

Storm Country Polly

by Grace Miller White

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CHAPTER XII—Continued.

Polly combed her hair and washed her face and hands. Billy-goat Hopkins was in his place at the wood-box eating a handful of oats she had gleaned for him along the roadside. Polly wished that she might take him, too, but as long as she could not, Billy should have a better feed than usual.

After everything else was attended to, she unwrapped the silken dress and put it on. Her bare feet showed from under the hem, but she had decided she looked better without the boots, and as she stood gazing at herself up and down, she regretted that she had not asked Evelyn for a pair of shoes too. Being careful not to soil her skirt, she knelt and allowed Jerry to climb on her shoulders.

The moment she stood outside the shanty in the rain, she shivered. The damp air nipped at her uncovered arms and neck. To travel the long distance to the station, so illy covered, was out of the question, and the gown would be drenched through in a few minutes. She turned back into the shack and placed Jerry on the cot.

"Jerry wants to see Daddy Hopkins," the child whimpered. "Ain't we goin', Pollyop?"

"Yer, sure!" said Polly. "But sister's got to put on her boots. She can't go this way. It's too cold and the walk to Ithaca's too long, honey."

Her brow puckered into a frown as she drew on her father's heavy boots and slipped into his ragged coat. Then she tucked the dress into the top of the boots that it might show as little as possible and went out again.

It was a long climb to the boulevard; and the boy was heavy. But he was very quiet, and a sudden rush of tears almost blinded her as she turned toward the city. How delighted both Jerry and Daddy would be when they spied each other! Gulping down her tears, she shut out the thought that perhaps some one would catch her breaking the law and clap her in jail too.

Granny Hope and her toothless smile flashed before the eyes of her tortured soul.

"Ask and it shall be given thee," seemed to leap from the vision of old age.

"I did ask," Pollyop cried aloud, "but Old Marc said I couldn't."

In the past months which had taken away three of her loves, many of the lessons Mrs. Hope had taught her had been effaced. She had even given up the habit of asserting with utmost faith: "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

She was almost overcome with terror and fatigue as she neared the station. One thing seemed to clear her



She Was Almost Overcome With Terror and Fatigue as She Nears the Station.

brow of wrinkles and lighten the load she was carrying. Not a soul was in sight. Even the station appeared to be deserted.

At the northern end of the Auburn car, which was waiting for the engine to pick it up, Pollyop halted. She walked around it stealthily, and then climbed up the steps. A little cry of joy leaped to her lips as the door opened under her touch.

Holding her breath, she shifted Jerry to her arms and crept slowly in. Rapidly she examined every corner; but all the places large enough to hold them both were in plain sight of anyone walking through. At the extreme end she discovered the stateroom; and when she went into it, a thankful feeling swept over her. It was as if that empty cabin, with its many dark places, had been built there just for them. Here she could stow Jerry away and hide herself out of sight.

Under one of the cross seats she placed the child, whispering a warning that he must be very quiet because, if a big man found them, he

could not go to Daddy Hopkins. Then under the side seat that ran lengthwise, Polly crawled, and after she had completely secreted herself, she drew down the velvet half-curtain that hung from the seat. It seemed hours before she heard a sound. She hissed a warning to Jerry, then waited in nervous tension.

From the station platform voices seemed suddenly to rise up from every quarter. Pollyop closed her eyes, too confused to think of anything to dissipate the agony of mind she was undergoing.

A few minutes before train time a high-powered motor car drew up to the platform.

"We've got the drawing-room, Marc," explained Robert Percival, "and while you three are shopping, I'm going to dig around Auburn a bit."

"I suppose you're going to call on your friend, Jeremiah," taunted MacKenzie. "Bob, I'll give you a pointer. Drop that case! There's no power on earth that can open the prison doors for Hopkins."

To this Robert did not reply. In deep reverie he helped his aunt and cousin from the automobile and followed them to the car.

When Polly heard a number of people come into the stateroom, she put one hand over her lips. She strained her ears to hear if Jerry had made a move. How she hoped the dear baby had fallen asleep, and that he would not wake up until they were in Auburn! As unexpected as the voice of one long dead, the sound of familiar tones came to her ears. The words were:

"Now, Mrs. Robertson, you sit there, and you too, Eve. Then you won't have to ride backward. Bob and I'll sit here."

