

# The Shadow of the Sheltering Pines

by GRACE MILLER WHITE

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A New Romance of the Storm Country

(Continued from last week.)

## SYNOPSIS.

**CHAPTER I.**—Lonely and almost friendless, Tonibel Devon, living on a canal boat, child of a brutal father and a worn-out, discouraged mother, wanders into a Salvation army hall at Ithaca, N. Y. There she meets a young Salvation army captain, Philip MacCauley.

**CHAPTER II.**—Uriah Devon, Tony's father, returns to the boat from a protracted "sneeze," and announces he has arranged for Tony to marry a worthless companion of his, Reginald Brown. Mrs. Devon objects, and Uriah beats her. She intimates there is a secret connected with Tonibel.

**CHAPTER III.**—In clothes that Uriah has brought Tony finds a baby's picture with a notification of a reward for its return to a Doctor Pendlehaven. She goes to return the picture.

Just then her feet touched the pebbles on the bottom of the lake. With one wild leap she was on the shore and up the bank, Uriah screaming at her to stop.

She heard the two men crashing after her. That her short, swift leaps could outdistance them for long if she tried for the boulevard, she had no hope. But all about her were giant friends with outstretched arms, offering her shelter. For one instant she paused, then sprang into the air, caught the lower branch of a great pine tree and like a squirrel scurried up it. Almost at the top, spanned over by the blue sky, she crawled out to the end of a big limb and clung to it. Beneath her the men paused and shouted curses up at her. Tonibel cared nothing for curses. She'd heard them all her life, used them, too, when she felt like it.

Suddenly there came to her ears the lapping of a paddle in the lake. She flung up her head, peeped out and saw a canoe taking its leisurely way toward Ithaca. She bent over and looked down.

"Daddy," she cried, "there's some one rowin' on the lake. I'm goin' to holler like h—l. And when he comes, I'll tell 'em how you banged Edie, and if she's croaked you'll both get jailed. . . . Here's where I holler!"

She sent out a quick birdlike trill, and the man in the canoe held his paddle suspended in the air as he studied the forest. This didn't interest Tonibel as much as did the fact that Devon and Reggie Brown jumped to their feet and raced away toward the boulevard. Tonibel from her perch saw them disappear toward Ithaca before she slid to the ground.

The man in the canoe, too, made but a short pause before he dipped his paddle and shot away. On the deck of the boat Tonibel picked up Gussie-Piglet and, dripping wet, went swiftly down the cabin steps. There she found her mother on the bunk, her face discolored by her husband's blows. She looked as if she were dead, and for a moment the forlorn child of the wilderness uttered heartbroken little cries for help.

The cabin was cluttered in the struggle Uriah Devon had had with his wife. In despair Tony looked around. The old clothes daddy had brought home were strewn over the cabin floor. Tonibel heaped them together, then began to examine them.

They needed nothing but pressing. This she'd do to save her mother the work; and perhaps the fact that he had something ready to sell would make Uriah less brutal when he came back. In running her fingers over a coat, searching for small rents, Tony felt something between the lining and outside, a book it seemed like, which she hastily pulled out. It was small and much worn. There wasn't any money in it, in fact nothing but a picture, wrapped up in paper.

She looked at the picture curiously. A baby's face smiled up at her, and



She Looked at the Picture Curiously. Her own lips curved a bit in answer to the laughing challenge in the little one's eyes.

Then she turned it over.

On the back was written: "My baby, Caroline Pendlehaven, aged six months. If this picture is ever lost the finder will receive a money reward by returning it to Dr. Paul Pendlehaven, Pendlehaven Place, Ithaca, N. Y."

Money was what Edie needed. Money, food and a doctor. If she could find this Paul Pendlehaven, perhaps in exchange for the picture he would give her a bottle of medicine for her mother.

Hastily changing her wet clothes, she slipped the baby's pictured face into her blouse, turned down the lamp and crept from the canal boat and with Gussie in her arms was soon lost in the forest.

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Pendlehavens.

