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The Shadow of the Sheltering Pines

A New Romance of the Storm Country

By GRACE MILLER WHITE

[illegible] Kate, while she walked [illegible] down her room, wringing her hands, [illegible] a state of [illegible] when [illegible] in.

"Has got to go," [illegible] Mrs. Curtis, after she had [illegible] her daughter. "He says he'll be arrested if he doesn't get his money. [illegible] promise not to tell John. Oh, if I could only get to Paul."

"No one but that girl is allowed [illegible]," [illegible] Katherine.

"John's orders," supplemented Mrs. Curtis.

Katherine's lip curled.

"Then, why not appeal to her, mamma? Perhaps she'd [illegible] the [illegible] of his [illegible]. The Lord [illegible] [illegible] Paul, [illegible] he herself [illegible]."

"But what will you do?" demanded the girl. "You may Cousin John won't help Reggie, and you refuse to ask the girl to help Cousin Paul. Then what will you do?"

"You ask her, Katie," said Mrs. Curtis, in cooing tones.

Katherine tossed her head.

"You've got a nerve to send me to her for anything," she shot back. "I will not!"

Mrs. Curtis came forward with trembling footsteps.

"Not for your brother's sake? Oh, Kathie, do!"

"No, I won't," said the girl. "So just don't ask me. Reggie's not my son, and I haven't any sympathy for him." With that she made for the door and was gone.

For over an hour the anguished mother walked up and down. Then as if she had at last reached a conclusion, she went to the servants' quarters. There she sent the maid to ask Tonnibel to come out to Doctor Paul's conservatory for a minute.

Tony silently stared at the white woman when they came face to face. Mrs. Curtis swallowed her pride, gulping at the lumps that rose in her throat.

"I'm sorry about this afternoon, Miss Devon," she said. "I really didn't understand."

Tonnibel thought in a flash that Mrs. Curtis must have gotten religion; nothing but a softening of heart could account for the apology.

"Never mind," she cooed. "I'm awfully sorry about my daddy, but if he will be bad, then I suppose he must go to jail."

This statement renewed the dread in Mrs. Curtis' heart about her son.

"Could you take a message to my Cousin Paul for me?" she ventured.

"What is it?" asked Tonnibel, thickly.

"My son is ill," Mrs. Curtis explained tearfully, "and he must go away. I haven't any money, but if Paul knew about it he'd help me. Will you ask him?"

Tony thought a minute.

"Not tonight!" she replied. "Mebbe Doctor John—"

"No, he hates my son," the other cried passionately. "Oh, you mustn't say anything to him about it."

Tonnibel Devon was awfully tempted to refuse the haughty woman who had pulled her around by the hair only that afternoon. But she remembered Philip, remembered his love for her, and relented.

"Come along back tomorrow morning, and mebbe I can get you some," she answered, walking away. Then over her shoulder she flung back, "I'll try, anyhow."

With this last statement Mrs. Curtis had to be satisfied. Reggie suffered dreadfully the night through, his mother sitting at his bedside. Tony Devon also had been awake most of the night. In the morning after breakfast, she set about gathering courage to approach Doctor Paul.

With Gussie Piglet in her arms, she sat down beside him, and now the minute was there to speak, Tony didn't know how to begin. But to begin meant to begin, Tony had learned, so she coughed and blurted:

"Your cousin, Mrs. Curtis, is kind of pretty, ain't she?"

"She would be it she didn't cry so much," responded Doctor Paul.

This gave Tony the opening she wanted.

"Her boy's awful sick, so she says," she broke out, "that's why she cries. If he don't go away, he'll die, mebbe."

The lovely gray eyes grew darker as they searched his, and Doctor Paul leaned over and looked keenly at her.

"Did Cousin Sarah ask you to come to me, little girl?" he questioned in a kindly tone.

Tonnibel nodded.

"She says Doctor John don't like [illegible] mebbe you'd help her. [illegible]

[illegible] "Doctor Paul, [illegible] Tony, "she's always very unkind to you."

"She don't know any better," [illegible] Tony. "She's never learned [illegible] maybe she's so worried over her boy she's got to be heated to scold [illegible]."

Paul Pendlehaven laughed. Then he grew serious. "Perhaps that's it. How do you think you could find my cousin and bring her here?"