The squatter girl's heart nearly jumped out of her mouth. There, within touching distance, was her powerful enemy. Her flesh tingled as if bees had stung her. Robert Percival, and Evelyn too, were there. Pollyop shivered and wished that she had waited until tomorrow, or perhaps the day after.

She tried to drive out the fear of being discovered and think only of Jerry's happiness and Daddy's. To make her heart beat less fast, she tried earnestly to think of some words that Jesus would hear and understand. But even that desire was driven from her as two heavy bodies dropped upon the seat above her. Plainly she saw two pairs of men's boots near enough to touch her if she moved an inch forward.

Back against the side of the car she pushed her head, noiselessly drawing her thick curls over her shoulder to make more room. How intensely she wished they were in Auburn! If the train would only start ahead, she was sure she would lose the insane desire to open her mouth and scream.

Then a whistle from the engine, and as if the man at the throttle had heard the inward cry of her frightened young soul, the train began to move slowly. As it crossed the northern end of the town, one of the owners of the boots near her face grew exceedingly restless, and of a sudden he pushed his foot directly against her nose. Gently she shoved it away; and a low exclamation from above followed instantly.

Then a strong, large hand lifted the velvet hangings; and before Pollyop could stir, a set of fingers took sharp hold of her face. In her frightened state she threw the hand off; and another ejaculation came to her ears. Then two hands came under and groped for a grip. She fought strenuously to hold her place; but the person pulled her out by main force.

Polly Hopkins was almost fainting when Robert Percival placed her on her feet. The silk dress, partly tucked in Daddy's boots and partly out, was covered with dust. In silent embarrassment she stooped and brushed it. Then she glanced up imploringly.

Robert, wax-white, was staring at her as if he could not believe his eyes; and MacKenzie, carried away by the rage within him, viciously clutched at her arm. Pollyop dragged herself away from the strong fingers.

"Don't touch me, you," she snapped hoarsely at him. "I'm goin' to Auburn to see my Daddy Hopkins."

Her voice was high-pitched and tensely toned. Her gaze sought one after another until it rested on Evelyn Robertson, huddled back in the corner of the seat.

"You can make him leave me be, ma'am," Polly went on. "I got a right to go to Auburn as well as any one else."

An unfeeling laugh left MacKenzie's lips; and a sharp exclamation fell from Percival.

"You're a thief," Marcus thrust in grimly. "A little thief. You're stealing a ride."

With all her fighting instinct roused, Polly squared herself.

"Sure, I'm stealin' a ride," she retorted. "I couldn't ride honest; you wouldn't let me. My Daddy Hopkins—"

"It seems to me," interrupted Mrs. Robertson haughtily, "that she's stolen something else besides a ride. That

dress you have on, Miss; where'd you get it?"

Polly's under lip dropped. It seemed as if a thousand hostile eyes were glaring at her.

"It's Evelyn's dress," went on the lady. "Take that coat off and let me see."

Before Robert could interfere, MacKenzie had grasped Pollyop by the shoulders and had stripped off the heavy coat. And there she stood, her bare young arms and sunburned neck exposed, her scarlet face hidden by a handful of curls. She was so overwhelmed with shame she could not say a word.

"Twice a thief," grieved MacKenzie. "I suppose you didn't give it to her, Eve?"

With one long finger he pointed at the dress, but his eyes, sparkling with anger, were on Evelyn.

Never had Miss Robertson been in such a dilemma. Never had she felt so much like quietly fainting away.

"Did you?" demanded Marc, once more.

"No, no," denied the girl, trembling. "No, of course I didn't give it to her. Why should I?"

MacKenzie's sharp, "You'll land where your father is, you huzzy," brought Polly's flashing glance upon him. Untaught to deceive for her own advantage, she could not fathom Evelyn's direct falsehood. To lie for a daddy, to keep a squatter friend from prison—yes, she would have done that, but a dress! And Evelyn had given it to her, too! She turned her burning eyes upon the other girl, and there she read with sickening certainty that the gift of the robe must be buried in the grave with Oscar Bennett. If Jerry had not been tucked away back of the skirts of the two women, Polly would have made a dash for liberty, but she could not leave the baby. Would no one help her? Her eyes sought Robert's face, and as if he were awaking from a dream, he picked up the coat.