In all of Tompkins county no family had more prestige than Pendlehavens'. John and Paul Pendlehaven had chosen medicine and surgery as their vocation when they were in college. John was a bachelor, and Paul a widower. At the time this story opens the latter was an invalid, his infirmity brought about by the death of his young wife, who had died at the birth of their daughter, and the disappearance of the little girl when she was but a year old. Pendlehaven place comprised a whole city block, on which stood a house, almost a mansion. In the family were John, Paul, and Mrs. Curtis and her two children, Katherine and Reginald. Mrs. Curtis was a second cousin to the Pendlehaven brothers and had made her home with them since her children had been left fatherless. Mrs. Curtis had buried two husbands, Silas Curtis, the father of Katherine, and Edmund Brown, the father of Reginald.

For over a year now Paul Pendlehaven had not left his apartments in the southern wing of the house. Many times he had told his brother, John, that he only waited with what patience he could for the call to go away, to follow after his girl-wife, and perhaps, well, perhaps his child might now be with her mother.

On the day that Uriah Devon returned from his week's boat, Doctor Pendlehaven was seated opposite his cousin, Mrs. Curtis, at dinner. "Sarah," he began gravely, "I wish you'd consent to my taking Reginald in hand for a time. He will be absolutely ruined if something isn't done with him."

The coquettish smile which Mrs. Curtis always used in the presence of the eminent doctor left her face, and her lips drew down at the corners. "What's he done now?" she cried. "He isn't going to college at all," said the doctor. "He won't pass any of his examinations if he doesn't go to class and get his hours in. . . ." He paused a moment and then went on, "Another thing I dislike to speak of, but I must. Reginald has no idea of mine and thine. I'm very much afraid he takes what doesn't belong to him."

Mrs. Curtis uttered a squeal. "Goodness gracious, you accuse him of stealing," she screamed.

"I'm afraid he does, Sarah," he answered gently. "Constantly I'm missing money and things. It will hurt you to know that some one almost stripped my wardrobe of clothes, and now I find there isn't much left for poor Paul. Paul is very much distressed! I suppose if Reginald did take them, he thought they were of no value!"

"Were they?" queried Mrs. Curtis, leaning over the table, still very angry.

"Whether they were or not, Sarah," replied Doctor Pendlehaven, ignoring his young cousin's appeal, "they didn't belong to him. And they were valuable to Paul in that they held something he prized highly. It hasn't been my habit to interfere between you and your children, Sarah, but I do wish you'd ask the boy if he did take Paul's clothes. If he's sold them, I'll pay whatever the amount is."

"How perfectly disgusting," snapped Mrs. Curtis. "If the child did sell them, thinking they were no good, you'd certainly not want them back from a second-hand shop."

Doctor Pendlehaven rose from the table.

"Ask him about the suits, Sarah," he said, walking toward the door. "Perhaps if you tell him Paul will give him a hundred dollars for them and the contents of their pockets, he'll look them up."

Mrs. Curtis rose with dignity, her damp handkerchief clenched in her hand.

"I'll not insult my only son," she said distinctly.

With a gesture of despair, Doctor Pendlehaven went out of the room. For a moment after he'd gone, and the sound of his footsteps had been lost in the corridor, the mother stared at her daughter.

"The fact is," she burst out, "it's o-

Cousin John says, I haven't much influence over Reggie, but I don't believe he's as bad as people say. In a little town like this a person can't take a step sideways without old wags commenting on it. I hate Ithaca for just that reason."

"If Reggie'd behave himself," replied the lady's daughter in a bored tone, "he wouldn't have to be chattered about. My advice is, mamma, that you give him a good raking over. If you don't mind your P's and Q's you'll never have Cousin John for your third husband, I can tell you that. You're no nearer marrying him than you were ten years ago, as I can see."

"I will, though, Miss Impudence," flashed back the woman. "Paul won't be much more than in his grave before Cousin John makes me his wife. I wish to heaven Paul would die, and— and I don't notice with all your flitting and maneuvering you're getting your claws on Philip. . . . Ah, that shot told!"

