

# The Shadow of the Sheltering Pines

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(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 "opra," 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.

**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.**—Tonibel 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.

**CHAPTER VII.**—Tony's personality and her loneliness appeal to Doctor John and he arranges to take her into his house as a companion to his invalid brother.

**CHAPTER VIII.**—Tony's presence in the house has a good effect on Doctor Paul. He begins to take a new interest in life. Visiting the canal boat, Tony finds Reginald Brown there. He attempts to kiss her. Captain MacCauley appears and throws the man into the lake. Uriah Devon orders MacCauley off his boat.

**CHAPTER IX.**—With the girl a captive Devon insists that she shall marry Brown. On her persistent refusal he beats her brutally, throws her into the cabin, unmoors the boat, and starts to leave Ithaca. MacCauley follows in his canoe. He takes the girl into the canoe through the cabin window. The men believe Tony has committed suicide. MacCauley declares his love, and Tony acknowledges she returns it. The girl returns to the Pendlehaven home.

**CHAPTER X.**—At dinner in the Pendlehaven home MacCauley, not knowing of her presence in the house, meets Tony, and his affectionate greeting alarms Katherine and her mother.

When the boy and girl stood facing each other, embarrassment kept them silent for some moments. Philip had decided to find out whether Tony knew of Reginald Brown's connection with the Pendlehavens, although he was positive in his own mind she did not. "It's a nice day," he blurted out, and Tonibel's low "yes" was her only answer. How pretty she looked, thought Philip, and how much he desired to kiss her as he had the other time in the breaking dawn on the shore of Lake Cayuga.

"Tony," he said huskily, "don't you—don't you—like me at all?"

Tonibel opened her eyes to their fullest extent. Why, hadn't she kissed



"Tony, Don't You Like Me at All?"

him, oh, ever so many times? No girl would do that— She blushed and studied the tip of her pretty shoe.

"Don't you, Tony, or if you don't, couldn't you?" pleaded the boy.

"I like you heaps," she breathed with suppressed emotion. She wanted to throw her arms about him right then, to tell him how she had longed to be with him, all about her promise that she would not leave the house again without some one with her. She was considering this when—

"I wanted to ask you—if you've seen that man again?" said Philip. "The one I—"

"You slung in the lake?" interrupted Tonibel, a dimple peeping out at the corner of her mouth. "No, never. I guess old Reggie thinks I'm dead, don't you?"

"I saw him in town today," he told her finally and then almost cursed himself for his brutality. She had gone so white and was looking about her helplessly.

"He'll find me, mebbe," she hesitated, a haunted expression coming into her eyes. "Mebbe he will."

"No, he won't; not if you let me help you," exclaimed Philip. "Now, listen to me! Don't go out of Cousin Paul's rooms for anything, no matter what. Call a servant if you want anything downstairs. And don't leave the house unless you go with me. I want your promise that you will not come downstairs. Will you give it to me?"

Tony didn't understand why she should promise this, and a whimsical thought came into her mind that she was always making promises to some one, but she couldn't refuse him, and Philip went away a little happier and feeling much more secure.

## CHAPTER XI.

"I Love You More'n the Whole World!"

One late afternoon Philip MacCauley started for the Pendlehavens', desirous of seeing Tony Devon. Katherine saw him guiding his car up the roadway and ran to the door to meet him. Her smile was especially radiant for she had begun to lose her fear about Tonibel's influence over him when "sit down, Phil," she entreated. "Mother's sick today. Reggie almost sets her into fits."

Philip still remained standing. "And you've kept away so much dear boy," complained the girl. "It seems you don't care for us any more."

"I do, though, but I've been busy," replied Philip, not able to think of any other excuse.

"But you've always been busy, more or less," the girl shot back, "and yet you came. Mother and I have come to the conclusion that you couldn't have been very much interested in—Cousin Paul's protegee. You haven't even asked about her."

Philip coughed embarrassedly, then laughed.

"The fact is, I came to see her to—"

Katherine went white.

"What do you want to see her for?" he asked sharply.

"Oh, just to talk to her," replied MacCauley, awkwardly.

Katherine shook her head.

"I don't believe you can," she protested dubiously. "Cousin John won't let any of us go up to Paul's room, and she never comes down any more."

"Where's Reggie?" demanded the boy.

