

# THE ENCHANTED BARN

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"Not a room in the whole place as dear and cozy and homey as this!" sighed Carol happily, sinking into the old denim-covered couch before the fireplace in the barn living room that Monday night after she got home. "I declare, mother, I don't see how Elizabeth stands it. Her mother is nice, but she's hardly ever there, unless she has a swarm of people dinnering or teaing or luncheon. She hardly ever has time to speak to Elizabeth, and Elizabeth doesn't seem to care much, either. She almost seems to think more of that old nurse Susan that took care of her when she was a baby than she does of her mother. I'm so glad I was sent to you instead of to her!" And Carol suddenly slipped across the room and buried her face in her mother's neck, hugging and kissing her, leaving a few bright tears on her mother's happy face.

It was a wonderful relief to Mrs. Hollister to find her child unspoiled by her first experience of the world and glad to get back to her home, after all the anxiety her mother heart had felt. Carol presently sat up and told them minutely all about her visit. The grand concert that Sidney had taken them to Friday evening in the Academy of Music, where a world renowned pianist was the soloist with the great symphony orchestra; the tennis and riding Saturday morning; the luncheon at a neighboring estate, where there were three girls and a brother who were "snobs" and hadn't at all good manners; the party in the evening that lasted so late that they didn't get to bed till long after midnight; the beautiful room they slept in, with every imaginable article for the toilet done in sterling silver with monograms; the strange Sabbath, with no service in the morning because they woke up too late, and no suggestion of anything but a holiday—except the vesper service in a cold, formal chapel that Carol had begged to go to; just a lot of worldly music and entertaining, with a multitude of visitors for the end of it. Carol told of the beautiful dresses that Elizabeth had loaned her, coral crepe de chine accordion plaited for the concert, white with an orange sash for the luncheon, pale yellow with a black velvet girdle for the party, a little blue silk affair and another lovely white organdie for Sunday, and all with their accompanying silk stockings and slippers and gloves, and necklaces and bands for her hair. It was most wonderful to her, and as they listened they marvelled that their Carol had come back to them so gladly, and rejoiced to see her nestling in her brown linen skirt and muddy blouse close beside her mother's chair. She declared herself satisfied with her flight into the world. She might like to go again for a glimpse now and then, but she thought she would rather have Elizabeth out to Glenside. She hated to lose any of the time out here, it was so pretty. Besides, it was lonesome without them all.

About that time Shirley picked up the morning paper in her office one day to look up a matter for Mr. Barnard. Her eye happened to fall on the society column and catch the name of Sidney Graham. She glanced down the column. It was an account of a wedding in high circles in which Graham had taken the part of best man, with Miss Harriet Hale—in blue tulle and white orchids as maid of honor—for his partner down the aisle. She read the column hurriedly, hungrily, getting every detail, white spots, gardenia, and all, until in those few printed sentences a picture was printed indelibly upon her vision, of Graham walking down the lily garlanded aisle with the maid in blue tulle and white orchids on his arm. To make it more vivid the lady's picture was in the paper along with Graham's, just under those of the bride and groom, and her face was both handsome and haughty. One could tell that by the tilt of chin, the short upper lip, the cynical curve of mouth and sweep of long eyelash, the extreme effect of her dress and the arrangement of her hair. Only a beauty could have stood that hair and not been positively ugly.

Shirley suddenly realized what she was doing and turned over the page of the paper with a jerk

that tore the sheet from top to bottom, going on with her search for the real estate column and the item she was after. All that morning her typewriter keys clicked with mad rapidity, yet her work was strangely correct and perfect. She was working under a tense strain.

By noon she had herself in hand, realized what she had been doing with her vagrant thoughts, and was able to laugh at Miss Harriet Hale—whoever or whatever she was. What mattered it, Miss Harriet Hale or somebody else? What was that to Shirley Hollister? Mr. Graham was her landlord and a kindly gentleman. He would probably continue to be that to her to the end of her tenancy, without regard to Miss Hale or any other intruding Miss, and what did anything else matter? She wanted nothing else of Mr. Graham but to be a kindly gentleman whenever it was her necessity to come in his way.

