

# Storm Country Polly

by Grace Miller White  
Illustrated by R.H. Livingstone

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**"YOU DARLING!"**

**SYNOPSIS.**—Occupying a dilapidated shack in the Silent City, a squatter settlement near Ithaca, New York, Polly Hopkins lives with her father, small Jerry, and an old woman, Granny Hope. On an adjacent farm, Oscar Bennett, prosperous farmer, is a neighbor. He is secretly married to Evelyn Robertson, supposedly wealthy girl of the neighborhood. Marcus MacKenzie, who owns the ground the squatters occupy, is their determined enemy. Polly overhears a conversation between MacKenzie and a stranger, in which the former avows his intention of driving the squatters from his land. The stranger sympathizes with the squatters, and earns Polly's gratitude. Evelyn Robertson discovers from her mother that they are not rich, but practically living on the bounty of Robert Percival, Evelyn's cousin. Polly learns from Evelyn that the sympathetic stranger is Robert Percival. Evelyn charges Polly with a message to Bennett, telling him she can give him no more money. She already bitterly regrets her marriage to the ignorant farmer. Polly conveys her message and Oscar makes threats. He insists Evelyn meet him that night. Polly has her father and Larry Bishop, a squatter, take an oath to do MacKenzie no injury. Evelyn unsuccessfully tries to get money from her mother with which to buy off Bennett and induce him to leave the country, giving her freedom. She and MacKenzie avow their love. At the arranged meeting that night Bennett threatens Evelyn with exposure unless she gives him money. Polly meets Robert Percival, and they are mutually attracted. Polly's feeling being adoration. Oscar kills Polly's lamb and Percival thrashes Oscar.

**CHAPTER VII—Continued.**

A sound of boots moving on boards was his only answer. Polly coughed nervously.

"Now this is what I'm going to offer," went on MacKenzie. "No one can make me raise the price one cent. I'll give you men twenty-five dollars apiece; you sign over to me your squatter rights; then take your women and kids and go."

There was not a word in answer to this. Only Wee Jerry felt Daddy Hopkins clasp him tighter.

Realizing that the stony silence that met his offer was practically a refusal, MacKenzie got to his feet.

"You can take it, or—or go to h— for all I care!" he exclaimed.

He turned toward the door; and then Pollyop got back her breath, and while the squatter men watched sullenly, she stepped in front of him.

"You're in wrong, mister," she flared. "You're d—d generous, ain't you? Twenty-five dollars wouldn't take us anywhere, an' where would we go anyhow? This ain't movin' day in the Silent City. You've made your talk, now scoot along."

Marcus fixed her with eyes angry beyond description. Her own blazed back at him as she pointed toward the door.

"Scout out," she repeated, "an' don't be comin' again."

MacKenzie lifted his riding whip threateningly, and every man with a growl started forward; but as the whip fell back to his side, they sank down again.

Then it was that he shifted the whip to his left hand and took from his pocket a shining pistol; and although Polly whitened, she held her ground.

"And you, you impudent luzzy," snapped MacKenzie, "what have you got to do with it? What are you, anyway?"

In spite of the deadly thing held in the white, strong fingers, Polly's head went up a bit.

"I'm the fittest mummy in the world," she said simply. "I'm naimy to this hull settlement. An' my squatters stays in the Silent City—see?"

The pistol came up with a click, and MacKenzie, enraged beyond control, struck Pollyop two stinging blows with the riding whip. Then he strode out into the open, and, holding high the weapon, passed through the frowning line of watching women. He gave them but a flashing disdainful glance, and when he turned around, Polly Hopkins was standing in the door, motioning the women into the shack. He came to a direct halt and shouted at her:

"I'll never offer money again, but you'll all go, if I have to burn your kuts about your heads."

As if he had not spoken, Polly gave him no heed but ushered woman after woman into the shanty.

"I'd rather be'd 'a hit me than any-one of you," she said, her flesh tingling with pain. "If you'd 'a pounced on 'm, Daddy, or you, Larry, he'd 'a popped one of you dead. Now listen to me."

