

# Thrilling Tales of Love and Adventure

## Finding The Great Peace

By Elsie Endicott

eyes, when she would rise and go to the window and look out upon the little world she knew. Ten years before, on the death of her husband, Jamie had left home to seek his fortune.

"There isn't much for me to do here, mother, and I can't bear to take anything from the nest egg father left you; wouldn't be right, and you wouldn't respect the person, son or friend, who should rob you of the feathers of comfort you ought to have," were the words of her Jamie as he made ready for his departure.

Only that day Mary had been conning over his letters, although she knew them all by heart, yet always when she read them over she found new beauties in them, new touches of that loving boy heart of his that had so endeared him to her; yet there was one so different from the rest, the last message that she had ever received, that made a pain go through her heart.

"I'm having a hard battle, mother," it said. "Seems though sometimes everything's bound to go wrong; I've always remembered your teachings, kept sober and never gambled, but sometimes it seems mighty hard to see some fellow who drinks and steals and makes no pretence of doing right running so smoothly down stream, gathering in the laurels that just come floating over to him, so that all he has to do is to pick them up."

But every Christmas since a boy Jamie had hung his stocking up beside the fireplace; he knew that his doing so gladdened the heart of his mother, and she knew that it was a sweet and glorious thing for her boy to remain young in spirit to enjoy the delights of youth, even though maturity was creeping on. And so ever since his feet had crossed over her threshold into a greater world, Mary Atwood had hung the stocking up in its accustomed place, kissing it fondly as she did so, and looking afterward with childish rapture at a little pile of tasty eatables on the lower shelf in the closet that were put there in case he should really come.

Tonight, however, try as she would, a feeling of uneasiness would come over her, and as time went on she grew depressed and weary; the longing for a sight of his face was almost unbearable, and the joyful faces of her village friends who passed by her windows, only made her heart's suffering more acute. She had refused many invitations to partake of the Christmas festivities in other homes; somehow she could not feel comfortable on such a day to leave the old home with its sacred memories.

At last, after having sat before the fireplace for some time, as if trying to

infuse some warmth into her being, to ease her aching heart, she rose and started to tidy up the room, preparatory to going to bed. Then, having done so, she paused a moment before blowing out the light. It was always a habit of hers to wait a while before enveloping the room in darkness.

"I'd like to keep the old lamp burning all the time," she murmured; "it would be a beacon light for the returning wanderer. Seems though, when it goes out, I shut him out from my heart."

But she did not extinguish the light, for suddenly an unheard of thing happened for that hour of the night—the knocking on the front door clanked three times, loud and compelling. And all at once Mary Atwood forgot her stiffness of joints that had so bothered her all the evening, and with a surprising rapidity for one of her years, she rushed for the door, with her heart bounding with joy, her shortsighted eyes gleaming with anticipation.

Then, just as sometimes we receive a blow of bitter words from a friend when we expected kindness, so Mary Atwood stood hesitant, when she opened the door, for there in the background she caught sight of the tall, lanky form of Silas, the livery stable man, and in front of him a young woman, so muffled up that you could not tell whether she was fair

or ugly of feature.

There was not time for dallying, however. The young woman quickly entered, followed by Silas carrying a suitcase, who leaped over and whispered something in Mary's ear as he passed that started her into feverish activity.

Not for one moment did Mary Atwood wince or tremble, but with loving care and tender solicitude, started to remove the wraps from the incoming stranger. But in her anxiety to relieve the chilled being before her, Mary failed to notice the little bundle tucked away beneath the cape under the young woman's arm. "A baby!" she exclaimed, delightedly, and bringing pillow and Afghan from another room, she soon had the sleeping form cuddled away in one corner of the haircloth sofa. The young woman, now recuperating herself, was seated by the fire, and presently a cup of coffee was brewing and home-made sandwiches and delicious doughnuts were brought to the hungry one.

"Tell me all," Mary finally said. Her voice trembled and sunk almost to a whisper, for not until then did she dare speak about what she so dreaded and yet desired to know.

And so the young woman, who was Jamie's wife, pausing often, when the two looked into each other's eyes as if to read the soul of the other, told of

his illness previous to their marriage, and of how she had nursed him back to health, after which they had become husband and wife.