But although her philosophy was on hand and her pride was aroused, she realized just where her heart might have been tending if it had not been for this little jolt it got; and she resolved to keep out of the gentleman's way whenever it was possible, and also, as far as she was able, to think no more about him.

Keeping out of Sidney Graham's way was one thing, but making him keep out of her way was quite another matter, and Shirley realized it every time he came out to Glenside, which he did quite frequently. She could not say to him that she wished he would not come. She could not be rude to him when he came. There was no way of showing him pointedly that she was not thinking of him in any way but as her landlord, because he never showed in any way that he was expecting her to. He just happened in evening after evening, in his frank, jolly way, on one pretext or other, never staying very long, never showing her any more attention than he did her mother or Carol or the boys, not so much as he did to Doris. How was she to do anything but sit quietly and take the whole thing as a matter of course? It really was a matter to deal with in her own heart alone. And there the battle must be fought if ever battle there was to be. Meantime, she could not but own that this frank, smiling, merry young man did bring a lot of life and pleasure into their lives, dropping in that way, and why should she not enjoy it when it came, seeing it in no wise interfered with Miss Harriet Hale's rights and prerogatives? Nevertheless, Shirley withdrew more and more into quietness whenever he came, and often slipped into the kitchen on some household pretext, until one day he boldly came out into the kitchen after her with a book he wanted her to read, and was so frank and companionable that she led the way back to the living room, and concluded it would be better in future to stay with the rest of the family.

Shirley had no intention whatever of letting her heart stray out after any impossible society man. She had her work in the world, and to it she meant to stick. If there were dreams she kept them well under lock and key, and only took them out now and then at night when she was very tired and discouraged and life looked hard and long and lonely ahead. Shirley had no intention that Sidney Graham should ever have reason to think, when he married Miss Harriet Hale or some one equivalent to her, that any poor little stenographer living in a barn had at one time fancied him fond of her. No, indeed! Shirley tilted her firm little chin at the thought, and declined to ride with Graham and Elizabeth the next time they called at the office for her, on the plea that she had promised to go home in the trolley with one of the office girls. And yet the next time she saw him he was just as pleasant, and showed no sign that she had declined his invitation. In fact, the whole basis of their acquaintance was such that she felt free to go her own way and yet know he would be just as pleasant a friend whenever she needed one. Matters stood in this way when Graham was suddenly obliged to go west on a trip for the office, to be gone three or four weeks.

Mrs. Graham and Elizabeth went to the Adirondacks for a short trip, and the people at Glenside settled down to quiet country life, broken only by a few visits from their farm neighbors, and a call from the cheery, shabby pastor of the little white church in the valley.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Graham did not seem to forget his friends entirely while he was gone. The boys received a number of post-cards from time to time, and a lot of fine views of California, Yellowstone Park, and Grand Canon, and other spots of interest. A wonderful picture book came for Doris, with Chinese pictures, and rhymes printed on crepe paper. The next morning a tiny sandalwood fan arrived for Carol with Graham's compliments, and a few days later a big box of oranges for Mrs. Hollister with no clew whatever as to the sender. Shirley began to wonder what her part would be and what she should do about it, and presently received—a letter! And then, after all, it was only a pleasant request that she would not pay the rent, about which she had always been so punctual, until his return, as no one else understood about his affairs. He added a few words about his pleasant trip and a wish that they were all prospering—and that was all.

Shirley was disappointed, of course, and yet, if he had said more, or if he had ventured to send her even a mere trifle of a gift, it would have made her uncomfortable and set her questioning how she should treat him and it. It was the perfection of his behavior that he had not overstepped a single bound that the most particular might set for a landlord and his respected tenant. She drew a deep sigh and put the letter back into the envelope, and as she did so she spied a small card, smaller than the envelope, on which was an exquisite bit of scenery, a colored photograph, apparently, and underneath had been pencilled, "One of the many beautiful spots in California that I am sure you would appreciate."

