

# Storm Country Polly

by Grace Miller White  
Illustrated by R.H. Livingstone  
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"SWEETHEART!"

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 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 a donation. Oscar kills Polly's lamb and Percival thrashes Oscar. MacKenzie orders the squatters to leave. Evelyn plans to marry MacKenzie. Percival and Polly confess their love. MacKenzie's men arrest Polly's father on a framed-up charge.

CHAPTER X—Continued.

"You do something, ma'am!" she implored. "Please do it quick, an' an'—" A light leapt into her eyes and she burst out: "Mebbe some day you'll be askin' me a big favor, an' here's my word before God, I do it."

For a short space of time the two girls stared into each other's eyes, but Evelyn's fell first. She sank back limply.

"Take her away, Robert!" she groaned. "It's too dreadful."

After Pollyop and Robert had gone, she turned swiftly on Marcus.

"I wish they were all dead, those wretched squatters," she said fretfully, and frowning, MacKenzie continued his breakfast in silence.

Miserable days passed for the entire squatter settlement. That the right arm of the Silent City had been lopped off when Hopkins was imprisoned showed plainly in the abjection of its inhabitants. Every countenance was wrinkled with anxiety; and still the strange men hovered about the lakeside.

Ugly rumors circulated through the Silent City. It was said that to fix a felony on Hopkins, the officers claimed that in searching him, before shutting him up, they had found a revolver in his pocket. Every one that knew him scouted the idea, but Jeremiah Hopkins was promptly indicted for carrying concealed weapons.

The only concession Robert had been able to obtain was permission for Polly to visit her father, and day after day she carried Jerry to see him.

The day of Hopkins' trial Polly had to stay at home to care for Granny Hope and the baby.

Late in the afternoon, while she was rocking Wee Jerry, for there was no other way to keep him quiet, there came a rap on the door. Placing him on the cot, she called a soft: "Come in."

The entrance of Robert Percival filled her with apprehension, he looked so serious, so drawn and pale.

"It's about daddy," she exclaimed, forgetting for the moment how embarrassed she was.

Robert nodded.

"Sit down, Polly," he said gravely, "and I'll tell you."

Mutely she stood staring at him.

"Sit down, dear," he insisted.

"I don't want to sit down," she moaned. "Tell me about daddy. What's happened?—He's goin' to Auburn, huh?"

Had he been able, Robert would have contradicted her. Gladly would he have chided away the welling tears that came slowly into the dear eyes.

"Is it Auburn prison?" she whispered. "Did the jury say he was guilty?"

"Yes, Polly, but I've still hopes I can get him another trial," answered Robert. "Oh, little Polly, please don't cry, please don't."

Unmindful that he was holding out his hands to her, she sobbed hysterically, utterly deprived of self-control. The more Robert pleaded with her to

cease, the more she kept up the incessant wail.

At the sound of her anguish, Jerry awoke and set up a loud screaming, and, ever true to her mother's instinct for him and all others in her wild world, Pollyop took him up and seated herself, hushing and caressing him.

"The littlest mother in the world," breathed Robert tenderly, bending over her. "And a brave girl you are, too, Polly Hopkins."

"I can't be brave ever any more. I can't. I need my daddy so, I do. I'm thinkin' my heart just busted when they took him away."

He understood, and Robert's very soul melted in sympathy. Indeed, never had he worked so hard on any one thing as he had done to defend the squatter. It had been only after MacKenzie had outwitted him that he had come to the Silent City to break the bad news to Polly Hopkins.

"Pollyop," he began, much moved, "do you need your father; every girl does. But while he's gone, if he really has to go, I can make living without him much easier for you. You must take some of the money you have for yourself," he hastened on. "No one needs it more than you do. No, now don't shake your head, dear. Some one must help you—don't you see?"

"'Twas awful good of you to give me the money, an' let me help the squatter women," came distinctly from the sobbing lips, "but Jerry an' me couldn't take a cent of yours!"

Somehow Robert had expected this, but her refusal did not make him any the less determined to help her. For a time he was silent, as Polly slowly rocked Jerry back and forth.

