

# Thrilling Tales of Love and Adventure

## A Little Superstition

By Elsie Endicott

**W**HISPER, are you—superstitious? You are not? You always say that, possibly because it is a woman's way to deny that which she has the firmest belief in, or wishes the most to possess. You are the little woman who said you could live without love; you denied any desire or inclination to wed even the best man in the world; you have denied, when you were asked, "Do you believe in the face to face with the charge," giggled merrily and admitted that well—perhaps, after all, you might be a woman, but certainly not all who expects you to?) that you would marry, provided the right man did you, and you have to admit that a shudder when a black cat leaps across your path, and you do not know you do it, but you cut your hair the first Friday of the new moon, and actually note results, for it makes your hair grow. How your cheeks glow when you have money in your pocket, and you are to have money in your pocket when you first behold the new moon!

When you would get married on the thirteenth of the month? Well, might, for it is a great temptation to get married when you can, but the marriage had even a little ripple of disturbance upon the sea of trimonial difficulties, you—deny you dare—would say in most emphatic terms, sadly and hopelessly, "Oh, you see, I was wedded on the thirteenth of the month."

The one reason why many persons believe in ghosts, spirits, and other things is due to the fact that in this, unenlightened age, we are disposed to look upon everything of black and Salem witchcraft as nothing short of complete ignorance. However, elaborate statistics prove that drinking at the fountain to destroy old beliefs which, if reasoned out, would be groundless, those very ideas, spooky, uncanny, and—destroying or hope building, a way of thriving in each generation. You can make a person laugh any superstition except his own pet.

The "dark ages" and the twentieth century have at least one bond of sympathy—all are more or less superstitious, yet denying it right along. In many colleges throughout the land various methods have been adopted to ascertain whether the knowledge within the temples of knowledge were disturbed by these petty fears. Strange as it may seem, not a young man or woman denied a disregard for at least one pet

omen. The hypothesis that "if a dog howls it is a sign of death in the family" is so old and so well established as a fact in the minds of some persons, that nothing short of death itself would result in the destruction of the most abhorred of all omens, for dogs have howled ever since dogs were on the market.

Thirteen clubs have been established for ages, it seems, and no hostess willingly will set thirteen persons at her hospitable board. The thirteenth person will decline the seat, and laugh off his superstitious fears, yet it is shown that he does not wish to be the unfortunate person to be seated at the table.

The harmless, or partially tamed domestic cat, which purrs softly in one's lap during the day, is loathed by many women if it prowls in the sanctuaries at night. The touch of a cat is most disagreeable to most persons. I, myself, cannot touch any animal without being almost overcome by a very peculiar sensation. I am not the least fearful of a cat, yet I cannot bring myself to touch even the most playful kitten.

The world expects more of the educated person than the ignorant, that is true, but these pet mental torments are everywhere, and while accusing others of their peculiar belief, I confess that I am exceedingly wary of 25, although for more than four years, I drew a weekly salary of \$25, but I finally lost my position on the 25th of the month. I consider it my "hoodoo" day, simply because I have kept an account of the many peculiar happenings which have been somewhat distressing and they all date to the 25th, of certain months. I stop there, for it is a mental gem of superstition. I do not believe in ghosts, spirit talks, getting out of bed with the left foot first or putting a garment on wrong side out.

One time, possibly two years ago, I was walking down the boulevard in the city of St. Louis. My companion was a highly cultured young woman of thirty. Suddenly she sprang ahead of her, swooped to the pavement and as suddenly leaped back, laughing as she held up a crooked, rusty hairpin. "A new bean" she ecstatically exclaimed.