Her heart gave an unforbidden leap, and was promptly taken to task for it. Yet when Shirley went back to her typewriter the bit of a picture was pinned to the wall back of her desk, and her eyes rested on it many times that day when she lifted them from her work. It is questionable whether Shirley remembered Miss Harriet Hale at all that day.

The garden was growing beautifully now. There would soon be lettuce and radishes ready to eat. George had secured a number of customers through people at the store, and was planning to take early trips to town, when his produce was ripe, to deliver it. They watched every night and looked again every morning for signs of the first pea blossoms, and the little green spires of onion tops, like sparse hairs, beginning to shoot up. Every day brought some new wonder. They almost forgot they had ever lived in the little old brick house, until George rode by there on his bicycle one noon and reported that it had been half pulled down, and you could now see the outline of where the stairs and closets had been, done in plaster, on the side of the next house. They were all very silent for a minute thinking after he told that, and Mrs. Hollister looked around the great airy place in which they were sitting, and then out the open door where the faint stain of sunset was still lingering against the horizon, and said:

"We ought all to be very thankful, children. George, get the Bible and read the 34th Psalm." Wonderingly George obeyed, and they all sat listening as the words sank into their souls.

"Now," said the mother when the Psalm was finished and those last words, "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate"; "now let us kneel down and thank Him."

And they all knelt while she prayed a few earnest, simple words of thanksgiving and commended them to God's keeping.

By this time Mrs. Hollister was so well that she went every day for a little while into the garden and worked, and was able to do a great deal in the house. The children were overjoyed, and lived in a continual trance of delight over the wild, free life they were living. Carol's school had closed and Carol was at home all day. This made one more to help in the garden. George was

talking about building a little pigeon house and raising squabs for sale. The man who did the ploughing had given him a couple to start with, and told him there was money in squabs if one only went about it right. George and Harley pored over a book that told all about it, and talked much on the subject.

The weather was growing warm, and Shirley was wishing her vacation came in July or August instead of the first two weeks in September. Somehow she felt so used up these hot days, and the hours dragged by so slowly. At night the trolleys were crowded until they were half-way out to Glenside. She often had to stand, and her head ached a great deal. Yet she was very happy and thankful—only there was so much to be done in this world, and she seemed to have so little strength to do it all. The burden of next fall came occasionally to mar the beauty of the summer, and rested heavily upon her young shoulders. If only there wouldn't be any winter for just one year, and they could stay in the barn and get rested and get a little money ahead somehow for moving. It was going to be so hard to leave that wide, beautiful abiding place, barn though it was.

One morning nearly four weeks after Graham left for California Shirley was called from her desk to the outer office to take some dictation for Mr. Clegg. While she was there two men entered the outer office and asked for Mr. Barnard. One of them was a short, thick-set man with a pretentious gray mustache paraded in the middle and combed elaborately out on his cheeks. He had a red face, little cunning eyes, and a cruel set to his jaw, which somehow seemed ridiculously at variance with his loud, checked suit, sporty necktie of soft bright blue satin, set with a scarf pin of two magnificent stones, a diamond and a sapphire, and with three showy jewelled rings which he wore on his fat, pudgy hand. The other man was sly, quiet, gray, unobtrusive, obviously the henchman of the first.

Mr. Clegg told the men they might go into the inner office and wait for Mr. Barnard, who would probably be in shortly, and Shirley watched them as they passed out of her view, wondering idly why those exquisite stones had to be wasted in such an out-of-place spot as in that coarse looking man's necktie, and if a man like that really cared for beautiful things, else why should he wear them? It was only a passing thought, and then she took up her pencil and took down the closing sentences of the letter Mr. Clegg was dictating. It was but a moment more and she was free to go back to her own little alcove just behind Mr. Barnard's office and connecting with it. There was an entrance to it from the tiny cloak-room, which she always used when Mr. Barnard had visitors in his office and through this way she now went, having a strange repugnance toward being seen by the two men. She had an innate sense that the man with the gaudy garments would not be one who would treat a young girl in her position with any respect, and she did not care to come under his coarse gaze, so she slipped in quietly through the cloak room, and passed like a shadow the open door into Mr. Barnard's office, where they sat with their backs toward her, having evidently just settled down and begun to talk. She could hear a low-breathed comment on the furnishings of the office as indicating a good bank account of the owner, and a coarse jest about a photograph of Mr. Barnard's wife which stood on his desk. It made her wish that the door between the rooms was closed; yet she did not care to rise and close it lest she should call attention to herself, and of course it might be but a minute or two before Mr. Barnard returned. A pile of envelopes to be addressed lay on her desk, and this work she could do without any noise, so she slipped softly into her seat and began to work.