Katherine's face had gone red at the words, then very white.

"How perfectly vile," she exclaimed, with a catch in her voice. Then she straightened up and laughed. "Well, I'm not forty-five years old and pretending I'm thirty-five, anyway, nor do I dye my hair, and flounce out with lace to prove I'm young. There's a shot for you, mother darling!"

The irate Mrs. Curtis rushed out of the room, followed by her daughter's mocking laugh.

For three years Katherine had been madly, passionately in love with Philip MacCauley, an intimate friend of the family. The young man's home adjoined hers, and during his orphaned boyhood he'd spent a great deal of his spare time at the Pendlehavens. But since he'd returned from France and had taken up the Salvation army work, a work which Katherine held in open contempt, the intimacy had about ceased.

## CHAPTER V.

### Doctor John Has a Visitor.

After remaining hidden in the forest for some time, Tonibel stole along toward Ithaca in the gathering gloom, her heart filled with hope. To get some medicine for Edith, and to take back the picture to the father who had offered money for it, were the two things she wanted to do now. Her young mind was busy with plans for her mother. If she could find some work to do, and Edith would go with her, she would get well again.

That evening, just after dinner, Dr. John Pendlehaven was sitting in his office, his mind disturbed, his heart aching for the sick brother upstairs, and he remembered that the first three or four years after the disappearance of Paul's daughter had been spent in a frantic search. All those working on the case had finally decided that Edith Mindil, a young nurse who had cared for the child most of the time since her mother had died and was devoted to her, had left home with the baby.

He sat up suddenly, for distinctly there came to him from the wide front porch the patter of feet like the soft footpads of some stealthy night-animal. He turned his eyes on the open door that led to the porch, and then he rose. There before him stood a girl,

a silent girl looking at him beseechingly—a curious, bounding expression in her eyes, and she was barefooted, too. He didn't speak, nor did he move forward. She was not a patient, that he knew, for only the rich came to him for treatment.

Suddenly she smiled and took two steps toward him. "Good evening," he managed to say.

"Paul Pendlehaven?" came in a

breath, and Doctor John shook his head.

"Oh! I hoped you were!" was the swift reply. "I want to see the doctor."

The voice was filled with touching pathos, and the young face had grown suddenly grave.

"I'm one Doctor Pendlehaven," he said. "Won't you sit down?"

Tonibel shook her head. She couldn't sit down in all this royal splendor, she who had been used to canal boats and rough benches to sit on.

"I'm kinda mused up," she said in excuse. "I've come to make a dicker with—with Dr. Paul Pendlehaven."

"Tell me what you want of my brother?" he said gently. "Do you want him to help you?"

"Yep, a hull lot," she responded, "a great lot. My mother's awful sick. But I can't tell how she got that way, so don't ask me. But—but I thought

mebbe if I brought Doctor Paul's baby back—" She paused, drew out of her blouse the picture and handed it out, "I thought if I didn't take any money for it, he'd help me, and mebbe wouldn't make me tell where I got it."

John Pendlehaven made no move to touch the little card she was holding out to him, and Tonibel came nearer. Her fingers let go their hold on the picture, and it fell to the floor. And there before the startled man's eyes, she dropped down and began to sob, long bitter sobs such as John Pendlehaven had never heard from any of his own women kind.

"I want some one to help my mummy so bad," came to him from among the curls.

Then he shook himself, deep sympathy striking at him.

"Listen to me, my dear; you've done my brother the greatest favor in the world by bringing back this picture." He stooped and picked it up. "He loved it dearly; no money could have bought it."

Tonibel's eyes, filled with tears, gazed up at him, and the red lips trembled.

"I don't want money," she faltered. "But my poor little mummy's sick. So I said to myself if the picture was worth cash, then mebbe I could get some medicine as a change off."

"We'll go to her instantly," said Pendlehaven. "Wait until I get my hat and coat, and I'll tell my brother you brought this to him."

In a few minutes he was back, finding her standing where he had left her. Without a word they walked out into the night.

