

# The Christmas Scapegoat by JACK NORMAN

JUST SUIT HER.



Employer—What we want is a night watchman that watches—somebody who can sleep with one eye open and both ears, and who is not afraid to tackle anything. See?  
Applicant—I see, boss; I'll send me wife round.

### They Didn't Have to Change.

During the years in which our pure food laws have been put into effect there has been a great hurrying and scurrying on the part of the food manufacturers to change their methods to make them conform to the law.

The Quaker Oats Company is a conspicuous exception. It was admitted that Quaker Oats was as pure and clean as possible and that it was an ideal food.

It is so cheap that any one can afford it and so nourishing that everyone needs it. The result of last year's experiments at Yale and other points where food values were tested is that Quaker Oats has been adopted by many persons as their food on which they rely for adding vigor and endurance of muscle and brain.

The Quaker Oats Company meets all demands in the way it packs Quaker Oats; regular size packages and the large size family package; the latter, both with and without china.

### A Revelation to the Cook.

A happily married woman, who had enjoyed 33 years of wedlock, and who was the grandmother of four beautiful little children, had an amusing old colored woman for a cook.

One day when a box of especially beautiful flowers was left for the mistress the cook happened to be present, and she said: "Yo' husband send you all the pretty flowers you gits, missy?"

"Certainly, my husband, mammy," proudly answered the lady.

"Glory!" exclaimed the cook, "he suttin' an holdin' out well."—Ladies' Home Journal.

### One Thing That Will Live Forever, PETTIT'S EYE SALVE.

first box sold in 1807, 100 years ago, sales increase yearly. All druggists or Howard Bros., Buffalo, N. Y.

### Was a Father, Too.

"Say, Mr. Editor, I'm the father of twins."

"All right; we'll put it in the paper under the head of 'Double Tragedy.'"

### HAVE YOU A COUGH, OR COLIC?

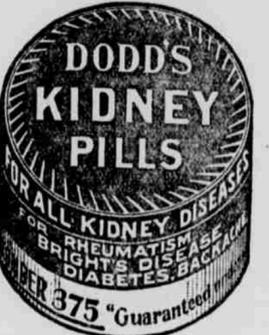
Don't believe everything you hear over a telephone wire.

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets regulate and invigorate stomach, liver and bowels. Sugar-coated, tiny granules. Easy to take as candy.

In a man's life the greatest necessity is more money.

Many who used to smoke 10c cigars are now smoking Lewis' Single Binder straight 5c.

It is usually costly to follow cheap advice.



### BROWN'S BRONCHIAL TROCHES

An absolutely harmless remedy for Sore Throat, Hoarseness and Coughs. Give immediate relief to Bronchial and Lung Affections. Fifty years' reputation. Price, 25 cents, 50 cents and \$1.00 per box. Sample sent on request.

JOHN I. BROWN & SON, Boston, Mass.

