

LITTLE RED HEELS

"Oh, dear!" The cry ended in a gasp of fright.

John Morrell turned sharply at the foot of the stairs, extending his arm automatically just in time to receive a fluff of white with a slender form in its midst. His sturdy figure recovered quickly from the shock of the impact, and he placed his burden on the carved settee near by. As he did so he caught a glimpse of two little red heels on shoes of snowy kid. They were the Frenchiest of the French.

"Ridiculous things," he snapped. "I wonder you didn't break your neck."

The limp little figure sat up with a jerk. "They're not ridiculous at all," it protested, pushing one of the offending objects out for further inspection with a dainty air of bravado. "I just slipped."

"I never slip," replied John tersely. "You caught one of those absurd monstrosities on the—"

"I didn't. I suppose I ought to thank you, but you spoil it all by lecturing." Polly's brown eyes flashed at him from under long light eyelashes, which gave them a peculiar charm.

"I have no desire to lecture, as you call it," answered the professor stiffly. "Your doings do not interest me in the least." He stalked into the library, leaving Polly gazing after him in astonishment.

"If I don't make you change your mind before this visit is over, Prof. John Morrell," Polly said, setting her little white teeth.

It is hardly necessary to state that at the end of two weeks the learned young professor found himself very cognizant of those little red heels wherever they happened to be. He approved of them less than ever, but he could not ignore their owner, although he threatened 20 times a day to take himself out of this obsession by the next train. Only last night his frivolous self urged Polly to take a run out to "The Poplars," in the morning and had been delighted at her eager acceptance.

Their road ran through the picturesque section of the Wiltshire Mills. On one side were stretches of pale spring verdure flecked with buttercups and patches of star flowers, on the other a low fence edged a 50-foot ravine, where the railroad paralleled the road.

Abruptly on the field side rose a jagged cliff, and as they approached it at swift pace a sudden cloud of dust arose as a huge rock from the top crashed directly in the middle of the road.

A suppressed scream from the girl, a quick wrench of the wheel toward the ravine by John, but the space was too narrow. As the machine struck, Polly's slender hands lost their desperate grip and she landed on the other side of the fence and rolled out of the horrified professor's vision.

Untangling himself from the steering gear as quickly as possible and ignoring the agonizing pain in his side, John climbed dizzily out and staggered to the edge.

He groaned. Half way down the descent lay an unconscious figure twisted sideways. Above and below there seemed nothing to stay her fall.

"If she moves!" He gasped as he saw the sharp rocks at the bottom of the gully. Then he slid gingerly down the steep slope and as he grasped the girl's skirt with nervous grip he gave a sob of thankfulness that showed him what Polly meant to him.

Digging his heels into the soil for a moment's recovery, he caught the spine of a little red heel wedged firmly in the opening of a cleft rock. The despised heel had saved the girl from mutilation, if not from actual death.

Polly opened her eyes suddenly. "Are you hurt much?" he inquired, anxiously.

She winced as she sat up and reached for her ankle. "No, not much, I guess," trying to "slog" her foot. Then, in a flash, she was her teasing, mocking self once more.

"You'll have to untie that shoe, professor. I can't seem to move the subject of your many satires."

"Thank God, for it, this time," he replied huskily, "or you mightn't have been here." He nodded toward the ugly depth below.

As John twisted the now empty shoe to dislodge it it parted company with its little red heel. He stuffed it absently into his pocket, retied the shoe on Polly's foot and helped her up the hill.

"Hey, diddle dumpling, my son John," she quoted merrily as they reached the top and rested a minute. "One head off and one head on. Why, professor," she gasped in astonishment, for the staid professor's arms were around her and his face was aglow with the look an honest man wears for "the one girl."

"You witch, you wholly adorable young woman," he said. "I love you." Now, that the expected had happened, Polly found, to her dismay, she was utterly unable to cope with the situation.

"I love you," he repeated, softly, and Polly discovered that she liked the words and also the strong arms that held her so closely. Then, as she felt something hard against her cheek, mischief shone in her eyes. Slyly reaching into his breast pocket, she pulled forth the little heel.

"And how about this?" she queried. "Do you like it now?"

"I love them. Blessed little red heels," John answered with due humility, and claimed the roseleaf lips so near.—Boston Post.