"Jamie was so good and industrious," she went on, "but somehow we didn't get along very well financially. He worked, oh, so hard, and overtaxing his strength, his health began to fail. His own ambition seemed to get back to you. 'We'll save all we can,' he used to say, 'and then, some day, we'll go back into the country where mother lives, buy a farm, and things will be better.'"

Up to this point Mary had kept very calm, but now it seemed that all the flood tides of her nature were sweeping over her, and she broke down completely. And then it was the turn for the young woman to minister, lovingly she entwined her arms about the aged shoulders and laid the quivering mother's head on her shoulder.

"It's all right, now," she comforted, "and just before Jamie died, he told me to take his savings and come home to his mother. You want a daughter, don't you?"

Instantly the aged head was raised from its resting place, and for several minutes they held on to each other, each busy with her own thoughts, and trying to gain strength to bear their common sorrow.

How long they had stood thus together they did not know, but the young woman was about to break the silence when a plaintive little wail came from the vicinity of the sofa and made both women turn simultaneously. Yet, quicker than a flash Mary had loosed herself from the other's arms and was over beside the baby, and taking it up fondly in her arms. Thus carrying it over to the fireplace, when it cooled, she laughed back at it, and kissed and hugged it as if she were a young mother instead of an old gray-haired grandmother. Perfectly contented, the baby lay there until the grandmother's eyes caught sight of the little old stocking hanging in its accustomed place.

"Jamie's stocking," she fondly breathed, "and some day you, little Jamie, will be hanging your stocking in the self-same place, and God grant, Jamie of mine, that many and pleasant will be the Christmases that you will have!"

Mary looked up, and seeing the eyes of her boy's wife looking at her so clearly and understandingly, as if she had found peace at last, she said: "It's the way of the world, my daughter, the reaper death ushers some souls out while the giver of life brings into being others to fill the places of those gone beyond, and complete his work here upon earth."

## A Happy Girl==Indeed

By Enos Emory

I was a dull morning in the ten-cent store, and Jenny had nothing to do. She stood gazing drowsily out of the window at the lifeless street, and wishing that Mrs. Hess, who was her aunt as well her employer, would stop humming "It's Long Day to Tipperary" back to her where she was making up the window shades.

The sound of whistling outside caught her interest. It was "Tipperary," but "Tipperary" by David Power, who worked in the next door, were two different things. Jenny loved David Power, but then, she loved herself. The color of her face and she was smiling to herself in expectation of a look and greeting when she stepped out and claimed all David's attention.

"How I hate her!" Jenny thought. Just in front of the two young people had

paused for a moment's chat. Neither seemed aware of Jenny's frowning like fate beyond the masses of artificial flowers and a fresh showing of ten-cent towels. Jenny drew back, but not so far back that she could not watch David's strong, earnest young face was full of light, which seemed like a reflection of Mary Dix's brightness. And yet she was not pretty. But she had a distinctive charm. Her brown coat was warm but plain, her crown velvet had hid most of her simply arranged hair, she wore no powder, jewelry or lace, and yet Jenny knew that she was drawing \$15 a week in the office of the hardware firm up the street. "And Aunt Marsh only pays me \$5," mourned Jenny.

"Customer!" Mrs. Hess' voice brought Jenny back to duty. There was a customer, and she had not even heard the door open. She lagged over to the counter and leaned upon it in tired tolerance of the old country woman who was fumbling at the ten-cent neckwear.

"What's the price of this collar, my dear?" inquired the old woman.

"All ten cents," snapped Jenny.

"It's kind a hard to choose," murmured the old lady, as much to herself as to Jenny. "Where there's so

many. Well, I guess I won't take any. I'll go over to Newton's and see what they got there."

As the door closed Mrs. Hess rustled up. Jenny was just reaching in to the tray for a handful of chocolates. "You put that candy back!" ordered Mrs. Hess. "You're making yourself sick eating it. And listen to me. You got to be nicer to folks that come in here. You lose me trade every day. You lost that customer just now."

"She couldn't make up her mind," mused Jenny.

"Then it was your business to help her. I wouldn't had her gone out that way for nothing. She's peculiar, but she's got money. And she's Dave Power's grandmother." Jenny turned pale, and Mrs. Hess eyed her enjoyably. "She'll go in to see him before she goes home, and she'll tell him how you acted. Now, see here, Jenny," and Mrs. Hess grew terribly emphatic. "You got to brace up right away straight or I'll send you home. I've put up with a good deal from you, but when it comes to interfering with my trade it's got to stop."