"I'll hand her over to the conductor," Marcus proceeded. "He'll know what to do with her," and he put out his hand to grasp her.

"No you won't," snapped Robert, moving in front of Pollyop. "I'll look after her myself, and if you folks want to stay friendly with me, just don't mention this." He held out the coat to Polly Hopkins. "Put it on," he ordered; and instantly she obeyed him.

What he was going to do with her, Polly did not know, but this thing she did realize: Jerry could not see Daddy Hopkins that day. She longed to be back in the shanty, to get away from MacKenzie's flashing eyes and the haughty stare of Mrs. Robertson. As for Evelyn, she despised the quivering girl with all her straightforward self.

Frowning, Robert stepped to the door and called the conductor; and when the official appeared, Polly shivered to her toes. The very sight of his uniform suggested trouble for her and Jerry.

"A friend of mine came down to see us off," said Robert distinctly, making a gesture toward her. "The train started before she could get off. Just let us stop at MacKenzie's, will you?"

He had a roll of bills in his fingers which he thrust into the officer's hand. Smilingly the man bowed and jerked the cord over his head.

"We're right there now, sir," said he.

"Thanks," replied Robert. "Thanks;" and "Come," he said to Pollyop.

Jerry! Daddy Hopkins' baby, went through her mind. Wee Jerry asleep under the cross seat!

"Wait a bit, mister," she faltered, "wait till I get the baby. I were takin' him up to see his daddy, so he wouldn't die." Her lip trembled as she looked at Mrs. Robertson. "Get up, please, ma'am," she begged. "He's under there, where you're sittin'!"

Mrs. Robertson and Evelyn rose immediately; and Polly pulled the shawl-bewrapped Jerry into full view. In another instant Robert had snatched up the child and pushed Polly out of the door. He turned about and looked back at the other three, a dreadful expression on his face.

"If you stick your finger in this, Marc," he said huskily, "you can say goodby to me for good." And he followed Polly out of the train as it came to a stop.

MacKenzie's point was on the east side of the lake, about opposite the Hopkins shanty, and when Robert had helped Polly off the train and had seen it pull away north, he stood a moment considering how best to get her back home. He could not make the girl tramp back to Ithaca and then across the head of the lake to the Silent City.

"Stay here with the child," he said curtly. "I'll be back in a minute."

Polly watched him dully as he strode away. When he returned, he had in his hand a large key with which he unfastened a boathouse on the shore. Almost before Pollyop sensed what was happening, she was in the stern of a boat with Jerry crouched down beside her, and Robert's strong arms were sending the craft swiftly across the lake. Not a word had been said between them until they drew up under the willow trees near Jeremiah's shack.

"Get out," exclaimed Robert, holding the boat that it might not tip.

Pollyop scrambled to the bow, bringing Jerry with her, the beautiful dress now hanging in limp folds around her feet. Very pale, Robert lifted her, almost fainting, from the boat, and picking Jerry up in his arms, walked ahead to the shanty.

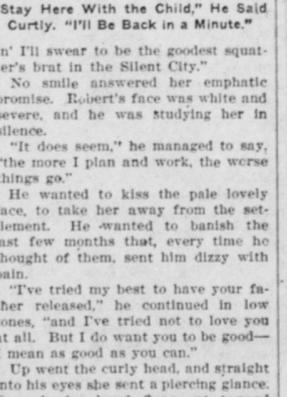
In the terrible moment that Polly bent under his dark gaze, she felt she must tell him the truth. How could she let him go away thinking her twice a thief, besides believing Oscar Bennett had been her man?

She dared a timid glance at him.

"What in heaven's name can I do for you?" he demanded hoarsely. "You don't seem to have any honor at all! Can't I say something that would make you a better girl?"