Then she told them that Robert Percival had said the squatters should stay in the settlement. She said she had had a promise from a man better

than Old Marc that he would help them. And thus she brought smiles back to the faces of her miserable friends; and as they went away, each woman kissed her, and each man reverently placed his hand on her curly head in blessing.

**CHAPTER VIII.**

Then came the days through which the inhabitants of the Silent City lived with nothing to comfort them but Polly Hopkins. Scarcely an hour passed without strangers walking over the rough road through the settlement and every one knew that these men, so curious and yet so unwilling to speak even a "good-day," were doing service for Marcus MacKenzie.

At last one day, crushed with apprehension and despair, Jeremiah Hopkins decided that one of them should go to Robert Percival to ask his aid in keeping the settlement together. Polly was so sure he would keep his word to her—now they would give him the chance.

"It's a choice of the three of you, Poll," said Lye Braeger, "you or your daddy or Larry Bishop."

"He wouldn't listen to me, lassie," Hopkins mourned. "Mebbe he would to you. I dunno, but mebbe."

Before the girl's sensitive mind flashed the face of Robert, and she hid her red cheeks against the speaker's knee.

"Oh, I couldn't never go to 'm, Daddy honey," she murmured. "Please, Daddy."

"We ain't got a chance without some one's help, Poll," insisted Braeger. "You go along, an' do your d—dest for the squatters!"

"All right, Lye," she managed to say. "I'll go after Jerry's in bed, an' the supper's over."

So it came to pass that nightfall found Polly Hopkins struggling up the hill to the railroad tracks. She turned south on the boulevard and stole cautiously along the edge of the road. She had no desire to meet Old Marc or Evelyn. As she went on she murmured to herself some of the love words Granny Hope had planted in her memory, and when she turned into the carriage-way leading to the Robertson home, she held her head a little higher and walked with less nervousness.

Around and around the house she crept, until with trepidation she mounted the steps leading to the front porch and tiptoed to a long French window. It was partly open and there, seated before a table, was the man she sought.

Polly knocked once, but the sound was so faint Robert did not hear it.

"Hist," came from between Polly's lips, and the young man glanced up. At the sight of her he got to his feet slowly. Then Polly shoved the window open a crack and squeezed into the room.

A strange mixture of conflicting expressions swept over his face, but pleasure at the sight of her predominated them all.

"Pollyop!" he exclaimed. "Polly Hopkins, what's the matter?"

"Old Marc's goin' to turn us all out, mister," she whispered huskily, searching his face. "an' Daddy sent me to ask you to help us."

Robert drew one hand across his brow helplessly.

"I've said everything I could to make him understand the crime of it all," he apologized. "He's like a crazy man! I can't see how he can think of such a thing, even though your people were willing to go, Polly."

"We ain't; we can't go," she replied, quivering. "There ain't a place in the world for squatters but the Silent City."

"I know it," he returned gloomily. "And can't Love do nothin' for us?"

"Implored the girl. "Granny Hope says it can, an' once I—I heard you say 'twas the—the—"

Just at that moment the sound of footsteps was heard outside in the hall. Robert thrust out his hand, grasped Polly by the shoulders, and in another moment she found herself behind the thick curtain hanging in heavy folds over rows of books which rose to the ceiling.

The door opened; and Percival spun around to meet Marcus MacKenzie. He crushed down his embarrassment and offered his visitor a chair.

"Evelyn sent me for a book," Marcus explained. "Pardon me for disturbing you, old chap."

"Sit down," Robert requested with an effort.

Marcus shook his head.

"I can't," he replied. "Eve and I are confabing over something. I told her I'd get a book and come right back."

He made a movement to walk toward the book shelves; but Robert stopped him.

"You've got to sit down," he said gruffly. "I want to talk to you."

"In a minute, then," returned Marcus. "I'll get the book first."