"Oh, he's gone to Trumansburg today," answered Katherine, listlessly. "And I am glad of it. I wish he'd never come back. He keeps mother in tears most of the time he's here."

"And Cousin John! I want to ask him if I can take Miss Devon—"

Katherine's head went up in disdain.

"I know what you want to ask him," she interrupted tartly. "But you needn't waste your sympathy on that Devon Girl. But mamma says—"

Before she could tell him her mother's opinion, the door opened and Dr. Pendlehaven walked in.

"Cousin John," said Philip, abruptly, going to him, "may I take Miss—Miss Devon out for a little ride? I'll promise to bring her back in an hour."

The doctor looked at the boy's dark pleading eyes, looked and then smiled.

"Perhaps you won't have any better luck than I have had, son," he answered with a little laugh. "I've almost been down on my knees to the child, and she absolutely refuses."

"Mother's dreadfully against her riding in our car, Cousin John," Katherine cried in thin, throaty tones. "The thought of it makes her sick."

"Your mother's not really sick, my dear Katherine," the doctor asserted. "Ah, here she is. Katherine was just speaking of you, my dear Sarah."

A merry twinkle came into his eyes as he turned on his cousin.

"Now, was she?" smirked Mrs. Curtis. "What were you saying, Kathie?"

Katherine lifted her eyes, slumbering with passionate anger.

"That you would dislike Cousin Paul's—I mean that girl up there—taken out for a drive," replied Katherine.

Mrs. Curtis caught her daughter's expression and looked at Dr. John, then at Philip.

"Well, I should say I wouldn't like it," she ejaculated. "There's a limit to all things. What in the world would the neighbors say to such an outrage?"

Dr. Pendlehaven's face gathered a dark look.

"If she'll go with Philip, Sarah," he said, "I wouldn't give a hang what the neighbors said. Come along up, Phil, and ask her."

"Cousin John!" cried Mrs. Curtis. "And, oh, Cousin John," gasped Katherine. But the doctor was too

angry to pay any heed to them.

"You really want to take the child, my lad?" he asked, smiling at MacCauley.

"Yes, do let me," blurted the boy. "Let's go up now."

They had no more than closed the door when Katherine burst into tears.

"Mrs. Curtis plumped down into a chair in a spell of hysterics.

"The little trollop," she cried. "Oh, I'd like—"

"I'd like to kill her," burst forth Katherine. "Mother, if you don't do something for me, I'll die. Oh, to think of it; he takes her out when he could take me! Oh, God! Oh, dear God, help me!"

Her daughter's terrible outburst brought Mrs. Curtis directly out of herself.

"Don't, Kathie," she said in a whisper. "I really had no idea you cared for him so much. I will help you, poor dear. John shall listen to me this night; he certainly shall."

Meanwhile Tonibel looked up with inquiring eyes as Dr. Pendlehaven walked in. He had closed Philip on the outside of the door.

The girl gave him a slight smile. The doctor came forward and took hold of her hand.

"Paul," he asked, looking at his brother, "could you spare our little girl for an hour? I want her to go out."

Tonibel, remembering her promise to Philip, rose to her feet. "I don't want to," she trembled. "I'd rather stay here. I'd really rather stay here."

Pendlehaven went to the door and opened it, and Philip walked in.

"Here's a young man, Miss Tony Devon," he said, laughing at the sight of the girl's puzzled face. "who tells

me he wants you to drive with him now, what do you say?"

"Say yes, darling Tony," Philip ejaculated with sparkling eyes.

"Oh, it's how the land lies, is it?" said Dr. John under his breath. There he stood, "I didn't know this thing had gotten to the 'darling' point, Philip."

Tonibel's face grew poppy red, and she stood with her eyes cast down and her fingers interlocked nervously. Oh how she wanted to go; now her boy had come for her.

"You will go, Tony?" begged Philip, his face very red from John's speech.

"If—if—" the girl stammered.

John Pendlehaven laughed.

"She can go, can't she, Paul?" he asked. "Phil will take good care of her."

Paul Pendlehaven smiled and sighed.

"Of course, she can go! She ought to," he said. "She stays in too close. I've told her that every day. Go along, little maid, but come back to your old uncle in a little while."

Philip seized her hand to lead her away, but Tony turned to the bed. Then she stooped and kissed Paul Pendlehaven impulsively.

"I love you," she whispered, "and mebbe it'll only be half an hour before I'm back to you."

