

TAXI

An Adventure Romance

By George Agnew Chamberlain

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SYNOPSIS.

PART I.—Robert Hervey Randolph, young New York man-about-town, leaves the home of his sweetheart, Madge Van Teller, chagrined because of her refusal of his proposal of marriage. His income, \$10,000 a year, which he must surrender to a certain Miss Imogene Pamela Thornton (whom he has seen only as a man girl ten years before) is found, is not considered by the girl of his heart adequate to modern needs. In a "don't care" mood Randolph enters a taxi, unseen by the driver, and is driven to the stage door of a theater. A man he knows, Duke Deamer, induces a girl to enter the cab. Deamer, attempting to follow, is pushed back by Randolph and the cab moves on. His new acquaintance tells Randolph she is a chorus girl, and has lost her position. She is in distress, even hungry, and he takes her to his apartment. There, after lunch, a chance remark convinces him the girl is the missing Pamela Thornton. He does not tell her of her good fortune, but secures her promise to stay in the flat until the morning, and leaves her. In a whimsical mood, also realizing that the girl's reappearance has left him practically penniless, he bribes the taxi driver to let him take his job, and leaving word with the legal representative of the Thornton estate where he can find Pamela, takes up his new duties under the name of "Slim Hervey." He loves the girl, but his pride forbids him approaching her under their changed conditions.

PART II.—One evening he is engaged by Beacher Tremont, notorious profligate, to drive him and Madge Van Teller to a beauty known as "Greenwood." Aware of the evil nature of the place, Randolph drives the pair to Greenwood cemetery. Infuriated, Beacher gets out of the cab and Randolph leaves him there, taking the girl (who has awakened to a realization of her folly) to her home. Madge recognizes him.

PART III.

Maid's Adventure.

Take a young girl of about twenty who, in her childhood, was pampered of fortune in money, position, good breeding, and pets, turn her loose on the world at the age of ten with no prop but a faithful, sticky and destitute old nurse, kill off the nurse a couple of years later, let the girl fend for herself as scullery-maid and what not through the uninteresting stage that precedes the sudden bloom of unexpected beauty, give her a long succession of jobs secured "on her looks" and lost because she wouldn't, lead her up to the crowded portal of despair and the long-drawn-out surrender; then snatch her suddenly back from destruction, feed her, give her the sole freedom for a night of Mr. Robert Hervey Randolph's comfortable apartment and—what will she do? The answer is easy. She will find the bath and turn on the hot water.

That was the very first thing that Miss Imogene Pamela Thornton did after she had finished spying from the window on the movements of what she supposed was Mr. Randolph and what, in reality, was Mr. Patrick O'Reilly in Mr. Randolph's best top-hat, best suit of evening clothes and overcoat, best gray silk muffler, price twenty-two dollars, and best patent-leather shoes—the last a very tight fit which made the revamped gentleman's gait a cross between that of a chicken on a hot stove and a drunk on his reluctant way home.

Even the unsuspecting Miss Thornton was puzzled by that halting locomotion in connection with what she knew of Mr. Randolph, but she added it, two and two, with the mysterious twenty minutes spent by that gentleman and the driver in the recesses of the cab, apparently to settle a difference in ideas as to the value of a waiting taxi, and decided that poor Mr. Randolph must have issued from the interview in a semi-crippled state.

She herself was too excited to let pity altogether absorb her. Without waiting for either the tortured wayfarer or the taxi to get quite out of sight, she dropped the window curtain and turned to possess herself of her world of comfort for a night. A starved instinct led her straight to the luxuriously appointed bathroom. As previously intimated, she turned on the hot water and clasped her hands ecstatically as she watched its crystalline surge and imagined she could smell the opalescent steam.

But not for long was she inactive. Having surrendered to circumstance to the extent of promising to stay in the flat until ten the following morning, she decided to do the job wholeheartedly, for Imogene Pamela was one of those lucky and fated young women who can never give themselves by halves. If happiness so much as showed its nose, it was her nature to tackle blindly for its waist and go to the mat for the immediate present.

