

The Shadow of the Sheltering Pines

by GRACE MILLER WHITE

A New Romance of the Storm Country

(Continued from last week.)

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Lonely and almost friendless, Tonnibel 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 Tonnibel.

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.

CHAPTER IV.—With the Pendlehavens, a family of wealth, live Mrs. Curtis, a cousin, her son and daughter, Katherine Curtis and Reginald Brown. Katherine is deeply in love with Philip MacCauley.

CHAPTER V.—Tonnibel returns the picture to Doctor John, and learns it belongs to his brother, Dr. Paul Pendlehaven. It is a portrait of Doctor Paul's child, who had been stolen in her infancy, and her loss has wrecked Doctor Paul's life. Doctor John goes with Tony to the canal boat and ministers to Mrs. Devon while she is unconscious.

CHAPTER VI.—Returning to consciousness, Mrs. Devon is informed by Tony of her visitor. She is deeply agitated, makes Tony swear she will never tell of Devon's brutality, and disappears.

The girl's dark head drooped, and the shower of curls almost covered Gussie to her short hind legs. Tears dropped silently.

Philip touched her gently. "Where's your mother?" he questioned.

She lifted her head and looked at him through her tears. She wanted to confide in some one—yes, she did want to tell him, but the oath she'd taken on the gentle Christ flashed into her mind.

"She ain't home just at present," she replied in a low voice.

Oh, how she wanted to ask him if he knew of any work she could do!

As if he had read her thoughts, he asked abruptly, "Can I do anything for you? I brought you this."

She made a slight movement with her head but accepted the card he extended.

Then there drifted over the quiet summer day the tolling of the chimes from the university clock on the campus of Cornell. She bent forward to listen. It struck one, and drawing her feet from the water, she got up. She had promised to be at Pendlehaven place at two o'clock.

"I got to go now," she said apologetically. "Much obliged for bringing me some more salvation, mister! Mebbe I'll see you again some time. Mebbe I will."

"When?" demanded Philip, the blood running swiftly to his face. He felt a sudden renewed interest in the solemn girl, and he didn't want her to leave him at all.

"I dunno," she answered, putting Gussie under one arm. "I mightn't be home when you come."

"Can I come tomorrow?" the boy urged.

"Yep, you can come," said Tonnibel, with filling throat, "but if there's any one around, don't stop."

This was all the warning she dared give him. Then she paused long enough to see him jump into the canoe, and for a few minutes she stood watching the craft as it danced away on the water toward Ithaca. Then she started for the doctor's.

CHAPTER VII.

Tony Finds a New Home.

Many a person turned in the street and looked at the bareheaded and barefooted girl as she made her way through the city with a little pig snuggled in her arms. Tonnibel was hurrying to Pendlehaven place, for she had promised Doctor John she'd come to his office at two o'clock that afternoon, and, if she didn't, he might take it into his head to visit the Dirty Mary.

When John Pendlehaven came in and saw her he noted how pale she was.

"Your mother," he began—

"She's gone away visitin'," gasped Tony. "I don't know where she is."

"Didn't you see her this morning?" if she was able to get up, then she's better. Isn't she? Is she?"

Tonnibel bobbed her head.

"I guess so," she mumbled. "When I woke up, she was gone. I guess she went to find—"

"She hesitated, then ran on, "to see some one we know. So me and Gussie come to tell you she's better."

"Sit down," urged the doctor.

Again the curly head shook negatively.

"I got to go," she told him, swallowing hard. "I just got to go."

Then as her homelessness pressed down upon her, she began to tremble, convulsive sobs shaking her from head

to foot. The doctor forced her into a chair.

"There," he said sympathetically. "Now tell me what has happened."

"I can't," came in a gasping sigh. "My mummy's gone away, mebbe forever, and I got to find work. And—and I don't know how."

Doctor Pendlehaven looked at her thoughtfully. All through the night the wan face had haunted him.

Suddenly Tonnibel put her hand to her blouse.