For many minutes after the car started Philip paid strict attention to his driving, and Tonibel allowed herself the luxury of taking a sidelong look at him now and then. Once within sight of Beebe Lake, Captain MacCauley slowed down and stopped.

"God, how I've prayed for this minute," he exclaimed, turning on her suddenly.

"I have, too," said Tonibel in a shy, sweet voice. "I thought you'd forgotten about me."

"Why, I couldn't do my work half way well, I've thought about you so much," cried the boy, "and I've been planning a lot for you and me. You see, Dr. John is a sort of a guardian to me, and next year I'll be twenty-three. Then I have all my own money. I can get married then, if I want to."

"Oh," said Tonibel in a queer little voice.

"Yes, I believe in early marriages," Philip went on emphatically. "Wasn't it a queer thing that all the while I was haunting the shore you were in the house, my house almost? You see, I live just next door to you."

"Oh!" Tony said again. Something had hurt her dreadfully. Something he had said. He might be married next year and, of course, it would be to Katherine.

"And time and again I heard how much some little girl was helping Dr. Paul," he went on. "But somehow I never heard your name and hadn't the last idea—" He stopped. Then he slipped his arm about her. "I didn't know she was my little girl," he finished.

Tony closed her eyes. All the unhappiness of the past weeks left her that moment like a vanished burden. He had said she was his little girl.

How very lovely the world was!

"Lean against me, dear," murmured Philip. "And this time—Oh, Tony, don't leave me today without telling me you love me a lot."

Tony glimpsed him with one little upward glance. Her eyes were star-bright.

"I love you more'n the whole world," she trembled. "More'n I know how to tell."

It isn't any one's affair just how many times Philip made Tony tell him she'd marry him, nor is it any one's affair how many times he kissed her, but it is our business to listen to Philip's conclusion.

"I'm going to tell Cousin John and Cousin Paul tonight that we're going to be married," he said, and Tonibel had no inclination to forbid him.

With dark thoughts, Katherine was watching for them to come back again. She saw the happy shining face of the girl, saw Philip lift the little figure from the car and draw her up the steps. Her teeth came together in sharp misery as she turned from the window and went upstairs.

## CHAPTER XII.

**A Little Drop of Something.**

Reginald was sitting in his mother's room that evening when his sister opened the door and entered. The girl looked about for Mrs. Curtis, then picked up a cigarette and lit it. She was so white and drawn looking that her brother stared at her.

"What's the matter, sis?" he asked with no particular interest in his voice.

"I hate everybody in the world," snapped the girl.

"Whew! That's some hate," laughed Reggie.

Katherine threw herself down on the divan.

"Worst of any one I hate Paul Pendlehaven and next—well, next I hate Cousin John," she said between her teeth. "I wish, oh, how I wish Paul would die tonight. I'd almost like to kill him myself. If it weren't for them, we'd all have money, and if it weren't for that girl with him, he'd die."

"Well, I might cheer you up a little if I told you that perhaps before long your illustrious Cousin Paul will be under the sod."

The girl sat up and stared at him.

"Don't be a fool, Reggie," she said with a sneer. "Cousin John says Paul will be able to get out of the house very soon, that by next week he can go anywhere he likes."

Reginald got up lazily. He said something under his breath that made his sister struggle to her feet. She stood a moment and gazed with startled eyes at the door that had closed Reggie on the other side of it.

"Now, what'd he mean by that?" she wondered dully. "What did he mean by saying that if he could help it Cousin Paul would never drive again? I wonder just what he meant by that!"

Reggie knew what he meant by his words if Katherine didn't. He intended to put Dr. Paul out of the way thus helping his mother as well as himself. He wanted to get away from Ithaca, to leave the town that always put him in mind of Tonibel Devon. The least wind that blew brought back the awful moment when he and Devon had discovered the girl had drowned herself, and because of his tormenting conscience he drank more heavily every day. After leaving his sister he went to his room where he filled himself up with brandy. The drunker he got the more dim grew the picture of Tony's pale, terrified face.

He slept suddenly for an hour or so and only awoke when a servant rapped at the door and told him dinner was ready. He was too ill to get up and lay staring hopelessly about the room. Then suddenly out of the shadows in the corner floated Tonibel Devon. He groaned and turned slowly in the bed. Instead of getting better he was getting worse. The ghost of Devon's daughter was haunting him in every one of his sober hours. He hated Ithaca and every one in it. If Dr. Paul were dead—

He sat up, his head whirling. He crawled to the floor, went to the bathroom and soaked his head in cold water. Then he sent a servant for a pot of strong coffee.

