

# Golden Rain

By Margaret Wildmer

**SYNOPSIS:** Iris Lanning, poor aristocratic, eager, has been caught up in the train of her highly successful Aunt Phina, America's most famous couturiere. Her brother Owen is already in the train, and Sigrid, Phina's partner who also is Owen's fiancee. Phina is making Iris about her accomplishments, which are numerous. And Iris has just about forgotten Aunt Ella and Uncle Will, at home in Persia, Pa.

### CHAPTER 20

#### TRUTH FROM PHINA

PHINA asked her some rapid questions in French, and then nodded. "Yes—good. Well, we have a winter before us here in New York, and I hope in spite of lessons you'll have time for some fun. You can ride till late in November in the country—after that in Central Park. Now get your bath and get dressed, and come down to the place for a fitting."

Aunt Phina was an avante-garde! Iris was beginning to understand why Owen went on being a designer when he wanted to be an architect. What she couldn't understand was why Uncle Will hadn't meekly married her the first week they met, such a general was she. That strong irresistible sureness that you would do what she said swept you along like a tide.

But, oh, a kind tide! Iris dressed swiftly. Life was beginning! This morning a fitting for beautiful clothes; this afternoon a gorgeous party. . . . If only Morgan were to be there. Morgan with his quizzical slow phrases that conveyed subtle comfort and encouragement and admiration!

Well, Morgan was there in the background, waiting. Love with its strong hands out to hold her. Perhaps he'd come over soon, or she'd run back to him—they were young, and there was plenty of time to decide, meanwhile, here were the pleasures and palaces and Morgan was altogether too cynical about life. . . .

She splashed through her bath, and, in an echo of remembering Morgan and Aunt Will and her other life, began to sing as she went downstairs, the old signal:

"Just as sure as it is half past eight,  
Someone's tapping at the garden gate—"

"What's that you're singing?" Phina called from the desk where she was going over a stack of bills like intelligent lightning.

"One of Grandmother Lanning's funny old songs that Uncle Will used to like, to the guitar, in the evening. I used to dress up in her clothes and put on performances for him, bleed his heart, and sometimes I did it for parties."

"Something Ella taught you?" sharply.

Ella was the one chink in Phina's smooth armor.

"No . . . Aunt Phina, after all you're a wonderful person and you've done it all yourself. Why do you mind about poor Aunt Ella?"

The handsome dominant well-groomed middle-aged woman sitting at her desk, mistress of herself and of most other things about her, changed before Iris's eyes.

She became suddenly twenty years younger and forty times angrier; the outraged capable pretty thing who had come to the aristocratic old town with only a needle between herself and the wolf at the door, half defiant, half frightened. Her face worked. The words poured out in a stream.

"Because Ella Lanning had been entrenched in money and position a generation ago—because Jean and I were common sewing girls as she called us—and because she was insane on the subject of your father, she was insolent—merciless—cruel. She broke off my marriage with Will—she wrecked Jean's with Lawrence. I've gone a long way. I'll end higher than any Lanning ever dreamed of being. When I am, I'll go there again—and show her—tell her."

AUNT PHINA stopped, panting, white, shaking. Iris shrank back. Was this the driving force behind that dominating capability?

Phina Ross saw what effect she had made, and was suddenly herself again, the quiet masterful unmoved woman. She smiled.

"I went theatrical," as you young things say, didn't I? That's all nonsense, of course. I really owe the poor soul a good deal; I doubt if I'd have made as much success or money without that feeling. I'd really supposed there was nothing left of it. Now sing your dramatic old auntie the song about the garden gate. I want to know everything you can do. You seem to have all the talents." She put an affectionate hand on Iris's shoulder.

Glad of some outlet for her own shaken feelings, Iris went to the

piano and sang the song through with all its outmoded gayeties and archnesses. Phina clapped when she had done; she was completely herself again.

"Darling, you are nearly a professional singer, bless your heart. We must work on that. I'll get you costumes. Now come along."

Phina's shop was not like any shop Iris knew; not like a shop at all, indeed. An ostentatiously quiet window with one hat and one dress tossed on a chair; an almost invisible sign.

