

# THE STORY of NINETTE

By RUBY M. AYRES

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(Continued from Yesterday)

## Chapter XL—NINETTE Clings to Nothard.

What would Peter say when he knew? Ninette stood still, half-way down the stairs, catching her breath with a little stifling sound.

Peter was an honorable man! How could he now—even supposing he wished it more than anything else in the world—break off his engagement?

For some seconds Ninette stood without moving, her face quite colorless, her heart beating with dull misery. Then she went on, and down to the library, where a light shone through the half-closed door.

Peter stood there alone by the fire, his elbow resting on the mantelshelf, his eyes fixed on the glowing fire, an unlit cigarette hanging dejectedly from his lips.

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"I hope mother piles it on her today," I said viciously, and relieved, though half-ashamed of my outburst, I climbed into my car and backed it out of the barn.

"An Important Call." "Poor, unsuspecting Elizabeth!"

hair, and then, as she raised her face, their lips met.

CHAPTER XLII. Peter Makes a Choice.

It was Ninette who spoke first, breaking away from him, her eyes wild, her voice tremulous.

"I'm not in love—I never have any happiness! She doesn't love you and I do! I've never had any happiness! It's been only trouble, all through my life!"

"Oh, you take it so calmly!" she broke out. "You are quite willing to do this? You're willing to let her say she may be scared. What does that matter? She never cared for you—you've just said so—and I—"

She stopped, afraid to trust herself to say any more.

"I can't do it, Ninette! I love you with every beat of my heart, but this—"

He stopped as someone tapped at the door. Mrs. Cranford entered. She looked from her nephew to Ninette, and hesitated, painfully aware of the tragedy in both their faces; then she said:

"Peter, Dorothy is asking for you."

There was an eloquent silence, then Peter made a quick, irresolute gesture.

Mrs. Cranford hesitated, but they both seemed to have forgotten her, and she went silently away.

Ninette turned round then. Her face was marble white, and her eyes blazing. She had lost all sense of justice and proportion in her newly realized love. She had known the joy of being held in this man's arms, and of feelings his kisses upon her lips, and for the moment her soul was aflame with jealousy.

"If you go to her now I will never forgive you or speak to you again as long as I live," she said.

"She hardly raised her voice, but it was shaken to the depths by the strength of her passion.

"Ninette, for God's sake—"

"She drew back.

"I mean what I say! Put yourself in my place and see how you would feel. Imagine that some man who cares for me was upstairs, asking for me—will you go to him?"

"I never want to see you again! I don't care if she is ill or what is the matter with her. You say yourself she doesn't love you. Well, I do! I suppose I've no pride to say this now, but it's the truth, and I won't spare you! You can go to her, if you like, but if you think I shall stay down here, and not mind when I know you will kiss her, and she'll cry out as if in pain as he caught her hand and tried to turn her to him."

"Oh, let me go—let me go!" she sobbed.

But he was stronger than she and held her forcibly, making her look at him as he spoke.

"You don't mean this Ninette; you're upset, unstrung! It's my duty to go to her now, and you know it. I love you—there is no other woman in the world for me—but Dorothy is ill."

Ninette cried out passionately—"I wish I were dead!"

She trembled so that she would have fallen but for Nothard's upholding hands and for a moment they looked into one another's tragic faces silently. Then he broke out again—

"At least kiss me, Ninette—if it's for the last time!"

When he bent toward her she struggled, and tried to hide her face, but she was like a child in his grasp, and he pressed a long, passionate kiss on her lips before he released her.

He turned to the door, but as he opened it she called his name wildly, "Peter! Don't go to her—don't go!"

For a moment she thought he hesitated; then, with a sudden movement, he turned and walked out of the room, shutting the door behind him.

(Continued in The Bee Tomorrow.)

A centenary of Aldershot is recorded as having lost his first tooth at the age of 102.

# My Marriage Problems

Adelle Garrison's New Phase of "REVELATIONS OF A WIFE"

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## What Happened Between Dr. Pettit and Claire Foster.

"I'm so afraid mother will overdo."

I said worriedly, as Lillian and I hurried out to the big old barn which housed the cars.

"No doubt she will," Lillian replied composedly, "but it won't hurt her."

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# SLEEPY-TIME TALES

## THE TALE OF PONY TWINKLEHEELS

BY ARTHUR SCOTT GATLEY

### CHAPTER XVI. The Blacksmith's Shop.

Twinkleheels trotted proudly behind the buggy in which the old horse Ebenezer was pulling Johnnie Green and his father towards the village. Pony Twinkleheels would have chafed at having to suit his pace to Ebenezer's. He would have

"Don't do that!" the old horse Ebenezer called to him. "There's no danger. That noise is nothing to be afraid of. It's only the smith pounding a horseshoe on his anvil."

Twinkleheels looked relieved—and just a bit sheepish.

"I'm glad you came with me," he said. "I'd have been frightened if you—"

A queer hiss made Twinkleheels forget what he was saying. "What's that?" he cried. "Is there a goose hidden somewhere in the smithy?"

"No! The smith put the hot shoe into a tub of water to cool," Ebenezer explained. He couldn't help smiling a bit.

A scrubby-looking white mare who was being shod turned her head and stared at Ebenezer and his small companion.

"It's easy to see," she remarked,

"I thought Ebenezer's gait too slow but ever since Ebenezer won a race with him in the pasture, Twinkleheels had thought more highly of his elderly friend. He knew that if Ebenezer chose to take his time it wasn't because he couldn't have hurried had he cared to."

They reached the blacksmith's shop at last, where Ebenezer and Twinkleheels were to get new shoes. Having been there many times before, Ebenezer was quite calm. Twinkleheels, however, was somewhat uneasy. He had never visited the smithy and he looked with wide, staring eyes at the low, dingy building. On the threshold he drew back as he sniffed odors that were strange to him.

Johnnie Green spoke to him and urged him forward. "Twinkleheels decided. And he wouldn't lunge until Farmer Green led the old horse into the smithy. Then Twinkleheels followed.

"Goodness!" he cried to Ebenezer a moment later. "This place is awful! It gets outside of me!"

He had caught sight of a sort of flaming table against one of the walls.

"Don't be alarmed!" Ebenezer said. "That's only the forge. That's where the blacksmith heats the shoes red hot, so they can pound them into the proper shape to fit the feet."

Twinkleheels had trembled with fear. And now he had scarcely recovered from his fright when a terrible clanging clatter startled him. He snorted and pulled back. He would have run out of the smithy had not Johnnie Green tied his halter rope to a ring in the wall.

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