

Storm Country Polly

by Grace Miller White
Illustrated by R.H. Livingstone.

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"A ANGEL"

SYNOPSIS.—Occupying a dilapidated shack in the Silent City, a squatter settlement near Ithaca, New York, Polly Hopkins, with her father, small Jerry, and an old woman, Granny Hope. On an adjacent farm, Oscar Bennett, profligate farmer, is a neighbor. He secretly harbors to Evelyn Robertson, supposedly wealthy girl of the neighborhood. Polly alone knows their secret. Marcus MacKenzie, who owns the ground the squatters occupy, is the determined enemy. Polly overhears a conversation between MacKenzie and a stranger, in which the former is threatening to evict the squatters from his land.

The stranger sympathized with the squatters, and earns Polly's gratitude. Evelyn charges Polly with a message to him, telling him she can give him more money, and urging him to be patient. She already bitterly regrets her infatuation with and marriage to the ignorant farmer.

CHAPTER IV—Continued.

Polly hesitated a moment, coughed and cleared her throat.

"A little milk for Jerry, please," she suggested, extending her can.

Bennett snatched it from her hand.

"Good God, you squatters're nothing but beggars," he grumbled, but because he was eager to get her message, he filled the pail full. Smilingly Polly took it back.

"I'm thankin' you, Oscar," she gurgled, "an' now mebbe a fresh egg for Granny Hope?"

He made an angry motion with his hand.

"Up in that box," he snapped. "Then tell what you came for! What'd Eve say?"

"Your woman sent word by me," she began.

"Tell it, and don't be all day about it," ordered the farmer.

Polly took a couple of steps backward toward the door, ready to fly if Oscar showed any signs of unusual wrath.

"She said you wasn't to write her any more letters," she replied. "She's awful scared. She trembled all over when she told me."

"What did she say about money?" Bennett demanded gruffly.

Through the dim light of the lantern, Polly looked at him pleadingly.

"She just can't get another cent," she returned, "an' she's feelin' terrible bad about it."

Although he had not finished his task, Bennett jumped up from his stool, and one step took him very close to the nervous young speaker.

"She can't, eh?" he cried. "She means she won't, I guess. By God, she will, or I'll come out with the whole thing. You go and tell her so. She's got rich folks, and I didn't marry her to keep quiet all my life. Tell her either she comes home here to me, or she pays up. If she says—" he paused, then laughed. "Oh, you needn't look as if I was goin' to swat you one, Pollyop," he went on, "but as I was sayin', if she pays up and I get rid of her, then—one for you, Polly Hopkins."

His voice was harsh, and his manners rough. Polly retreated to the threshold.

"The time's here," Oscar went on, "when both you women will be leapin' to my gad. There! Get home and say to my lady just what I said—again he broke off, only to continue, "leaving out the part about you. See, Pollyop?"

Dumb with dread, Polly sagged weakly against the door casing. No wonder Evelyn Robertson didn't want to live with such a man!

"And you can tell her to come tonight at nine o'clock, to Granny Hope's old shack," he proceeded. "I want to talk to her. Now get along and don't come around after any more milk, or I'll throw you out of the barn."

Glad to be gone, Polly passed out to the lane. In a little ravine at her left a noisy stream rumbled down the hill. With wistful eyes she watched it through the fast gathering dusk flow away to the lake. It was then she saw something moving about in a small pool of water in a rock basin. Carefully she put the milk and eggs on a bit of smooth turf. Down the bank she slipped, and there in the falling gloom, struggling in the water, was a baby lamb. Polly tucked her skirts up about her waist and waded into the water. Several times she fell, and, dripping wet, scrambled up again. When she pulled the lamb to the bank, she dropped to the ground, gasping for breath.

"Poor little duffer," she murmured. "You was 'most gone, wasn't you? Come on home with Pollyop an' get love up a bit!"

In the road she picked up the pail, slipped the eggs into the milk and

went swiftly down the lane, the lamb under one arm. Polly's heart sang with gladness. Out of the rigors of the Storm country, out of the cold rayne water, she had found another little thing to care for.

Jeremiah Hopkins and Larry Bishop were in the shack when Polly arrived with her burdens. With much pride she displayed the lamb; then she fed him a portion of the milk with a spoon. While she was preparing the evening meal, she invited her father's friend to take potluck with them.

After supper she settled her family. Wee Jerry she tucked into Daddy's bed, and Granny Hope was made comfortable in a chair by the stove, where she soon nodded off to sleep. Then, the lamb in her lap and the billy goat at her knee, Pollyop sat down on the edge of her cot, facing the two men. She knew by the dark expressions on their faces that a question of import had come up.