So happy was Dr. Paul to have Tonibel back that he insisted on sitting up to his dinner.

"It was a long hour, my dear," he said, smiling. "But I'm glad you went out. He's a nice fellow, Philip. My brother and I have often wished our young cousin would pattern after him, but it does seem as if nothing can be done with him. Even his mother has no influence over him."

"I've never seen him," stated Tonibel.

"He's scarcely ever at home," answered Dr. Paul, "and the worst of it is, he gives no explanation as to where he goes."

Then after dinner as usual Tonibel, with Gussie Piglet in her arms, read from the Bible. The clock struck ten when she arose softly and began to prepare for the night. By the even breathing of the man on the bed she knew he was asleep and as quiet as a mouse she crept about softly so as not to arouse him. The suite directly back of Paul Pendlehaven's had been given to her. She went into her bedroom and made ready to retire. Then over her night robe she drew a light kimono.

She turned off the electric switch and stood near the window looking out. Her heart sang with gladness. She had but to hearken back to the afternoon to hear a dear voice telling her of a great love, love for her, Tonibel Devon. How very much she had to be thankful for!

Suddenly she saw the tall tree directly in front of Dr. Paul's room shake as if a giant hand were clutch-

ing at its roots. How could that be? There wasn't any wind, not even a breeze. Her heart jumped into her throat as she crept away from the window and back into Pendlehaven's room. The little night lamp glimmered dimly above the small table with its load of medicine glasses. She stood in the shadow and peered through the screen. There among the dripping branches was the quiet figure of a man.

Her mind went immediately to her father, but she put the thought of him away, for the form in the tree was much more slender than Uriah Devon's.

Dr. Pendlehaven still slept, his face turned toward the wall, and Tonibel squatted down at the foot of the bed, keeping the dark figure in the tree in the line of her vision. She dared not leave the room, nor dared she call out. How often Dr. John had told her that his brother must be kept free from shocks of every kind. For another ten minutes she leaned her chin on her hand, still keeping her eyes on the window. Then she saw the flutter of a wistaria branch against the screen and knew that the hour had come. Another tense silence for several minutes, then a little scraping sound as if a sharp instrument was moving over wire. Some one was trying to get in. Tonibel crawled forward on her knees until she was directly in front of Dr. Paul.

She sank back against the bed and waited.

The scraping sound at length ceased. With a forward shove of her head, Tonibel saw that the wire netting had been ripped fully a foot, and then she saw a hand move little by little through the opening, until a long arm was fully inside the room. Tony watched it, fascinated. Then she saw it waver toward the table, pause, open and lay some little pellets down without a sound. Then long white fingers drew off the covers of the glasses noiselessly and picked up the pellets one after another and dropped them silently into the medicine. As quietly the covers were restored, and the arm slowly withdrawn. Directly beneath the window, Tonibel rose up.

There through the faint light she was staring into the face of Reginald Brown. Instantly she recognized him, and all the terror of that day when he and her brutal father had placed a menacing shadow over her swept her nearly off her feet. Reginald had come not only to harm Paul Pendlehaven, but to get her!

"Stand by, Salvation of the Lord," shot across her tortured soul, and then through the break in the wire netting she thrust her clenched fist. Reginald took the blow she gave him without an audible sound and fell backward into the garden below. He was paralyzed by the blazing eyes and the memory that the body of the ghost-girl was somewhere beneath the broad surface of Lake Cayuga.

Tonibel heard him land on the soft grass, and for a few seconds she stood panting against the window. Then she withdrew her arm and crouched down on the floor.

What had her father's pal put in Dr. Paul's medicine? Minute by minute she became more acutely sure that no good had been intended. Silently she took up the glasses and carried them to her own room. Then she slipped out into the hall, ran along the corridor and rapped softly on John Pendlehaven's apartments. Twice she repeated her summons in nervous little rap-taps that penetrated Dr. John's sound slumber. When he recognized her, opened the door and noticed how white she was, he drew her instantly to him and shut the door.

Between chattering teeth she began to tell him the dreadful tale. As she went on with the story the listener's face grew much concerned.

"Somebody tried to poison him," he cried, taking a long breath. "My

God, who could be so damnable as that? Come, let me get the stuff."