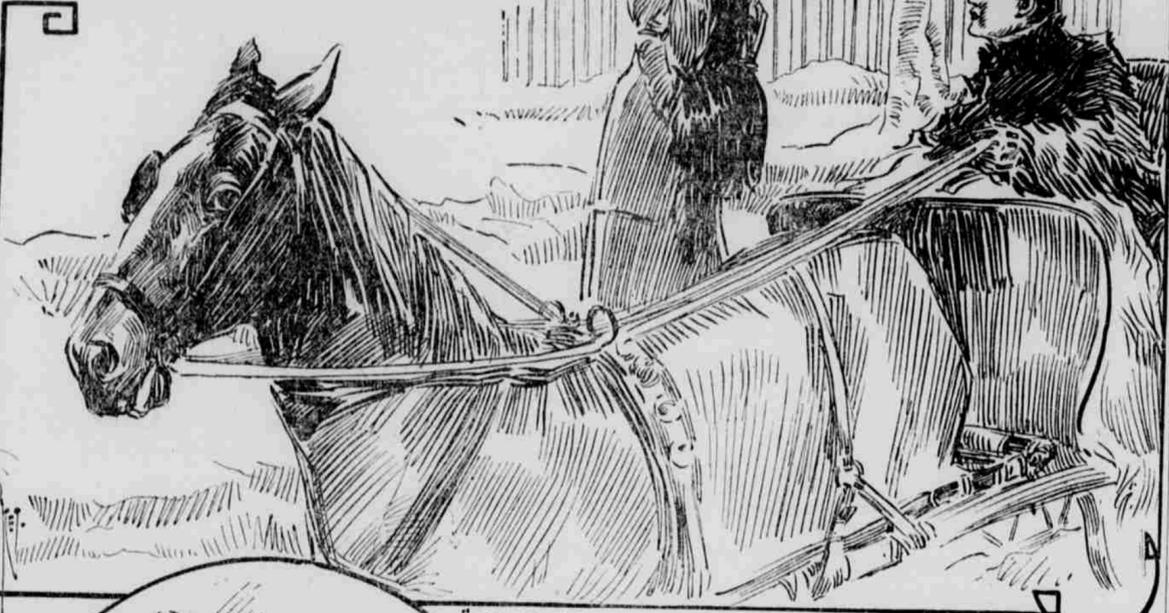


Make Shaving Easy NO STROPPING NO HONING  
TRADE MARK Gillette  
KNOWN THE WORLD OVER

HOLD ON THERE I want agents in every town. The Practical Hog Handler. A patented invention for catching, restraining, and loading hogs. Not a squeal, but a struggle and a chill in the work. Money in it. Send for booklet for booklet.

FITS cured to stay cured. Eminent physicians, druggists, congressmen and the medical press declare my cures permanent. Write for cures after others fail. WHITE-TOPPED DAY FOR FIRE BOOKLET. Address Dr. W. Towns, Fond du Lac, Wis.

Baby Smiles—When He Takes PISO'S CURE THE BEST MEDICINE FOR COUGHS AND COLDS  
So pleasant that he likes it—and contains no opiates. There is nothing like it for Bronchitis, Asthma and all troubles of the throat and lungs. A Standard Remedy for half a century. All Druggists, 25 CENTS.



"I'M NOT LIVING THERE JUST AT PRESENT" SAID PAMELA



"I'M TIRED OF BEING A CHRISTMAS SCAPEGOAT."

"M" R. PETERS bring you some mail, Miss Pam," announced Aunt Sally, coming into the cozy sitting room with four damp letters.

Pamela looked them over knowingly, felt of their soft contents and smiled grimly.

"The regular Christmas donations of handkerchiefs has begun," she observed in a dry but humorous voice. "This is from Lottie Preston. This," fingering a thinner envelope gingerly, "is probably a pin cushion cover from Geraldine, and this very fat envelope contains a linen initial handkerchief from Molly Drew."

"Last year, Aunt Sally, I received 17 handkerchiefs and three embroidered cushion tops that bore unmistakable marks of previous Christmas travels. I received three invitations to spend Christmas with relatives—Salina and Pauline, of course, and the Prestons—all of whom had gaps to be filled in, and I filled them as usual. I spent \$32 for Christmas gifts that I didn't enjoy giving because I knew they were expected, and made three trips to the city for the express purpose of suiting everybody as nearly as possible, and in consequence I grew so tired that I was cross to you for two whole days before I left on my Christmas tour."

"This year I shall not make a single present outside of my immediate family—which means just us two, Aunt Sally, for I intend to make myself a handsome Christmas present instead of wasting my money on the relatives who dump all their left-overs on me. I shall not accept a single invitation, either. I have lost the Christmas spirit."

Aunt Sally's honest black face took on a look of perplexity, whereupon Miss Pamela went on to explain the situation.

"I am tired of being a Christmas scapegoat," she declared with spirit. "Everything unpleasant is loaded on my shoulders because I happen to be unmarried."

