

Polly of the Circus

BY MARGARET MAYO

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(Continued from last week)

"What's that to you?"

"She isn't BIT!" Douglas demanded anxiously, oblivious to the gruffness in the big fellow's voice.

"She's all right," Jim answered shortly as he shifted nervously from one foot to the other and avoided the pastor's burning gaze.

"And she's happy, she's content?"

"Sure."

"I'm glad," said Douglas dully. He tried to think of some way to prolong their talk. "I've never heard from her, you know."

"Us folks don't get much time to write," Jim turned away and began fidgeting with one of the wagons.

Douglas had walked up and down in front of the tents again and again, fighting against a desire to do the very thing that he was doing, but to no purpose, and now that he was here it seemed impossible that he should go away so unsatisfied. He crossed to Jim and came determinedly to the point.

"Can't I see her, Jim?"

"It's agin the rules," he did not turn. There was another pause; then Douglas started slowly out of the lot.

"Wait a minute," called Jim, as though the words had been sprung from him. The pastor came back with a question in his eyes.

"I lied to you."

"She's not well, then?"

"Oh, yes, she's well enough. It ain't what it's about her being happy."

"She isn't?" There was a note of unconscious exultation in his voice.

"No. She ain't happy here, an' she was happy with you."

"Then why did she leave me?"

"I don't know. She wasn't goin' to do it at first. Somethin' must 'a' happened afterwards, somethin' that you an' me didn't know about."

she himself with impudence.

"He— he just talked to the big an' an' went out that way," Elverson nodded toward the wagons.

"I guess he ain't gone far," sneered Strong. "He come over to this lot to see her, and he ain't goin' to give up till he does it. You wait here. I'll take a look round." He went quickly in the direction of the wagons.

Elverson needed no second invitation to wait. He was congratulating himself upon his good fortune when he all but collided with a flying apparition, rushing in the direction of the main tent. Polished eyes would have seen only a rather stout, acrobatic child in pink tights, but Elverson was not sophisticated, and he teetered after the flying angel, even unto the forbidden portals of the big top.

He was peeping through the curtains which had fallen behind her and was getting his first glimpse of the great sawdust world beyond when one of the clowns dashed from the dressing tent on his way to the ring.

The clown was late. He saw the limp contours of the deacon, who was three-quarters in the tent. Here was a chance to make a funny entrance. He grabbed the unsuspecting little man from the rear. The terrified deacon struck out blindly in all directions, his black arms and legs moving like a centipede, but the clown held him firmly by the back and thrust him headforemost into the tent.

Strong returned almost immediately from his unsuccessful search for the pastor. He looked about the lot for Elverson.

"Hey, there, Elverson!" he called lustily. There was no response.

"Now, where's he got to?" grumbled Strong. He disappeared quickly around the corner of the dressing tent, resolved to keep a sharp lookout for

Polly had nothing more to do to-night except to get into her street clothes. The wagons would soon be moving away. For a moment she glanced at the dark church street, then she turned to go inside the tent, a deep, familiar voice stopped her.

"Polly!"

She turned quickly. She could not remember Douglas came toward her. He gazed at her in amazement. Six days her eyes about her slightly changed figure. She seemed older to him, more unapproachable with her hair heaped high and sparkling with jewels.

She found strength at last to open her lips, but still no sound came from them. She and the pastor looked at each other strangely. The night, newly met from far apart worlds. She, too, thought her companion. Indeed, he was older, the circles beneath his eyes were deeper, the look in their depths more grave.

"We were such close neighbors today I-I rather thought you'd call," he stammered. He was uncertain what he was saying. It did not matter to him that he was there with her.

"When you're in a circus there isn't much time for calling."

"That's why I've come to call on you." They might have been shepherd and shepherds on a May day, wooing for the baiting way in which their words came.

"You're all right?" he went on. "You're happy?"

"Yes, very," she said. Her eyes were downcast.

He did not believe her. The effort in her voice, her drawn, white face, belied her words. How could he get the truth from her?

"Jim said you might not want to see me."

She started.

"Has Jim been talking to you?"

"Yes, but I didn't let him stop me, for you told me the day you left that you'd never change toward me. Have you, Polly?" He studied her anxiously.

"Why, no, of course not," she said evasively.

"And you'll be quite frank when I ask you something?"

"Yes, of course." She was growing more and more uneasy. She glanced about for a way of escape.

"Why did you leave me as you did?"

"I told you then." She tried to cross toward the dressing tent.

He seized her small wrists and forced her to look at him.

"And I am not happy without you, and I never, never can be." The floodgates were open. His eyes were aglow. He bent toward her eagerly.

"Oh, you mustn't!" she begged.

"You've grown so close," he cried, "so close!" She struggled to be free. He did not heed her. "You know, you must know, what I mean." He drew her toward him and forced her into his arms. "You're more precious to me than all else on this earth."

For the first time he saw the extreme pallor on her face. He felt her growing limp and helpless in his arms. A doubt crossed his mind. "If I am wrong in thinking you feel as I do, if you honestly care for all this," he glanced about at the tents, "more than for any life that I can give you, I

"Oh, please, Mr. John, please don't make him any worse!"

"Why didn't you tell me?" he demanded.

"It would have done no good," she sobbed. "Oh, why— why won't you leave me alone?"

"It would have done all the good in the world. What right had he to send you back to this?"

"I had every right," said Strong, stubbornly.

"What?" cried Douglas.

"It was my duty."

"Your duty? Your narrow minded bigotry?"

"I don't allow no man to talk to me like that, not even my parson."

"I'm not your parson any longer," declared Douglas. He faced Strong squarely. He was master of his own affairs at last. Polly clung to him, begging and beseeching.

"Oh, Mr. John, Mr. John!"

"What do you mean by that?" shouted Strong.

"I mean that I stayed with you and your narrow minded bigotry, but before because I believed you needed it. But now this girl needs me more. She needs me to protect her from just such injustice as yours."

"And better be protectin' yourself. That's my advice to you."

"I can do that without your advice."

"Maybe you can find another church with that circus ridin' girl a-hangin' round your neck."

"He's right," cried Polly. "You couldn't." She clung to the pastor in terrified entreaty. "You couldn't get another church. They'd never, never forgive you. It's no use. You've got to let me go. You've got to!"

"Listen, Polly!" He drew her toward him. "God is greater than any church or creed. There's work to be done every where—his work."

"You'll soon find out about that," thundered Strong.

"So I will," answered Douglas, with his head thrown high. "This child has opened a new world to me. She has shown me a broader, deeper humanity. She and I will find the way together."

"It won't be an easy one. I'll promise you that." Strong turned to go.

"I'm not looking for the easy way," Douglas called after him; then he turned to draw Polly's arm within his, but Polly had slipped from his side to follow the deacon.

"Oh, please, Deacon Strong, please!" she pleaded. "You won't go away like that. He'll be all right if you'll only wait. I'm not coming back. I'm not. I'm going on with the show tonight, and I'm going this time for ever."

"You are going to stay here with me!" cried Douglas.

"No, no, Mr. John! I've made up my mind and I won't be to blame for your unhappiness." She faced him firmly now. "I don't belong to your world, and I don't want to try any more. I'm what he called me—I'm a circus riding girl. I was born in the circus, and I'll never change. That's my work—riding—and it's yours to preach. You must do your work, and I'll do mine."

(To be continued)



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"YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR MOTHER, WHY SHE'D BE ASHAMED TO OWN YOU."

"We will know about it, Jim. Where is she?" His quick eye searched the lot. His voice had regained its old command. He felt that he could conquer worlds.

"You can't do no good that way," answered Jim. "She don't want to see you again."

"Why not?"

"I don't know, but she told me she'd run away if I ever even talked to you about her."

"You needn't talk, Jim. I'll talk for myself. Where is she?"

"She'll be comin' out soon. You can wait around out here with me. I'll let you know in time." He led the way, through a narrow passage between the wagons.

Jim and Douglas had barely left the lot when Deacon Elverson's small, round head slipped cautiously around the corner of the dressing tent. The little deacon glanced excitedly about him. He was monarch of all he surveyed. It was very thrilling to stand here on this forbidden ground smelling the sawdust, gazing at the big red wagons, studying the unprotected circus properties and listening to the lightning tempo of the band.

"Did you see him?" shouted Strong, who had followed closely upon Elverson's heels.

The little deacon started. Strong was certainly a disturbing factor at times.

"Yes, I-I saw him."

"Well?"

"He—he didn't see her."

"What did he do?" Strong was be-

Douglas.

Elverson was thrust from the tent soon after, spitting sawdust and much discomfort, by the laughing performers who followed him. His knees almost gave way beneath him when Barker came out of the ring, snapping his long black whip.