THE JUDGE'S LOVE

"May I read your palm, sir?"

The scene was a large, brilliantly lighted hall in the city of Minneapolis. Judge Robert Underwood paused in his walk through the crowded bazaar and, glancing in the direction of the voice, saw just before him a prettily draped tent with a trio of palmists plying their art.

The speaker, of whom nothing was visible save a pair of large brown eyes, the rest of her figure being carefully shrouded in lace, so arranged as to conceal all identity, gave him an earnest look in which he fancied for a moment a gleam of recognition dawned. But the eyelids drooped as he drew near, and seating himself at the little table he extended his shapely hand.

"Your life," began the palmist, "is a long and successful one; you have overcome difficulties by a strong will and indomitable energy, and are now wealthy, prominent and beloved. Ambition prompted you to marry a lady of wealth and station, but death claimed her after a few years; you have never filled her place, but often you are lonely and the memory of a boyish first love comes back to you, and the brown-haired girl you left sobbing in the distant eastern state, as the train bore you away to seek your fortune, brings a pang of regret. She waited long for him who never came, but mark ye, sir, you will meet again. Within a twelve-month she will become your bride, and the best years of your life are yet to come."

In the library of his beautiful home that night he gave himself up to the memory of his first love, sweet Alice Holden. How dear she had been until ambition had driven her image from his mind. Twenty years ago, and now he was a man of 40, a well-preserved man, with only a touch of gray showing at the temples, and Alice was five years younger. Only a slip of a girl when he had left her, a woman of 35 now.

"I will find her," he said, "and if she is free she shall be mine."

Two days later saw the Judge speeding back to his native town, where he found only a few of his boyhood friends remaining. From these he learned that Alice, upon the death of her parents, had left the country village to earn her living as a teacher in a western seminary, no one could tell him where.

The week that followed was a busy one. Returning one night from a day spent at court, as he stepped from an uptown car, a pocketbook slipped apparently unnoticed from its owner and fell at his feet. The car sped on, and, stooping, he tucked it in an inner pocket, mentally resolving to advertise it on the morrow. He dismissed it from his mind until later in the evening, in dressing gown and slippers, he opened the pretty trifle.

It was of Russian leather, and a bill of small dimensions, some silver coin and an old-fashioned photograph met his gaze. Idly he glanced at the pictured face, then with an exclamation of amazement he sprang to his feet and looked again. It was his own smooth, boyish face.

Unable to believe his eyes, he turned the card over, and there, in his own handwriting were the words, "Robert to Alice—Mizpah." "Alice, sweet Alice; my first love," whispered the Judge. "I have found you. Fate has been kind to me."

On the lining of the pocketbook was printed in small gilt letters Alice Holden, the Thorndike, Radcliffe terrace. The next morning the Judge boarded a car and sped on through the great city out beyond, where comparative quiet reigned. He found the Thorndike to be a modest apartment house. His heart stood still; his quest was ended, but how would he be received after all these years? He would soon know, for he advanced and knocked.

A sweet feminine voice bade him enter, and the Judge never forgot the picture that met his gaze. A simple room in its appointments, but how homelike! Plants blooming in the windows, a bird singing in its cage, bright colored mats, a writing desk, a bookcase, and there, sitting before an open fire, was the love of his youth, brown-eyed, brown-haired, the same fair cheeks and red lips, only more lovely. The girl had matured into a most beautiful woman.

"Alice," he cried, "I have come back to you."

The woman, who had risen, stretched out both hands in greeting. The hour that followed was a happy one; each had much to relate, and at its close the man pleaded humbly for the love that now meant so much to him.

"Let the future years prove my devotion," he said, and she whispered, with trembling lips:

"I have loved but you."

"Fate has been very kind to me," he said later; "fate in the form of a palmist and a pocketbook."

"'Twas not fate," she said, after he had departed, "but he shall never know that I was the palmist and dropped the purse at his feet. I will make him happy. The end justifies the means."

Waiting for the Royal Sanction. Ashe Carte—What do you know, dear boy, about these new trousseaus the papahs are mentioning?

Daubigny—I nevah permit myself to be interested in such things, old chap, until I am reliably informed, don't you know, that the king has decided to wear them.



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