"I brought back what's left of the money," she said, holding it out. "Mummy took some. You don't care about that, do you? She needed it awful, mummy did! But I couldn't keep this because I dickered with you last night about the picture, and you done your share."

"Keep it," exclaimed Doctor John, huskily.

"No," said Tonnibel. "I couldn't ever sleep a wink if I did. And she thrust the roll of bills into his hand, giving a long sigh as if she were glad to be rid of it.

It might have been this action on her part that brought to quick fruition the resolve that had begun to live the night before when Doctor Pendlehaven had tramped along the boulevard to Ithaca. From what she had told him now, she had been left alone. Then there was no one to ask permission of to help her.

"Where's your father?" he said, abruptly.

"I dunno," answered Tonnibel, a little sulkily. She didn't intend ever to speak of Uriah to anyone.

"Then you are all alone, now that your mother's gone? Do I understand you haven't any relatives?"

"Not anybody," she hesitated, "at least, not now. Not anybody but Gussie-Piglet here."

She touched the little animal with exquisite tenderness. Doctor Pendlehaven leaned over and, placing one finger under the girl's chin, raised her face to his. "Come with me," he said softly.

Tonnibel followed him through what seemed to her long miles of halls. When he ushered her into a room and closed the door, she stood a moment taking in all its magnificence. The atmosphere was laden with a heavy perfume of flowers, and then she saw something else. A man lay partly propped up in bed, his burning gray eyes staring at her.

"This is my brother, Paul Pendlehaven, my child," said Doctor John. "He wants to thank you for bringing back the picture."

"Sit down a while," murmured Doctor Paul.

She squatted unceremoniously upon the bed beside the pig.

"Our little friend here is in trouble," said Doctor John to his brother, "and wants work. I'll come back after three." Then he went out.

For a long time Paul Pendlehaven looked at Tony, and Tony looked back at him. Tony was mentally pitying him with all her loving heart. He was thinking over the conversation he and his brother had had about this strange little girl who had brought from a thief's den the picture of his baby.

"How would you like to stay here a while with me?" he asked at length.

Gray eyes widened to the fullest extent of fringed lids.

"Lordy," was all Tonnibel could say, as she glanced around.

"You might wait on me," explained the doctor, "and keep me company. I do get lonely sometimes. Would you like that? I know you like flowers."

"I love 'em," cried Tonnibel.

Pendlehaven smiled into the shining eyes. He felt better already.

"I've such a lot of them all over this wing," he went on. "You might take care of them for me and—and other things."

Tony was almost bursting with joy. She had within her the greatest gift of God, supreme gratitude. To work for him would be bliss indeed. She didn't want to cry, so to keep from it, she bit down on her red underlip. He had said in positive tones that he wanted her. It did seem good to be wanted somewhere. What she did then Pendlehaven remembered many a long day. She bent over and kissed his hand. The warm red lips thrilled him as vibrant youth always thrills weakness.

"Can Gussie stay, too?" she pleaded presently. "She'd be without anybody if she didn't have me."

"Yes," said Pendlehaven, as his brother opened the door. "You can make her a nice home in my conservatory."

It took but a moment for the sick man to explain to Doctor John his arrangements with Tonnibel, and the girl's heart was not the only rejoicing one among the trio.

When Katherine Curtis came home late that afternoon she found her mother in a towering rage, surrounded by many strange looking boxes and bundles.

"For heaven's sake, what's the matter?" asked the girl.

"I think your Cousin John's gone mad," said Mrs. Curtis, beginning to cry. "He's brought a ragged girl into the house to stay, a girl with bare feet, and enough hair for three people. From what I could gather she's going to stay over with Paul. And John insisted on my going with him to buy these. Think of a poor nobody dressed up like a horse."

Katherine looked at her keenly. "I suppose you served Cousin John a deep-seated spell of hysterics, didn't you, when he popped the girl in on you?" she demanded.

"I did my best," admitted Mrs. Curtis, sniffing.