"Get out of here, you bloke!" roared Barker, and Elverson "got."

No one had remembered to tell the groom that Polly was not to ride tonight, so Bingo was brought out as usual when their "turn" approached.

"Take him back, Tom!" Polly called from the entrance when she learned Bingo was waiting, and bring Bartolman. "I'm not going on tonight. Eloise is going to ride in my place."

This was the second time today that Bingo had been led away without going into the ring. Something in his big, wondering eyes made Polly follow him and apologize. He was very proud, and was very conscientious. He felt uneasy when he saw the other horses going to their work without him.

"Never mind, Bingo," she said, patting his great, arched neck; "we'll show 'em tomorrow." He rubbed his satiny nose against her cheek. "We'll make them sit up again. Barker says our act's no good—that I've let down. But it's not your fault, Bingo. I've not been fair to you. I'll give you a chance tomorrow. You wait. He'll never say it again, Bingo, never again!"



"Never mind, Bingo."

shan't interfere. You'll be going on your way in an hour. I'll say good-by and God bless you, but if you do care for me, Polly," he was pleading now. "If you're not happy here, won't you come back to me? Won't you, Polly?"

She dared not meet his eyes nor yet to send him away. She stood irresolute. The voice of Deacon Strong answered for her.

"So you're here, are you?"

"Yes, Deacon Strong, I'm here," answered the pastor as he turned to meet the accusing eyes of the deacon.

"As for you, miss," continued Strong, "with an insolent nod toward Polly, "I might have known how you'd keep your part of the bargain."

"Bargain?" echoed Douglas. "What bargain?"

"Oh, please, Deacon Strong, please. I didn't mean to see him—I didn't, truly." She hardly knew what she was saying.

"What bargain?" demanded Douglas.

"She told me that you and her wasn't ever goin' to see each other ag'in!" roared Strong. "If I'd known she was goin' to keep on with this kind of thing you wouldn't have got on so easy."

"So that's it!" cried Douglas. It was all clear to him now. He recalled everything—her hysterical behavior, her laughter, her tears. "It was you who drove that child back to this." He glanced at Polly. The narrow shoulders were bent forward. The nervous little fingers were clasping and unclasping each other. Never before had she seemed so small and helpless.

STATEMENT

of the Independence National Bank, of Independence, Polk county, state of Oregon, showing the amount standing to the credit of every depositor July 1, 1909, who has not made a deposit, or who has not withdrawn any part of his deposit, principal or interest for a period of more than seven (7) years immediately prior to said date with the name, last known place of residence or postoffice address of such depositor, and the fact of his death, if known.

J H Byerley, Independence, Oregon	9 35
Levina Simpson, Independence, Oregon	80
W W Ireland, Monmouth, Oregon	1 80
Mrs A E Turner, Independence, Oregon	9
W. D. Elkins, Independence, Oregon	6 00
G S Elder, Independence, Oregon	81
H Smith, Independence, Oregon	4 20
Barbara Sloper Est., Independence, Oregon	4 00
Charles Phillips, Independence, Oregon	1 63
J H Morris, Independence, Oregon	1 40
Carrie M Brown, Independence, Oregon	2 00
O C Beck, Independence, Oregon	2 61
John F Lacey, Independence, Oregon	15 00
G A Wells Sr., Buena Vista, Oregon	7 50
Geo W Murphy, Buena Vista, Oregon	63
Gibson Burch & Fox, Buena Vista, Oregon	5 44
Wm Wells, Buena Vista, Oregon	23 00
Joshua McDaniel, Rickreall, Oregon	30 0
T P Cummins, Rickreall, Oregon	58
E L Gale & Co, Independence, Oregon	1 50
T C James, Independence, Oregon	2 5
Hoskins Lumber Co, Independence, Oregon	2 81
Wm Faber, Portland, Oregon	68 70
H D Waller, Portland, Oregon	3 84
State of Oregon, county of Polk, ss. I, C. W. Irvine, being first duly sworn, depose and say upon oath, that I am the cashier of the Independence National Bank of Independence, county of Polk, state of Oregon; that the foregoing statement is a full, true, correct and complete statement, showing the name, last known residence or postoffice address, fact of death, if known, and the amount to the credit of each depositor as required by the provisions of chapter 148, of the general laws of Oregon of 1907.	
C. W. IRVINE,	
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 13th day of July, A. D., 1909.	
B. WILSON,	
Notary public for Oregon.	

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