"I do wish to goodness sake you had a married!" exclaimed Aunt Sally in a tone that gave Pamela to understand that all hope had been relinquished.

"You never was cut out for an old maid," Aunt Sally maintained, sorrowfully, whereupon Pamela shrugged her well-set shoulders in half humorous despair.

She dearly loved her faithful old servant and friend, who had descended to her together with the little country home which was the most undesirable of "effects" mentioned in the paternal will—to be equally divided among my three daughters."

Pamela being unmarried, had no need of the negotiable property which her sisters' husbands eagerly desired for the purpose of enlarging their business operations, so Pamela had accepted the country house and a third of a maternal income, which barely sufficed to cover the taxes and repairs.

"Now we shall see what Salina has to say," observed Pamela as she opened her sister's hurriedly scrawled letter.

"Dear Pamela," she read aloud. "Please don't take offense at what I have done, for I simply had to take advantage of your irresponsibility at a pinch. The Kensingtons—you remember them, don't you, Jim's sister and family?—have just come back from Texas, of course expecting to be invited here for Christmas. That is what we'd have to do if I didn't have you to fall back on. I'm sending them all down to you to spend the holidays, as we simply can't have them here, for the reason that we've invited the Masons, Jim's business friends, you know. It is likely that Tom Mason will be here if he can get away from a pressing business engagement, and as he was rather attentive to Geraldine last summer at the mountains something may come of this Christmas visit. You know how fastidious Tom is and how a crowd of noisy children would annoy him. I know men of his kind—they are as sensitive as girls, and I don't propose to spoil my daughter's prospects for the sake of the Kensingtons."

"Geraldine is packing a box of things for the Kensingtons which we will send by express to-day, so you needn't go to any expense buying Christmas presents for them. I hope you'll have a real pleasant Christmas and come to see us as soon after the holidays as possible."

Pamela threw down the letter with a determined gesture and for a few moments she thought deeply, painstakingly, with her smooth forehead puckered in a very unusual frown.

"Aunt Sally," she said suddenly, "could you possibly make out to spend Christmas week in the pasture cabin?"

"For what, Miss Pam?" asked the negress in a puzzled voice.

"For peace—I'm going to spend Christmas as I please. The Kensingtons can come if they like and make merry in my house, but I am not going to be a Christmas scapegoat any longer. Can you make the cabin do, Aunt Sally?"

"Deed an' I can," was the confident answer. "I can cook the bestes' kind in a fireplace, jes' like my old mammy could. Ben can haul us down all the bed close an' things we need."

Fortunately Salina was at home when Pamela's telephone call reached her, so there was no delay. She was surprised to receive a mes-

sage from her sister and still more surprised at its purport.

"You have made other Christmas plans!" she repeated in blank amazement.

"Yes, I'm real sorry you will be put out Salina," came the brisk, businesslike answer—"What did you say?—O, no, Salina, I couldn't possibly do that, but my house will be here, open to your guests, so send them right along just as you planned, only tell them that I have made arrangements to be away over Christmas—What?—They can't cook? Then I don't see but that you'd better send Geraldine down to entertain them, as she is such an excellent manager and hostess."

Salina's answering voice was exceedingly sharp. "Geraldine can't possibly be spared," she snapped. "I wrote you that the Masons are going to be with us, and we hope to have Tom if he can possibly get off, and I really think something definite may come of his visit, for I'm almost certain he admires Geraldine. Just give the Kensingtons a sort of a camp Christmas and they'll be perfectly satisfied."

"Very well," Pamela answered, cheerfully, "send them down and let them have a camp Christmas, as you say. I'll see that the house is well stocked with provisions and will leave the key under the door-step—don't forget to tell them that, Salina, or they won't be able to get in, mind."

Pamela dropped the receiver to choke off Salina's parting protest, and hurried away fearful of being recalled. She went the rounds of the village stores, ordering what she needed to tide herself and the Kensingtons through the holiday week.

