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Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
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with heavy mattress and double rein-
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Every ingredient pure and
fresh—exquisite care in every
detail—skill of long experi-
ence—price lowest consistent
with quality.

That's how we fill prescriptions.

Estacada Pharmacy

The Rexall Store

The Case of Jennie Brice

By
MARY ROBERTS RINEHART
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Merrill Company

Continued from last issue

nie Brice saying she was going away,
and that we need not try to find her.
I went to Horner, but I had lost track
of her completely. Even then, we did
not believe things so bad as they turned
out to be. We thought she was giving
us a bad time, but that she would show
up.

"Ladley was in a blue funk for a
time. Bronson and I went to him. We
told him how the thing had slipped



"She is hiding so he will go to the
gallows."

up. We didn't want to go to the police
and confess if we could help it. Finally
he agreed to stick it out until she was
found, at \$100 a week. It took all we
could beg, borrow and steal. But now—we
have to come out with the story anyhow."

Mr. Holcombe sat up and closed his
notebook with a snap. "I'm not so
sure of that," he said impressively. "I
wonder if you realize, young man, that,
having provided a perfect defense for
this man Ladley, you provided him with
every possible inducement to make away
with his wife. Secure in your coming
forward at the last minute and confessing
the hoax to save him, was there anything
he might not have dared with impunity?"

"But I tell you I took Jennie Brice
out of town on Monday morning."

"Did you?" asked Holcombe sternly.
But at that, the schoolteacher, having
come home and found old Isaac sound
asleep in her cozy corner, set up such
a screaming for the police that our
meeting broke up. Nor would Mr.
Holcombe explain any further.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. HOLCOMBE was up very
early the next morning. I
heard him moving around
at 5 o'clock, and at 6 he banged
at my door and demanded to know
at what time the neighborhood rose.
He had been up for an hour and there
were no signs of life. He was more
cheerful after he had a cup of coffee,
commented on Lida's beauty and said

that Howell was a lucky chap.

"That is what worries me, Mr. Hol-
combe," I said. "I am helping the af-
fair along and what if it turns out
badly?"

He looked at me over his glasses.
"It isn't likely to turn out badly," he
said. "I have never married, Mrs. Pit-
man, and I have missed a great deal
out of life."

"Perhaps you're better off. If you
had married and lost your wife"— I
was thinking of Mr. Pitman.

"Not at all," he said with emphasis.
"It's better to have married and lost
than never to have married at all. Ev-
ery man needs a good woman, and it
doesn't matter how old he is. The
older he is the more he needs her. I
am nearly sixty."

I was rather startled, and I almost
dropped the fried potatoes. But the
next moment he had got out his note-
book and was going over the items
again. "Pillowslip," he said, "knife,
broken; onyx clock wouldn't think so
much of the clock if he hadn't been
so damnably anxious to hide the key,
the discrepancy in time as revealed by
the trial—yes, it is as clear as a bell.
Mrs. Pitman, does that Maguire wo-
man next door sleep all day?"

"She's up now," I said, looking out
the window.

He was in the hall in a moment, only
to come to the door after, but in hand.
"Is she the only woman on the
street who keeps boarders?"

"She's the only woman who doesn't,"
I snapped. "She'll keep anything that
doesn't belong to her—except boarders."
"Ah!"

He lit his corn-cob pipe and stood
puffing at it and watching me. He
made me uneasy. I thought he was
going to continue the subject of every
man needing a wife.

But when he spoke he was back to
the crime again: "Did you ever work
a typewriter?" he asked.

What with the surprise, I was a lit-
tle sharp. "I don't play any instru-
ment except an egg beater," I replied
shortly, and went on clearing the table.

"I wonder—do you remember about
the village idiot and the horse? But
of course you do, Mrs. Pitman, you are
a woman of imagination. Don't you
think you could be Alice Murray for
a few moments? Now think—you are
a stenographer with theatrical ambi-
tions. You meet an actor and you fall
in love with him and he with you."

"That's hard to imagine, that last."
"Not so hard," he said gently. "Now
the actor is going to put you on the
stage, perhaps in this new play, and
some day he is going to marry you."

"Is that what he promised the girl?"
"According to some letters her moth-
er found, yes. The actor is married,
but he tells you he will divorce the
wife. You are to wait for him, and in
the meantime he wants you near him—
away from the office, where other men
are apt to come in with letters to be
typed and to chaff you. You are a
pretty girl."

