

JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK. Copyright, 1924.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

"A little help—yes. But don't you think you can do things you can't do. Probably you're an unusually strong girl, though I'd say I was more energy than muscle. You might think you could yank him easily. Lots of nice nurses have made mistakes like that, and their backs are gone. He'll find ways of getting himself around. That'll be his business—to manage himself and invent ways of being independent of help. You'll both be astonished to find how much of such an obstacle can be overcome. I could tell you remarkable instances—but I won't. You and Marty have some sort of a life ahead of you. The team has four good arms—"

"And only two legs," added Jo Ellen, with a grimace that was meant to be whimsical. She felt the need to keep Dr. Parker from being gloomy—particularly to keep him from pretending to be cheerful.

"And two good legs," returned Parker defiantly. "Think how much worse everything might be."

This became one of the sharp pains of the situation—listening to talk about how much worse. There would be years of consolation.

The wheel chair brightened Marty at once. He steered himself into every corner of the apartment, accomplishing amazing maneuvers.

"About—"

And he spun around within an incredibly narrow margin of room.

He sat beside Jo Ellen in the kitchen, and had theories about helping her put some of these theories into practice, until she protested that he was in the way. It was a very small kitchen.

"Think of that!" he cried at eating time. "Never need to have a chair set for me. Wheel up my coach, and there I am. The fellow who invented wheel chairs was a genius. I'm for decorating him. But probably he's dead. When were wheel chairs invented, anyway?"

Jo Ellen noted his new habit of watching her narrowly, as if to supplement what she said with something that might be seen. She wondered what he was thinking while he looked at her in this way. When his chair was at the window, it was easy to fancy that he dreamed of an inaccessible world, or that he was trying to fit the world and himself together in a new way. It was possible that at the time of the original disaster, when he was in Europe, he had begun to do this. Any man who had been in hospital would have counted changes. Beyond all that, or nearer than all that, was the mat-

ter of his thought about Jo Ellen. When he seemed to be listening with his eyes, as if to catch the whisper of the maudlin, she wondered; and a sense of this scrutiny made her wary. If, after she answered his questions and had given her assurance, there remained something to be watched, something that signaled from the innermost part of herself, there had to be protection for whatever was to be withheld. Naturally, an artificial cheerfulness was a basic part of the protection. She said to herself that cheerfulness was imperative. You began with that. Being cheerful fitted with the excitement of something that amounted to an extraordinary adventure. Keeping house with a stricken husband who contributed his share of the artificial cheerfulness—and did it so well that she often fancied it was mostly real—was quite out of the ordinary in honeymoons. When it came to the thoughts and feelings that were really hidden, it was true that excitement and depression were fearfully mixed. The novelty of disaster might not last very long; on the other hand, the thing you had endured for a while might not hurt so much.

Jo Ellen did no reasoning about these things. There was neither time nor space for withdrawal. She was busy, and Marty was at her elbow. A flashing sense of some things left others to come as by a slow ache. Chiefly she felt the restraint upon the forward look. She had always liked to mount into her mental conning tower three steps at a time. There were moments when she felt as if she were locked in a cellar. Fortunately, there were other moments when the sun seemed very gay, when even the meager city symbols of summer showed a kind of youthful levity. Maybe you had to be a child, or like a child, to blossom in a back yard. When she went out to the stores she felt she could no longer freely follow the girlhood habit of thinking about the other end of streets. It was worse to have known the sweep of Broadway, for example, than to have come forth and then to have been called back.

X.

One day when she returned from a domestic expedition Marty said he had telephoned to Arnold Pearson, and that his regimental chum was to call that evening.

"You ought to have asked him to supper," said Jo Ellen.

"I will next time," said Marty. "I wasn't quite sure how you'd like it."

"You mean, like him?"

"I meant the supper part—the trouble. You liked him, didn't you?"

A lot. Can't you get him again and ask him to come to supper—we'll make it a dinner for him."

"Good work!"

Marty was thrilled by the idea. His buddy to a dinner served by the bride!

"I know we were going to do that some time," he said. "Naturally, but everything's so different from what we planned on."

"Everything isn't different," said Jo Ellen. "Not everything. I don't think we ought to begin believing that."

"No!" cried Marty, slapping the arms of his wheel chair. "You said it, Jo Ellen. Not everything!" He looked up at her with suffused eyes. "If you'll only keep on thinking it isn't everything!"

"It's a bargain—" and Jo Ellen hustled away to her kitchen.

Arnold Pearson came at six o'clock. He was a bit taller than Marty. His dark hair was brushed straight back. His eyes were quick, like the movements of his lithe body. When his face flushed, as it did when he shook hands with Jo Ellen, a wound scar on his chin stood out sharply.

"Well, old man..." He rushed at Marty, seizing him by the shoulders. "What do you mean..."

"Rotten, er..."

