

THE ENCHANTED BARN

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CHAPTER I.

Shirley Hollister pushed back the hair from her hot forehead, pressed her hands wearily over tired eyes, then dropped her fingers again to the typewriter keys, and flew on with the letter she was writing.

There was no one else in the inner office where she sat. Mr. Barnard, the senior member of the firm, whose stenographer she was, had stepped into the outer office for a moment with a telegram which he had just received. His absence gave Shirley a moment's respite from the feeling that she must keep strained up to meet his gaze and not let trouble show in her eyes, though a great lump was choking in her throat and the tears stung her hot eyelids and insisted on blurring her vision now and then. But it was only for an instant that she gave way. Her fingers flew on with their work, for this was an important letter, and Mr. Barnard wanted it to go in the next mail.

As she wrote, a vision of her mother's white face appeared to her between the lines, the mother weak and white, with tears on her cheeks and that despairing look in her eyes. Her mother hadn't been able to get up for a week. It seemed as if the cares of life were getting almost too much for her, and the warm spring days made the little brick house in the narrow street a stifling place to stay. There was only one small window in her mother's room, opening against a brick wall, for they had to rent the front room with its two windows.

But, poor as it was, the little brick house had been home; and now they were not to have that long. Notice had been served that they must vacate in four weeks; for the house, in fact the whole row of houses in which it was situated, had been sold, and was to be pulled down to make way for a big apartment house that was to be put up.

Where they were going and what they were going to do now was the great problem that throbbed on Shirley's weary brain night and day, that kept her from sleeping and eating, that choked in her throat when she tried to speak to Mr. Barnard, that started from her feverish eyes as she looked at the sunshine or tried to work in the busy monotony of the office.

They had been in the little house nearly a year, ever since the father died. It had taken all they could scrape together to pay the funeral expenses, and now with her salary and the roomer's rent and what George got as cash boy in a department store they were just barely able to get along. There was not a cent over for sickness or trouble, and nothing to move with, even if they had anywhere to move, or any time to hunt for a place. Shirley knew from her experience in hunting for the present house that it was going to be next to impossible for them to find any habitable place for as little rent as they were now paying, and how could they pay more? She was only a beginner, and her salary was small. There were three others in the family not yet wage earners. The problem was tremendous. Could it be that Carol, only 14 years old, must stop school and go to work somewhere to earn a pittance also? Carol was slender and pale, and needed fresh air and nourishing food. Carol was too young to bear burdens yet; besides, who would be housekeeper and take care of her mother if Carol had to go to work? It was different with George; he was a boy, strong and sturdy; he had his school in the department store, and was getting on well with his studies. George would be all right. He belonged to a baseball team, too, and got plenty of chances for exercise; but Carol was frail, there was no denying it. Harley was a boisterous 9-year old, always on the street these days when he wasn't in school; and who could blame him! For the narrow dark brick house was no place for a lively boy. But the burden and anxiety for him were heavy on his sister's heart, who had taken over bodily all the worries of her mother. Then there was the baby, Doris, with her big, pathetic eyes, and her round cheeks and loving ways. Doris, too, had to be shut in the dark little house

with the summer heat coming on, and no one with time enough or strength enough to take her to the park. Doris was only 4. Oh, it was terrible, terrible! and Shirley could do nothing but sit there and click those keys and earn her poor little inadequate salary! Some day, of course, she would get more—but some day might be too late!

She shuddered as the terrible thought flashed through her mind, then went on with her work again. She must shake off this state of mind and give attention to her duty, or she would lose even this opportunity to help her dear ones.

The door of the outer office opened, and Mr. Barnard entered.

"Miss Hollister," he said hurriedly, "if you have those letters ready I will sign them at once. We have just had word that Mr. Baker, of the firm, died last night in Chicago, and I must go at once. The office will be closed for the rest of the day. You can let those other matters that I spoke of go until tomorrow, and you may have the day off. I shall not be at the office at the usual hour tomorrow morning, but you can come in and look after the mail. I will leave further directions with Mr. Clegg. You can mail these letters as you go down."

