

THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER YEAR

MARTHA OSTENSO



W.N.U. SERVICE

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SYNOPSIS

The little town of Heron River is eagerly awaiting the arrival of Anna ("Silver") Grenoble, daughter of "Gentleman Jim," formerly of the community, but known as a gambler, news of whose recent murder in Chicago has reached the town. Sophronia Willard, Jim Grenoble's sister, with whom the girl is to live, is at the railroad depot to meet her. Sophronia's household consists of her husband, and stepsons, Roderick and Jason. The Willards own only half of the farm on which they live, the other half being Anna Grenoble's. On Silver's arrival Duke Melbank, a shiftless youth, makes himself obnoxious. Sophronia slaps him. Roderick is on the eve of marriage to Corinne Meader, daughter of a failed banker.

CHAPTER III

SOPHRONIA WILLARD had driven a half mile from the limits of Heron River before she spoke to the girl, who sat beside her straight and white as an icicle.

Then Phronie said, between her long white teeth, "D—n them! The ignoramus. Don't you mind 'em, child! You've done nothin' wrong. Don't you let 'em scare you!"

The girl laughed softly. Sophronia glanced at her in surprise, and thought suddenly that she looked in some way much more than nineteen.

"I'm not a child, Aunt Sophronia," she said. Her voice was low and oddly measured, as though she herself were listening to it. "They didn't frighten me. I am only sorry they upset you on my account."

Phronie was discomfited and a bit irritated. "They get away with too much, those galoots!" she said loudly. "A stranger can't come here that don't act up like a pack o' hoodlums!"

Silver did not reply. Her aunt ventured a glance at her as she jerked the old car around a corner. The girl's face, with its rather small features, was like marble, no life in anything but her eyes, and they stared straight ahead of her as though she saw something nameless beyond the dark of the windshield. Qualms were unusual with Phronie, but she experienced them now.

"We've got to buck up, Silver," Sophronia said violently. "I know how you feel. Jim was my only brother. If he'd been my father I couldn't of felt worse. We've got to keep a stiff upper lip, my dear."

"I know," the girl said in that same level voice. "It must have been a great shock to you, Aunt Sophronia."

"It was."

For a little time there was no conversation between them. Sophronia almost wished that the girl had thrown a fit of hysterics—anything, rather than this frozen silence. It was unnatural in such a young thing.

"But we won't do any talking tonight, Silver," she said presently. "You must get a good rest. I am sorry Roddy—he's my oldest stepson—I'm sorry he's away in the good car. This is an awful rattle-trap for you to be comin' home in!"

Silver seemed to have been thinking her own thoughts. "Your stepson—Roddy," she ventured, "will he mind very much—my coming?"

"He won't mind anything, unless you sell your land to a cash buyer," Sophronia said grimly, and then could have bitten her tongue out. She had just said that tonight they wouldn't do any talking!

"Oh!"

"I didn't exactly mean that," Sophronia shouted. "It's just that he's tilled your section with his dad's until he feels that it's his own. Don't pay attention to me tonight. I'm a little scattered, I guess."

"I don't think I shall want to sell the land, Aunt Sophronia," Silver said monotonously. "If you will just let me stay with you, I'll be ever so grateful."

Sophronia's heart leaped. Well, if it was going to be as simple as that!

"Stay!" she exclaimed. "Isn't this your rightful home? And ain't it your closest kin? I'd be a fine one, I would, if I didn't insist on your living with me!"

"Thank you, Aunt Sophronia," Silver said. "I can't say any more."

"You don't need to," Sophronia remarked tersely. "And don't call me 'Sophronia'! It's too much like me. I get 'Phronie' from them that likes me. You can cut out the 'aunt' too. It makes me feel old."

"Phronie," Silver repeated thoughtfully. "Dad called you that, but I wasn't sure—"

"If it was moonlight," the older woman interrupted, "you could see a stand of white birch against that rise there. The old house—your

great-grandfather's homestead—sits back a ways. It's part furnished still, just like it was when he built it—It, seventy-five years ago. We use the place for the crew now during thrashin'. Well, we're gettin' home."

The girl stirred slightly and glanced back down the slope. "I remember this hill," she said.

"Yes, you was born in that old house," Sophronia declared promptly. "And your mother died in it."

Out of the sultry darkness, old Roderick came toward them from the big house, where one light was burning in the living room. Sophronia saw his arms outstretched toward Jim's daughter, and heard the booming greeting of his voice, and was suddenly afraid. But Jim's daughter did not break down. There was something uncanny about the girl, Sophronia thought in confusion.