It was a snowy morning and walking was very disagreeable and tiring, so by the time Pamela reached her own gate she was glad to climb up beside old Ben who was glad to be taking the last consignment of household stuff to the cabin in the pasture where Aunt Sally already held cheerful sway.

The next morning was clear and very cold. Pamela, in her warm but humble cabin sitting room, thought of the Kensingtons.

"Ben had better lay the fires up at the house so that it won't take too long to warm up after they come," she said. "You tell him about it, Aunt Sally, when he brings down the groceries."

Pamela settled herself to a pleasant task, which was nothing less than the ordering of a long-wished-for winter coat with fur trimmings, which was to be her Christmas present to herself. She had a \$50 check saved to pay for it, and was about to inclose it in the carefully written letter, to which she had pinned a clipping from the cloak maker's catalogue, when Aunt Sally called to her from the front door.

"Dey's come!" she announced. "Why, dey's most all growed up! I expected for to see a passel of chilluns."

"They're just big, Aunt Sally, not grown," Pamela explained, watching the stumbling descent of the six Kensingtons from the station hack. "The oldest girl can't be over 15, for she was born while Salina was spending the summer with us when Geraldine had her third

birthday. I remember Salina told us the whole Kensingtons' history when she received her sister-in-law's announcement of the child's birth—four girls and a boy."

"That last un walks terrible puny," Aunt Sally observed with something akin to pity.

"That must be the mother. She has had a lot of sickness, I understand. The father died three years ago, but according to Jim and Salina he wasn't of much account anyway—a professor, or something bookish, I believe."

Pamela went back to her writing, but seemed unable to finish it to her satisfaction. She could not put her mind to it; instead, she kept thinking of the Kensingtons, of Salina and Geraldine, and lastly of Tom Mason, whose supposed fancy for the former surprised and rather irritated Pamela, who had always considered Tom

thoroughly sensible.

"I suppose his money has spoiled him," she said to herself as her mind went back to the days when Tom was her school friend, before the Masons made their fortune in Pennsylvania oil lands.

"Certainly Tom Mason of old would not have thought of marrying an affected, vain girl like Geraldine. How Salina has spoiled that girl! Whew, there goes the ink all over my letter. Now I shall have to write another!"

But she didn't even begin another letter. Instead she rose and flung on her coat and hood preparatory to going out.

"I'm going up to the house, Aunt Sally," she announced to her surprised servant. "I'll pretend I'm a neighbor who wants to see the lady of the place."

Pamela rang her own doorbell rather timidly, and was admitted by a tall, rather pale girl in a skimpy plaid dress.

The girl led her to the dining room, where the other four were seated before an open fire. In a deep-seated rocker, with a well-worn shawl about her thin shoulders, sat a gaunt-looking woman of middle age, who introduced herself as Mrs. Kensington, a relative-in-law of Miss Pamela.

"You are not very well, are you?" Pamela asked, as she accepted a chair beside the fire.

"I'm a great deal better than I was last year," was the cheerful answer.

Miss Pamela left such a kind note of welcome for us. She must be a very nice person.

"O, yes," said Pamela, with a flush of shame as she remembered the indifferent wording of that reluctant note. "Well, I must go. Thank you for letting me warm up. I hope you'll have a real nice Christmas here."

She rushed out into the keen, wintry day in a rage against herself and Salina and Jim, who had combined in that shabby treatment of the needy Kensingtons.

Outside of her gate she narrowly escaped being run over by a trig little cutter with two occupants, one of whom she recognized with a start of amazement as her old friend, Tom Mason.

He looked exceedingly well-to-do in his fur great coat and his smooth, blond face had a fresh, boyish charm that made him look much younger than he really was, for Pamela knew that he was exactly her own age—31.

"May I stop?" he asked, as he threw back the lap robes. "The south-bound train ran off the track just below the station here and I took that opportunity to give myself the pleasure of calling on you."