I was amazed, for it seemed so idiotic, especially for her to do anything so silly. I noted she was looking about her, up and down and all around. I inquired what she was looking for and she said that it was necessary to hang the hairpin on a nail or the hair would not arrive. "Did you never observe the hairpins hanging on telegraph poles?" she asked. I had to admit that I did not; but when she hung her pin upon a nail, it had four rusty companions! We then amused ourselves looking for hairpins on telegraph poles, and I am most certain I saw hundreds, so it goes to show that more persons than this charming young woman believed in the new bean when the wire hairpin was found. A straight wire hairpin denoted a lover; a crooked one, a woman; a small pin, a child. After this incident, I noticed many persons, from time to time, picking up hairpins. Did I? Certainly, for I am a woman. When I found a new pin, I met a fine little lawyer that week, and he was a grand rascal; the pin I picked up on Olive street was hung on a nail in a new building. A workman sang out to me, "Hello little girl, I'm single, will you take me?" I had the good grace to laugh, but I felt mighty foolish, and went my way in a hurry. It was the last pin I ever picked up from the sidewalk.

Possibly there is nothing which takes a firmer grip upon womanhood than that erroneous belief that some departed soul, the disembodied spirit that has escaped the toll and turmoil of life, can come back to earth and communicate with loved ones.

Imagine, if you can, the horror that a young mother experiences when she "communicates" with the spirit of her beloved babe. The death was cruel enough, and it was hard to see the baby slip out of her loving arms that cuddled the little body each night; and it was doubly hard to see the little form lowered into the tiny flower-lined grave, but imagine its flapping O, that such belief could be forever destroyed! If it were possible for the person to communicate with loved ones, God in His infinite wisdom would make it possible for those persons to soothe the broken hearts of loved ones that mourn in the deepest of all human grief. Never was a greater falsehood perpetrated on a sane and sensible world; and nothing in the omen world has had a more faithful audience. It is such a temptation to go, even though one may go without belief, and return with a brain of wonder.

This fake has been unearthed in many cities, and the perpetrators have been harshly dealt with by the law; yet so cunning are the workings of many, that their methods seem truly marvelous, and many of the world's greatest scientists have tried to discover the peculiar theory of their trade, yet are baffled at every turn.

Not long ago a magazine, and a good one, too, had the bad policy to publish a series of articles to the effect that there were ghosts. A good ghost story is readable, and likable by a person whose mind is sufficiently well poised to be a non-believer, but less hearts and spades, a believer will lose breath and cuddle all up in a tiny knot in bed, at the mere recollection of that story.

I can recollect when I was a mere child that a neighbor woman had the lack of good sense to tell me that if I were mad the devil would sit on the footboard of my bed and some night—of course, when I least expected it—he would get me; however, if I were good, obeyed my mother and did everything according to what she said, and what everyone else said, a beautiful angel would sit there and watch over me in loving vigil throughout the night. As I was not very good, I lived in eternal torment expecting the devil to get me every night. I was glad when footboards went out of style, for now I have none on my lowly couch whereon his satanic majesty may perch his unlovely self. If he gets me, and he may, for added years and hard work have not subdued my fun-loving spirit nor spells of spontaneous devilry, he may claim his own and I will come into my own hot estate, as hot as the hinges thereof.

The love-lorn will flock to the fortune-tellers. I have gone myself, but I cannot say they ever impressed me. I am something of a character reader myself, and can understand full well how an intuitive mind can read most persons—not all—but a few. If the reader is clever, skillful, and sympathetic there is every hope of drawing from the visitor sufficient material to work on. Still, I must confess, that I have been puzzled at some clairvoyants. I visited a renowned medium at one time and as soon as I was seated before her, she called my name. It made the hair raise straight up on my head. My name is anything but a common one, and the mere fact that she called it was a shock. She followed by telling me I was a married woman. I am single, but I permitted her to say her say, and I said nothing to discourage her on. She spoke of the death of my child, the unfaithfulness of my husband, a certain married man who figured scandalously in my life, and she made a furious attack upon my chastity, and saw before me a great calamity, for I was standing on the precipice of great danger. I wondered how on earth she could tell my name, and go so far astray on everything else, for I would almost commit murder if anyone attacked the honesty of my womanhood, and I was not entangled in an affair so amorous with any married man, and I never shall be. Then I looked down at my handbag and saw cleverly carved across the latch was my name! I paid her my money and left.