In the house, Phronie relieved Silver Grenoble of her wraps and the men took her luggage upstairs. With the firm belief in the efficacy of food to dull the sharp edge of grief, Phronie then busied herself preparing a plate of sandwiches. Jason went to the cooler in the vegetable cellar outside, and brought in a stone Jug of ginger beer, while old Roderick kept Silver company in the living room.

When Sophronia returned with the sandwiches, she saw a bit of color on Silver's cheeks, and although her eyes were darting about the room like dark flames, they were no longer the eyes of some stricken animal.

Sophronia placed the sandwiches and glasses on the table with its crocheted dolly, and Jason poured ginger beer into the glasses.

"Now, Silver," she said stoutly, "you must have a bite. That darned old car must have played you out—it sure did me."

The men helped themselves, reaching out to the decked table in painful fastidiousness with their large brown hands.

Sophronia took in Silver's appearance in detail. The girl was slender, but not as frail as Phronie had at first supposed. Her eyes were dark blue, although by the light of the acetylene lamp they seemed almost black. Her hair was what would be called ash-blond, she decided, and it waved slightly and was dressed in a plain fashion low upon her neck.

Then Sophronia looked about the room and saw it, in a twinkling, as she had not seen it in years. She saw it now because she was wondering what Jim's daughter was thinking about it.

She saw the unobtrusive, faded tan of the wall paper, with the silver stripe in it. That was not in bad taste, she thought stoutly. The curtains were of ecru net, with side strips and valance of plain blue rep; that had been Roddy's idea. She saw the upright piano of black walnut, the keys yellowing, and recalled that until Roddy had removed it there had been a handsome green velvet scarf on its top, hand-painted in pink roses. Sophronia looked at the walls and thought how much cosier they had been with the pictures and mottoes on them, and the burnt leather panel with the head of Pocahontas and the little calendar below. Now, on the wall opposite her, were three smallish etchings, placed step-ladder fashion. Black and white—no color or life to them! One was only land and sky, the second the same with a windmill stuck in it, and the third was an old horse plodding across a frozen pond dragging a two-wheeled cart.

"And is this lawyer—this Benjamin Hubbard you speak of—" old Roderick was saying—"is he looking after all the—the arrangements?"

"Yes," Silver replied softly but very clearly. "Ben is looking after everything. It was Dad's wish that his body should be cremated and his ashes sent here—to be near Mother's grave."

"And did he live long enough to tell you that?" Phronie asked, clearing her throat.

"Oh—he spoke of that some months ago," Silver said, "right after he had his first heart attack. But he mentioned it again—before he died."

"I see," Phronie winked rapidly several times.

The men shifted their feet in awkward silence.

Sophronia kept her eyes on Silver as the girl continued speaking in the same subdued tone. Almost as though she had been there, Sophronia experienced in Silver's telling, the events of the summer.

She saw the scorching day in June when Jim Grenoble had crumpled forward on the street and the doctor had warned him. She saw Jim's eyes as he had looked then—levelly into the face of doom. She heard the doctor's voice telling Jim that one of these days his heart would snap like a rubber band that had been stretched too far. She heard Jim asking his daughter Silver to see to it—if anything happened—that his ashes should rest in the country cemetery at Heron River. Sophronia could hear Silver promising—and pleading desperately with him then to go away with her to some quiet place, away from the tension and fever of the life they were living. And she could see him patting his daughter's hand gently and telling her that they would go soon—just as soon as they had enough money put by.

Phronie said, "Did Jim never mention wantin' to come back—I mean—before he knew he was dyin'?"

Silver raised her eyes, and for a moment Sophronia thought she saw in them something secret and fearful in their expression, something startling. The girl parted her lips and then looked fixedly at the wall opposite her. Phronie had the feeling that Silver had been about to impart some difficult information, and then had changed her mind.

"Yes—he was coming back," she said slowly. "He and I were all ready to come. We had planned to take this morning's train—the one I took alone."

Sophronia started. Her handkerchief dropped limply into her lap. Then, without warning, two large tears rolled from her lids and down her long brown cheeks.

"Please don't," Silver breathed. "I'm sorry—I shouldn't have—"

"Never mind me!" Sophronia exclaimed in a tremendous voice. "I'm an old fool. I thought we wouldn't

Then he turned to speak to Duke. "Time you were in bed, Duke," he remarked pleasantly. This tall, soft hulk of a fellow was beneath contempt, beneath anger, even for Sophronia's sake, although he had been spreading gossip about Phronie's niece ever since his famous visit to Chicago earlier in the summer.

"You been away," Duke said as he slumped down upon a stool.

"Duke checks up on us, Lena," Roddy smiled. "We've got to watch our step."