Consequently, let not her modesty be misjudged when it is related that, in the short time it took to fill the bath, she accomplished the following: Rooted out Mr. Randolph's best silk pajamas, found his softest bathrobe, filled a hot-water bottle and slipped it far down between the too cold linen sheets of his big bed. Continuing at this rate of achievement, it may be imagined that in ten minutes more the young lady, having bathed, was curled up and sound asleep. Not on your

feet. It took her twenty-one minutes by the clock to scrub out the corners of the soapy zinc bath-tub of twenty years.

minutes to wash her hair. Item: Half an hour more to scrub her underwear and stockings. Assorted items: Various pauses during which she shamelessly looked at herself in a full-length mirror of such pure reflecting qualities as had not crossed her path since England was a pup. After that, a long, entrancing time, called "drying her hair."

Did you blame her, three lines back, in your heart for her frequent inspections of self in the mirror? If you did, look at her now! Mr. Randolph's bathrobe is billowed at her waist and tied tight to keep it from trailing on the floor; for almost a like reason, its sleeves are rolled up above her elbows. It is open in a V at the neck, showing the adolescent curve of a virginal but much excited bosom.

With a woolly towel in both hands, she plants herself before the staid old looking-glass and gives it such a treat as it has never before savored in its sixty-two years of service to the Randolph family. Rub, rub, rub with the towel. Her cheeks grow pink and plumper, her eyes round and rounder. They twinkle and smile, and once, when she made a little face at herself, they laughed out loud. Her hair slowly wakes from its stringy dampness until it, too, bursts into a sort of light and curly merriment. Pamela puffs out her cheeks and blows at it, reflection.

When all the rubbing is done, even to the last rite where they divide the fragrant flood into two waves falling over the bosom and mercilessly knead the damp ends between folds of the driest bit of the towel, she drops that implement and runs into the big room where the dying open fire blinks its red eye as though it had been waiting up for her.

The writer—who is privileged, for the benefit of a large and growing public, to see her in his mind's eye as her pink bare feet pad up and down the room, racing every time they come to the home-stretch between the unpeopled grandstand of the couch and the fire, and then doubling suddenly, so that her wide eyes may catch her hair still on the wing, for all the world like a kitten chasing its tail—does herein affirm, by the collective manhood of the earth, that she was altogether lovable and beyond the reach of sullying thought. Now let her curl up in the bed and sleep.

Slumber meant nothing in Pamela's life. That statement should be taken not in the sense of the common slang of the vulgar, but at its literal face value. What is meant is that when this young lady slept, it was like taking a chunk bodily out of life and putting it in warm storage. As a consequence, when the old-fashioned clock on the mantle burred a warning that it was thinking of striking the hour of nine in about two minutes, she opened her eyes and wondered through what magic light had been suddenly replaced by broad and smiling day.

Not for long did that life-long and accustomed miracle hold her attention, for scarcely had it occurred, through force of habit, to her awakening thought than her startled eyes fell upon the tall, stooped, gray-headed figure of a man, clad in livery, and standing unobtrusively in the doorway of the room. His eyes, naturally deep-set, actually protruded from his face as though they were determined to come half-way to meet Pamela's wondering



"He-hello," stammered the Young Lady.

orbs. He looked like a solemn raven which has carelessly alighted on a live wire.

"He-hello!" stammered the young lady.

"Good-morning, miss," said Tomlinson, in sepulchral and censorious tones. "Where is Master Robert?"

"You mean Mr. Randolph?" asked Pamela, a little breathlessly.

The old man steeled himself by seizing the door-jamb and bowed confirmation of her supposition.

"I don't know where he is," said Pamela, more calmly. "The last time I saw him he was limping west." A twinkle came into her eyes. "Why do you ask?"

"Why do I ask?" he exclaimed. "Miss, do you mind telling me who you are and what you are doing in Mr. Randolph's apartment at nine o'clock on a Friday morning?"

"In November," supplemented Pam-

ela, as though she were supplying very important addition to the facts in the case. "I am Miss Thornton," she added, with such dignity as a

cheek, and cuddled in a young man's big bed, could summon.

The effect of her words on Tomlinson was electrical.

"Miss Imogene Pamela Thornton?" he asked, as he suddenly straightened and let go of his supports.

"Yes," said Pamela, gazing at him in undisguised surprise. "How did you know?"

"Why, miss," said the old man. "I'm Tomlinson. Excuse me for saying so," he added, a pale flush in his withered cheeks. "But many a time in the old days Maggie let me take you on my knee. A mort of worry you have given us, miss."

Quick tears rose to Pamela's eyes. "Oh!" she cried. "You knew Maggie?"

"In a manner of speaking, I did," stated Tomlinson sonorously. "Kissed her; but she never let me get as far as hugging, poor girl! She said she knew she wasn't here for long enough."