Together they stole back to Tonibel's room and Dr. John carried away the medicine with him, leaving Tony with a caution not to speak of the matter to his brother. Putting on his clothes, John went outside and made a tour of the house. It wasn't difficult to find the place where the man had fallen, but there was no sign of him anywhere.

Tonibel did not sleep at all that night. But very early in the morning she arose and slipped into Dr. Paul's room and put back the medicine Dr. John had given her.

During the morning Dr. John Pendlehaven softly entered her room. He came forward, his hands outstretched, his face white and very grave.

"Darling little girl," he whispered, with much emotion. "You have saved my brother's life. The villain, whoever he was, put the rankest kind of poison in it. He must have gotten it from some doctor, for no druggist would have sold it to him."

"Mebbe he's dead," replied Tony gently, with an expression of awe. "It was a long tumble he took."

"No; he got away! I've hunted the place over for him. Would you know him again if you saw him?"

"Sure," replied Tony, nodding, but she said no more. To tell him who the man was would mean to break the solemn oath she had made on the Christ to her mother.

A timid knock brought the conversation to a close. Mrs. Curtis was at the threshold when Pendlehaven opened the door.

"I've been looking the house over for you, John," she began. "Boy's got a headache! He said for you not to bother to come in him, but to give me something to make him sleep."

"Is he drunk?" demanded Pendlehaven.

Mrs. Curtis began to cry.

"John, how unkind!" she sniffled from the haven of her handkerchief. "The moment the child complains everybody accuses him of drinking. No, of course, he isn't drunk."

For many days Reginald Curtis tossed fitfully in bed, tortured by the thought that he would never cease being haunted by Tony Devon's spirit. He dared not get up, for he was covered with bruises from his fall, and added to his misery, he imagined every time the door opened he was going to be arrested. But no such thing happened, and one afternoon when Dr. John was gone and his mother and Katherine were shopping downtown, he crawled out of bed and made his way softly from the house.

Uriah Devon had ventured back to the Hoghole with his canal boat, so when Reginald appeared aboard her Devon met him with a growl.

"Where in—l—l you been all this time, Reggie?" he demanded in a snifter tone.

Reggie shuddered, as he sank down on the bench.

"I'm going crazy," he muttered. "I've been awful sick."

"You mean just drunk, don't you? Didn't you try doin' what I told you to?"

The boy nodded and shivered again. "I sure did, but, but—"

"But what?" cried Devon.

"I put the stuff in the medicine all right, but something happened." Reginald's voice was low and wavering as he finished the statement.

"What happened?" repeated Devon hoarsely. "Don't sit there like a d—d fool and look as if you'd swallowed a live eel."

"I was going to slip back from the window sill to the tree," faltered Reggie, "and Tony's ghost rose up before me and shoved me clean off the ledge and down to the ground!"

Uriah's eyes almost protruded from his head. Then a slow smile ran around his lips.

"Rats!" he ejaculated huskily. "Rats, you fool! There ain't such things as ghosts."

"Yes, there is, Devon," insisted Reggie, in a dreary monotone. "I've seen one! I've seen Tony, I say, and many a time she's come so close to my eyes I could have touched her if she could have been touched. The fall made me sick. I've been in bed ever since."

"And your cousin's still alive, eh?" Uriah's voice had a snarl in it.

"Still alive," muttered Reggie.

"What you goin' to do about it now?" demanded Devon. "Try it again!"

Brown shook his head.

"No, not yet. Riah," he muttered. "Not just yet. I can't."

"You got to get me a lot of money some way," Devon came in with. "I've got to get out of this country, or I'll be hooked to jail if those Syracuse folks find me. You'd better be getting home and back to bed. Best take a stiff swing, too, to settle your nerves."

He watched the tall thin boy walk slowly away in deep meditation. Then he laughed and went below to the cabin.

Almost a week after Reggie's futile attempt to poison his Cousin Paul, Tony Devon was sitting in her room, reading, when a servant appeared and told her some one wanted to see her downstairs. Her heart bounded with delight, for she was sure Philip had come again and had sent for her. She rushed to the glass, pushed back a few stray curls and went downstairs to the drawing room.

As she stepped inside, she came to a sudden terrified halt. Her father was seated in a large chair and his eyes, red and swollen, were centered upon her. Then he smiled, that wicked smile