Very white, Robert walked before MacKenzie to the bookcase. Then with one sweep of his arm he moved aside the curtain and with it—Polly Hopkins. He could feel beneath the thick material the slender, quivering body. And there, as the two men stood facing the shelves laden with the masterpieces of the world, and Marcus was running his eye up and down, Robert felt that first wonderful protective love that comes to a man when he is shielding a woman.

"Evelyn said it was here," observed MacKenzie carelessly. "Let me look! A—B—C—Here's D. It ought to be on this shelf."

He read aloud the names of the books under his eye while still the strong hand of his companion held up the curtain and the girl.

"Ah, here it is," came in exclamation. "There! Thanks, Bob! Now I'll sit down a minute."

He walked back to the table, and Percival carefully dropped the draperies. Keeping his eye on the other man's back, he ran his fingers over the curtain until he came to the curly head of Polly Hopkins. Two tender pats fell upon it. Then he, too, crossed to the center of the room.

"You're a hospitable chap, Bob," laughed Marcus. "Heigh-ho! but today I've been some busy. I'll bet you a quarter of a dollar it won't be three months before I get every squatter off that shore. The fact of it is, I've only got to catch Hopkins, and the rest'll be easy. He's a bad actor; and that girl of his is a saucy baggage."

"She's a very good girl," Robert interposed in deep tones, "and very pretty, too."

The bookcase draperies moved ever so little. Polly Hopkins almost burst with joy when she heard those words.

"Pretty enough, I suppose," Marcus conceded, "but not good. She's like the rest—had clean through."

The curtains moved a little more; and Robert caught the sway of them out of the tail of his eye. He felt that if MacKenzie did not go soon, he would love to drive right along where their road runs, couldn't you?"

This had been MacKenzie's idea, also. What a capable girl Eve was! He took her pretty face between his hands and kissed her once and then again and again.

"You darling!" he murmured. "You're the wisest little woman in the world! My whole ambition is to make our home just to suit you. I was talking to one of those landscape chaps up at the college the other day, and he said the lake section could be made charming. We can build our house on the hill just above there!"

"And the farm," Evelyn interposed, "that would just round out your place perfectly. Oh, honey, do that right away. Mr. Bennett will ask more for it as soon as you get rid of the squatters."

Marcus lighted a cigarette thoughtfully.

"The Bennett farm wouldn't be of any use to me," he explained slowly, "unless I can make a clean sweep of the whole thing. It's a crime, I tell you, Evelyn. Think of it! I had to send out of the county to get my men to watch those fellows down there. Ithaca makes me tired. It's a good thing I came back to put some snap into the fight against the squatters."

The girl's white lids made a curtain between his shining eyes and her own. Evelyn was wishing, oh, how very much she desired that Marcus would buy the farm. Then Oscar could leave the country, and in another state he would set her free! She studied MacKenzie's face covertly through half-closed eyes, considering what to say and how to say it.

MacKenzie flung his cigarette into the grate. He found the suggestion of her veiled look so alluring that he gathered her into his arms and rained kisses upon her face.

"I love you so, sweet, I could almost eat you!" he panted.

A happy sigh, like the perfumed breath of a rose, slipped from her parted lips, and when she laughed again, his deep chuckles joined hers.



Robert Drew One Hand Across His Brow Helplessly.

won't be anything to catch in season or out, if the squatters keep up their infernal poaching. Hunting and fishing are for gentlemen, my dear Bob! Don't forget that!"

"Gentlemen be d—d!" ejaculated Robert, and then the curtains swayed so that he got to his feet and started toward the door.

"Marc," he continued, "perhaps we can't agree on this matter at all, but I really do want a heart-to-heart talk with you about it. But not now! The fact is I was busy when you came in—"

"Thinking up a few more pleas for the squatters, eh?" the other man teased. "Well, old fellow, just remember this. I've got at least twenty-five men watching everything that scamp of a Hopkins does, and when I get something on him, there won't be twenty-four hours between that time and his arrest."