After a few moments the boy fell asleep, and his sister laid him quietly on the bed again.

"Now what be I goin' to do?" she queried forlornly, looking straight at him. "Granny Hope says love's all powerful, an' every night I cry out to the good God to bring my daddy home. It's true, ain't it, Jesus can help a squatter girl?"

"Of course," Robert assured her. "Of course, and, oh, Polly, I want you to be different—"

"What do you mean by bein' different?" she stopped him quickly, and then she caught the look he cast around the room.

"I'll always be a squatter," she went on fiercely. "I love squatters, I do."

His face burned at the emphasis on her words, yet he liked her better for standing by her humble friends.

"And you love me too, don't you, Pollyop?" he asked, reaching out and taking one of her hands.

"Didn't she love him? Ah, more than she even dared to admit to herself! A blush mounted to her curls.

"Yep, I'm lovin' you, too," she breathed. "You an' daddy—"

Robert stood up dizzily, bringing her up with him. What was there in this



"Hadn't You Best Go Now?" She Asked.

crude squatter lassie that made his heart beat so?

"Polly," he murmured, drawing her to him. "Little Polly," and then he raised her face to his—"Kiss me, sweet."

Limp and trembling, she leaned against him as she had that day in his own home. She was so tired and lonely.

"I want you always, Polly," he whispered in her ear. "Some day I want you for my wife. I'll take you away from Ithaca—all of you, your father and the baby—and Granny

Hope too. You hear, don't you, Pollyop?"

At that Polly clung to him. She had lost sight of the fact that she might have to marry Oscar Bennett to free Daddy Hopkins, and to keep her people in the Silent City. She only realized that she was in Robert's arms, and that he was telling her over and over and over that he adored her.

"Hadn't you best go now?" she asked. "Some one might catch you here. No! Please, please don't kiss me no more."

Without the slightest regard for her protestations, Robert, smiling, gathered her completely into his arms.

"Perhaps," he stammered, "perhaps, sweetheart, your father'll come back in spite of Marcus MacKenzie. Good-by, dear."

She followed him to the door and watched him go up the lane. Then she crept back into the shanty.

"Daddy," she cried, "I'm tryin' my best to save you, dear, an', an' I will, I will, darlin'. Your brat'll save you, Daddy—but oh, God, it seems as how I couldn't do it."

CHAPTER XI.

Over a week had passed since Hopkins had stood before his peers to be judged of a crime the law would not overlook. His lawyer, a good one and well paid by Robert Percival, had fought strenuously for a new trial; but after much deliberation on the part of the judge, the motion had been denied; and this was the last day of Jeremiah's stay in the county jail.

It was soon after luncheon time that a high-powered motorcar was carrying Evelyn Robertson and Marcus MacKenzie to the Bennett farmhouse. The purchasing of the farm had been settled, as far as Marcus was concerned, although Eve's pleading and Oscar's stubbornness had made him offer more for the place than it was really worth.

When the farmer walked up to the automobile, as it stopped before his door, Oscar paid no attention to Evelyn, sitting beside MacKenzie, save to give her an awkward bow.

"You've spoken to this squatter girl about what you want, Bennett?" asked Marcus, going to the point at once.

"Yes, sure I have," growled Oscar. "I told you that t'other day; but Polly seems to be always holding off for something. If she toes the mark, then I won't have that brat of a Jerry, though, but I suppose Polly'll make a row when I tell her that."

"You won't be worried with the boy, Bennett. I'm going to have the Children's society take him. Hopkins will serve a long term, and if you marry Polly, the rest of the pests will scatter after a while. I'll be glad to be rid of the whole Hopkins tribe. But that girl is like a burr; she sticks tighter, the more you pull!"

"That's the bargain, Mr. MacKenzie. I sell the farm at the price we talked if I get Polly Hopkins. If I don't get her, then I won't sell. I can make a good living here for me and my mother, and I don't intend to leave this country without Pollyop."

The thought of his staying around Ithaca filled Evelyn with dread. She knew something of the tenacity with which he clung to any notion that might take possession of him. How could she have ever submitted to his caresses? And the words, "Until death do us part," rang in her ears, filling her with nauseating disgust.