Whatever Marty may have said over the telephone left something that Arnold Pearson hardly, inevitably it left something more, that was not to be picked up in a moment by even the most eager eyes. Jo Ellen never forgot a stunned, fuddled look that marked Pearson for an instant. The sorry part of the look she could understand. There was more of it that carried over into his glance at her, a nervous, frightened glance that made her feel that the meeting of the two men would have been different if she were not there. Afterward it seemed quite reasonable to imagine a meeting with, out her in which these two cronies would have acted differently, with any new man-to-man feeling entirely free to say it any. The third one always brought some sort of restraint, and, of course, she was the most significant possible third one—the wife one, the new wife one. A man friend had to get used to the adjustment.

Yes, it was all quite reasonable. Up to a certain point you could explain it perfectly. Beyond that point you went groping... like Pearson. Of course, she didn't know much

about Pearson. She understood that there was an implication of sacrifice. Marty naturally adored him. You could think of all this in estimating Pearson's stupefaction when he began to know just what had finally happened to Marty. No matter what Marty had said to him at

the telephone, it would be a certain sort of shock to see him, to see him with Jo Ellen standing by. There was the effect of his feeling that the first hurt had happened to Marty, and that this second one, this one that completely toppled him, had happened to two. It was as if his feel-

ing must go out to both of them, and as if this was hard for him. In the end he could only stammer. "Marty, old man, this is tough." The sight of his friend excited Marty.

"Of course. Glad not to find the newly-weds moping. Wouldn't it be said with a forced loudness, 'it isn't foolish!'"

A funeral. We're going to surprise you. Business as usual. A get-together of us three. Never mind the old legs."

"I'm mighty glad—"

"Of course. Glad not to find the newly-weds moping. Wouldn't it be said with a forced loudness, 'it isn't foolish!'"

"It sure would," assented Arnold. "I think it's a great big compliment. Our first married invitation. Why not? The best man. The bride included."

"The bride ought to have thought of it," said Jo Ellen, "but—"

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

THE NEBB'S



PARDNERS.



Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess



Barney Google and Spark Plug



It Doesn't Look Like the Naked Truth.



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck



BRINGING UP FATHER



THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE U. S. M.



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus



JERRY ON THE JOB



THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE U. S. M.



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban



New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. MINTYRE.

New York, Aug. 1.—Thoughts while strolling around New York: Lexington avenue's curls and second-hand coats. Gladstonian collars and narrow string ties. They live and die in a musty world they never leave.

Park avenue's sun-dappled maid. Children of the rich. Nurse maids and silk haired dogs. West Indian servants with a Cockney twang. The sleek old boys around the Racquet club. Bud Fisher in a green motor. Two new hotels—with only motor entrances. Swank? No end.

Bold, bad cuties stopping to redder their lips. Prim old ladies rustling taffetas of long ago. The smart dress-making places near the St. Regis. Million dollar homes turned into shops. No signs. Wiggled door openers in knickerbockers.

Cornelius Vanderbilt. I wish his mother would have the family mansion windows washed. And the curtains changed. Kindly old men feeding sparrows in Plaza park. A riderless horse. Someone thrown on the bridle path. The pink-checked loungers on the Athletic club portico.

Wish someone would ask me to a home-cooked dinner! With hot biscuits, home-made jelly and cream gravy. And, O, yes, floating island. If I keep this up I'll bust out crying. Wonder if Bill Hogg's home. A drug store advertises a marked down goldfish sale.

The colored belt west of Columbus Circle. Smart little shops for the dusky belle. Manicure parlors and colifura salons. A raggy-gay section where smiles predominate. And I believe they get more-out of life than most folk.

A livery stable and a blacksmith shop. The brackish tang of sea air. Sidewheelers heading for Albany. Little Jersey towns begin to pop with lights. New York is going home. And so am I.

A speckled blue sign with white letters announces Michael's school at 145 West Forty-third street. It is the only school for acrobats in the city. The school is in one of the old brown stone houses ready to crumble into dust. The house contains downstairs, at the left, a homeopathic drug store; upstairs at the right, a laundry; at the left, a beauty parlor. Out straight to the rear, the door open, is Michael's. He is the father of what vaudeville knows as "dumb acts." He teaches agile folk to do somersaults and handstands, nips and flip flops. He, for years, was a skilled acrobat until age slowed him down. The most important part of all the equipment in Michael's school is the phonograph. Every motion is timed to music, and it is that which gives rhythm and grace to the performance.

There is an old man up in Harlem, by the way, who teaches the art of clowning. He has not more than a handful of pupils, but there is a pathetic earnestness about his instruction. Courtney Ryley Cooper, the writer, is off with the circus this summer. Few who saw the amusing clown in the ring knew it was the author. Cooper goes with the circus to gather material for his intensely interesting circus stories. He is probably the greatest living authority on elephants. One night I sat up all night listening to elephantine wonders as told by Achmed Abdulla and Cooper. Achmed would outdo Cooper and vice versa, and I now in retrospect rather believe they were kidding me.

And to those who like elephants, I recommend a short story called "The Elephant Never Forgets." I have been unable at the moment to remember the author, but it is included in one of the O. Henry Short Story Prize winning books and is in my opinion about the best animal story ever written.

(Copyright, 1924.)

Oh, Man!



By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield

