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# Polly of the Circus

BY MARGARET MAYO  
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(Continued from last week)

She wondered what Jim and Toby would say if they could see her now, sitting like a queen in the midst of her soft coverlets, with no need to raise even a finger to wait upon herself.

"Ain't it the limit?" she sighed, and with that Jim and Toby seemed to drift farther away. She began to see their life apart from hers. She could picture Jim with his head in his hands. She could hear his sharp orders to the men. He was always short with the others when anything went wrong with her.

"I'll bet 'Muvver Jim's' in the dumps," she murmured as a cloud stole across the flowerlike face; then the tired muscles relaxed, and she ceased to rebel.

"Muvver Jim?" Douglas repeated, feeling that he must recall her to a knowledge of his presence.

"That's what I call him," Polly explained, "but the fellows call him 'Big Jim.' You might not think Jim could be a good mother just to look at him,

ways 'tchin' to get it away from 'em."

Before Douglas could think of words with which to defend his disapproved methods Mandy had continued eagerly.

"An' den on Sunday, when he can't go to church an' preach"—She got no further. A sharp exclamation brought both Mandy and Douglas to attention.

"Preach!" Polly almost shouted. She looked at him with genuine alarm this time.

"That will do, Mandy," Douglas commanded, feeling an unwelcome drama gathering about his head.

"Great Barnum and Bailey!" Polly exclaimed, looking at him as though he were the very last thing in the world she had ever expected to see.

"Are you a sky pilot?"

"That's what he am, chile," Mandy slipped the words in slyly, for she knew that they were against the pastor's wishes, but she was unable to restrain her mischievous impulse to sow the seeds of curiosity that would soon bear fruit in the inquisitive mind of the little invalid.

"Will you get on to me a landin' into a mixup like this?" She continued to study the uncomfortable man at her side. "I never thought I'd be a-talkin' to one of you guys. What's your name?"

"Douglas." He spoke shortly.

"Ain't you got no handle to it?"

"If you mean my Christian name, it's John."

"Well, that sounds like a sky pilot all right. But you don't look like 's'posed they did."

"Why not?"

"I always s'posed sky pilots was old an' grouchy-like. You're a most as good lookin' as our strong man."

"I done tole him he was too good lookin' to be an unmarried parson," Mandy chuckled, more and more amused at the pastor's discomfort.

"Looks don't play a very important part in my work," Douglas answered curtly. Mandy's confidential snickers made him doubly anxious to get to a less personal topic.

"Well, they count for a whole lot with us." She nodded her head decidedly. "How long you been showin' in this town, anyhow?"

"About a year," Douglas answered, with something of a sigh.

"A year!" she gasped. "In a burg like this! You must have an awful lot of laughs in your act to keep 'em a-comin' that long." She was wise in the ways of professional success.

"Not many, I'm afraid." He wondered for the first time if this might be the reason for his rather indifferent success.

"Do you give them the same stuff, or have you got a rep?"

"A rep?" he repeated in surprise.

"Sure, repertory, different acts—entries, some calls 'em. Uncle Toby's got twenty-seven entries. It makes a heap of difference in the big towns where you have a run."

"Oh, I understand!" Douglas answered in a tone of relief. "Well, I try to say something new each Sunday."

"What kind of spiels do you give 'em?" she inquired, with growing interest.

"I try to help my people to get on better terms with themselves and to forget their week day troubles. He had never had occasion to define his efforts so minutely.

"Well, that's jes' the same as us," Polly told him, with an air of condescension. "Only circuses draws more people 'an churches."

"Yours does seem to be a more popular form of entertainment," Douglas answered dryly. He was beginning to feel that there were many tricks in the entertainment trade which he had not mastered. And, after all, what was his preaching but an effort at entertainment? If he failed to hold his congregation by what he was saying, his listeners grew drowsy and his sermon fell short of its desired effect. It was true that his position and hers had points of similarity. She was apparently successful. As for himself he could not be sure. He knew he tried very hard and that sometimes a tired mother or a sad faced child looked up at him with a smile that made the service seem worth while.



"Lordy, no, chile. He ain't nebbber seed none ob dem 't'ings."

but he is, only sometimes you can't tell him things you could a real mother," she added, half sadly.

"And your real mother went away when you were very young?"

"No, she didn't go away."

"No?" There was a puzzled note in the pastor's voice.

"She went out," Polly corrected.

"Out!" he echoed blankly.

"Yes; finished—lights out."

"Oh, an accident," Douglas understood at last.

"I don't like to talk about it," Polly raised herself on her elbow and looked at him solemnly, as though about to impart a bit of forbidden family history. It was this look in the round eyes that had made Jim so often declare that the kid knew everything.

"Why, mother 'd 'a' been ashamed if she'd 'a' knowed how she wound up. She was the best rider of her time—everybody says so—but she cashed in by fallin' off a skate what didn't have no more ginger 'an a kitten. If you can beat that!" She gazed at him with her lips pressed tightly together, evidently expecting some startling expression of wonder.

"And your father?" Douglas asked rather lamely, being at a loss for any adequate comment upon a tragedy which the child before him was too desolate even to understand.

"Oh, dad's finish was all right. He got his'n in a lions' cage where he worked. There was nothin' slow about his end." She looked up for his approval.

"For de Lord's sake!" Mandy groaned as the wonder of the child's conversation grew upon her.

"An' now I'm down an' out," Polly concluded, with a sigh.

"But this is nothing serious," said the pastor, trying to cheer her.

"It's serious enough with a whole show a dependin' on you. Maybe you don't know how it feels to have to knock off work."

"Oh, yes, I do," Douglas answered quickly. "I was ill a while ago myself. I had to be in bed day after day, thinkin' of dozens of things that I ought to be doing."

"Was you ever floored?" Polly asked with a touch of unbelief as she studied the fine, healthy physique at the side of her bed.

"Deed, he was, chile," Mandy cried, feeling that her opportunity had now arrived. "an' I had the worst time a-keepin' him in bed. He act jes' like you did."

"Did he?" Polly was delighted to find that the pastor had "nothin' on her," as she would have put it.

"You ought to have heard him," continued Mandy, made eloquent by Polly's show of interest. "What will dose poor folks do? he kept a-sayin', 'Jes' yo' lay where yo' is, I tole him. 'Dem poor folks will be better off dan dey would be a-comin' to yoah funeral.'"

"Poor folks?" Polly questioned. "Do you give money to folks? We are al-

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Nancey Whiteaker,  
Administratrix of the estate of George Whiteaker, deceased.

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Notice is hereby given that I have been appointed by the County Court of Polk County, Ore., Administrator of the estate of J. P. Tetherow, deceased. All persons having claims against said estate are hereby notified to present the same duly verified by law required at my residence at Monmouth, Polk County, Oregon, within six months from date hereof.

A. A. Tetherow,  
Administrator Estate of J. P. Tetherow, deceased.

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