Tonnibel looked at him doubtfully.

"It might make you nervous," she said [illegible].

"I don't think so," replied the doctor, smiling. "I'm so much better. We won't speak of this to John, and I won't get nervous." He made the girl promise because the girl's face was troubled and anxious.

Tonnibel nodded and hurried out. She knew which room Mrs. Curtis occupied and sought the other wing of the house. When she knocked at the door, a woman's voice called a low "Come in!"

Tony stepped inside and, turning, met the door before she took a step away of the room. When she did, she almost fainted. Beside Reggie, the awful man she had heard in the schoolhouse days the week, she had dropped the poison into Paul Pendlehaven's medicine, was seated, very near Mrs. Curtis, and Katherine was by the window, wearing a very bored expression.

An exclamation came from each one of the three as the girl faced them, looking as if she were ready to collapse.

"You didn't get the money then, girl," demanded Mrs. Curtis, sharply. "Reggie dear, I didn't tell you last night, but your Cousin John refused me when I asked him for help, and I had to reach Paul through—"

Tony's eyes were on Reginald, who was crouching lower in his chair. Her forward, staggering step broke off the speaker's explanation.

"You want the money for him?" she

"You Want the Money for Him?" She Cried.

cried, pointing a finger toward the cringing boy.

Mrs. Curtis nodded.

"Yes, he's my son," she answered.

Tony drew a long breath, letting it hiss out through her teeth.

"If he's your son, ma'am," she said falteringly, "then you got a murderer for a son. He tried—he tried to poison Doctor Paul."

Mrs. Curtis got up slowly, a cold rage rising in her pale eyes. Katherine came forward to her mother's side, but Reginald remained silent.

"You lie," snarled Mrs. Curtis.

"I don't lie," cried Tony, hoarsely. "I don't lie, either. Look at him, and see if he ain't guilty. He did put poison in Doctor Phil's medicine, and I pushed him off the window. But I didn't know he was your son."

By forcing her eyes around, the mother caught sight of her boy.

"Reggie," she screamed, "for God's love, don't look that way. Why don't you tell the huzzy she lies! Tell her you'll go to your cousins and let them know of her accusations. I'll go myself!"

She darted across the room, but Reginald's husky voice called her back.

"Don't do that," he wailed. "Don't do it, mater! What she says is true. I did exactly that thing. I—I tried to kill Cousin Paul."

Mrs. Curtis sank down with a groan, and Katherine uttered a cry.

"I thought you wanted me to, mater," went on the boy, wearily. "I thought you said, if he died, we'd get money—"

"But, my God, I didn't want you to kill him," moaned Mrs. Curtis.

"I didn't," said Reggie.

"But you tried," thrust in Tonnibel.

"And you've told my cousins, eh?" he asked hopelessly.

"No, I didn't," denied Tony. "I spose mebbe I would have, but I didn't know you belonged here. I knew you used to steal with my daddy and do all sorts of wicked things—"

Mrs. Curtis cried out again.

"But I didn't know you'd try to kill a poor sick man," Tony went on, "and that was your aim to get money of him."

"You'll tell him, I know you will, you terrible girl," screamed Katherine, [illegible] able to restrain herself.

Tonnibel turned calmly. Cousin Paul [illegible] fired by the [illegible] who had [illegible]

[illegible] "Doctor Paul wants to see you, ma'am," said Tonnibel, her dark grey eyes fixed on the woman, "and if he sees," she pointed at Reginald, "and stays a long time, I'll keep mum. See?"

Completely overlooking Katherine, Tony ran out of the room. The next day she didn't look up when she heard Doctor John tell Doctor Paul that Reginald had left Ithaca. When she peeped at Doctor Paul, he smiled at her.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Will Is Changed.

The two years that had passed since Tony Devon had entered the Pendlehaven house, the greater part of which she had spent in school, had brought about many changes. Paul Pendlehaven had taken his place among the world's workers, but this does not say that he did not still long for the child who had gone from his life almost years before.

Mrs. Curtis did so scarce giving Cousin John or Katherine as a father than she ever had done, and Reggie had caused no sight of Reginald Curtis since he had fled from it with the knowledge that he might follow Uriah Brown behind the prison bars. Philip had carried on the wonderful work, living in the joyous letters he received from Tony and spending his spare time in answering them.

