

Reading for Women and all the Family



"When a Girl Marries"

By ANN LISLE

A New, Romantic Serial Dealing With the Absorbing Problem of a Girl Wife

CHAPTER CCLXIX.
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A conspiracy of silence seemed to fall on our group all during the long day when Val lay in the blue room, going from faints into hysterics and from hysterics into strangely calm periods. She was continually sending for Jim and me, I wondered with him as with me, she seemed always on the verge of asking something and always drawing back.

In the late afternoon, Virginia decided to walk over to Mason Towers with Pat.

"What'll we do now that we find ourselves alone together?" for a change, Edna Lady said to me.

"If you don't mind, Jimmie boy," I replied, "I sort of feel like getting out for a breath of air."

"All right, I'll come with you."

"Please, Jim, I'd rather go alone."

A trifle miffed, Jim retorted: "Don't care for a tete-a-tete with your old man, eh? Some day you'll be sorry."

"You say that in the hurt tone of the child declaring how sorry everybody will be when he's dead and gone and it's too late," I said, struggling for a light tone to cover my earnest and gripping purpose. "But I really do want to go out, Jim."

"Because your walk this morning had such pleasant results?" questioned Jim, tartly.

"Oh, boy—dear, that's unworthy! Can't you understand that I want to get off by myself and pull myself together?"

"No, I'll never fully understand the modern woman—even though I'm married to her. But run along, of course I know you don't want me to go with you, but I still might insist if it weren't for the fact that it's only decent for one of us to stay in the house in case Val needs us."

Jim seemed to lay a lot of stress on how much it hurt him to have me insist on going off and leave him, but I had a long 'd been counting on the twilight hour and what I must do in it.

I hurried to our room, donned a short skirt and heavy sweater and completed my costume with a pair of thick walking boots and a warm tam. Into my pocket I slipped a tiny electric flash and a Jack-knife. I unbuttoned the big secretary down in the living room. With a ball of heavy cord to complete my ammunition, I started off.

There was something shudder-some and ghost-like in the twilight. The little green path, down which I had started so gaily only this morning, seemed a grim sort of dark undergrowth. But I hurried along, glad that there was light enough so I could trace my way without using the pocket flash.

Instead of going all the way to

morning, I branched off about three-quarters of the way down the path. With this climb down the embankment in view, I had worn the heavy boots I bought for cross-country tramps. Steadying myself by the bushes that grew profusely on the sides of the steep bank, I let myself down cautiously.

At last, just as I had calculated, I came out on the very plateau where I had found Val. A head of me bulked a dark shape. I knew well enough that it was the big gray roadster in which Shelly had driven to meet his doom, but it looked like something monstrously strange and terrible, something I'd never seen before. Haunted, a dreadful, impossible thing that couldn't be and yet was. A menace and a horror.

It took all the courage I possessed to force myself onward. By now darkness was clanking the woods and creeping down to the edge of the river, which was open enough so that even there at the bottom of the ravine it still was gray instead of black like the bank towering back of me.

The beautiful estate I knew so well looked sinister and strange. My feelings were akin to the terrible dread and the fear I experienced once as a child when I was sent to fetch something from the room where my grandfather had died the week before.

I had come to fetch something now, too. So I steadied myself and with thudding heart I slid and clambered down the crumbling embankment to the spot where the big gray car lay overturned. Just before was the place where I had seen Evvy Mason with Sheldor's body clasped against her heart.

"Don't think of that. Don't think of that," I admonished myself aloud. And then my whisper burst into a scream, for something seemed to brush by me. I stood alone at the edge of the clearing at the foot of the embankment. The path was wide enough for one, no more. And yet something heavy seemed to brush against me. It was nothing alive. It felt like some inanimate thing in the hands of a crafty, hidden power. A moment and it was gone. I turned to look up the embankment, but it was pitch dark, and I could not see if the bushes parted or the leaves swayed.

Suddenly I thought of my flash. I got it from my pocket, pressed my finger against the button and turned it up toward the top of the hill, but its light was so feeble that I could not be sure if I saw, or only fancied I saw, a figure crouching at the top of the hill, where I had crept down from the patch between the two estates.

"That's that. Now quit acting like a ninny and go ahead with what you came for," I murmured, but silently this time.

They covered the few steps to the big gray car. I held up my torch and got out my Jack-knife, opening the biggest, staunchest blade in preparation for what I had come to do.

Then I stumbled back a pace, astounded. The leather straps over the tank were cut. Whatever they had held was gone.

(To Be Continued)

Bringing Up Father

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By McManus



The Wonderful Stories of "OZ"

By L. Frank Baum

The Glass City

"We've got to come to the bottom some time," remarked Zeb, with a deep sigh. "We can't keep falling forever, you know."

"Of course not," said Dorothy. "We are somewhere in the middle of the earth and the chances are we'll reach the other side of it before long. But it's a big hollow, isn't it?"

"A awful big!" answered the boy. "We're coming to something now," announced the horse. At this they both put their heads over the side of the buggy and looked down. Yes; there was land below them; and not so very far away, either.

But they were floating very, very slowly—so slowly that it could no longer be called a fall—and the children had ample time to take heart and look about them.

They saw a landscape with mountains and plains, and lakes and rivers, very like those upon one earth's surface; but all the scene was splendidly colored by the variegated lights from the six suns. Here and there were groups of houses that seemed made of clear glass, because they sparkled so brightly.

"I'm sure we are in no danger," said Dorothy, in a sober voice. "We are falling slowly, but we can't be dashed to pieces when we land, and this country that we are coming to seems quite pretty."