At another time I went with a party of young persons and this woman was genuinely clever in character reading, although she understood the trick of leading her subject on to reveal certain important features to work on. For example, she looked at me and interrogatively said: "You are not mar-

ried, I see." Naturally I said I was not. She then told me of a light man, also one medium dark, and saw a wedding in the distance. She saw more than I did, for at that particular reading the only man who was in my life was a married man, my manager, and I mentally called him "Sitting Bull," so I was quite certain her predictions were meaningless. Of course, like others, she said I soon should hear of a death, a wedding, a great surprise and I would be ill. I think she predicted pomaine poisoning. As I was boarding at the time, I believed her, for I had enjoyed everything else in the various boarding houses, and was not going to miss anything my money could procure; but I never had it.

While this article was to deal with women and their pet superstitions, it goes without saying that they are not alone in their mental happiness or misery, for men are as prone to superstition as the sparks fly upward.

There is the farmer who studies the fat-faced moon of his Dutch almanac. He has a deep-rooted belief in his brain pan that if he plants beans in a certain period of the moon that those beans will not climb the pole; and if he happens to plant them at the proper period,—why those beans excel the mythical story of Jack the Giant-Killer. He claims that if cucumbers are planted when the signs are "twins" that there will be a double crop of cucumbers. Women plant flower seeds when the signs show the woman holding the bunch of flowers in her hand. That is the sign of Virgo, the bows.

Most all old-fashioned mothers weaned their babies when the "signs" were below the heart. The modern mother weans her baby at the start and allows it to yell its lungs out or dies. It is up to the nurse, the cow and the pacifier to do what mother used to do. It is not known what sign it is that made most present-day mothers withdraw the natural feast from her babe, but put it down as a sign that something caused a disturbance in Nature's own dining room.

Some men were undoubtedly born or weaned when the signs were in Places, the feet, for they are natural born kickers. I once worked in an office where I am quite certain the man was born or weaned under this sign, for there is no record on earth, or above the earth, or even below it when that man smiled. He was married when the signs were in the heart, I dare say, for never did a man live who so heartily regretted that early morning frolic at Dan Cupid's altar.

The devout Catholic makes the sign of the cross. It is a pretty custom and there are many occasions for it. He crosses himself as he passes the holy

temple; the sign of the cross is made at the festive or humble board, and it is symbolic of what is pure, holy, eternal in the Christian sense. In itself it is nothing, yet beautifully significant of what is good.

After the awakening of a misty and dreamy existence of spiritual bodies, thought waves, astral figures and other peculiar ideas of an existence not seen with the naked eye, many learned persons delved as deeply as possible into the new conditions. It is not based so much on superstition as a theory that there is a fluid of influence which each learned person may use to his advantage. It embraces everything pertaining to thought waves, wireless telegraphy, etc. As yet so ponderous is its purport that not many persons have adopted it in the commercial world as a means of making a living. It is confined almost wholly to societies and "circles."

Perhaps there is no place where the belief in the uncanny is so carefully nourished as right upon the American playboards where we might naturally look for its complete elimination, especially among persons of rare talent and highly developed intellectual attainments.

May things are considered harbingers of good luck. Most all actors and actresses retain some article of clothing they wore upon the night of their crowning success in the play-world. Their bad omens are so numerous that, at first glance of the entire list, one is inclined to wonder whether they believe in anything real. They avoid certain yellow shades, which they consider casts certain evil spells. The cat that follows them as a mascot is beloved and petted so long as the feline member of the troupe does not scurry across the stage. That, alone, is trouble without anything else to support the belief. What a manager won't do, and what he will do to the person who whistles in the theater is most interesting, for it brings trouble as surely as the crowing of the chicken brings company if he crows in the kitchen door.

An actor who has been on the stage long enough to acquaint himself with certain superstitions will never, never go on the stage where there is the picture of an ostrich. Peafowl feathers are considered as worse than ill omens, and one famous actress positively refused to take the leading part in a play where the stage settings were a wonderful development created wholly in lights and gauzes of these brilliant tints; nor would she adopt the attire. Consternation reigned supreme, the play went on, and, as the good actress now says, "I knew it, I knew it," for the play was a complete failure.