Within, two large rooms, one with paneled pale green walls, one furnished as a replica of one of Marie Antoinette's, so she was told later. A handful of bright colored necklaces dink on one table, a dress or two across chairs. A fireplace full of flowers at one end, with chairs grouped about it; three or four lovely young girls, "types," drifting about, gay and docile and flattering to the five or six women who were being shown—as if one's relatives did it, rather superior relatives—clothes from behind the panels.

An electric stiffening went through the rooms with Phina's quiet arrival. The customers became excited; the sales people intimidated their manners, whether these were gay or scornful or coaxing.

A tall awkward girl with a face that might have been handsome if it had been less tense, broke away from her salesgirl and rushed over to Phina. Her attitude was that of a schoolgirl toward a worshiped teacher.

"Oh, Miss Phina! Oh, Miss Phina!" Her insistent voice rang through the room, and she stopped short, embarrassed and frightened. Phina spoke to her very much like a teacher, Iris thought; kindly, a little reprovingly.

"Now, my dear Miss Camilla," she said, looking brightly up at the girl's stooped height, "you don't need anything more at all this spring. Your mother would think you were horribly extravagant if I let you go on buying."

Iris, waiting at a little distance, was sure she heard one of the exquisite goddess-blondes snicker. There was some joke about the poor girl.

"But — but Mother won't mind, honestly she won't at all," said Camilla, jerking her shoulders under the smart coat and flushing a dull red under her unpowdered skin.

"WHAT you need is more time in the beauty parlor," Phina said almost severely. "If you wear your clothes properly, and look after your makeup better, that's all you need."

"But I do need one more evening frock, anyway!" pleaded this top-turvey customer. Phina shook her head indignantly.

"Very well, if you must, but speak to your mother first," she said.

"Oh, is this your niece? Is this Owen's sister? Oh, she's lovely!" said Camilla with her uncontrolled voice. "And she looks like him too. You look just like Owen!" She stared at Iris with the same devotion she had given Phina. "Do come see me! Or have luncheon with me tomorrow."

The enigma was solved—poor girl! It was Owen's designs, Owen himself, in fact, that Camilla came for. But the girl was so helpless, so honest and inapt in her schoolgirl crush that Iris could only be sorry for her. If this was a New York society girl, one needn't feel back-woody!

Phina made the luncheon engagement tentative, shifted Camilla adroitly to the head saleswoman, and beckoned Iris upstairs to the fitting room.

"Is she—" Iris began, half pitying, half laughing.

"She is," said Phina irritably, and yet with an amused lifted eyebrow. "My dear, that poor girl has everything, except personal attraction. Her mother turned her over to me to dress, in despair; and I really was doing well with her. All on earth that she has is a complete conviction that she is awkward and ugly and nobody loves her. I have told Owen a dozen times that if he had mercy on her and married her she would bloom. She isn't actually plain—it's her manner and voice. Iris, you could help the poor child. Will you?"