Mrs. Hess went back to her desk and Jenny sobbed with her head on the counter. Home! Why, she couldn't go home. Her stepmother did not

want her. She would rather die than go home. She would want to die any way if she lost Dave Power. And she had offended his grandmother! Oh, what a wretched thing life was, after all! She had thought she was going to be so happy with Aunt Marsh, so happy earning money and being independent and learning to be a clever woman. And here she was nothing but a tawdry, cheap, heart-sick little girl whose golden dreams had just undergone a frightful explosion.

All the rest of that day, all the long evening, all the night, during which she slept but little, Jenny's mind was in torment. She rose resolved. She had been wrong, now she would be right. She would earn Aunt Marsh's approval. "I will! I will!" she said over and over to herself.

She came downstairs with shadows under her eyes. Mrs. Hess, reading the morning paper beside the coffee pot, looked up in astonishment. Jenny had on the blue serge blouse costume in which she had arrived at her aunt's. Her hair was simply knotted. Her jewelry, scent, and powder were gone. She looked wistful, sweet, good as she was.

"Have some coffee, Jeanne?" asked Mrs. Hess.

"Please, auntie, and—and, auntie, you needn't bother to call me Jeanne after this. Jen—Jenny's good enough."

"So it seems to me," Mrs. Hess replied firmly, and apparently went on with her paper. But over its edge she watched the young face with its new lines wondering.

It was two weeks before she admitted the change in Jenny. "You're going all right," she told the girl then. "If you keep on like this a couple of months longer, I'll be raising your wages."

Jenny lifted her eyes. "I'll try hard, Aunt Marsh," she said.

Mrs. Hess studied her thoughtfully. "You ever see Dave Power now?" she asked bluntly.

Jenny's head dropped. She tried to reply and failed. Mrs. Hess glanced over her at the window. Dave Power was singing past on his way to the postoffice with a package. He looked neither to right nor left. With a sign Mrs. Hess turned and went back to rearrange some tinware.

Mary Dix came into the store for a pencil that day. She lingered a moment with Jenny. Jenny was beautifully courteous to her, and after Mary had gone out Mrs. Hess called: "That's right Jenny. Treat 'em all alike."

Was there anything that Aunt Marsh did not see? After that Mary came in often, and always Jenny had to wait upon her. Each time was a fight for Jenny, but she conquered herself and was unflinching sweet and gentle. One day as they were bending over the counter looking at something, Jenny explained and Mary admiring. Mary said: "What lovely hair you have, Jenny, all curls. I wish mine was so."

A week later Mrs. Hess showed Jenny a note from the morning's mail. "For you, Jenny. Looks like an invitation."

"It is!" cried Jenny, opening it. "It's to a party—from Mary Dix."

"Well, there!" said Mrs. Hess, smiling. "That pleases me. Mary's a nice girl, with a nice family and home. I'm proud to have her notice you like this. You must go."

"Oh, I can't," breathed Jenny.

"You must," said Mrs. Hess steadily. "If you don't do they'll all be offended. And they're good customers of mine."

So Jenny went. Mrs. Hess bought a new dress for her—a flimsy white voile with a sash as blue as Jenny's eyes.

"You're right sweet," she said giving the girl a rare kiss. "You're a good girl, Jenny. Tomorrow I'm going to pay you \$7 a week instead of \$5."

"Oh, thank you, Aunt Marsh," Jenny said.

But despite this good news and the new frock she went to the party unhappy. It was a small party. But Dave Power was there. And somehow he never got far away from Jenny's side.

In the midst of the good time a tall girl in pink waved a handkerchief for order and said that she had something nice to say. And then she told them all that this party was really an announcement party. Mary Dix was engaged to Oliver Bliss, and she had taken this way to let all her friends know it.

Jenny could not believe it at first. But there was the ring on Mary's finger.

After the party Dave Power walked home with Jenny. They walked slowly for there was moonlight.

Mrs. Hess sat up in bed to hear all about the party and what had happened afterward.

"Dave's a good boy," she said. "You couldn't do better. I guess you're a pretty happy girl tonight, Jenny."

"I guess I am," replied Jenny with a sigh of deep content.

## Real Honesty And A Job

By Annette Angert

It happened as Shelly lifted her hands to pin on her hat, she had known, of course, that it was badly worn, but she had not expected it to rend thus suddenly from shoulder seam to belt line. Her hands were wood-staring at the gaping hole with amazement which she could not suppress. "And I must get the job!" she thought. "I must get the job!"