"Me an' Larry, brat, have been tryin' to think of some way of gettin' rid of Old Marc," began Hopkins grimly.

Nervous brown fingers plucked at the lamb's wool as Polly, going white, stared at her father.

"You don't mean burthin' him, Daddy, do you?" she broke out. "Oh, if that's what you're talkin' about, don't do it. Don't do it, Daddy! Something

beautiful is goin' to happen to us squatters. God up in the sky sent a angel smack down from high heaven to help us."

The serious, lovely face turned pleadingly, truthfully up to his prevent Hopkins from indulging his desire to laugh. Polly turned and looked at Larry. His dark face was heavy with frown and deep, grief-filled lines.

"There ain't any angels anywhere but up there," muttered Larry Bishop, making an upward thrust with his hands.

"Yep, there is, Larry," contradicted Polly impetuously. "I seen one. He's bigger than you an' Daddy put together, I guess; an' his face looks like the sun, all shiny an' bright. He says the squatters has to have a place to live in just like other folks, an' he won't let Old Marc run us out of the Silent City. Mebbe after a while, when he gets to workin' for us, you can hunt an' fish just the same as ever!"

Hopkins looked at his daughter as if she had lost her mind.

"What's eatin' you, brat?" he grunted.

"Nothing," replied Polly, "but I know what I heard."

"Spiel it out to us," put in Bishop eagerly.

Then Polly told them. Both men laughed.

"Why, he's got more money'n Old Marc, Polly," snapped Hopkins. "It's just because we don't happen to be settin' on his ground that he ain't wantin' us off."

It was quite evident that both the fishermen were of one opinion. Polly

was immediately to her mother's apartment and, opening the door, slipped in and sank down upon the floor at Mrs. Robertson's side.

"I've told him I'd marry him," she said, with trembling lips. "Mother dear, oh, please, mother dear, don't you think you could borrow some money from Robert for me? I must have it. After I'm married to Marcus, I could get it all back for you. I know I could. I've just got to have a lot of money, and you can't expect me to ask Marcus."

Mrs. Robertson drew away with a shiver.

"If you so forgot yourself, your family and your name as to do such a thing, I should disown you, Evelyn," she said, finally in her tones.

Evelyn rose weakly. She could imagine the heights of her mother's scorn if she discovered the actual situation. She felt that she would rather tell MacKenzie than the unsympathetic, frowning woman in the chair.

"There's no use, mother, in trying to talk to you," she muttered. "I'll manage some way, though only God knows how."

Mrs. Robertson took up her book and gazed sternly at her daughter over the top of it.

"Very well, Evelyn," she said, ungraciously. "You're of age. If that's the way you feel about it, there's nothing more to be said."

Whereupon the speaker began to read, and a very hopeless girl crept out of the room.

When Evelyn was repairing the ravages made by her emotions, Polly Hopkins crept into the Robertson garden. Her fear of Mrs. Robertson was mingled with a thrilling happiness. She had seen Granny Hope and Wee Jerry eat the fresh eggs; Daddy's promise would keep him out of trouble with Old Marc; and the beautiful stranger would help them!

She gave a piercing little trill, the signal she had always used to call Evelyn from the house. Almost at once a figure stepped from the door to the porch directly in front of her, and terrified, she shrank back among the vines and clung there.

Silhouetted against the bright light

have been the brilliant smile she flashed upon her listeners. At any rate, the mayor of the Silent City and Larry Bishop, his henchman, repeated in dull apathy the words she dictated to them, the words that made the Storm country a safe habitation for Marcus MacKenzie. Then both men reverently kissed the Bible and fell back limply in their chairs.

Polly kissed the ragged edges of the book too, then she turned to Hopkins. "Daddy, honey, I'm givin' out. Give your kid a lovin' smack. I'll be back quicker'n the billy goat can blink."

CHAPTER V.

The afternoon had been unpleasant for both Mrs. Robertson and her daughter. The lady was studiously icy to Evelyn and the girl was utterly miserable. Robert Percival was away with MacKenzie. In his absence, although the two women ate dinner together and kept each other company afterward in the drawing room, their conversation was limited to the simplest commonplace. The return of the men eased the tension. Percival excused himself almost at once to write some letters, and as MacKenzie made evident his eagerness to get Evelyn by herself, Mrs. Robertson seized a chance to steal away to her own room.