Laughter bubbled into Pamela's eyes alongside of the tears, but, in spite of it, the next moment she was crying softly.

"P-poor M-Maggie!" she sobbed.

Tomlinson bobbed his head up and down in formal sympathy, too old to worry much over woman's weeping.

"I understand that she must 'ave went," he said. "Else you wouldn't be alone, miss. Will you have your breakfast in bed?"

"Oh, could I?" sniffed Pamela, and then her eyes fell on the clock. "No, I can't," she decided for herself. "You see, Tomlinson, I only pro-promised to stay until ten."

"I'll be getting your bath ready, then, miss," said Tomlinson, and withdrew.

Half an hour later Pamela was enjoying a lonely "tray"-breakfast, placed at her command before the couch, which faced the friendly fire in the big living-room. Without being a mind-reader, it is possible to surmise that she ate very slowly, in the vain hope that Mr. Randolph would pop in, with or without Father Christmas, and joining her in the meal, banish a baby Mr. Gloom that was hanging round.

While she was still toying with her food she heard the bell ring and Tomlinson's voice saying, in deep, respectful tones: "Miss Thornton will see you, sir. She is in the sitting-room."

Pamela dropped her egg-spoon and stood up, back to the fire, just in time to face a neatly dressed, pink-cheeked, bright-eyed, bald-headed little gentleman, who stood, poised but alert, in the open doorway, like a bird about to peck at her to see if she were the real thing.

"Miss Thornton?" he asked, in a peculiarly loud voice.

Pamela nodded her head twice.

"I am Mr. Borden Milyuns," continued the molten voice, and the bright eyes studied her face expectantly.

Pamela puckered her brows in an effort to meet that expectancy half-way, but failed.

"Are you?" she asked doubtfully, and with a mental reservation against Mr. Robert Hervey Randolph for outraging the traditions of childhood by sending a Father Christmas in this dapper form. "Won't you sit down?" she added politely.

Mr. Milyuns hung poised for a second longer, and then advanced on the couch decisively, sat down on one end of it, and waved his hand at the other. Tomlinson slipped in and out, bearing the breakfast-tray away. Pamela accepted Mr. Milyuns' silent invitation and seated herself, but tentatively, as though she could only stay for a minute.

"Make yourself comfortable, my dear," said Mr. Milyuns; "I'm going to talk to you for some time."

"You can't," said Pam; "not here. I only have the flat for six minutes longer. That is, I only pro-promised to stay here until ten." Her eyes wandered half expectantly, half wistfully to the door.

The bird-man smiled.

"We'll see about that," he said. "I'm sorry you don't remember me. If you are indeed Miss Imogene Pamela Thornton, I used to take you on my knee often, many years ago."

Pamela could no longer be startled by such announcements.

"That's what Tomlinson said this morning," she remarked. "Ever since last night, everybody I meet seems to—to know my real name. I don't understand it."

"Please trust me," said Mr. Milyuns, "and you'll soon understand a lot more than that." He drew a slip from his pocket. "Now, do answer me carefully. Tell me the addresses of the first four places you and Maggie lived in after your father died."

"I can't remember the first," said Pam, but after a second's thought, rattled off the names of three streets, and located addresses approximately by describing nearby corners prominent to a child's mind for one reason or another. "Those are the next three," she said. "After that, we went—"

But Mr. Milyuns was satisfied.

"That's enough for formalities, my dear. I'm convinced that you are the person for whom the firm of Milyuns, Branch & Milyuns has been searching for years. Do you remember your great-uncle, Asa Thornton?"

"Yes," said Pamela, a vague wonder and terror in her eyes; "but I didn't know he was real."

"Didn't know he was real!" exclaimed Mr. Milyuns. "What do you mean?"

"Maggie used to say," explained Pamela, "if you're not good, your great-uncle, Asa Thornton, will catch you, and he hasn't cut his finger nails

since your poor father married your dear mother." Pamela shuddered.

"You'll have to forget all that," said Mr. Milyuns soberly. "Before your great-uncle died, he repeated very ef-

fectively of the way he treated your father, and left you an income of ten thousand dollars a year."

Pamela sat up very straight, and then sank slowly into the pillows at her back.

"Ten—thousand—dollars—a—year!" she repeated slowly.

Mr. Milyuns nodded.