"I wish he were dead this minute," she thought passionately.

She was waiting for Oscar to continue, but he evidently did not intend to; so, settling back as if anxious to start, she said coldly:

"I'll go to her then, as soon as I can."

"When—today, ma'am?" asked Oscar eagerly.

If she had to approach Polly Hopkins over this disagreeable matter, the sooner the better, Evelyn thought.

"Yes," she consented languidly. "I might go now, I suppose."

"But you won't find her home till night, Eve," Marcus informed her. "She's gone to see her father before he goes to Auburn. I tried to put the quibus on that, but Bob cut us up so I told the sheriff to let her in."

"Then I'll telephone you later, Mr. Bennett," said Evelyn, lifting her chin haughtily as if he were really beneath her consideration. "Good afternoon!"

The hours passed slowly by! It seemed an eternity to Oscar while he waited the call from Evelyn. When he heard her voice over the telephone, he answered gruffly.

"Now, don't be nasty, Oscar," ordered Evelyn imperiously. "I'm doing the best I can. I'm in a booth talking, and if you'll meet me at seven, we'll go together to Polly Hopkins. Does that suit you all right?"

"You don't suit me very well," Oscar grumbled into the receiver. "I'd like to give you the licking of your life, my lady."

Evelyn's laugh came ringing across the wire.

"Don't put yourself out, my dear man," she taunted. "Now, don't start bullying me over the phone, Oscar, for I won't stand it. Hold your temper if you can possibly do so. For once do as I tell you! Will you?"

"Oh, I suppose so," Bennett rapped out. "Where'll I meet you?"

"Well, let me see. At seven on the boulevard, near the lane."

"All right!" and Oscar slammed up the receiver without waiting to hear any more, and proceeded about his farm tasks. Thoughts of anger toward Eve, now so overbearing and contemptuous, were soon crowded out, however, by anticipation of the time when Polly would belong to him—

his to love or abuse at his own sweet will, for Oscar had little doubt that the squatter girl would eventually yield to his will.

Pollyop, meanwhile, quite unconscious of Oscar's vicious intentions, was already utterly overwhelmed with misery.

After the meager supper was over that night, she sat crouched near the wood-box, her arm around Billy Hopkins' strung neck. Granny Hope was in bed and Wee Jerry, having cried himself to sleep, was in Jeremiah's room, rolled up in a blanket.

For the first time in her life Polly had seen her father weep. How impetuously she had kissed away his tears! How she had hung to his neck! When they had been forced to leave him, Jerry had shrieked his misery all the way through the streets of Ithaca.

To make the matter worse, it began to rain, to thunder and lighten. And now, a forlorn, lonely little creature, she sat listening to the tempest outside with no company but the billy goat.

How listless and hopeless she felt! Only when the thunder rolled over the lake, and the lightning flashed across the sky, did she lift her head. When she was happy, Polly loved the storms, but now, with Daddy in Auburn, how could she bear the thrashing rain and the moan of the willow trees as they swung to and fro over the shanty roof?

She found herself wishing fearfully that the storm would sweep off to the south and down behind the hills. Over and over in her mind went the thought that perhaps she could have helped



In the White Light of It Polly Saw a Man Lying Face Down in the Path Leading to the Shanty.

Daddy if she had done what Evelyn wanted her to. Why hadn't she consented to marry Oscar two weeks ago? She knew why, and, blushing, blamed herself. She could not keep the image of Robert Percival from smiling at her.

All of a sudden a frightful flash of lightning made dim the flicker from the small candle, and was followed instantly by a thunderous roar that shook the very earth. Mingled with it came a woman's scream. Polly struggled to her feet. Some one was in trouble! Some squatter-woman was calling her. She dashed toward the door just as it flung wide open, and Evelyn Robertson rushed in.

"Polly Hopkins," she cried, grasping the squatter girl's arm, "Pollyop, something struck Oscar, and he's dead in the road."