It is considered fortunate for a man to enter the house first on the New Year. The "Open House" was said to be adopted by mothers with eligible daughters to interest men in calling on New Year's Day. No doubt many pretty romances have been enacted as fair lips sipped the New Year's beverages, and merry eyes laughed across the punch bowl, but history does not record anything unusual when a woman was the first caller.

The countless festivities occasioned at Hallow E'en are not without some hidden belief that the mystic charms and fun-provoking amusements are not a wee bit truthful. Happy, indeed, is the girl who finds the ring, for well she knows it portends her coming marriage.

In foreign countries where male birth is so important and the appearance of a little girl so sadly deplored, there is any amount of witchcraft practiced in hope that the little child will be a son. Even among royalty the omens have been cast, magicians have been paid enormous sums to make certain the sex of a child. It is considered most fortunate when an heir is born to any kingdom.

In the professional world are many peculiar beliefs, some too absurd to chronicle, others as reasonable as any, if any are to be considered within the bounds of good sense or judgment.

## And Kitty Was Glad

By Annette Angert

**T**HERE was plenty of time to catch the seven-ten car, though even this was wholly unnecessary. It was not really essential that Kitty should start before seven-thirty.

But the young lady had her reasons for hurrying. She knew that when she reached home Bixby would be along in his sedan about seven-ten, on his way to his real estate office in the city. Of course, he would drive past the house and take her to the Central Telephone Station. But that sleek combination of business and pleasure was to be avoided, unless she was mistaken! She'd never seen him! Just as he should appear in a fine suit and his olive branch of peace, and his olive branch of peace, and she would coolly snub him, she would calmly turn her back and take the seven-ten.

Walden Bixby along that avenue. How proud she had been of her handsome, enterprising young "Dollar-Down-Dollar-a-Week" real estate man! The little glooms and fups of darkness recalled to her mind all the plans she and Walden had discussed; of Walden's purpose to begin raising his real estate price; to put on building restrictions, and gradually to weed out the unsightly hovels; to bring in a better class of residents and to make of Watts something more than the joke it was. And then on the hill overlooking the sea he was going to build a bungalow, a fine one, which was to be their home when—but that was all in the past, and Kitty sighed. He had taken to running with other women, and this, of course, was the limit. Good thing she found him out before instead of after.

Kitty was wisely glad when the dingy, dirty Watts Local reached the Central Telephone Station in the city, and her hat and wraps put carefully away in her locker in the girl's restroom, she found herself before the switchboard with the ear pads clamped over her ears. If there's anything that will effectually put the glooms to rout it is occupation. And certainly it would be a gloom with praiseworthy persistence that could make any headway against the innumerable calls claiming a telephone girl's attention.

And so in no time at all Kitty had dipped her voice into the dissolved sugar and was trilling sweetly into the mouthpiece, "Number, please?" "Put in your nickel, please." "Line's busy." "Party doesn't answer," etc., just as though she was happy as a bird and no "other woman" had darkened her sky.

And so her day would have passed if something hadn't happened. But suddenly her name and a familiar voice came into her ear. "Hello, is that you, Kit?" she heard, and recognized the voice of Clara Katz at Watts. The connection was lost on the instant, and in the interval Kitty wasn't certain that she wanted to talk with Clara. Of course, Clara would want to pump her about her break with Walden. And then Clara got the line again, and Kitty heard, "Hello, Kit, I lost the line. Say, Kit, there's another fire down at Watts"—and again somebody broke in.

But Kitty had heard enough. Another fire down at Watts? Fire? The word struck terror to the girl's heart and drove everything else from her mind—telephone calls, the other woman, even Walden. Fire! And her mind was so confused in their little board cottage, and Bob was away at school. And Watts was one immense firetrap, with no fire protection to speak of!