Ten minutes later Shirley stood on the street below in the warm spring sunshine, and gazed about her half dazed. It seemed a travesty on her poor little life just now to have a holiday and no way to make it count for the dear ones at home. How should she use it, anyway? Should she go home and help Carol? Or should she go out and see whether she could find a house somewhere that they could possibly afford to move to? That, of course, was the sensible thing to do; yet she had no idea where to go. But they did not expect her home at this time of day. Perhaps it was as well that she should use this time and find out something without worrying her mother. At least, she would have time to think undisturbed.

She grasped her little package of lunch that she had brought from home and looked about her helplessly. In her little thin purse was the dime she always carried with her to pay her car fare in case something happened that she had to ride either way—though she seldom rode, even in a storm. But her mother insisted on the dime. She said it was not safe to go without any money at all. This dime was her capital wherewith to hunt a house. Perhaps the day had been given her by a kind heavenly Father to go on her search. She would try to use it to the best of her ability. She lifted her bewildered heart in a feeble petition for light and help in her difficult problem, and then she went and stood on the corner of the street where many trolley cars were passing and repassing. Which one should she take, and where should she go? The 10 cents must cover all her riding, and she must save half of it for her return.

She studied the names on the cars. "Glenside Road" one read. What had she heard about that? Ah! that it was the longest ride one could take for 5 cents within the limits of the city's roads! Her heart leaped up at the word. It sounded restful anyway, and would give her time to think. It wasn't likely, if it went near any glens, that there would be any houses within her means on its way; but possibly it passed some as it went through the city, and she could take notice of the streets and numbers and get out on her return trip to investigate if there proved to be anything promising; or, if it were too far away from home for her to walk back from it, she could come another time in the evening with George, some night when he did not have school. Anyhow, the ride would rest her and give her a chance to think what she ought to do, and one car was as good as another for that. Her resolve was taken, and she stepped out and signaled it.

There were not many people in the car. It was not an hour when people rode out to the suburbs. Two workmen with rolls of wall paper slung in burlap bags, a woman and a little girl—that was all.

(To Be Continued Next Week)

THE MARK OF CAIN

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"A clothes chute? You mean a laundry slide?"

"Yes, sir. I'm told it's that. I didn't know what it was. Only it was a way out."

"You jumped?"

"Well, I sorter slid. I threw down pillers and mattresses first, so it is soft."

"You are a clever boy."

"No, sir, it ain't that," and Fibsy looked embarrassed. "You see, I got that detective instinct, an' I can't help a-usin' of it. You see, it was me what got Miss Trowbridge to send for Mr. Stone, and then Judge Hoyt he tried to head him off."

"How?"

"Well, I jest knew for positive sure that this case was too big fer anybody to sling but Mr. Stone. Well, I got Miss Trowbridge to send fer him, an' Judge Hoyt he told Miss Aviece that Mr. Stone was outa town. Then I said I seen him on the street the day before, an' we called him up, an' he was right there on the spot, but said he'd had a telegram not to come. Well, Judge Hoyt he sent that telegram. But the way I got Miss Aviece to do it in the first place was to get me Aunt Becky to go to her an' tell her she'd had a revelation, and fer Miss Aviece to go to a clairvoyant. Well, an' so Miss Aviece did, an' that clairvoyant she told her to get Mr. Stone. You see, the clairvoyant, Maddum Isis, she's a friend of me Aunt Becky, so we three fixed it up between us, and Miss Aviece went an' got Mr. Stone. If I'd a-tried any other way, Judge Hoyt he'd found a way to prevent Mr. Stone from comin', 'cause he knew he'd do him up."