One morning Tony came to Paul Pendlehaven, smiling and blushingly girlish, and he seated her to a little stool at his feet.

"Darling," he began in a moved tone, "I sent for you because I've come to perhaps the most important decision of my whole life."

Tony glanced up at him wonderingly. He appeared solemnly sober and looked as if he hadn't slept.

"If it affects me, Cousin Paul, it can't be greater than the one you made over two years ago when you took poor little me into your home," she asserted.

His hand fell lovingly upon her curly head as though in benediction.

They both lapsed into a long silence, the girl's dreamy eyes fixed on space, and the man gazing at her shining head.

"Tony," he ejaculated at length. There was something in his voice as he pronounced her name that dispelled her revery instantly.

"Yes," she breathed. "Yes, what is it?"

Pendlehaven cleared his throat.

"I would never have believed that anyone could have wormed her way into my heart as you have," he told her. "How would—how would you like me for your father?"

Tony tried to speak but, seeing he had something else to add, waited expectantly.

"Once, as you know," went on the doctor, "I had a little girl of my own, but the years have been so long and so many since she was taken away, I feel I shan't have her again in this world."

Tony's dark head dropped against his knee in silent sympathy.

"Could you think of me as your father, dear?" he said after an emotional silence.

"I'm not fit for that," sighed Tony. "No, no, not that. I come from people who are not your kind, Cousin Paul. You know that! Everybody does! Then I'm not so good as you think I am. First of all I haven't always told you the truth."

"So my brother told me," remarked Doctor Paul. "Long ago he took me into his confidence about the poison in my medicine. I've watched you for two years, Tony, and it seems to me that I know every secret of your soul. I'm sure you love me, dear child. I'm going to adopt you legally for my daughter. After this I'm your father, and I give warning to my Captain MacGauley that if he tries to take you from me, he's going to have some fight on his hands. From now on, I'm not Cousin Paul, I am—what?"

"My father," gulped Tony. "It seems as if I couldn't stand so much happiness. And if you're my father, that makes Cousin John—"

"Your uncle," laughed a voice from the door. "So Paul has told you, has he, little girl? Well, Tony, you wouldn't have slept a wink one night if you'd heard our argument about you. We spent several hours wrangling which of us should adopt you. I said I should because I saw you first, and Paul—"

"Has the prior right because you saved me, Tony," interrupted Paul. "Now I think the family had better know of our changed arrangements."

Paul Pendlehaven acted as spokesman when Mrs. Curtis and her daughter, Katherine, had been summoned to the library. He told them very gravely that as his will now stood, his brother, John, and his cousin, Sarah, were the beneficiaries of it. Mrs. Curtis smiled at him, self arranged the face ruffles around her neck.

"You've always been most generous, Paul dear," she simpered.

"But now," went on the doctor, paying no heed to the lady's remark, "our household's going to have a mistress."

Katherine lifted her chin from the palm of her hand, and Mrs. Curtis straightened up. Were her ambitions going to be realized after all? Why if Paul who was going to see him in his sightful place! The smile hovered on her lips and [illegible] with a happy look. [illegible] Cousin Paul [illegible] some, yes, more [illegible]

[illegible] returned Pendlehaven, and Doctor John pulled at the corners of his mouth to keep back a malicious smile.

"I'm going to adopt Tony Devon—" Doctor Paul had only time enough to make this statement when Mrs. Curtis jumped to her feet.

"You couldn't do that!" she cried. "That would be wicked, Paul, absolutely wicked! Oh God, don't do that!"

Without heeding in the slightest his cousin's bitter ejaculation, Paul Pendlehaven picked up a box that lay at his elbow. With much ceremony he opened it and took out an exquisite pearl necklace.

"I do not need to remind any of you," he said, turning his eyes from his brother to his two white-faced cousins, "that these belonged to my dear wife. I have always considered them the property of her daughter too. That is the reason, Katherine, why I've always refused your request to wear them. But now I have a daughter." He turned smiling eyes upon Tonnibel. "I shall allow her to wear them whenever she wishes, and if—if her lost sister isn't found, then they are hers—hers forever."

A long hissing breath broke from Sarah Curtis, and a gasp came from Katherine.