"Men get surfeited to women's tears, mamma darling," said the all-wise Katherine. "If I wanted to make any impression on him, I'd leave off howling every minute or two. And you don't look pretty when your nose is red. Who is the gutter rat?"

"I'm sure I don't know. She's got a queer name, and I asked her about herself, and she looked as sulky as could be."

"Leave it to me—" began Katherine. Just then the door swung open, and there appeared before Katherine Curtis a girl who made her breath almost stop with surprise. A very young girl, too, the gazer caught at a glance. Abundant curls hung about one of the most beautiful faces Katherine had ever seen. Her mother hadn't told her the girl was so pretty. She felt a nervousness come over her when she thought of Philip MacCauley.

In silence Tonnibel donned her new clothes, and when she stood up to be inspected, Mrs. Curtis scowled at her. "Go show Doctor John," she said. "He told me to send you right down to him."

Tonnibel was glad to escape. Katherine hadn't said a word to her, but both girls had eyed each other appraisingly, and Katherine suddenly came to a resolution, which she made known to her mother the moment they were alone.

"She can't stay in this house," she said between her teeth.

Mrs. Curtis laughed sarcastically.

"See what you can do with your cousin, then," she snapped. "I did my best with John, and he positively refused to let me go to Paul! As much as told me it was none of my business."

"I won't cry when I talk to him," said the girl. "I'll speak my mind outright. I'll make the house too hot to hold her. I think I know how to put one over on our philanthropic cousins."

When Tonnibel came into the office that evening to ask a very important question of Doctor Pendlehaven, he said to her:

"My dear, I want you always to remember what I am going to tell you now. This house belongs to my brother and me. I do not wish you to take orders from anyone but us."

Tony gazed at him a moment, not understanding at first. Then her lips widened.

"That means if anyone says I've got to hike back to the canal boat, I don't go unless one of you tells me to," she demanded. "Is that it?"

The doctor laughed.

"Yes, that's it," said he. "Now what did you want of me?"

"Can I go down the lake tomorrow afternoon—" she hesitated and then went on, "I want to see if anyone's home."

"Certainly, dear child, you can," was the answer. "But get back before it's dark; I don't want anything to happen to my little Tony girl."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Fight.

Little by little Paul Pendlehaven taught her, and little by little Tony's salvation boy preached his lessons of Universal Love to her; and the eager young mind drank in the knowledge as a thirsty plant takes in water.

There were no signs of Uriah and Edith returning, and Tonnibel grew daily more hopeless when she thought of her mother. Perhaps she would never see her again. She had strenuously refused to speak of her people to Paul Pendlehaven.

Doctor John noticed as the days passed how much better his brother was looking, and no wonder his own heart warmed hourly to the curly-headed wail who had come among them so mysteriously.

Unknown to either of the doctors, Mrs. Curtis and her daughter had been able to keep Tony Devon from meeting Philip MacCauley in the house. At first John Pendlehaven had insisted that Tony attend the family table, but both Paul and the girl decided that her meals should be served in the sick room. Perhaps if Philip MacCauley hadn't been interested in a certain little girl on a canal boat, his curiosity would have taken him to Paul's apartments to make the acquaintance of the little companion John Pendlehaven had casually spoken of.

"She's a wonder, Phil," he said one evening. "For the first time I've hopes of Paul's recovery."

"Good!" replied Philip, and immediately fell into a reverie.

Tonnibel had reached the canal boat and had changed to her old clothes when suddenly she heard footsteps on the path beside the Hoghole. Her heart almost leapt out of her mouth. Perhaps her mother was coming home, perhaps her father. Tremblingly she peeped out through the aperture. She saw approaching, Reginald Brown was approaching the canal boat. She heard him cross the deck, and then the footsteps ceased. She hoped with all her might and main that he wouldn't think of coming downstairs.

But that was exactly what he did

she broke out abruptly. "I won't stay if he don't."

Uriah's hand went back to his hip. "I guess he'll go if I tell 'im to," said he. "Just hop into your boat, kid, before I fill you up to your teeth with little bits of hot lead."