Kitty, with quick presence of mind made the connection and called, "Fire double three," thus notifying the city fire station. Then she removed her ear pads and rushed from her switchboard and into the manager's office. It took but a moment to explain to Mr. Crosby the situation and to be relieved from duty. And in another moment Kitty had seized her hat and wraps in the restroom, and was in the street looking for the Watts Local. Her heart sank as she realized that her mother and all Watts might burn up long before that lumbering coach would reach the suburb.

## A Day With the Kids

By Annette Angert

**T**OP crying, Jennie, you and Bobbie are to go in the jitney and be sure to wait outside the gate where it says, "Tickets." No! we won't get lost. Hold on to Bobbie and don't let him fall out. Good-by, Now, Milly and Hazel, come on, here is a car. Stop fussing, Millie, we are all crowded. Well, I should think a big man of his size would know enough not to push and step all over a little girl's new shoes. Yes, sir, I was speaking about you, sir. You've made my little sister here cry. Oh, yes, sir—thank you, sir—Hush Millie, see, the kind man is giving you a dime to spend at the fair. Thanks awfully, mister. Millie, see the nice fat woman, she says you may sit on her lap—Thank you, ma'am, you're very good. Here we are at the fair grounds, that's it. Jump, Hazel. Well, now where is Jennie and Bobbie? Oh, there they are, and Jennie bawling already. Hush, kid, we're not lost. I wish you were not such a crybaby.

Yes, sir, three tickets—children under ten get in free, today—don't they? Come on, now. No, we're not going to sit on the grandstand. Ma said it would cost too much and you would want to be moving round all the time, anyway. Yes, Jen, you can be a snake charmer when you grow up. No, not now. Yes, Millie, go ahead and have your fortune told, if you want to. We will wait here at the corner of the grandstand.

No, we are not going to eat now, but you may each have a glass of pink lemonade and—the balloon! It is rising. Yes, yes, it is going to heaven, Jen. Yes, there is a man in it. You will see him in a minute. Look! No, that isn't a sunshade, that's a parachute.

We will walk over here a little and watch that elegant young lady in pink, ride the tight rope on her bicycle. Ain't she splendid?

Well, Millie, what did the old woman say? Oh, well, that's very fine, but don't believe all you hear. Told you, your name, did she? Pity you didn't know that already.

Yes, get one if you want to. Here, now Jen, you can't have any mustard on yours. Millie, tell the man not to put any mustard on Jennie's. No, thanks, bring me a ham sandwich.

Oh, here goes the woman, that's dangerous business. Oh! go, did you see? Look, she's all right now—turned a somersault in the air in an auto! Oh, gee!

Where is Bobbie? Oh, what shall we do? Stop crying, Jen. Millie, you go down Fakers' row and I'll go this way. Come back to the corner of the grandstand. What shall we do, if he is lost? Oh, what will ma say? Stop crying, Jen, Millie! Millie! Here he is. Robert Edward Robbinal! Where have you been? You had boy, answer me at once. Didn't I tell you to keep away from the wild man? Wait till you get home. Just wait.

Now, while I go up on the ferris wheel with Hazel, Millie will take you in to see the mermaid that lived 40 days under water and whose hair is sea-weed.

Hush, Hazel, you said you wanted to go. Two tickets. Hop in, sis. This is awful! O hush up, we're all right. Now see, we are coming down all right. Well, Millie, how did you like the mermaid?

Now we are going home. You shall each have a balloon and a bag of peanuts. Bobbie, what are you doing? Oh, so you have given your nickel to the monkey because he cried. Well, it didn't do him any good, you see. That man that keeps him has got it now and where are you going to get your peanuts? Hush now, don't cry, Jen, give your little brother some of your peanuts. Millie, you take care of Hazel, Bobbie and Jennie, don't let go your hand. No, we can't stay to see the alrabi go up. It is growing dark and there is such a mob. We must go early to avoid the rush—Come on.

Now we are going to eat now, but you may each have a glass of pink lemonade and—the balloon! It is rising. Yes, yes, it is going to heaven, Jen. Yes, there is a man in it. You will see him in a minute. Look! No, that isn't a sunshade, that's a parachute.

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