Robert almost shoved the speaker out of the door; but Marcus only chuckled good-naturedly as he went away. When Robert turned the key in the lock, he stood quite still, breathing hard.

From behind the curtain, Polly thrust out her head, her small face wrinkled and tears standing thick in her eyes.

"I'm a-goin' after that pup an' swat him," she hissed stormily. "He lies when he says my daddy's a scamp."

Percival lifted a precautionary hand. "Not too loud," he warned. "Come here." She went slowly forward, her head banging; but when he held out his hands she snatched them and bent her curly head over the strong fingers and kissed them passionately.

"Poor little girl, poor little Polly," murmured Robert, brokenly. Then as she swayed toward him, his arms went around her, and for a moment he pressed her head against his breast.

"Polly, Pollyop," he whispered, kissing her hair. "Oh, God, if I owned that lake property I'd—"

A certain deep tone in his voice brought up Pollyop's head, and she saw in his eyes an expression that made her struggle from his arms. Fleeing to the porch window, she was gone before Robert could stop her.

"Bob's a queer fish, Eve," laughed MacKenzie, as he came into the music room where Evelyn Robertson was waiting for him. "If I hadn't kept my temper just now, we should have parted bad friends."

"That's like you, dear," she smiled. "But then, of course, you wouldn't let him bother you. Fussing about the squatters again, I suppose."

Evelyn took his big fingers in her hand and occupied herself in examining the white spots on one of the polished nails.

"My big man mustn't mind Bobs," she exclaimed persuasively, noting the frowning lines that had come in his face. "He's sentimental, Robert is, full of half-baked notions about brotherly love and helping the downtrodden, and that sort of thing."

The man laughed indulgently. It delighted him to have the girl of his choice express his own sentiments so well.

"You precious!" he murmured. "They can't fool my Eve much, can they?" By a simple twist of his wrist he captured her hand. Then he took up a favorite topic with new zest. "I want to improve my property, dear. The Silent City's an eyesore! If I could get the squatters off the lake-side and buy the Bennett farm, I could make my place the handsomest in the county."

At the suggestion about Oscar's farm, a different light flashed into the girl's eyes. Her hand twitched in his.

"That would be wonderful, dear," she ejaculated. "If—if the squatters weren't there, you could make a very lovely drive right along where their road runs, couldn't you?"

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"Look at me, dearie. I love you, little girl."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**Traded Pipes for Land.**

The clay pipe industry of Bristol, Eng., which is now entirely closed down, dates back to the Seventeenth century, when large quantities of Bristol-made pipes were exported to the American colonies. English clays were so much preferred by the Indians to their own rudely fashioned pipes that they became valuable as objects of barter or part purchase value in exchange for land. Three hundred pipes figure in the list of articles given by William Penn in exchange for a tract of land in what is now Pennsylvania, and another record of early colonial days shows that in 1677 120 pipes and 100 Jews' harps were exchanged for a plot near Timber Town, N. J.

**Webster's Work on Dictionary.**

Noah Webster began his preparation for his American dictionary of the English language in 1807 and published it in 1828. Previous to 1807 he had published a speller and "A Compendious Dictionary" both of which were probably helpful in the new undertaking. The American dictionary contained 12,000 more words and about 40,000 more definitions than had appeared in any English dictionary published before his.

## CORNHUSKER ITEMS

News of All Kinds Gathered From Various Points Throughout Nebraska.

A blaze which started in the garret of the Friend hotel was declared by Fire Chief Hoefler to have all the appearances of incendiary origin. The fire was extinguished with chemicals before much damage resulted. When the volunteer fire department answered the call they found Britton in the kitchen of the building, which is a three-story brick structure, eating popcorn. When told that the building was on fire he answered that it could not be possible. Investigation showed that oil-soaked carpets and blankets had been placed in the garret. According to firemen the building is insured for \$20,000.

