow but, if I have, I will. Good-bye."

Rosie started off, then turned back a little shyly. She put her arm about old Danny's neck and kissed him on the cheek. "Danny, you're awful good to me. And do you know, Danny, after Jarge and Geraldine and Janet I think I love you best of all!"

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Danny chuckled. "Well, I suppose fourth ch'ice is better than no ch'ice at all!"

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## CHAPTER XLII

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### THE ROSIE MORROW

FOR a whole week Rosie worked away at her letter. She followed Danny's advice and added new pages each day. As a result her manuscript grew in bulk with startling rapidity. She had to buy a big envelope for it and then spend a large part of a week's wages on postage stamps.

Here is what she wrote:

DEAR GEORGE,

How are you and how is your mother and how is your father? Tell your mother that Geraldine is growing so fast that she would hardly know her.

George, I've got some bad news for you. Only it isn't as bad as it sounds, for I know it will be all right in the end. George, Ellen's got married. He's a feather salesman. He wears sporty clothes. He's twenty-six years old. That makes him seven years older than Ellen. He's a good-looker. Him and Ellen are just the same kind. They both like to dress and to gad around.

George, I know you're going to feel awful bad about this at first, but listen, George, it would have been an awful thing to plant Ellen out on a farm. She would have hated it. She would have been unhappy and that would have made you unhappy. And I don't think Ellen and your mother would have liked each other either and they would have to live together and then where would you be? George, don't you see, you're a farmer and you ought to pick out the kind of girl that likes farm life and that knows how to work. George, Ellen just loves the city where she can go to the theatre and dances and things and she never would like the country. Don't you see, George? I don't mean that Ellen was right to get married without telling you. She ought to have told you. I know that. But, George, I think she was a little bit scared of you. Really and truly, George, I don't think she would ever have got engaged to you if that Hawes man hadn't insulted her. Then afterwards, George, she didn't know how to get away from you. But she wanted to, honest she did.

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George, I'm awful sorry to be the one to tell you this. But I thought I better because it wouldn't be fair to have you come down on Thanksgiving without knowing. And I thought it would be better for you to hear it from me than from any one else. You and me, George, are awful good friends and I love you like I love Geraldine and I'd give anything not to have to tell you something that will hurt you and make you feel bad. Honest, George, I'm awful sorry.

George, all your friends always ask for you. The other day Danny Agin asked about you. Danny's pretty well but he ain't very strong these days and me and Mrs. Agin are a little bit worried. I don't know what I'd do without Danny. Sometimes he thinks he's funny and then me and Mrs. Agin have to scold him, but I just love him and so does Mrs. Agin even when she pretends she don't. You know, George, you can't help it because really and truly he's always so kind and gentle. And he gives awful good advice when you're worried about something. I always stand up for Danny. I told him once that he is my fourth best friend. I put you first, George, and then Geraldine, and then Janet.

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And, George, do you know about Janet? Dave McFadden has never once fell off the water wagon! What do you know about that? Mrs. McFadden got home from the hospital just after you left. She's real weak and she'll probably never be able to work again. She just sits around and complains and what do you think? Dave waits on her like she was a baby and don't say a word. Miss Harris from the Settlement House explained about it to Janet and me. She said that time that Dave was laid up with a broken leg and Mrs. McFadden began working out and Dave saw how easy it was for him to get along without supporting Mrs. McFadden and Janet that he lost the sense of family responsibility. And Miss Harris says it just took a thing like this to wake him up. And Miss Harris says it was Mrs. McFadden's big mistake to take Dave's place ever because

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lots of men are just that way when they see their wives and mothers can earn money by working out they just let them and Miss Harris says a woman has enough to do at home and taking care of her children. I'm sure my mother has, don't you think so, George?

The McFaddens are real comfortable now because all Dave's money comes home. They're going to move out of that horrible tenement next week. They've rented a little four-room house in the next block to us. Janet ain't very good friends with her father. She hardly ever talks to him and he hardly ever talks to her. She says how can she when she looks at her mother. But she says now she'll keep on at school. She thought she'd have to go to work. You know Janet's just crazy about school. She wants to go through High School and be a teacher. I want to go through High School, too, but I don't want to be a teacher. I think a girl ought to go through High School, don't you, George? because if she ever has any children of her own she wouldn't want them to grow up and think their mother was an ignorant old thing. And, besides, if she hasn't got a good education herself, how can she teach her children? And really and truly, George, you know a good mother has to be a teacher. Did you ever think of that before?

George, I don't suppose I'll ever marry. But if I was to marry, do you know the kind of man I'd pick out? I'd take a farmer every time! I just love the country, George, and I just love the kind of work a farmer's wife has to do. You ask your mother if I don't. There wasn't a thing that Mrs. Riley did last summer that she didn't teach me, and she told me herself I was awful quick about learning.

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My, my, George, did you ever think how fast time flies? Here I'm thirteen now and it won't be hardly any time before I'm eighteen. When I'm eighteen I'll be grown up and getting ready to graduate from High School. Will you promise me to come down and see the graduation? I'd rather have you come than any one else in the world. Let's see how old you'll be then? You'll be twenty-four. That's not so awful old. Maybe you won't even be married. Lots of men nowadays don't get married until they're thirty. But I think you ought to get married by the time you're twenty-five. And you ought to get a wife that would love your mother and would be willing to take some of the work off her shoulders. That's why I say to you that you ought to pick out a girl that loves the country and isn't afraid of work. And you ought to take a girl that's gone through High School, too, because it's a mistake for a man to marry an ignorant woman that he'd be ashamed of.

George, I can't tell you how much I miss you. I miss you every day. We always had such good times together, didn't we? Do you remember all the times you took me to the movies and for street-car rides and things like that? I remember every one of them. And whenever I was bothered about anything you were always so kind to me. Other people are kind to me, too. Danny Agin is. I love Danny Agin, too, but I love you first.

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George, I don't think I could get on without you if I didn't have Geraldine. Seems like I just got to have some one to love. When I get real lonely for you, I take Geraldine and give her a good scrubbing and then dress her up and take her out for a walk.

George, I don't know when I'll see you again, but listen here, George, I want you to remember one thing. It won't make any difference how long it is because I'll love you just the same.

And, George, I love your mother, too, and she told me that she loved me. Will you tell her that I hope she's well and that I'll never forget how kind she was to me and Geraldine last summer. And I hope your father's well, too.

Terry says to say Hello to you. And he says, how's farming? Jackie's getting awful big and he's real smart in school. He always gets a hundred in problems.

Ma and dad are well and I told you all about Janet. So that's all now.

With love,  
Yours truly,  
ROSIE O'BRIEN.

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### Transcriber's Note:

Spelling and hyphenation have been retained as they appear in the original publication.

Page 175 Inserted "of"—on one side [of](#) the gate

Page 190 Added closing quotation mark after [Good for Jarge!](#)

Page 227 Inserted "to"—had happened [to](#) Janet

In the advertisements, Louisa Olcott changed to [Alcott](#)

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