"I couldn't wear them," Tony got out at length, "I simply couldn't."

"Not to please me, your father, Tonnibel?" demanded Paul, almost irritably.

"And me, your new uncle?" laughed Doctor John. "Why, honey, little girl," he reached out and took Tonnibel's hand, "don't look as if you'd lost your last friend!"

Then Paul Pendlehaven drew Tonnibel Devon to his side, and, when he had clasped the jewels around her neck, he lifted her face and kissed her.

"There, little daughter!" His voice choked with emotion, but he conquered his feelings and went on, "they're very lovely, very precious, Tony, doubly so because you're wearing them."

"Oh," she exulted, "how happy I am! . . . It isn't the pearls, though they're simply great, but it's that I have some real people." She turned a flushed and radiant face to each man. "Somebody that's my very own. My mother's dead, and my father—"

"In prison," snapped Mrs. Curtis, vindictively. "I'm wondering what he'll say to all this when he comes home."

"His opinion won't make any difference to us," Paul Pendlehaven stated coolly. "He has forfeited every right to any claim on Tony."

"Hideous!" exclaimed Mrs. Curtis, and "Well, I never," dropped from Katherine.

"And," went on Doctor Paul, relentlessly, for he knew the barbs that were being thrust into the souls of his two cousins. "I'm going to change my will in favor of my new daughter here—"

"And I mine in favor of our young Salvation Army captain who is going to marry my new niece," chuckled Doctor John. "I guess that's all we have to say, Paul."

In silence Katherine and Mrs. Curtis faded from the room, carrying with them bitter humiliation and nursing outraged feelings.

"It's all your fault, mamma," scolded Katherine, bursting into tears when they were in the seclusion of their own apartments. "You've whined and wept yourself right out of Cousin John's life. That's what you've done. God, how I hated that girl when I saw Caroline's pearls around her neck!"

"What are you doing now?" thrust back her mother. "Aren't you crying as if your heart would break? I tell you tears—"

"Oh Lordy, tears! What good do they do?" came sharply. "Here we [illegible] Oh, what shall we do?"

"I wish that man—her father, I mean—was out of jail," mused Mrs. Curtis. "I really believe he could do something, Katie. Perhaps Reggie—"

Katherine wiped her eyes with a sudden movement.

"Mamma, why don't you send for Reggie?" she questioned. "Meg, [illegible] to me. Reggie confided in me before he left that he really was fond of that girl, and it—Oh, mamma, I've thought of a wonderful thing. Send for Reggie, shove the girl under his nose every minute. Let him cut Philip out—"

"And perhaps have my son marry that thing," objected the mother curtly.

"That thing, as you please to call Tony Devon, is one of the prettiest and richest young women in this county." Katherine snapped back. "She's heiress to the Pendlehavens, and engaged to be married to a man who owns half the town. Thing, eh? Well, I think she's a little higher up in the world at this moment than my half-brother, Reggie, if you want my opinion."

That night an urgent message from the frantic mother traveled by wire to Reginald Curtis, summoning him home.

(To be continued)

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Pursuant to an order of Hon. Elbe Reynolds, Surrogate of the County of Allegany, notice is hereby given to all persons having claims against the estate of Hon. Bundy, late of Andover, N. Y., deceased, to present the same with proper vouchers thereof to the undersigned Executrix of the Last Will and Testament of said deceased, at the Law Office of Crayton L. Earley, in the Village of Andover, N. Y., on or before the first day of June, 1921.

Dated at Andover, N. Y., this 17th day of November, 1920.

ROXIE B. BRUNDAGE,
Executrix.
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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Pursuant to an order of Hon. Elbe Reynolds, Surrogate of the County of Allegany, notice is hereby given to all persons having claims against the estate of Chester Clair, late of Andover, N. Y., deceased, to present the same with proper vouchers thereof to the undersigned Administrators of the Estate of said deceased, at the Law Office of Crayton L. Earley, in the Village of Andover, N. Y., on or before the 20th day of July, 1921.

Dated January 13, 1921.

EMMA BISSELL,
JAMES S. CLAIR,
Administrators.
27

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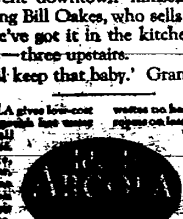

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