Wolbach believes it has the youngest purebred hog dealer in the state in the person of Virgil, son of Mrs. W. H. Maddox, proprietor of the Glen View hotel. While but 12, Virgil sold three purebred hogs at the Larson & Son sale for a handsome price, and immediately bid in one of the Larson gilts for \$52. Those he sold were his own raising and which he earned during last summer's vacation.

When Leo Nicholas, hardware merchant at Palmer, opened his mail one evening recently he was surprised to find a \$10 bill in a letter with an explanation that the sender had at one time short changed Mr. Nicholas to the amount of \$4. At another time he had taken merchandise from the Nicholas store to the amount of \$5. The extra dollar was included for interest.

Douglas county post, American legion, was awarded judgment of one cent by default in Judge Redick's court against F. H. Shoemaker, former labor leader on charges of slander. It was charged Shoemaker in a labor speech last December stated "the legion was subsidized by the big business and interfered with picketing among labor unions."

Following cremation of his body the ashes of the late Matheus, Gering, well-known Omaha and Plattsmouth attorney, will be taken to his childhood home, Kempton, Bavaria and scattered over the waters of the River Iler, along which he played when a small boy. The disposition of his ashes will be in accord with a wish often expressed by Mr. Gering.

Every taxpayer in Nebraska who turns in property for taxation will have to give an oath that his return is correct, if a plan proposed at a group meeting of county assessors here is carried out. Twenty assessors at a meeting passed a resolution urging that county assessors require precinct assessors to administer an oath on every tax return in their district.

The jury in the \$65,000 damage suit of Arlie Culver of Beatrice against Union Pacific railroad brought in a verdict in favor of the plaintiff for \$50,000. The case has been the most bitterly fought of any tried in the district court in years and will be appealed to the supreme court.

The uncompleted building of the North American Hotel company, recently estimated to be worth \$225,000, inclusive of real estate, was sold to Judge Norval, representing Seward, Omaha and other bondholders, at foreclosure sale for \$56,000.

Benkelman schools have outgrown the present school building, and the district is preparing to vote a bond issue to cover the present running expenses. New quarters for high school or grade must be provided before school opens next fall.

As an appreciation for the quick response made to David City's call for aid when the I. O. O. F. temple burned the David City city council authorized the sending of a check for \$100 to the Seward fire department.

The Garrison Poland China Pig club has completed its organization and is the first of its kind to be started in Butler county this year. More than half of the boys have already started, each having a pure bred sow.

A. H. Byrum of Franklin county, member of the Nebraska house of representatives, has filed with the secretary of state notice of his candidacy as a republican for governor.

One hundred Nebraska editors attended the forty-ninth annual meeting of the Nebraska Press Association just held at Lincoln.

An inspection of the winter wheat near Oshkosh shows that practically all of it is going through the winter in splendid condition, is well rooted and the abundance of moisture assures a speedy growth in the spring.

H. C. Yund of Broken Bow has completed installing his wireless outfit. Mr. Yund brought the set with him from Coudersport, Pa., but on account of war conditions has not reset the station. He has very complete equipment and can receive messages from France, Germany, Spain, Norway and South America.

Lieutenant Clarence Welch, twenty-seven years old son of Mr. and Mrs. M. V. Welch, of Papillion, was among the severely injured of the crew of the giant dirigible Roma which crashed in flames over Hampton Roads.

When Deputy Sheriff T. L. Miskimen went on an errand to the basement of the county court house at Alliance, he discovered that a burglar had stolen the contents of two 100-pound sacks of granulated sugar and had filled the sacks with ashes and clinders. The sugar had been confiscated in a raid on a still several months ago.

Sugar bees growers in the vicinity of Lowell and Gibbon are not in the least perturbed over the announcement that the year's contract price will be around \$5 per ton, for the simple reason they do not plan to raise many beets, regardless of price. With irrigation acreage these farmers for the most part are finding the humble potato more profitable, with cabbage a close second. Consequently, this vicinity, which in past years has raised large quantities of beets, will build up, instead, a greatly increased potato acreage and also a large acreage of cabbage. The latter product is becoming more popular annually. One farmer located south of Gibbon is setting out 40 acres of cabbage plants to replace beets.