Polly swayed and pushed back her curls. Her tired head fell forward on her chest, and she bit her tongue to keep back the rush of words.

"Get Wee Jerry back his Daddy Hopkins," she gulped presently, "an—"



"Stay Here With the Child," He Said Curtly. "I'll Be Back in a Minute."

an' I'll swear to be the goodest squatter's brat in the Silent City."

No smile answered her emphatic promise. Robert's face was white and severe, and he was studying her in silence.

"It does seem," he managed to say, "the more I plan and work, the worse things go."

He wanted to kiss the pale lovely face, to take her away from the settlement. He wanted to banish the last few months that, every time he thought of them, sent him dizzy with pain.

"I've tried my best to have your father released," he continued in low tones, "and I've tried not to love you at all. But I do want you to be good—I mean as good as you can."

Up went the curly head, and straight into his eyes she sent a piercing glance. One slender hand flung out toward him.

"Couldn't you trust me, sir?" she breathed. "Couldn't you just forget about—about—"

She advanced toward him, her hands extended and her face twitching nervously.

"Of course taking the dress doesn't matter to me," he choked. "Mr. MacKenzie is a very wicked man, and he has treated you abominably. But, but what hurts me so is the thought of the man who died in your—your home—"

His voice broke and, turning swiftly, he walked away.

Polly tried to call his name, but her throat made no sound. When he disappeared up the lane she picked Jerry up and, shivering, went into the shanty.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Embarrassing.

My most embarrassing moment was one day when one of my friends and I were in town together. We went into a store and my friend bought a toothbrush. The storekeeper wrapped it up and we started out of the store. He said something. I thought he asked if we wanted anything else, so I said "No," and we went out of the store. When we got out on the steps he came out behind us and asked my friend if she wasn't going to pay for the toothbrush. I certainly felt foolish, because I knew then that that was what he had asked before.—Exchange.

One of World's Great Rivers.

The mouth of the Yenisei is only open for a few weeks in the year. One of the largest rivers in the world, the Yenisei, which flows into the Arctic sea at Yeniseisk, is in its lower reaches four or five miles wide.

The Easier Way.

It's so easy to yell for help and get it that a lot of people never think it worth while to try and work their own way out of their difficulties.

NEW SPORT SHOES

Season at Hand for Footwear in Variety of Leathers.

Many Styles Available for Street Wear, Formal Occasions and for Games.

In buying shoes, says a fashion writer, one must now look ahead to the season in which sport costumes, wool hose or silk and wool, or silk lisle in all of the soft colors, will be worn with footwear of the sport order in a variety of leathers. A shoe is not in the sport class simply because there is a dominant interest in sportwear. Sport shoes are for street, golf and walking, but for dress and semiformal the pretty straps in patent, satin, brocade and suede are correct. There are a number of new styles, including straps with jeweled buckles for evening wear, suedes and satins for evening wear, while buck with fringed tongues for street and sport wear in summer, and gold cloth mules for the boudoir.

It is well to get a proper definition of sport footwear. There is a difference between sport shoes and sports shoes. The first term is generally applied to a rather wide variety of footwear that is used quite generally for street wear in summer. These styles are made of a variety of materials on rather broad toe lasts carrying flat, broad heels, and are frequently fitted with rubber soles.

The second term is used to designate footwear intended for use for some particular game or sport and used exclusively, or nearly so, for that sport, such as football, baseball, bowling, basketball and track, etc.

Right at this minute "the craze," so called, is for smoked leathers and coffee shades of elk, horse and calf, and white and pearl buck. The smoked leathers are very popular for the new footwear.

White buck is one of the most popular of our sport leathers. It is used in footwear for a large variety of sport and outing wear.

It should be mentioned that the pearl grays still retain their popularity in calf and buck.

Black patent leathers are smart in flat heeled oxford styles.

Full Louis and baby Louis heels divide honors in dress styles.

Flat and one-inch heels are favored for sports wear.

SPORTS AND STREET COAT



This is something new in polo coats for either sports or street wear. The inverted plait is not stretched below the shoulders, which gives more than the usual comfort in a top coat.

GAY COLORS FOR THE SKIRTS

Reds, Greens and Purples Are Prominent; White Flannel With Conventional Designs.