(To Be Continued Next Week.)

The unbaring of that \$50,000,000 swindle ring in Chicago indicates again the truth of the old saw that "the bigger they are the harder they fall." The rogues were playing for big stakes on broad lines but they were caught just the same.

The Silesian question completely baffled the supreme council of the allies. Now it is up to the League of Nations. If the league should solve it—and there is a fair prospect that it will—it will deserve a distinguished service medal, at least.

## KEEPING WELL MEANS A CONSTANT FIGHT AGAINST CATARRH

Many diseases may be described as a catarrhal condition. Coughs, colds, nasal catarrh, stomach and bowel disorders are just a few of the very common ills due to catarrh.

Fight it! Fight catarrh with a remedy of assured merit, a remedy which has a reputation for usefulness extending over half a century.

## DR. HARTMAN'S PE-RU-NA

Tablets or Liquid Sold Everywhere

### Not Quite Finished.

The most embarrassing moment of my life was when a new stenographer came to work for my boss. About noon of her first day with us I wrote to the old stenographer and I left the note in the typewriter when my boss called me in. Just then the new stenographer came back from lunch and she read the note.

When I came out of my boss's office she said, "There is a note of yours in the typewriter. Do you want to finish it?"

The note read: "Dear Peggie—I am writing to let you know of our new stenographer. She is dead from the neck up and as slow as molasses. She has a face like a—."—Chicago Tribune.

Be fair; then you need fear neither Gor nor man.

Don't be indifferent or you'll soon be out.



## GENUINE "BULL" DURHAM

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### Reasonable.

The matron entered the seaside passenger's cabin softly.

"Is there anything," she said, "anything at all that I can do to make you feel more comfortable?"

"There is," remarked the girl who was doing her first-time-across. "If you don't mind."

"Not at all, my dear, not at all!"

"Well, then, if it's perfectly convenient, you may pick me up and let me down on the ground under a large tree, please!"—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

## Cuticura Soap Clears the Skin and Keeps it Clear

Soap 25c, Ointment 25 and 50c, Talcum 25c.



The Spirit of "Color Discord" glares at you from certain walls. Disease casts its baleful shadows from unsanitary walls.

Cheerfulness, happiness, health, serene peacefulness, is the beautiful "Spirit" of Alabastine walls.

## Brighten Up Your Walls This Fall

Have the walls of your rooms cheerful and sanitary, to reflect cheerfulness instead of gloom. Have walls that will harmonize with rugs and furniture, colors that will enhance and not detract from your gowns and personal appearance.

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Alabastine will give you that soft, pastel effect in neutral colors that so many are enjoying in the most attractive homes and public buildings. Alabastine is artistic, sanitary, durable and economical. Alabastine has distinctive merits recognized throughout the world; ready to mix and use by adding cold water.

## Our Decorative Service Department

Our decorative department has the ability to serve you, and the desire to do so. We have the experience of planning interior decorations for thousands of the best homes and that experience is yours for the asking. Remember, there is only one quality of Alabastine and at a very economical cost.

You purchase the same identical material that goes into the home of the millionaire. The Alabastine packages always have the cross and circle printed in red and are identical in quality. This being the case, the question of whether your walls are artistically decorated depends on the proper treatment of colors.

Write us a postal that you are interested and we will send you a Chart that may be easily filled in with the information that will enable our artist to work intelligently and there will be no cost or obligation on your part. Our reason for this is that we are interested in your best interests.



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