For some time after her departure the girl and the man were silent. This was the first time in Marc's life that his heart had been really touched by a woman, and in spite of his years and experience, he was almost as bashful as a young boy.

At length their eyes met, and the girl's lowered, while the color mounted in a flood to her hair.

The man was by her side in an instant. He had read in the shy, retreating glance what he longed to see.

"Evelyn! I—I—I believe you care for me, I really believe you do," he exclaimed. "You do, sweet?" he demanded, his voice trembling.

"Yes," whispered Evelyn.

"Now, isn't it strange," asked Marcus, after they took up their conversation again, "that while I was gone I always thought of you, but not just like this. Honey, girl, how long have you loved me? Before—before today?"

"I think always," confessed Evelyn, with a growing flush.

What a fortunate man Marcus MacKenzie considered himself just at that moment! He had won the prettiest girl in Ithaca; and she loved him.

"And to think I only came home last night," he exulted. "This time yesterday you were free; my Eve. At this moment no power can take you away from me."

Dreadful recollections of Oscar intruded upon Evelyn's new happiness. Oh, if she only had the courage to tell Marcus! Would he keep on loving her and help her to get free, or would he—she glanced into his face. There were upon it the marks of breeding, of pride in himself, his wealth, position and power. She knew how highly he regarded the conventions of society. If she should disclose to him the secret of her marriage to the farmer, he would see nothing but the blot upon her and turn away in disgust. No, she couldn't tell him. Despair overwhelmed her and made MacKenzie's arms burdensome. With an effort she smiled faintly and withdrew from him. He laughed. "It seems like a beautiful dream!"

Eve wished passionately that she were at liberty to make the dream come true.

"You are my beloved," asserted Marcus, and with the girl's whisper "yes," he allowed her to leave the room.

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was Robert Percival. He stood gazing straight ahead of him at the dark driveway, but turned when Evelyn appeared beside him. Polly heard the murmur of their voices, that was all. They then disappeared into the house, Evelyn laughingly pushing the soldier ahead of her. Quickly the girl came out again; and Polly could hear her swift-coming breaths as she ran softly down the steps.

"Shush," hissed Polly Hopkins. "Lordy, I was scared to death some one'd catch me."

"Pollyop," questioned Evelyn anxiously.

"What'd he say? Was he angry?"

Their heads were very close together, and Polly gave the message in a low tone.

"He wants you to come to Granny Hope's but at nine o'clock tonight, an' I guess you best do it. He's as mad as ever a man be."

"I'm afraid," Evelyn wailed. "I'm terribly afraid, Polly dear."

All the sympathy in Polly's heart came to sudden life.

"I reckon you be," she returned.

"But you've got to get up your spunk an' go. Oscar's just as soon come bustin' right in your house here, I guess, if you don't. You come along, an' at nine o'clock I'll hike over an' get in the hut too. Say, why can't you talk just a little nicer to him? Granny Hope's got a Bible, an' it says when a feller hurts you, speak kind of soft back, an' he won't have nothin' more to say. Histr! What's that noise? Scoot!"

Before Evelyn could say another word, the squatter girl slipped away among the shadows. The other, al-

most

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footwear for milady is the Russian boot, which seems likely to replace the galoshes for popularity. These boots are made in many styles and colors, ranging from black to a bright red, and are marked with many fancy designs. The picture shows one of the late spring styles, including the Russian boots.

USE TWO FABRICS

Double Effect in Dresses Is Emphasized by Paris Makers.

Results Are Widely Different From the Slender Draperies; Embroideries Are Absent.

A feature now much in evidence in dress is the development of models in two fabrics, writes a fashion correspondent in the New York Tribune. Callot is one of the foremost makers to emphasize the new double effect seen in so many dresses which appear to be made of one material over another.

These clothes are particularly interesting because they are so different from the usual Callot styles. Here effects are achieved widely different from the slender draperies so typical of this house. Even the wonderful Callot embroideries are absent, but, as of yore, this famous couture depends on the fabric for her results, and upon wonderful color combinations for rich effects.

To show that suits are no exception to the mode of uniting two colors in one model a typical tailored suit is of black cloth with bands of black lamb's-wool bordering the jacket and forming cuffs and a collar. A



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FABRICS FOR THE LINGERIES

Radium Silk Ranks Well With Crepe de Chine—Chiffon and Georgette Are Popular.

Radium silk is vying with crepe de chine for the place of greatest popularity in the making of lingeries. It has much to recommend it in the way