Frantically she drew the dazed Polly over the threshold. The darkness was dense, and the torrents of rain pelted their faces. Another zigzag streak of fire ran across the sky, making a vivid picture as it blazed Cornell university into plain view. In the white light of it, Polly saw a man lying face down in the path leading to the shanty. He made no effort to get up as the two girls bent over him.

"Mebbe he ain't dead," muttered Polly, shuddering. "Let's lug him in the hut."

Between them they dragged the heavy, inert body into the shanty and shut the door. Oscar looked dead when they turned him over. His face was livid, and his eyes tightly shut.

"The thunder hit him, huh?" questioned Polly, awestruck.

Shudder after shudder ran over Evelyn.

"I don't know," she moaned. "Yes, I suppose so. Oh, it was dreadful!"

She began to cry, wringing her hands desperately.

"Don't do that," begged Pollyop, with a shiver. "Come on an' help me get 'im up on my bunk."

Weak from the shock, Evelyn was of little service in lifting Oscar. But the bed was low, and finally after much tugging, he was rolled lifelessly over on his back, stretched to his full length on the rickety cot.

Standing side by side, the girls looked anxiously down upon him.

"I guess mebbe he's dead, ain't he?" queried Polly woefully.

"Thus did the storm country give back to Evelyn Robertson her freedom."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The prince of Wales is exempted from income tax, but his brothers are not.

# THE AMERICAN LEGION

(Copy for This Department Supplied by The American Legion News Service.)

## LEGION'S GENUINE 'CAVE MAN'

Parlee Gross, Buckeye Soldier, Specializes on Underground Exploration—Says "It's the Life."

Remarkably few newly married couples ever think of settling down in a little cave in the Ozark mountains. And yet Parlee C. Gross of McComb, O., says that caves are much warmer than apartments and farmhouses. They are also much cheaper.

When Gross, who is a magazine writer connected with the See-America-First movement, returned to McComb from an exploration of the celebrated Ha Ha Tonka region in the Ozarks, he didn't understand why his American Legion post hadn't picked out a nice ripe cave for its quarters. He said cave life was the only life. He has become not only a cave admirer, but a cave connoisseur as well, and in appreciation of his exploration achievements, officials have named an interesting geological formation which he discovered "Gross's Giant Gnome."

The American Legion at McComb is proud of its genuine "cave man"—particularly proud of the fact that he has been selected as one of the members of a party to penetrate the unknown regions of Wyandotte Cave of Indiana and the Great Onyx Cave of Kentucky.

Members of the American Legion in Denver testify that all the ex-soldier talent this side of the Rockies does not compare with a good-looking girl, when it comes to putting on a show. They are gradually coming to this conclusion—being some few years behind Broadway managers, who discovered the secret several summers ago by reading old Egyptian and Syrian manuscripts.

## DENVER LEGION BOOSTS HER

Miss Edith Adams, Beautiful Actress, as Genuine as the Centennial State's Mountains.

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## USED THE GOLD BRICK CURE

"Treatment" Ended Many Cases of Flat-Foot, Semi-Blindness and Other "Defects."

A gold brick which made the lame to walk and the blind to see is told of by Capt. P. H. McCarthy, Development Battalion No. 1, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind., who gets the credit for introducing the term "gold brick" into the army during the war. The unwillingness of certain recruits to submit to "development" brought the brick into play.

Innumerable cases of flat-foot, semi-blindness, and other ailments were continually reported by reluctant soldiers at the camp. It was up to Captain McCarthy to discover whether these were ailments or alibis. When the medical profession failed, the brick got in its work. The soldier would be handed the gold article and told to go about as he pleased, free from drill, hikes, labor of any kind, but he must carry the brick. When he saw an officer he must hold the brick out with the left hand and salute with the right.

The sick man was invariably back drilling with his outfit the second day. Flat feet and cold ones alike were cured.

## Foch Sees Himself in "Movies."

Marshal Foch sat comfortably in Paris the other evening and saw films of his 16,000-mile tour through the United States. The "movie" was part of the entertainment which the Paris post of the American Legion had arranged for the marshal. Ambassador Myron T. Herrick said, in introducing Foch: "If it had been possible for Germany in 1914 to have seen a picture so truly representing the love between France and America, the war would never have been."

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