"Beginning with today. There is no accumulation waiting for you, because, by the terms of the will, Mr. Randolph was allowed the entire income up to such time as you should be



"Ten—Thousand—Dollars—a—Year!" She Repeated Slowly.

discovered. That provision was quite natural, if you will remember that Mr. Asa Thornton had been searching for you unsuccessfully for some months before he died."

Pamela sat up straight again.

"I want to understand you," she said with a sudden dignity that increased Mr. Milyuns' admiration, already decidedly on the upgrade. "You mean that, with my appearance, Mr. Randolph's entire income completely disappears?"

Mr. Milyuns nodded.

"You have guessed it in one," he said flippantly.

"I don't need ten thousand dollars a year," said Pamela promptly. "You will please tell Mr. Randolph that I shall only take half."

Mr. Milyuns smiled.

"I'll try to carry out your orders," he said blandly, "but I'll have to find Mr. Randolph first. Let me add that you apparently don't know the young gentleman very well."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Pam.

"Well," said Mr. Milyuns, taking another scrap of paper from his pocket and handing it to her, "read that. It was left at my house this morning by a taxi-cabman, who didn't wait for an answer. You see that Mr. Randolph has handed over to you in perpetuity this apartment, Tomlinson, and all the other fixings. It doesn't look very much as though he intended to come back in the near future."

"But I want him to!" cried Pam. "I—I've been expecting him. I didn't half—half thank him for—for—"

Tears of disappointment clogged her throat.

"There, there!" said Mr. Milyuns, leaning over and patting her hand. "I understand just how you feel, because Bob is one of the straightest, openest, most lovable young devils that ever went his own way through a delighted world."

Pamela nodded her head up and down in silent confirmation of all those kind words. She began to like Mr. Milyuns. She raised pleading eyes to his face.

"Won't you please find him for me?"

"My dear," said Mr. Milyuns, so promptly that if she had asked for the house and lot on the northwest corner of Fifth avenue and Fifty-seventh street, he would have promised it to her before he could stop himself. "I will. I haven't proved myself much good at the game, but I'll find Bob for you if I have to start a detective agency of my own. In the meantime, what are you going to do? I suggest that you accept these premises until the trunk turns up—only, of course, we must get you a companion."

"A companion?" asked Miss Thornton. "But I have that already. Tomlinson is a dear."

"Tomlinson is splendid in his way," admitted Mr. Milyuns, "but he isn't quite a woman. You can't live here chaperoned by a mere male."

"Can't I?" said Miss Thornton, with a new edge to her voice and something in her eyes that made them look as though they were passing in review all the unchaperoned years since first she made her debut as an independent scullery-maid at Mrs. Blunkum's feed-house. "I shall change nothing here," she concluded. "When Randy—Mr. Randolph comes back, he shan't find his place cluttered with females."

Mr. Milyuns turned on her a gaze that was complex with admiration and a realization that he was on the way to biting off more than he could chew. He decided to sidestep.

"Can you be in this afternoon?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said Pamela, involuntarily glancing at the door and betraying a half-formed intention to watch that portal night and day until death or

Mr. Robert Hervey Randolph arrived; "I'll be in. Why?"

"Mrs. Milyuns and my daughter Ellen will call on you at about five," explained Mr. Milyuns. "Just on-

more matter and I must go," he continued. "Your income amounts to something over eight hundred dollars a month. I shall pay it in advance until you get settled and have a chance to catch up."

"Please send me only half," said Pamela, as she rose to say good-by.

Mr. Milyuns took her hand, dropped it, and started toward the door; but before he got there, he stopped and turned.

"My dear," he said, losing for the moment his birdlike, chirpy pose. "I don't want you to think of me as just your banker. I knew your father and your mother, and their fathers and mothers before them. I am fond, by old usage, of every drop of blood that runs in your veins. You won't forget that, will you?"

Pamela stared at him, swept toward him, threw her arms round his neck, hugged him, dropped her face on his shoulder and wept. Mr. Borden Milyuns stood very erect, his bald head held high, his pink cheeks puffed out, and his eyelids blinking at the rate of fifteen to the dozen in a vain effort to fan back an amazing lachrymatory inundation.

"There, there!" he said, patting Pamela on the back. "Who would have thought it, you adorable, lonely little girl?"

Pamela threw up her head and smiled through the sudden summer shower.

"I know it was ridiculous," she said. "But I couldn't help it. You made me like you all of a sudden, and I just had to, because you've had a bath and you look so clean inside and out." She kissed him as she broke away.