"No," Duke objected. "I was just thinkin' you ain't heard, maybe, about old Jim Grenoble."

"Gentleman Jim?"

"Sure. Him I seen when I was to Chi last month. I could 'a' told them he wouldn't come to no good end."

"Anything happened?" Roddy asked. There was a certain leering knowledge about Duke that filled him, as always, with distaste.

"Plenty! He got himself shot last night."

"My G—d!" Roddy exclaimed. "Who shot him?"

"Fella named Rawson, it was. The police got him. Killed him when he was tryin' to make his getaway. Some o' them guys can shoot, no foolin'!"

"Poor old Jim!" Roddy said to himself. "Sophronia will take that pretty hard, I'm afraid."

Duke laughed mirthlessly. "Not so's you'd notice it."

"You've seen her?"

"I seen her, all right, all right. And how! She was down to meet the train tonight."

"You mean—they sent the body—?"

Duke's hands played together. "Not exactly. The one that came in tonight wasn't what you'd call a dead one, eh, Lena? I'll tell the world! It was Jim's daughter. Her I seen that night in Chi with a big shot by the name o' Lucas."

"Is she here?"

"She's out to the farm, if that's what you mean. But that oughtn't to worry you none. She won't be stayin' long in these parts, if I know anything. Her kind don't belong round here." He chuckled. "I've got her number, all right, all right!"

But Roddy did not hear the innuendo. Duke's disclosure had flashed like lightning across his mind. He tossed a coin on the counter, seized his hat and made for the door.

Driving home, he realized that he was as near to panic as he had ever been in his life. What would this girl's coming mean? She would undoubtedly sell her land for cash. It was not likely that a couple of hundred a year rental would interest her. Five years ago the land might have come into the possession of the Willards, had it not been for Jim Grenoble's obstinacy. Instead, the money that might have bought it had gone into bad investments. How, if they lost the Grenoble section, were all the Willards going to live on the meager income from their own land, which was, by some trick of nature, not half so rich? And in a week he, Roddy, would have a wife to support as well.

"Yes," Silver Replied Softly but Very Clearly.

talk about it tonight. But—well, it's time we were all turnin' in." She got to her feet. "Looks as if Roddy won't be comin' home tonight. Jase, light the upstairs lamps!"

More than darkness, more than starlight and an indolent wind flowed into Silver's room through the dormer windows. Silver had been gazing at them for over an hour, and the company that entered there was palpable as that heart-beat, undeniable as a truth individualized in loneliness. The company was composed of Jim Grenoble's love for her mother, Anna; of his tragic loss; his subsequent folly. But it had other members as well; the murmur of trees Jim had planted in his boyhood, the ripe fragrance of fields he had tilled, the faint, gliding chuckle of the creek under the willows, in the ravine below.

She reached for the flashlight she had left on the small table beside the bed. She sat for a moment holding it and listening to the dense silence of the house, separating that silence from the winged presences of her own room.

The others would be asleep now. Barefooted, her high-heeled mules in her hand, and a quilted robe about her, Silver stole downstairs, using the flashlight to guide her through the dark. Once outside the house, it was a simple matter to follow the gentle slope down to the old stone building. Presently she knew she had come to the doorway of the old house, for the air about her had subtly changed, as though time itself had gathered there. Ydrasil—her father had not permitted her memory of it to die. Anna Grenoble had named it so. Silver had told Sister Anastasia, in one of the numerous confessions of her girlhood, about Ydrasil, and the nun had said, "Your mother must have been a poet, Silver."

Silver felt her way in her insecure slippers across the ground to the left, the direction from which came the sound of the creek. She seated herself and presently, overcome with weariness, sank down with her head on her arms. It was only twenty-four hours now since Jim Grenoble had died. Just twenty-four hours since this spell of un-attention. The cup of gold is a solanaceae, botanically, giving it the datura and cestrum parqui, the nightblooming jasmine.

It was inevitable that he should die as he had died. There was a

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Hawaii's Cup of Gold

Solantra guttata, or the cup of gold, the glorious flower of the Hawaiian islands, is a naturalized southern California plant. It not only grows easily, but actually thrives on a certain amount of in-attention. The cup of gold is a solanaceae, botanically, giving it the datura and cestrum parqui, the nightblooming jasmine.

relentless rightness in his going the way he had gone. At a hacienda near Mexico City, a peon in the employ of Carlos Salamanca had darted out from behind a pomegranate tree one moonlight night after Jim had taken four thousand dollars from his master, but Jim had broken the wrist of the hand that held the knife and had kept the knife as a souvenir of a close call.