As they passed the Salvation army quarters the girl turned her head and looked at it. But she made no remark, and so rapid did she walk that Pendlehaven found himself taking long strides to keep up with her.

To say he was surprised when they turned from the boulevard road to a path leading to the west shore of the lake would be putting it lightly. But he didn't ask where they were going; somehow it made no difference to him. His strong, warm hand held the small brown one, and something in the touch of the girl's fingers made him thrill with pleasure. He found himself vowing that anything this strange child should ask of him, he'd do, no matter what it might be.

They passed over a culvert through which water, in tumbling roars, took its way down the hill. Just on the north side the girl stopped.

"Here we are to the bogged rocks," she said. "There's the boat where my mummy is. See that little light? Stand here a minute till I come back and get you."

It had suddenly occurred to Tonibel that perhaps her father might have ventured home. If so, then she must prepare him for the doctor's coming.

She went immediately to her mother and looked down upon her. The swollen lids were still closed and the wan white face brought a rush of tears to the girl's eyes.

"I've brought some one to help you, darlin'," she whispered, but the woman made no move, if by chance she heard.

Clambering up the steps, Tonibel was back at the doctor's side before he scarcely realized it.

"Mummy's alone," she said. "Come on."

Pendlehaven stooped over Edith Devon, gently taking her wrist in his fingers. For some time he sat beside her, then mixing a draught, succeeded in pouring it down her throat. The weary lids didn't lift, but one thin arm came rigidly upward, then fell back limply.

"Some one struck her, eh?" asked the doctor.

"Yep," replied the girl, and that was all.

Pendlehaven didn't ask anything more. In accepting the picture he had tacitly promised not to question her. What did it matter to him how the woman had come into her present condition? He would do his utmost, his very best for the sake of the trembling child who had brought back the baby's picture which might bring a new desire to live in his brother, Paul.

"Come outside," he said at length, rising. "I want to talk to you. She'll sleep a long time, perhaps until morning."

"She'll get well, huh?" demanded Tonibel, in a whisper.

"Surely," he responded, "Of course."

The thought of her father coming home drunk flashed across the girl's mind. "I don't want you to stay if she's all right," she said with a backward bend of her head. "You said she'd get well, didn't you?" At the doctor's affirmative nod she went on: "Then I'll take you back up the hill, so you'll be safe."

"No," said Pendlehaven, firmly. "No, I won't let you. I can find my way all right, but I can't leave you like this."

Tonibel extended her hand. "I said I was going with you," she answered crisply. "Come on, it'll be all hours before you get home now. I ain't sayin' I would love to have you in the Dirty Mary with mummy and me, but you might get killed if you stay."

"And what about you?" demanded Pendlehaven.

"Oh, I'm used to it," she responded. "Somebody might give me a swat or two on my bean, but that won't count for nothin'!"

When they reached the boulevard, he dropped her hand.

"Now go back," he said gently, "I can find my way. Will you come tomorrow at two, and let me know how she is? Or shall I come down?"

"I'll hike to you," answered Tonibel. "If you're sure now you won't get lost, I'll run back to mummy. But—"

"I shall get home perfectly safe, child," came in quick interruption, and "Good-night. Thank you for bringing me the picture and allowing me to come to your mother."

## CHAPTER VI.

### "Tony" Swears an Oath.

When Tonibel bent over the bunk, she saw her mother's eyes were open. She smiled sadly down upon her, sat on a stool and took one of the woman's thin hands in hers.

"Where's your daddy?" murmured Mrs. Devon.

"He's gone, mummy dear," breathed Tony. "I guess he thought some one was after him. You're feelin' a lot better, huh, honey?"

"Yep, but I'm thirsty, awful thirsty, baby dear."

Tonibel gave her a drink, and re-seated herself.

"You're goin' to get well," she ejaculated. "I brought a awful nice doctor here when you were so sick. He's just gone, and he left you them pills and that medicine in the glass."

The woman stared at the speaker as if she hadn't heard rightly.

"A doctor?" she whined. "What doctor?"