"I see; I see," said the astounded Mr. Milyuns.

(Continued in Next Issue)

HEMINGFORD

Lloyd Mullen has been on the sick list.

D. W. Butler was an Alliance caller Wednesday.

Mrs. Joel Sheldon is having a siege of the grippe.

Jack Dickinson departed for St. Louis Monday.

Rev. May returned home from Morrill Wednesday.

Bill Brooks returned home from Alliance Tuesday.

K. L. Pierce returned home from Lincoln Tuesday.

Margaret Wilcox has been nursing the chicken pox.

Russell Cox is again working at the Drury barn shop.

G. M. Burns of Alliance was a caller in town Wednesday.

Miss Eureka Wiley is working at the Sam Graham home.

Mr. Taylor of Girard was in town Tuesday between trains.

Bert Brown and Arthur Carrel were Alliance callers Monday.

Mrs. Homer Meade of Alliance was a caller in town Monday.

Mr. Grimes returned home from Sheridan, Ia., Wednesday.

Mrs. John Manion was visiting her parents Saturday and Sunday.

Frank Walters transacted business in town Monday between trains.

Ora Mavel of Hastings has accepted a position at the First State Bank.

Bert Hopkins spent a few days at the Ralph Hopkins home this week.

Irma Wright spent the first of the week at the home of Helen Andrews.

Mrs. Frank Caha and Mrs. Myrta Hopkins were Alliance shoppers Monday.

Misses Irene Davidson and Mar-

garet Uhrig were Alliance callers on Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Vain were passengers to Purdue Monday, returning Tuesday.

S. Yonaru who has been at the L. L. Rosenberger home, returned to Denver Monday.

Mrs. Ike Woods has been on the sick list. Miss Amelia Hucke is taking care of her.

Irene Davidson entertained a few of her friends at a party at her home Monday evening.

Mrs. Madison and daughter departed Wednesday for Lodge Pole, Neb., to visit her parents.

Fred Abley returned home Wednesday after a week's visit with his son, Aloys, at Omaha.

Mr. and Mrs. Oakley Stevenson were passengers to Alliance Monday, returning Wednesday.

Jay Hall, Fred Melick, Chris Hansen and Edgar Christensen were Alliance callers Tuesday.

Mary Walters who has been spending the past two months at Ardmore, S. D., returned Wednesday.

Mr. Solenberger, Mr. Frank Black and Mrs. Brida Shimek of Marsland were callers in town Monday.

The monthly Parent-Teachers' meeting was held at the high school assembly room Monday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Hovl Kvester and daughter, Margaret, were callers at Sam Graham's Sunday afternoon.

J. B. Plumer, who has been stationed here for the past three weeks' buying potatoes, returned to Morrill Tuesday.

Charles Caha has been taching the Latin class of the high school during the absence of their teacher, Miss Dulle.

S. E. Mooser, a potato buyer who has been buying potatoes for the Whitnack Produce Co., of Lincoln returned to Omaha Monday.

Ora Phillips and father were Alliance callers Tuesday. Mr. Phillips stayed over until Wednesday, but his father returned the same day.

Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Kosinski and family, Mr. and Mrs. B. Barrows and family and Emmitt Dowell attended the dance at Ed Bugers Saturday night.

Frank Cody of Brague, Neb., and Mary Poltny of Hemingford, were married by Father Manning, at the Catholic church Tuesday morning at nine o'clock. They expect to make their home at Brague.

Mrs. Sam Graham received the sad news of the serious illness and death of her brother, George McCoy of Newcastle, Wyo., last Friday, but she was unable to go, owing to the illness of her husband and oldest son.

Mrs. Corey and Mr. Whitsell entertained their Sunday school classes at a party at the church basement Tuesday evening. Various games was the evening's amusement. A lunch of sandwiches, fruit salad, cake and ice cream was served.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Mackler who have been enjoying a two weeks' visit at Denver, Kansas City and different points in Missouri returned home Tuesday morning. Miss Sylvia Morris who took care of the children during their absence returned to her home in the country Tuesday.

The Freshmen class of the high school, enjoyed themselves to the very utmost Wednesday evening when they went for a sleighing party. They met at the high school building and then went to the country home of Bessie Baldwin where she joined the party, afterwards they returned to Miss Bessie's home where a good hot fire and lunch was enjoyed.

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