"It isn't necessary to overwork my
imagination," I said, with a little bit-
terness. "I had been a pretty girl, but
work and worry—"

"Now you are going to New York
very soon, and in the meantime you
have cut yourself off from all your
people. You have no one but this man.
What would you do? Where would
you go?"

"How old was the girl?"

"Nineteen."
"I think," I said slowly, "that if I
were nineteen and in love with a man
and hiding I would hide as near him
as possible. I'd be likely to get a win-
dow that could see his going out and
coming in—a place so near that he
could come often to see me."

"Bravo!" he exclaimed. "Of course,
with your present wisdom and experi-
ence, you would do nothing so fool-
ish. But this girl, was in her teens.
She was not very far away, for he
probably saw her that Sunday after-
noon, when he was out for two hours.
And as the going was slow that day
and he had much to tell and explain I
figure she was not far off, probably in
this very neighborhood."

During the remainder of that morn-
ing I saw Mr. Holcombe at intervals
going from house to house. Finally
he came back, flushed and excited.

"I found the house," he said, wiping
his glasses. "She was there, all right,
not so close as we had thought, but
as close as she could get."

"And can you trace her?" I asked.
His face changed and saddened.
"Poor child!" he said. "She is dead,
Mrs. Pitman!"

"Not she—at Sewickley?"

"No," he said patiently. "That was
Jennie Brice."

"But—Mr. Howell?"

"Mr. Howell is a young ass," he said
with irritation. "He did not take Jen-
nie Brice out of the city that morning.
He took Alice Murray in Jennie Brice's
clothing, and veiled."

Well, that is five years ago. Five
times since then the Allegheny river,
from being a mild and inoffensive
stream, carrying a few boats and a
great deal of sewage, has become a
raging destroyer and has filled our
hearts with fear and our cellars with
mud.

A few days ago, as I said at the be-
ginning, we found Peter's body float-
ing in the cellar, and as soon as the
yard was dry I buried him. He had
grown fat and lazy, but I shall miss
him.

Yesterday a riverman fell off a barge
along the water front and was drown-
ed. They dragged the river for his
body, but they did not find him. But
they found something—an onyx clock,
with the tattered remnant of a muslin
pillowslip wrapped around it. It only
bore out the story as we had known it
for five years.

The Murray girl had lived long
enough to make a statement to the po-
lice, although Mr. Holcombe only
learned this later. On the statement
being shown to Ladley in the jail and
his learning of the girl's death, he col-
lapsed. He confessed before he was
hanged, and his confession, briefly,
was like this:

He had met the Murray girl in con-
nection with the typing of his play,
and had fallen in love with her. He
had never cared for his wife, and
would have been glad to get rid of her
in any way possible. He had not in-
tended to kill her, however. He had
planned to elope with the Murray girl,
and, awaiting an opportunity, had per-
suaded her to leave home and to take
a room near my house.

Here he had visited her daily, while
his wife was at the theater.

They had planned to go to New York
together on Monday, March 5. On
Sunday, the 4th, however, Mr. Bronson
and Mr. Howell had made their curi-
ous proposition. When he accepted,
Philip Ladley maintained that he
meant only to carry out the plan as
suggested. But the temptation was
too strong for him. That night, while
his wife slept, he had strangled her.

I believe he was frantic with fear,
after he had done it. Then it occurred
to him that if he made the body un-
recognizable he would be safe enough.
On that quiet Sunday night, when Mr.
Reynolds reported all peaceful in the
Ladley room he had cut off the poor
wretch's head and had tied it up in a
pillowslip weighted with my onyx
clock!

It is a curious fact about the case
that the scar which his wife incurred
to enable her to marry him was the
means of his undoing. He insisted,
and I believe he was telling the truth,
that he did not know of the scar—
that is, his wife had never told him of
it and had been able to conceal it. He
thought she had probably used paraffin
in some way.

In his final statement, written with
great care and no little literary finish,
he told the story in detail; of arrang-
ing the clues as Mr. Howell and Mr.
Bronson had suggested; of going out in
the boat with the body, covered with
a fur coat, in the bottom of the skiff;
of throwing it into the current above
the Ninth street bridge, and of seeing
the fur coat fall from the boat and car-

Concluded in next issue.