She sat up and clasped her arms about her knees and gazed with burning, dry eyes down at the dark flow of the creek. What would that strange aunt of hers, Dad Jim's sister, have thought if she had told her that there had been another reason, besides his failing heart, for Jim Grenoble's sudden decision to return? Perhaps some day she would tell Sophronia about Gerald Lucas. Some day, when his cool power over her and her capitulation to him was only an evil dream, she might tell Sophronia that it was really from Gerald Lucas that she had fled; that Jim, knowing Gerald for what he was, had been overcome by the knowledge that Silver was in love with him, and had blamed himself for exposing her to the corruption of his own life.

Silver Grenoble, as she lay under the willow tree, was conscious of a great weariness, she knew deeply that a change was coming, pervasive and calm, into her being.

HAMBURG, Great Seaport



View of the Port of Hamburg.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—W.N.U. Service.

HAMBURG thinks in terms of ships, of fish, and trade with far-flung places. Overseas news, especially news that affects trade for better or worse, means more to it than all the politico-social twaddle of Berlin or Munich.

Since the days of sail, its sons have scoured every nook of the world to barter, buy, and sell. Many now extensive German colonies in South America and the Orient began as small groups of traders and clerks first sent from here. Some marry foreign women, retire well-to-do, and bring their families back here to educate the children.

This close tie with distant lands accounts for Hamburg's well-known study of tropic economics and diseases, its researches into new uses for imported raw materials, the world-wide work of its trade groups, and the desire of its young people to learn foreign languages and to travel abroad. Visit in any Hamburg home, or any industrial museum where foreign products are seen, and at once you are struck with youth's eager interest in men, events, and things overseas.

During the years when endless shiploads of immigrants left Germany for the New World, Hamburg was the port from which millions of them sailed, including those from middle and eastern Europe.

Many a Hamburg sitting room is cluttered with curios and quaint mementoes brought back from distant voyages by father, uncle, or brother. Always, Hamburg shares its sons with the sea—many never to return.

From here red-faced crews in smelly oilskins and high boots sail each season to fish the wind-swept North sea, working as far away as Iceland. The loss of life, ships, and nets in this trade is recorded in many a North sea ballad. Herrings their harvest in countless millions, herrings belong to the North sea what bananas are to Central America.

Special fish cars, gaudily painted like circus trains, run at high speed from North sea fish ports to fish-hungry cities as far away as Vienna.

What the "Free Port" Means.

That phrase, "the Free Port of Hamburg," means what? Only this: Away back in 1189 Frederick Barbarossa (the Red Beard) gave Hamburg its "free charter." Though a state now in the German republic, it still enjoys a peculiar degree of independence. Its ancient senate still functions in traditional Spanish dress. While Hamburg joined the German union in 1888, the senate cannily maintained its free-trade rights by holding back a part of its harbor area as a free port. Shut off by a high iron fence, this section is a city within itself, free from the plague of duties and customs inspectors.

Here are mammoth warehouses piled high with China silk, frozen meats from Argentina, coffee from Brazil, farm machines from the United States, many waiting shipment to strange-named Baltic ports, none to pay a cent of customs duty to Germany. Here many of the world's huge ships are built; here are foundries and machine shops. Here, too, flocks of factories profit by the free use of imported raw material and easy shipping facilities.

Hamburg, as a German state, has tariff protections, but this part of it enjoys free trade in all its enormous transit commerce. This benefit is shared by American firms who have warehouses here.

Like Manhattan Island, crowded Hamburg uses tunnels. Between St. Pauli and the Steinwarder side of the Elbe, in the harbor sections, a double tube leads under the river. It is similar to the Hudson tunnels at New York, except for approaches. So crowded are the river banks that no space could be spared for inclines; hence, at each end, men and vehicles use elevators, which lift and lower them 77 feet below street level. Domed temple-like structures house these elevators.

Pig-iron weights hold the tubes from shifting. The tunnels, their walls faced with glazed tiles and decorated with sculptured reliefs, are brilliantly illuminated. On bad days, when fog or ice slows down the Elbe ferries or crowds the bridges, pedestrians and cyclists all "refer the dry, warm tubes.

Many Languages There.

Hamburg is a polyglot port. Shopping street window cards read, "English Spoken," "Se Habla Espanol," "On Parle Francais," Syrian cafes display sidewalk dinner signs

in "fishworm" writing. The hoarsest newspaper joke tells of one store whose sign read, "German spoken here."

English words and phrases "five-o'clock tea," "sport," "morning coat," "gentleman," even "boule dogue" for bulldog—are often sandwiched in German speech and news text. "Jazz" is pronounced "rotz." At the theater one sometimes hears the phrase "Echt Amerikanische Yotz Bandt," meaning "real American jazz band!"