Tonnibel had witnessed scenes like this before. She knew but a tiny pressure of her father's finger on the gun he held would kill her sweetheart.

"Go along," she managed to get out between her chattering teeth. "It'll be worse for both of us if you don't!"

Devon was forcing Philip backward toward the end of the dock, and by this time Reginald had crawled to the shore and had lain down upon it.

"Don't lag, mister," cried Tony to Philip. "Go along to Ithaca."

MacCauley stepped into his canoe, and Devon sullenly unfastened the rope and threw it into the bow of the craft.

"Don't come back here if you don't want a taste of this," he snapped, touching his gun. "Get out and stay out, mister."

With the end of the revolver he gave the canoe a shove, and Tony saw the middle dip into the water and the boy move away.

Uriah stood a moment and looked off to the hills. Then locking Tony in the cabin he went to where Reggie lay on the shore and helped him back to the boat.

CHAPTER IX.

The Face in the Window.

By ten o'clock a heavy rain and wind had settled over the Storm Country with such force that the waves were rolling southward like ivory-crested mountains. Once in a while a heavy thud of thunder reverberated over the lake from the north, tossing its roar back of the Cornell buildings on the university campus.

Devon's canal boat was following the little tug which was hugging the western shore northward. Tonnibel, in the little room back of the cabin, was searching through the darkness from the small window. But the only thing she could see was the dark bank along which they crept and which once in a while was lit up by a vivid streak of lightning.

Suddenly the engine stopped, and as if she imagined Gussie could help her she gathered her into her arms.

In a vivid streak of lightning she saw they were anchored close to Crowbar point, which protected them somewhat from the wind. She crouched low when the little door opened and Uriah called her name.

"Come out here, Tonnibel," he commanded roughly, and Tony, with Gussie in her arms, crept into the cabin, where Reggie was seated on a bunk, looking pale and sullen.

"Set down on the floor, brat," commanded Uriah, and Tonnibel dropped down. "Now listen to me, Tony," went on Devon. "Ever since you've been knee high to a grasshopper you've been as mean as the devil. You always got in behind Ede when she was here, but now there ain't no skirts to shove me off. You hear?"

Every vestige of blood left the wan young face.

"Where is mummy?" she said, lifting imploring eyes to his.

"Dead," said Devon brutally, "as dead as a door nail. Here, my lady, if you holler I'll rap you one on the sob."

"Dead!" cried Tonnibel. "Pop, you're lying to me—I know you are!"

"Have it your own way, kid," replied Uriah, with an insolent laugh. "but one thing's sure—Ede ain't here to buck against me now. What I want to get into your thick noodle is you're goin' to get married as soon as we get to Auburn. See?"

The girl's eyes remained centered on his face, horror deep seated in their gray depths.

"Here's Reggie wantin' to marry you," continued Devon, with a wide wave at the limp young man. "And when I say you've got to I mean it."

"I won't," fell from Tony's lips, but the awful expression on her face didn't change nor did she drop her eyes.

Devon took a quick step toward her, with an upraised arm, and as he had beaten his wife so he laid the blows about the girl's head and shoulders. The pig fell from Tony's arms in her desperate efforts to protect herself.

"Oh, daddy, don't, don't, any more!" she screamed.

Reggie Brown was watching the brutal scene dully as if it interested him but little. At the girl's fearful plea Devon stepped back and glared at her.

"Will you do what I bid you, miss?" he demanded hoarsely. "I'd as soon kill you as take a wink."

Tonnibel made no answer save to weep more wildly, and because she did not make ready reply, Uriah struck her again. Then suddenly Reginald stood up.

"Don't hit 'er any more, Dev," he drawled. "Shut 'er up a while and keep 'er without grub, and she'll come to time. Give 'er a night to think it over. God, but you've walloped her black and blue as 'tis."

In answer to this Devon picked Tony up and threw her into the back cabin. Then he kicked Gussie over the threshold, slammed the door and locked it.