"I'm not living there just at present," said Pamela, with a backward nod of her head, "but I'll be glad to have you go down to my cabin with me. And O, I do need sensible advice just this moment, and I'm awfully glad to see you, Tom."

Seated before Aunt Sally's nicely laid table in the lean-to kitchen, Pamela poured out the story of the Kensingtons.

"Do tell me what I can do to ease my con-

science and give those people a real good time," she begged.

"Why, give them a rousing good Christmas tree. I'll help," Tom offered cheerfully.

"Geraldine is sending a Christmas box for the Kensingtons, but I don't believe there'll be enough in it to make the tree look real festive," said Pamela, "so we'd better do what we can at the village."

The tree trimming began that evening with great gusto. Tom opened Geraldine's Christmas box expectantly and out tumbled a lot of antiquated toys, half a dozen summer hats, stained and crushed beyond repair, some worn and none too clean waists and two dragged, silk-lined skirts. In the bottom of the box were two baskets of cheap candy and a cake and a few shopworn Christmas cards.

Tom's wholesome face had taken on a look of deep disgust. He caught up the armful of rumpled finery and flung it violently on the glowing coals of the big fireplace.

"So much for Geraldine's generosity!" he exclaimed in a voice that would have made Geraldine's ears burn furiously, had she heard it.

At 10 o'clock Tom took his cheerful leave, promising to return by 10 o'clock on Christmas morning.

Tom reappeared promptly at the appointed hour, with additional packages, which he stowed in a corner, for they did not seem designed for the tree.

At 11:30 the jangle of sleigh bells announced the arrival of the guests, who trooped in rather timidly, bewildered by the littleness and humbleness of the cabin, evidently, but Tom soon put them at ease.

By the time dinner was over the guests were as happy as birds, even to the pale, weak-looking mother, who glowed with the reflected happiness of her children.

And the Christmas tree surprise! It was almost too much to be quietly borne by children who had known so very little of Christmas lavishness. Laden with gifts, they departed all a-quiver with gratitude.

"It has been a great success!" Tom declared when the jangle of sleigh bells had died away on the icy night air. "One phase of it is regrettable, though, and that is the dissatisfaction it has left in my mind."

"What do you mean?" Pamela asked, frankly surprised.

"It has made me feel dissatisfied with my bachelor existence. It is lonely at best and a pretty selfish way of living."

"So unmarried men are selfish and irresponsible as well as unmarried women, are they?" mused Pamela. "I'm rather glad to hear that because I have so often been censured for selfishness and obstinacy and—"

"Do you ever think seriously of getting married, Pam?" Tom broke in.

"I haven't for years," was the frank answer.

"I have thought of it a good deal lately—very lately," he declared, significantly. "If you could make up your mind to marry me, Pamela, we could have many a Christmas like this, for we certainly—"

"Marry you!" Pamela echoed, turning her crimsoning face toward the speaker. "Why, I never once thought of—not for years, that is," she interrupted herself to say truthfully.

"But once you did think of me," Tom cried, triumphantly. "I wanted you years ago, Pam, but now I want you a great deal more. At 31 a man knows his mind perfectly, especially if it concerns a woman that he has known and cared for all his life."

Then for the first time the remembrance of Geraldine's expectations surged through Pamela's mind. She spoke of it in a confused, embarrassed way, whereupon Tom laughed and said he guessed the Clydes would survive the disappointment, especially as he had never given them any grounds for such expectations.

"Come, Pam, give me my answer," he urged, "and don't forget that the season called for—a joyous one to me."

Aunt Sally, listening eagerly behind the half-shut kitchen door, saw rather than heard what followed. She smiled a big, intensely gratified smile as she turned back to her fragrant old pipe.

"Thank the good Lord, she's settled at last!" she exclaimed, gratefully.

Then, after a long, delicious pull at her faithful pipe, she added, triumphantly, "An' she's done better'n any of 'em, too, if she is a Christmas scapegoat."