"Well, never get home again, though!" declared Zeb, with a groan.

"Oh, I'm not so sure of that," replied the girl. "But don't let us worry about such things. Zeb, we can't help ourselves just now, you know, and I've always been told it's foolish to borrow trouble."

The boy became silent, having no reply to so sensible a speech, and soon both were fully occupied in staring at the strange sights spread out below them. They seemed to be falling right into the middle of a big city which had many tall buildings with glass domes and sharp-pointed spires. These spires were like great spear-points, and if they tumbled upon one of them they were likely to suffer serious injury.

Jim the horse had seen these spires also, and his ears stood straight up while Dorothy and Zeb held their breath in suspense. But no; they floated gently down upon a broad, flat roof, and came to a stop.

When Jim felt something firm under his feet the poor beast's legs trembled so much that he could hardly stand; but Zeb at once leaped to the ground, and he found he was so awkward and hasty that he kicked over Dorothy's bird-cage, which rolled out upon the roof so that the bird came off. At once a pink kitten crept out of the upset cage, sat down upon the glass roof and yawned and blinked its eyes.

"Oh," said Dorothy. "There's Eureka."

"First time I ever saw a pink cat," said Zeb.

"Eureka isn't pink; she's white. It's this queer light that gives her that color."

"Where's my milk?" asked the kitten, looking up into Dorothy's face. "I'm most starved to death."

"Oh, Eureka! Can you talk?"

"Talk! Am I talking? Good gracious, I believe I am. Isn't it funny?" asked the kitten.

"It's all wrong," said Zeb, gravely. "Animals ought not to talk. But even old Jim has been saying things since we had our accident."

"I can't see that it's wrong," remarked Jim, in his gruff tones. "At least, it isn't as wrong as some other things. What's going to become of us now?"

"I don't know," answered the boy, looking around him curiously.

The houses of the city were all made of glass, so clear and transparent that one could look through the walls as easily as through a window. Dorothy saw, underneath the roof on which she stood, several rooms used for rest chambers, and even though she could make out a number of queer forms huddled into the corners of these rooms.

The roof beside them had a great hole smashed through it, and pieces of glass were lying scattered in every direction. A nearby steeple had been broken off short and the fragments lay heaped beside it. Other buildings were cracked in places or had corners chipped off from them; but they must have been very beautiful before these accidents had happened to mar their perfection. The rainbow tints from the colored suns fell upon the glass city softly and gave to the buildings many delicate, shifting hues which were very pretty to see.

But not a sound had broken the stillness since the strangers had arrived, except that of their own voices. They began to wonder if there were no people to inhabit this magnificent city of the inner world.

Suddenly a man appeared through a hole in the roof next to the one they were on and stepped into plain view. He was not a very large man, but was well formed and had a beautiful face calm and serene as the face of a fine portrait. His clothing



sensible horse and quite experienced, he made up his mind that he could go where the others did. So, with a snort and a neigh and a whisk of his short tail he trotted off the roof into the air and at once began floating downward to the street. His great weight made him fall faster than the children walked, and he passed them on the way down; but when he came to the glass pavement he alighted upon it so softly that he was not even jarred.

"Well, well!" said Dorothy, drawing a long breath. "What a strange country this is!"

People began to come out of the glass doors to look at the new arrivals, and pretty soon quite a crowd had assembled. There were men and women, but no children at all, and the folks were all beautifully formed and attractively dressed and had wonderfully handsome faces. There was not an ugly person in all the throng, yet Dorothy was not especially pleased by the appearance of these people because their features had no more expression than the faces of dolls. They did not smile nor did they frown, or show either fear or surprise, or friendliness. They simply stared at the strangers, paying most attention to Jim and Eureka, for they had never before seen either a horse or a cat and the children bore an outward resemblance to themselves.

Pretty soon a man joined the group who wore a glistening star in the dark hair just over his forehead. He seemed to be a person of authority, for the others pressed back to give him room. After turning his composed eyes upon the animals and then upon the children he said to Zeb, who was a little taller than Dorothy:

"Tell me, intruder, was it you who caused the Rain or Stones?"

For a moment the girl did not know what he meant by this question. Then, remembering the stones that had fallen with them and passed them long before they had reached this place, he answered:

"No, sir; we didn't cause anything. It was the earthquake."

Editor's Note—Next week, "The Arrival of the Wizard," in which Dorothy's dear old friend Oz appears. How does he do? Read and see.

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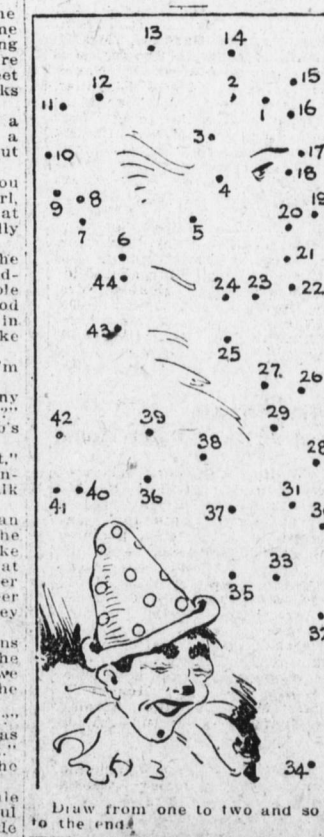
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Admits He Aided in the Theft of Wool

New York, Dec. 6.—Influenced by a gang of crooks, Isadore Popkin, a truck driver, aided in the theft of \$24,000 worth of woolen goods consigned to a Virginia concern last November, according to a confession

Daily Dot Puzzle



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