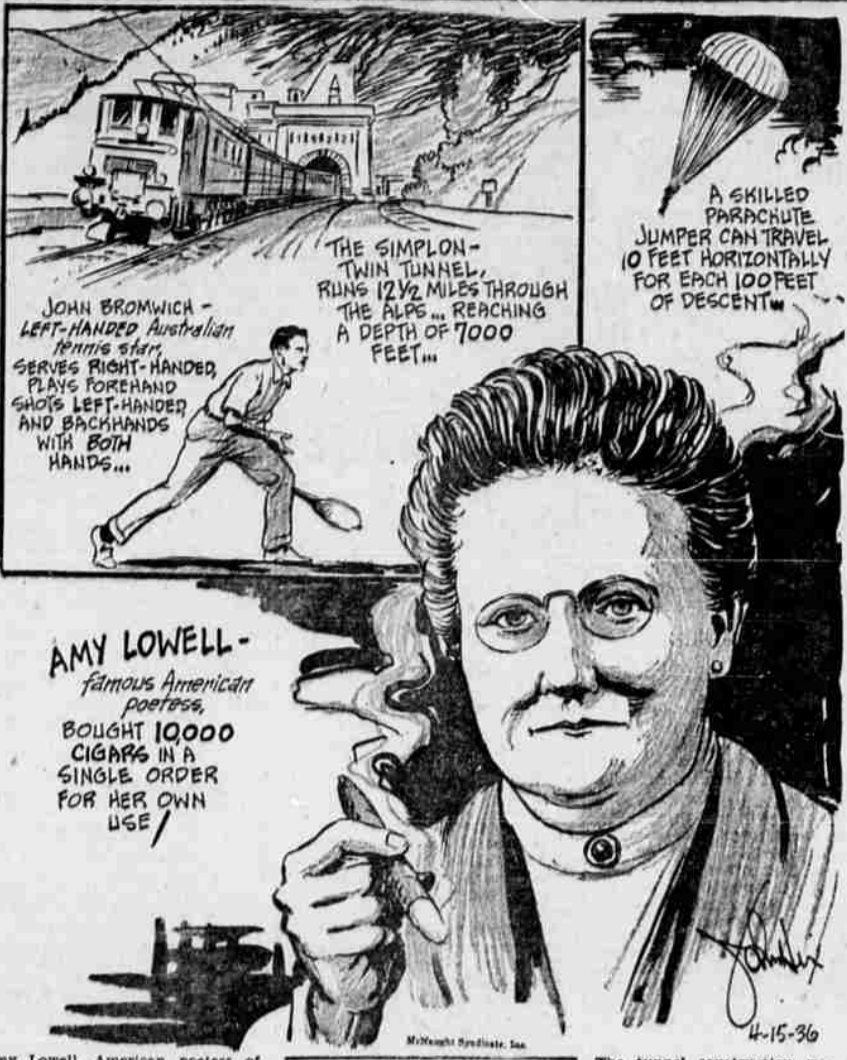
"Oh, not to marry Owen!" "It might be for his best interests," said Phina. "But I don't mean that, foolish child. Don't be romantic. In spite of her money and position she's the Poor Little Rich Girl. She took to you—you can do something kind there. Be her friend, my dear."

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Iris learns more, Monday, of the relation between her aunt and Sigrid.

## STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



JOHN BROMWICH - LEFT-HANDED Australian tennis star, SERVES RIGHT-HANDED, PLAYS FOREHAND SHOTS LEFT-HANDED AND BACKHANDS WITH BOTH HANDS...

AMY LOWELL - Famous American poetess, BOUGHT 10000 CIGARS IN A SINGLE ORDER FOR HER OWN USE!

THE SIMPLON-TWIN TUNNEL, RUNS 12 1/2 MILES THROUGH THE ALPS, REACHING A DEPTH OF 7000 FEET...

A SKILLED PARACHUTE JUMPER CAN TRAVEL 10 FEET HORIZONTALLY FOR EACH 100 FEET OF DESCENT...

The tunnel construction was unusual in that two parallel shafts were dug, 58 feet apart and joined by oblique galleries at intervals of 220 yards. This permitted better ventilation and greater efficiency of construction. One of the tunnels was enlarged for railway track immediately, but the other was left in its original condition for 13 years until 1918, when work was started on it to enlarge it for a second track. Simplon tunnel's greatest depth below the surface is 7003 feet, and normal hazards of digging were increased by upheavals at the floor due to tremendous pressure of the rock above.

Tomorrow: Allmony Before Marriage.

As a poetess Miss Lowell was considered the most representative of the unconventional group. Her most important work, however, was a two-volume biography of John Keats, published shortly before her death.

The Simplon tunnel that passes almost twelve and a half miles through the Alps between Brigue, Switzerland, and Iselle, Italy, is the largest tunnel in the world. Seven years, from 1898 to 1905, were required for the completion of the task, and it was not until 1921 that the capacity was enlarged to permit another line.