Germans take their pleasures seriously. Sport is highly organized so that fun-making may function smoothly, like electric cargo cranes in the harbor! Hamburg crowds leaving for winter sports take every conventional article advertised in fashion journals.

Watch the Luft Hansa planes, whose pilots can't start till uniformed air policemen come with orders; or observe the race crowds on Derby day, where many wear monocles and London sport clothes, and see with what clocklike precision all events are clicked off. In busy cafes waiters keep count of beers served by the number of paper coasters stacked under each guest's glass.

Go out in Mecklenburg to shoot, and servants carry your coat, lunch, gun, shells, even a stool to sit on, while others drive the game past you in easy shooting range.

In a vast St. Pauli pleasure palace you see dinner dancers suddenly scurry from the floor when uniformed attendants rush in, as if raiding the place, dragging mats, rugs, poles, wires, and all the gear of aerial acrobats. In a jiffy this is set up, and girls in tights are flying through the smoke or swinging out over the tables by trapeze. Just as magically, all this spectacle vanishes; again the jazz band plays, and back to the floor the diners rush to dance again.

Alster Lake in the City.

Alster lake is set in Hamburg like a reflection pool in some ornate exposition grounds. Imagine Times Square, in New York city, as a tree-bordered lake, alive with toy ferriboats, rafts, pleasure craft, floats, and swans. Hamburg's Alster lake is like that, only larger. A river, the Alster, on its way to the Elbe splays wide as its reaches the city. A dam divides the lake, cutting off one end, the Inner Alster, in Hamburg's busiest quarters; so that hotel guests, department store and office building workers can look down on cafes and canoes and watch huge flocks of swans fed at troughs like pigs. Gulls are tame; they fly past and peck bread from your extended hand.

Neat white cafes, with glassed-in verandas, fragrant with potted plants and window flower boxes, stand along the promenade that runs about the lake. Crowds gather here to sit, and sup, and listen to the band or watch boat races, but are politely blind to open-air love-making in cozily cushioned canoes that drift by often with gramophone playing.

Riding to Hamburg in a third-class coach affords a quick flash of life among the masses. Through snatches of salty dialogue overheard run the themes about which working people think. Jobs, wages, the price of food and clothes, what the government ought to do, politics in its many variations—the same here as everywhere. Also, you hear many poor are leaving the city to save rents and try to live on the land. Some men in the coach, returning from visits with country kin, carry a goose, a sack of fruit or potatoes.

"It was better before the war."

"Ach, ya, the good old peace times!"

Peace, war, fires, floods, and cholera—Hamburg had known them all since Charlemagne first laid out the place as a fort from which to fight the Wends, the Swedes, and other half-wild pagans hereabouts, whose descendants later helped people England, Danes, French, Russians—all have struck their blows at Hamburg. But, from the day that Rome soldiers built the first hut and sounded their bugle blasts over the swampy Elbe lands down to the steam-siren chorus of today, Hamburg has slowly grown in power and influence, till now she is the greatest seaport in continental Europe. Heiress of the Hanseatic league, Germans call her.

As in olden days her sailing ships pioneered the Seven seas, so now her liners, freighters, and tankers follow every ocean lane and her voice is the sound of steamers whirling.

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Always a good beginning, this youthful tailored collar on the simple yoke makes a demure foil for the dainty softness of the bodice. The prettiness of the chic frock is furthered with a graceful flare sleeve—or it may puff, if you prefer. The results are so satisfying you'll find it real fun to run up this little dress in a dainty printed silk or cotton. A soft handkerchief linen would be stunning, too, and so easy to tub. Buttons and belt can pick up a color in the print and make a striking accent.

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Smiles

FORTUNATE FAMILY

Teacher—And what is your father's name.

New Pupil—It's Daddy.

Teacher—Yes, I know, dear, but what does your mother call him?

New Pupil—She doesn't call him names. She likes him.

Her Policy

Kathryn—What a lovely engagement ring! Your fiance must be rich to afford so big a stone.

Kitty—Rather. You see, I was engaged to five men this season, and persuaded them to go in together on a syndicate ring. I hate a lot of little ones.—Detroit News.

Popular, Anyway

"Did you see that tall, dark man at the wedding reception? He didn't take his eyes off me the whole time."

"So I noticed, dear. He was one of the detectives guarding the presents."

Long-Arm Artist

Jobyna—Last night Jim tried to put his arm around me three times.

Tatiana—Some arm, I say!

FLAVOR+QUALITY

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