Philip MacCauley had paddled away from the Dirty Mary with a dull, sick fear for the girl he had had to leave behind. To fight single-handed a drunken man with a gun was foolhardy and would do little Tony no good.

When he reached the corner of the lake he ran his craft ashore and sat for a long time thinking. Suddenly he saw through the dusk that the canal boat had left its moorings and was moving slowly northward in the teeth of the rising wind. With an ejaculation he shoved off and was out in the

bellied surf. Wherever that boat went he decided to go, too.

As he paddled carefully along, he could see the shadows of two men in the glimmer of the little light in the small pilot house. Then Reggie was there with Devon, but where was Tony?

One small window in the canal boat gave forth a dim light. He felt within him that she was there where that light was, alone and suffering. What had she thought of his allowing himself to be forced away from her when she needed him most? His teeth came together sharply. He was no coward, this Philip MacCauley, this captain of the Salvation army.

Suddenly he caught sight of a passing shadow in the cabin, and his heart leapt up within him. 'Twas the shadow of a girl walking up and down. Grimly his teeth set into his under lip and with one deep thrust of the paddle into the water, he sent the canoe heading toward the canal boat. Then it was that a girl's face came to the window.

The canoe almost crashed against the side of the bigger boat as it came sidewise of it, and Philip caught at it

desperately. Slowly lifting himself up he thrust his face close to Tony's. She was staring at him blankly as if his ghost had suddenly risen out of the storm-tossed lake.

"Don't do that, darling," he whispered as she drew back in terror. "I'm going to take you away."

Then she realized who it was, and reached out and clutched at him, breathlessly.

"Climb through," undertoned Philip. "Quick, climb through, and when I tell you to drop, do it, but not before."

By holding his body rigidly erect, he managed to keep the canoe upright. Then he waited, but not for long. Almost immediately a girl's bare arm shot through the window. Something wriggled in her clutching fingers. Philip almost lost his hold on the boat as Gussie came against his face. He snatched the pig and dropped it at his feet. Then a pair of bare legs followed and Tony's body began to wriggle through the narrow aperture.

Once or twice Philip muttered an ejaculation as a streak of lightning crossed the sky only to die and leave the water as dark as before. It was taking the girl an interminable time to squeeze herself through that opening. Suddenly her shoulders were through, and she was hanging on by her hands.

Just at that moment the tug ahead became silent, and Philip heard the two men walking back along its roof. They were coming aboard the canal boat, and if—He crushed the canoe nearer, lifted one hand and jerked the hanging figure of the girl away from the window. She flopped face downward into the bottom of the canoe, and Philip left her limp without a word. Then he let go his hold of the canal boat, and a great wave lifted his slender craft upon its crest and shot away toward the bank.

It took a shorter time than it takes to tell it for the canoe to reach the shore. Under the overhanging trees where they were sheltered from the wind, Philip turned and looked back. A man's face was thrust through the window which had just yielded up the quiet little figure at his feet. Then two forms appeared upon the stern deck. From the hand of one of the men hung a lantern. Philip remained very still. He knew they could not see him hidden away there in the darkness.

For a long time, through which Tonnibel never moved, Philip waited. The men on the canal boat seemed filled with terror. They ran from one end of it to the other. He heard them calling to and fro, and once in a while an oath escaped from Devon as he screamed his daughter's name loudly.

It was not until he saw one of them climb upon the tug and heard the sudden clang of the engine that the boy yook up his paddle and moved slowly along the shore southward, and as he was going with the wind, Philip made rapid progress toward the head of the lake.

In a little cove he drew the canoe to the shore and, springing out, dragged it its length from the water.

(Continued next week.)

—Get your job work done at this office and get it right.

—Late arrival at ball grounds—What's the score?

Smarty—Nothing to nothing.

Late Arrival—Must be a good game, huh?

Smarty—Dunno. Ain't strated yet.

—Subscribe for the "Watchman."



Philip Caught at It Desperately.



Never Had She Seen Such Strength.