TALK ABOUT FLAVOR! TRY WRIGLEY'S



WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT THE PERFECT GUM

STEADIES THE NERVES

## COMPETITION

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



REALIZES, FROM THE BABBLE OF VOICES, THAT MOTHER IS HAVING A BIG TEA PARTY OR SOMETHING

IS A LITTLE STARTLED PRESENTLY TO HEAR THE PIANO, AND A WOMAN BEGIN TO SING VERY LOUD

IS VERY SORRY BUT HE JUST CAN'T HELP IT

EXPERIENCES FEELING OF GREAT RELIEF AS SINGING STOPS ABRUPTLY

SINGING RESUMES, VERY SHRILL AND SEEMING TO GO RIGHT THROUGH HIM

SILENCE AGAIN AND MOTHER COMES IN. LISTENS CONTRITELY TO HER PLEAS TO BE GOOD AND NOT SPOIL HER PARTY

FIGHTS TO KEEP BACK WAITS AS SONG BEGINS ALL OVER AGAIN

NO USE!

SIGNS WITH RELIEF AS SINGER GIVES UP THE STRUGGLE, AND THE PARTY SETTLES DOWN TO BRIDGE

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## SMATTER POP—

By O. M. PAYNE



GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY? WHY?

-ER, WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU, POP?

HM, THAT ABOUT CLEANS ME OUTA PLEAS. SEE WHAT MAN'S GOT?

YESSIR!

POP POP

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## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tommy's SOS Is Interrupted!

By HAL FORREST



WHILE SPEED— HIS RADIO FUSED AFTER HIS PLANE HAD STRUGGLED IN THE GRIP OF THE INVISIBLE HAND... IS FLYING TOWARD THREE-POINT FOR HELP... TOMMY IS STILL TRYING TO FLASH A WARNING OVER THE RADIO IN THE DEN OF THE TERROR WHEN

MY FRIEND, YOU ARE MERELY WASTING YOUR TIME...

YOUR RADIO CALL HAS BEEN INTERCEPTED... EVERY MOVE YOU HAVE MADE IN THIS ROOM HAS BEEN OBSERVED...

WHY ARE WE BEING HELD PRISONERS HERE?

YOU SHALL NOT BE... PRISONERS... IF YOU ARE WILLING TO LISTEN TO REASON

GO AHEAD... I'M LISTENING

## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Prisoners!

By EDWIN ALGER



WE CAN'T GET AWAY FROM HERE NOW, CRIP—COME ON, I'LL SHOW YOU WHY—

SEE? THE DRAW-BRIDGE IS UP—THAT RAVINE IS A SHEER DROP OF 500 FEET!

GOSH, WE'RE TRAPPED!

HAGGIM, AFTER THE MAN ESCAPED OVER IT—

WHO PUT IT UP?

BUT THE ALARM THE BOYS FELT WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE FEARS OF HAGGIM AT THAT MOMENT!

## THE NEBBS—Oh—Happy Day

By SOL NEBS



WHY ALL THE MIRTH?

JUST A MINUTE UNTIL I SET THIS LAUGH OUT OF MY SYSTEM—MRS. VAN MIDAS, THE RICH SOCIETY LEADER, ASKED ME ABOUT THE AIR MAIL, AND MRS. GILT SAID US TALKING

AND SHE THINKS I KNOW HER... I HAD NO IDEA WHO SHE WAS BUT I TOLD HER I MET HER AT SOME SOCIETY AFFAIR, AND YOU KNOW I COULDN'T GET INTO ONE UNLESS I WAS WAITING ON THE TABLE

WELL, I'M FANNY NOW TO THE HEAVY MRS. GILT... I'M HER LADDER TO SOCIAL PROMINENCE... THERE'S SOME WAY I'VE GOT TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH THIS VAN MIDAS WOMAN, EVEN IF I HAVE TO LEARN MANUFACTURING, JUST TO DRAW GILT'S CONTENTMENT OUT OF HER VACATION!

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## DEATHS PER MILE LEAST SINCE 1932

BALEM, Ore., April 17.—(AP) Motorists in Oregon traveled 7,483,921 miles for each fatality due to a motor vehicle accident in 1935. Secretary of State Earl Snell reported today.

## WASHINGTON'S TROWEL IS USED BY ROOSEVELT

WASHINGTON, April 17.—(AP) In laying the cornerstone of the new interior department building today, President Roosevelt noted that he was using the same trowel "used by the first president in 1793 in laying the cornerstone of the capitol itself."

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