"This is a remarkable tale—"

"But true in every particular," averred Fleming Stone. "This boy has done fine work and deserves great credit. The final proof, I think, of the guilty of Judge Hoyt is the fact that the cane found in his room exactly fits a round mark found in the soil at the scene of the crime and cut from the earth, and carefully preserved by McGuire. Also, a shoe button found there corresponds with the buttons on shoes found in Judge Hoyt's dressing room. And it seems to me the most logical conclusion is put upon the dying words of Rowland Trowbridge when we conclude that he meant he was killed by a cane, thus describing the weapon. Judge Hoyt also is conversant with the Latin names of the specimens of natural history which Mr. Trowbridge was in the habit of collecting, and it was he, of course, who telephoned about the set trap and the Scaphinotus. And, as his motive was to win the hand of Miss Trowbridge by means of a forged clause in her uncle's will, we can have no further doubts."

"You have done marvelous work, Mr. Stone," said the judge on the bench. "And you say this young lad helped you?"

"No, your honor, I helped him. He noticed clues and points about the case at once. But he could persuade no one to take him seriously, and finally Judge Hoyt, for reasons of his own, sent the boy to a lucrative position out of town."

There were many details to be attended to, much business to be transacted, and many proofs to be looked up. But first of all the name of Kane Landon was cleared and the prisoner set free. Leslie Hoyt was arrested and held for trial.

As Aviece passed him on her way out of the court room he detained her to say: "You know why I did it! I've told you I would do anything for you! I'm not sorry; I'm only sorry I failed!" His eyes showed a hard glitter, and Aviece shrank away, as if from a maniac, which indeed he looked.

"Brave up, Miss Aviece," whispered Fibsy, who saw the girl pale and tremble. "You orta be so glad Mr. Landon is out you'd forget Judge Hoyt!"

"Yes, brave up, darling," added Landon, overhearing. "At last I can love you with a clear conscience. If I had known that clause about your marriage was not uncle's wish, how different it would have been! But I could not ask you for yourself if by that you lost your fortune!"

"Why wouldn't you straightforwardly tell me you were innocent, Kane?" asked Aviece as they rode home together.

"I couldn't, dear. I know I was foolish, but the fact of your doubting me even enough to ask me, made me so furious I could not breathe! Didn't you know I couldn't kill Uncle Rowly?"

"I did know it, truly I did, Kane; but I was crazy; I wasn't myself all those dreadful days!"

"And you won't be now, if you stay here! I'm going to marry you all up, and take you far away on a long trip, right now, before we hear anything more about Leslie Hoyt and his wickedness!"

"I'd love to go away, Kane; but I can't be married in such a hurry. Let's go on a trip, and take Mrs. Black for chap-erone, and then get married when I say so!"

This plan didn't suit Landon so well as his own, but he was coerced into submission by the love of his liege lady, and the trip was planned.

Fibsy was greatly honored and praised. But the peculiar character of the boy made him oblivious to compliments.

"I don't care about bookays, Miss Aviece," he said earnestly when she praised him; "just to have saved Mr. Landon an' you is enough. An' to knock the spots out o' Judge Hoyt! But it's the game that gets me. The whole detective business! I'm goin' to be a big one, like Mr. Stone. Gee! Miss Aviece, did you catch on to how he ran Judge Hoyt down the minute I gave him the steer? That's the trick! Oh, he's a hummer, F. Stone is! An' he's goin' to let me work with him, sometimes!"

"But I say," he went on suddenly, "what about that guy as telephoned and called Mr. Trowbridge 'Uncle'?"

"It wasn't I," said Landon. "I called up uncle that afternoon, but couldn't get him."

"Then I know," said Aviece. "It was Judge Hoyt. You see," and she blushed as she looked at Landon, "he was so sure he would marry me he frequently said 'uncle' to my uncle. And Uncle Rowly sometimes called him 'nephew.' They used to do it to tease me."

"Your uncle really wanted you to marry him, then?" and Landon looked anxious.

"Yes, he did. But not to the extent of putting it in his will! Uncle often said to me that as I didn't seem to care for any one else I might as well marry Leslie."