Shelly turned to the edges of the door and trusting to her coat she slipped out of the room, and upon her getting to her board, and her aunt, who was already waiting for her, could not resist. Moreover, times and good jobs were scarce, and she had been slack Shelly had been working at

Page's. Page's was a woman's small furnishing store which employed only four or five people. When Mrs. Page decided to reduce her working force the choice had lain between Shelly and Neva Moran. Neva had been there considerably longer than Shelly and so she was retained. Also, not without reason, Shelly suspected that Neva, who did not like her, had had something to say in her disfavor which had been listened to.

Being for sometime out of work it was incumbent, therefore, that Shelly get this new job. Roger Winton had suggested it to her. Roger Winton was the big, brown draftsman whom everybody liked and turned to instinctively. He had comfort and sympathy for all. When Mrs. Hess had mentioned that her niece was out of work Roger had said cheerfully that they needed another saleswoman at the stationer's where he bought his supplies and he thought if Miss Shelly applied and as soon as 10 o'clock tomorrow she might get the place.

But at 10:15 o'clock Shelly still sat

in the street car which was being held up by a block ahead. Each moment the car was expected to move, but time passed without its moving. When at last release came and Shelly arrived at the stationer's she rushed in to find a showy blonde consulting her nails behind the counter.

"I understand that they need a saleswoman here," Shelly panted.

The blond girl lifted her eyes in a casual glance of appraisal. "Place filled an hour ago," she replied calmly.

Shelly turned away. She went out on the street and bought a morning paper in the hope of finding something. She walked along reading the "wants" and trying to act careless and composed.

Suddenly she looked up to find herself in front of Page's. There was a row of silk blouses in the window, and underneath a placard which read, "Your choice of these \$5 blouses at \$2.98."

Shelly caught her breath. She had \$5 in her purse, all the money she had

in the world. Under her coat was a worn out blue silk blouse, and in the window was a perfectly fresh, stout one for such a price as she might not see again. She entered the shop.

Neva Moran gave her a light smile. "How you was, Shelly?" she remarked. "Ain't set glim on you in ages."

"I'm very well, thank you," replied Shelly. "May I look at that dark blue blouse that you have in the window, please?"

Neva displayed the blouse. "Good value for a mark-down," she said. "The collar is out, but any one could change it. I don't have time myself. I buy things when they're in style and pass 'em up when they ain't. Two-ninety-eight. Want it, Shelly?"

"Yes, I do," answered Shelly. Neva's speech had left her flushed, but none the less resolute.

Neva wrapped up the waist, dropped Shelly's bill into the cash register and handed over the change. Shelly stuffed the change into her handbag and walked out. She felt that Neva's eyes were

penetrating her coat and discovering the pinned up rent underneath.

Arrived at home Shelly opened her purse and pulled out the wisp of ragged bill. It had occurred to her that she ought to get her aunt to change it into dimes and nickels for her before she started out job hunting after luncheon. She turned pale as she unfolded the bill. For instead of a two-dollar bill she had a twenty-dollar one!

Joy followed surprise. Twenty dollars seemed a fortune. She could pay Aunt Fran, she could buy a new pair of gloves, and there would still be money left. Then conscience spoke. "You know you got that money by mistake—Neva's mistake. And you know what it will mean to her when that hawk-eyed old Kate Page tallies up the contents of the cash drawer with the day's sales. Neva will either be accused of theft or lose her job."

For ten minutes Shelly stood there clutching the bill and fighting wrong in her heart. Then she decided. She donned her hat and coat and went

downstairs. She met Roger Winton just coming in.

"Running away?" he laughed.

"Yes, from a wicked temptation. Tell auntie I shan't be in to luncheon," Shelly answered.

It was two miles to Page's by the shortest course, and she walked. Young and supple as she was, the distance, added to that she had already traveled, told upon her. She was going when she entered the store.

From the back room came loud voices, then Mrs. Page, large and angry, stepped in. "Well, Shelly!" she said.

Shelly held out the bill. "Will you please give this to Neva, Mrs. Page? She made a mistake this morning and handed it out to me instead of the two-dollar bill which was really coming to me."