"Doctor Pendlehaven," replied Tonibel. "He's a real nice man—John Pendlehaven."

Edith struggled up on her elbow.

"What'd you bring him here for?" she cried. "I hate the Pendlehavens. Uriah hates 'em—"

"I know that, mummy," Tony cut her off with, "but you was too sick to tell me what to do, and daddy wasn't here, so I just went and got the doctor myself. . . . Here! You mustn't sit up."

"I will! I will! Now tell me all he said from the beginning to end."

In silence Tonibel helped her mother to a sitting position and wrapped the blankets around her. Then she began to tell her what had happened. The only thing she omitted speaking of was the baby's picture.

"He were the only doctor I knew about," she offered finally, flushing, "and he's the beautifullest man I ever saw. Mebbe he'll come down tomorrow to see you."

Edith dropped back on the bed, shivering in desperation.

"Get your clothes off, baby," she whispered. "Crawl in beside me. You're all wet."

"Take your medicine first, then I will," said Tonibel. "Here—"

She picked up the glass and then stood staring at the place she'd taken it from. "Why, the doctor must have left this money," she exclaimed, taking up a roll of bills. "Look, Edie, look!"

"Get off your clothes," repeated the woman, impassively. "Come on to bed and go to sleep."

In another moment the girl had stripped off her wet clothes, had blown out the light and was in bed beside her mother.

When Edith was assured the girl slept, she crawled out of the bed and felt the lamp. She tried to collect her thoughts, to lay a plan for the future for herself and husband, John Pendlehaven had been there! Pendlehaven, the one man in the world she'd dreamed the mention of! And Tony had said he would come back tomorrow!

She turned and looked at the sleeping face, half-hidden in the blankets. She had stolen this child from her father, and now she had to escape the consequences of her wicked deed. She had to go away, and that quickly. If she had dared to face her husband's wrath, she would have, then and there, communicated with Paul Pendlehaven.

She reached out and touched Tonibel's face.

"Baby, darlin', wake up," she said. "I want to ask you something!"

Tony opened her slumber-laden eyes and smiled.

"Don't go to sleep again," exclaimed Mrs. Devon, hoarsely. "Tell me this. Do you honest believe what you said about that thing on the card? About it bein' holy?"

"Yep," asserted Tony, with drooping eyelids.

"You don't want to hurt Uriah and me, do you, honey?"

The girl shook her head slowly, and a doubtful shadow settling in her eyes, seemed to make her wider awake.

"I wouldn't hurt you, darlin'," she replied at length, "but sometimes, when daddy's beatin' you, I feel like whackin' the life out of him. Why, today—"

Edith stopped her by a tug at her sleeve.

"If you swore by that card you brought, I mean if you took an oath, would you keep it?" she asked hoarsely.

"You bet I would." There was amazement, surprise and eagerness in the young voice.

"Didn't you tell me the feller said Jesus was a holy bird?"

Tony nodded.

Mrs. Devon gripped her fingers about the girl's arm.

"Mebbe he's in the Dirty Mary here, only you can't see him, baby dear?" The woman's voice was slyly toned, but she shivered in superstition.

"He's right here," affirmed the girl, thinking of a boy's earnest uplifted face and vibrant assurances.

"Then say after me what I'm thinkin' of," said Edith.

Tony lifted her eyes to her mother's, but drew back when she discovered how terrible she looked, white like a dead person.

"I swear by the livin' Jesus," began Edith, and then she paused. "Say it," she hissed.

"I swear by the livin' Jesus," Tony repeated fearfully.

"I swear to my mummy never to

say nothin' mean against Uriah Devon, my daddy," went on Mrs. Devon. Tony repeated this, too, almost frightened into fits. She had never seen her mother look and act so mysteriously.

"Now say this, keepin' in your mind you'll be blasted to hell if you break your word, I won't never tell that my father beat my poor mummy, or that he's a thief and a liar—" A thick fearless sob burst from the woman's lips and brought an ejaculation from the girl.

"I swear to it all, honey mummy," she cried. "You believe me, Edie, darlin', don't you?"