Approximately 150 inmates of Nebraska penitentiary will soon be steadily employed in the new prison shirt and overall factory. Installation of 129 large power sewing machines is expected to be completed soon. Large quantities of buttons, thread and cloth are already on hand. The factory will probably turn out 125 dozen shirts a day, according to Warden Fenton. The entire product will go to a Jefferson City, Mo., wholesale concern, which has contracted for the labor.

Organized farmers of Nebraska are opposed to the proposed sales tax to create revenue for the soldiers bonus or for any other purpose. H. D. Lute, of Lincoln, secretary of the Nebraska Farm Bureau federation, wired members of the Nebraska delegation in congress. Mr. Lute said the farmers suggest that funds for the bonus should come from either a tax on excess profits or from the income tax.

Instructors in any of the state normal colleges of Nebraska hereafter will be refused leaves of absence to study or attend the universities of Columbia, Chicago and Northwestern "because the testimony of those who have been students and the news items in the daily press, show that cigaret smoking is common among women in these institutions," under a resolution adopted by the board of education of state normal schools.

Nebraska's dog population for 1921 was 105,288, according to figures given out at the state house at Lincoln, based on assessor's returns. That means that there is one poodle, collie, airdale, terrier, bull dog or some other kind of canine for every twelfth person in the state. The dog census for last year shows an increase of 5,285 over that of 1920. The assessors made no attempt to place the dog wealth.

The Superior High school will have a new gymnasium. The proposed building is to be 50x80 feet. The basement room is to consist of class rooms, which will relieve the congestion of the seventh and eighth grades and the high school. The ground floor will make a gym 30x70 feet, with a maple wood basketball floor and a seating capacity of 500.

The thirty-mile gale accompanied by sleet put 20,000 miles of telephone lines with 40,000 phones and 300 toll lines out of commission in the South Platte district, with a financial loss of \$20,000. M. T. Caster, plant superintendent of the Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph Co., announced. The heaviest loss was in Butler county.

For selling liquor to Indians on the Winnebago reservation near Walthill, Neb., Earl Rose was given a 60-day jail sentence and a \$100 fine by Federal Judge Woodrough. This is the minimum sentence set by law. Rose pleaded guilty. Indian agents testified that Rose sold pint of whiskey for \$12.

The Richardson county board took another step in the building of a new \$200,000 court house when at their meeting, W. F. Grandt of Omaha was selected as the architect. It is not yet known when active work will be commenced.

The city council at Ravenna has made a call for bids on street paving. The first district to be paved will cover about 30 blocks. It is the object of the city to pave the main thoroughfares and one block on each side street.

At a bond selection held in Stratton for the purpose of issuing \$12,500 light extension bonds to replace a similar issue that were declared illegal the issue carried by the wide margin of 68 to 8.

J. D. Phillips, Fremont contractor, submitted the lowest bid among 16 firms, for the construction of the new junior high school to be built at Fremont this summer. The bid was \$157,469.

An electric siren fire alarm is to be installed at Randolph by the fire department, to supersede the bell alarm.

Persons from all parts of the United States will attend the national debate at Lexington March 4, when the question of whether or not speculation is a menace to the marketing of grain will be argued by J. Ralph Pickell, editor of The Roundup, a Chicago grain paper, and George C. Jewett of Portland, Ore., vice president of the United States Grain Growers. The debate is the outcome of a challenge published by Pickell offering to meet any grain growers' official at any place in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri or Illinois.

The state of martial law which has been in existence in Four Mile precinct at Nebraska City, in Otoe county, since January 28, has ceased by a proclamation of Governor McKelvie, stating "that violence and disorder had been suppressed and there was no further need of martial law."

Fire destroyed the five-room home of W. D. Shaal near Springfield. Mr. Shaal was alone in the house at the time of the fire and almost suffocated before rescued. The firemen were unable to save the house or contents. The loss is estimated at \$3,000.