Mrs. Page took the bill, glanced at it, glanced at Shelly and flung up her head. "Neva!" she called. Neva came in. She had been crying. "It's all right, Neva, the bill has been found. Shelly here just returned it. You

## The Mystery Of The Fake Blonde

By Will Seaton

"Oh, I happened to be at the garden party given by Mrs. Blake for charity, and all the ladies were having their fortunes told, so I went, too. Everybody agreed that she was wonderful," but Mrs. Blake won't tell us where she got her. She's a Hindu of some sort, I believe," she added.

"Hindu, nothing!" scoffed Billy. "I will bet she's as much Hindu as you are. Probably some fanatic having a lot of pipe dreams."

"Why, Billy Chandler, how can you say such a thing? I just wish I could find out where she is at present. I'd like to have you go to see her and see what she would tell you. You'd have to admit that she is wonderful," said Frances decisively.

"So you are really determined to call things off on account of what she said. I suppose I could bleach my hair and make myself a blonde, but there's no getting away from the fact that I was born in 77."

laughed. "Oh, come on, Frances, be sensible and forget it—you know there is nothing to it."

"It's no joking matter," said Frances. "I believe that there are certain things that should guide one in choosing a life companion, and I would rather wait than make a mistake. I'm sorry."

"Very well," answered Billy, as he rose to go. "We won't discuss it any further. From now on it is absolutely up to you. I must run along to catch a train. I'm going out of the city for a few days on business. In the meantime, I hope you find your August blonde," he added spitefully, with a short laugh.

But it was a furious young man that left the city that afternoon, and what he said about fortune tellers in general, would hardly bear repetition.

The next few days passed slowly and drearily for Frances, for there was no word from Billy.

"He might at least have written to me," she soliloquized. Even though I can't marry him, we could still be friends. Oh, why should such an unfortunate thing ever have happened to me—that I should fall in love with a man who is really not my mate. Besides I never did care for blondes, but it can't be helped. I suppose, and as a last resort, she gave herself up to the full enjoyment of a good cry.

That afternoon as she started on a shopping expedition downtown a telegram was handed to her, which she opened eagerly. read:

"Has the blonde turned up yet. Am at Hotel Belvidere. BILLY."

Frances tore the message into shreds, resolving to put him out of her thoughts entirely. She would waste no more time worrying over such a flippant young man. Evidently he did not take her seriously, and if he did, it certainly didn't bother him much. As she entered one of the large stores in

the heart of the shopping districts, she met Mrs. Blake, who greeted her cheerily.

"Why, Frances, you are just the girl I'm looking for. I want you to meet my niece, Sylvia Prescott," and Frances turned to meet Miss Prescott, a tall beautiful brunette.

"You girls ought to be good friends," said Mrs. Blake. "Sylvia is to be here for the rest of the season, and I want she did upon her last visit," whereupon she and Sylvia exchanged knowing smiles.

"Why, I don't remember of ever having met your niece before," said Frances. "Has she been here?"

"Frances, dear, we'll let you into a secret. Sylvia was the wonderful seeress of my garden party, but it was necessary that she keep her identity a secret or the spell would have been broken. With a little disguise she made quite a good looking Hindu,

didn't you think so?" laughed Mrs. Blake.

But Frances was staring at the girl with undisguised amazement.

"But how did you ever tell people things?" she faltered.

"Oh, easy," laughed Sylvia. "Every woman thinks she is a little different from other women. The fact is that all are more or less alike. I just told them things that would apply to most anybody, and the rest was purely my own invention. I don't know the first thing about telling fortunes. It was great fun to see the women swallow the things I told them."

"Well," laughed Frances nonchalantly, "you certainly made a most wonderful fortune teller. Of course, personally, I don't believe in those things at all—in fact, I can't remember what you told me."

"Well, I should hope they all felt the same way about it," said Sylvia. "If you could have heard some of the

fairly tales I told them about who they should and should not marry. I wonder at my own audacity."

"Frances, dear," said Mrs. Blake "won't you come along home with us and have tea? We are just about going now."

"I thank you, Mrs. Blake, but I must decline. I have a very important matter to which I must attend," and with a smile and a nod she departed.

She lost no time in getting to a telegraph office, and sending a message to the Hotel Belvidere, and that evening an amused young man, who was dark complexioned and born in September received a message which read:

"Fortune teller fake. Frances a myth. Never again. 'FRANCES.'"

Whenever Billy particularly wants to chaff his wife a little, all he has to say is something pertaining to a blonde born in August, and it has the desired effect.