A novelty material is being shown by a manufacturer of separate skirts. This is a white flannel with conventional designs in bright colors, printed to give a sort of stripe effect, although these patterns run only about halfway up the skirt. The colors are gay reds and greens or purples, and are fast, it is said.

Another novelty is a white flannel skirt with four panels, two back and two front, of knife plaits, the plain portions of the skirt being painted with gayly colored butterflies. A skirt which is said to be a number much in demand is of rose tweed with the double fringe side trimming, the pockets being crescent shaped, finished off with embroidered arrows. This model is made up in all the popular shades and is for immediate wear.

A covert skirt is plaited, with a darker pattern in brown showing between, the belt unusually wide and finished off with long fringes of tobacco brown silk.

Many silk types are found in roshanara crepe, while a black and white striped wool forms a checker-board border about six inches wide.

A Plaited Blouse.

An accordion-plaited blouse of canton crepe, cut upon kimono lines, was an unusually treated complement to a black kasha suit. This, as well as the emphatically stressed accordion-plaited ruffles, accented upon tailored dress and suit necklines and cuffs, attests a certain favor of this mode.

Scarfs Match Suits.

The three-piece mode extends to bathing suit rooms, one factory having conceived the idea of completing the one-piece bathing suit, or two-piece, as their newest version of the swimming suit is called, by adding a matching scarf or cape of knitted cloth.

HAT OF YELLOW LACE STRAW



Charming hat of yellow lace straw with wooden beads in colors. It has a band of narrow ribbon dangling over the side, tinted to match the beads.

BLOUSE PART OF THE SUIT

Garment Adds to Two-Piece or Three-Piece Costume; Embroidery Very Much in Favor.

The Parisian designer is taking great interest this spring in blouses, which are really a part of the three-piece or two-piece costume suit, and likewise vests, which seem to be a necessary trimming.

English embroidery is very much in favor. The lingerie blouse, sometimes handkerchief linen and sometimes fine voile, is decorated with small embroidered eyelets. Then, on the other hand, there is a blouse of plain red or henna crepe de chine which has for its only trimming a long and full flounce in the front. This ripples gracefully in the opening of the coat and takes the place of a vest. Again a blouse of organdie is used, with a huge collar for the outside of the coat. The latter is black serge. A straight blouse of white pique or pink has sleeves which show below the cuffs of the tailored suit. The cuffs are lined with a clear color. It is noticed that the blouses of all kinds of crepe are as elaborately trimmed as the frocks and suits.

A blouse of white crepe de chine has little bands of red on the collars and cuffs and small silk tassels. A red blouse tones agreeably with a costume suit of beige. The pleasant influence is noted in the fastening of the collars and cuffs in some of the crepe de chine novelties.

A white blouse, embroidered in red on the sides of the sleeves and in the front, reminds one exactly of the smocks worn by the Rumanian peasants.

NEW NECKLINE IN FROCKS

Evening Dress Model Has Bodice Cut Straight Across Back Below Shoulder Blades.

An evening dress model has the bodice cut straight across the back just below the shoulder blades. To the center is fastened a jeweled chain, which straps the shoulders and extends eight inches below the waistline. In front, where it terminates in a large plaque or pendant of Bligree gold or enamel and set stones. A variation of the same idea for a black frock has the neckline made of a strand of black velvet ribbon embroidered in diamonds and jet with a paste and jet pendant in front. This gives an entirely new neckline and is very becoming where sleeves are not worn.

Skims Tip of the Ear.

Paris fashions take little note of the weather. In spite of warm spring days, some of the new blouses have high necks and long sleeves with little edgings of ostrich to simulate fur. One especially chic dark blue taffeta blouse with a jeweled girdle and a deep embroidered hem coming well below the hips, has a neckline that skims the tip of the ear. The neckline is heightened even more by ostrich trimming, and the result is smartness itself, on a cool day.

Gray Costume Unique.

A costume worked out in gray and white consists of a straight, full cape of gray velvet and a gray velvet frock. The cape is attached to a deep ermine band which forms the collar. The bottom is cut in deep points.