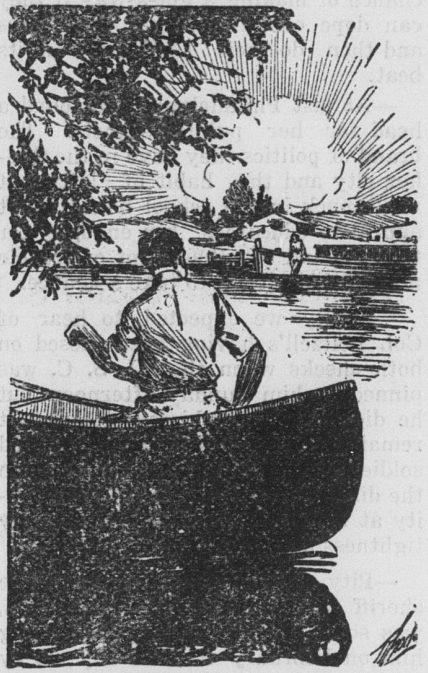
"Yes, I believe you," replied Edith, dully. "Crawl into bed, and go to sleep, baby dear."

Shiveringly Tony Devon got back under the blanket.

Then for more than an hour there was silence on the canal boat, silence that was broken only by the night noises outside.

Then, extremely weak, the woman prepared herself to go out. It took her a long time to write a note she had to leave for Tony, and when that was finished, she divided the money the doctor had left and stole softly from the boat.

It was in the full blaze of a morning sun that Tonibel opened her eyes and looked around the cabin. The other bunk was empty, and her mother was not in the cabin. In her night clothes Tonibel went to the deck, shouting the name, "Edith," her strong young voice repeating itself back from the woods in echoes. Then she went downstairs again and began to dress hastily, and every moment her fear was growing. She spied the note pinned to the lamp handle and stared



A Canoe Slipped Under the Overhanging Trees.

at it mutely as if dreading to know its contents, but she unpinning it with fingers that seemed to be all thumbs her legs were shaking so she had to sit down to read it.

"Tony dear," it began.

"I'm going to look up Uriah. I took part of the money. We might need some. You can go to work some where if I don't come back. Maybe some day you'll see me. Leave the boat where she is so your daddy can

find her. I love you, darlin'. Remember about your swearing not to tell on your Pop, and don't tell I'm gone to find him. MUMMAY."

Tonibel gave a gasping sob. They had all gone and left her stranded in a land of strangers. Because it was no longer her home, she began to love the silent old canal boat, and to wish with all her soul that Uriah and Edith would come walking down the cabin steps.

For a long time she sat thinking, looking out over the water, sometimes with tears flooding her lids, sometimes dried-eyed with fright. After a while she got up, took Gussie to the lake, where, much to the little animal's disgust, she washed her with a scrubbing brush and soap. Then she carefully washed herself, letting her feet and legs hang over the end of the dock until they, too, were as clean as her little friend.

It was while she was sitting there with the pig in her arms that a canoe slipped under the overhanging trees and came toward the canal boat swiftly. She watched it coming with no show of interest. Directly in front of her the paddle remained suspended, and the boat came to a stop. Tonibel's heart thumped, then seemed to fall to the pit of her stomach. Here, right before her, was the Salvation man.

"How do you do?" he said, smiling at her. "I see you're having a nice time."

Tonibel shook her head.

"No, I ain't, and Gussie ain't, either," she replied almost sullenly.

By a skillful twist of the paddle, Philip MacCauley drew the canoe close to the dock.

"Is this the boat you told me you lived on?" he asked, climbing up beside her and holding the canoe fast by a rope.

"Yes, the Dirty Mary," answered Tonibel, with a little catch in her voice. "Now I live on her, I mean today."

"What do you mean by 'now you live on her'?" he asked. "Isn't this your home? Didn't you tell me that?"

(Continued next week.)

"Bridget, I don't want you to have so much company. Why, you have more callers in a day than I have you'd try to be a little more agreeable you'd have as many friends as I have."—Boston Transcript.

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