"And now, you do care for somebody else?"

Landon had forgotten the presence of the boy. But Aviece had not, and she looked around.

"Sure, Miss Aviece," said Fibsy politely as if in response to her spoken word, and he slid swiftly from the room.

And then Aviece answered Kane Landon's question.

—THE END—

First "Topper" Caused Riot.
From the North China Herald.

John Hetherington was a prosperous haberdasher in the Strand, London, but his career had not been noteworthy until he conceived the idea that the time was ripe to introduce a novelty in headgear, and accordingly, January 15, 1937, crossed his threshold wearing the first silk hat.

In American frontier days it seemed to be quite impossible for a cowboy to see a silk hat without feeling an irresistible impulse to shoot at it, and something of the same spirit must have existed in London two centuries ago, for no sooner had the first silk hat appeared than trouble started. An excited throng gathered about the owner, and the crowd soon increased to such a dangerous extent that the authorities had to interfere. The next morning the daring haberdasher was brought before the lord mayor, charged with "walking down a public highway wearing upon his head a tall structure having a shining luster calculated to alarm timid people."

Witnesses gave evidence that women had fainted, that children had gone into hysterics, and that one had sustained a broken arm through the violence of the mob. Hetherington asserted his rights as an Englishman to wear such clothing as he saw fit, but the lord mayor took another view of the matter and ordered the defendant to find sureties in the sum of \$5,000 for his future good behavior.

Practiced by Ear.
President Cleveland had in his early days a lawyer friend who was extremely lazy. He made it a practice to come over to Cleveland's office and get the benefit of Cleveland's knowledge of the law in all his important cases. Finally Mr. Cleveland got tired of this and told his friend plainly that he was welcome to come over and use his library at his pleasure.

"There are my books," said he, "but I cannot work out your cases for you." His friend retorted: "See here, Grover Cleveland, I want you to understand that I don't read law. I practice it and I practice entirely by ear, and you and your books can go to thunder!"

Un-Japanese.
From the Indianapolis News.
Japan's Yap note was almost too frank to be Japanese and too definite to be diplomatic.

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WERE OTHERS IN THE FIELD DIFFERENT IN THEIR MAKEUP

School Superintendent Learned That He Was Not Alone in His Devotion to Fair Play.

The superintendent of schools in a small Indiana town recently persuaded the school board to revoke its ruling to employ only single women as teachers in the school. At the first school at which he called he tried to joke the young teachers. "Now you'll all be getting married," he laughed. "Have any of you been getting any proposals since the ruling was passed?"

Accidentally his eyes happened to meet those of the young teacher in whom every one knew he was interested. She thought the question was addressed to her and blushing answered, "Just three others besides yours."

And the roars of the other teachers the young superintendent made his exit from that building. But never since that day has he mentioned the new ruling.—Indianapolis News.

Steady Stream.

A Brazilian living in New York has invented a machine to cast piston rings at a rate of 18,000 to 20,000 a day by whirling molten metal into shape by centrifugal force.

Boys Together, John Burroughs and Jay Gould Were as Wide Apart as the Poles.

One poignant recollection John Burroughs had of Jay Gould as boy and man, he spoke of in this way: "I was large and strong, while Jay was small and slippery. A boy taught us to wrestle, but Jay would break his hold and land on top. I would say: 'Jay, that isn't fair,' but he would only laugh. Not wanting to be thrown, he resorted to tricks, and because I was indulgent, would wrestle with no one else. He went away to an academy and, when he returned, his father had sold his land and bought a village tinsmith. Jay got in with a man and made maps. By and by he left that part of the country and, our lives being no longer parallel, I never spoke to him after that, although I saw him twice."

"One day while I was custodian of a vault at the national treasury in Washington I heard a familiar voice. Looking up from my desk, I saw Jay Gould, dark and thin and wily as ever, and even then one of the richest men in the United States. He hadn't observed me, and I said nothing."

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