

The Making of a Champion

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rungs of the ladder, the walls, he tumbled through the opening and landed with a tremendous thud.

Made after the best theories of surprise in war, the manoeuvre demoralized the enemy. They stared a fleeting second at this bold warrior who had leaped into their midst. And then they incontinently fled! An instant's jam at the door, a crunching of the gravel, and the mob was gone! Panic had taken them for its own and led them pell-mell to the main street and to safety.

The late besieged arose, inventoried the situation, and made haste into the outer air.

"Fraidy calf," he shouted. "Fraidy calf, 'fraidy calf!"

He was master of the field. Covered with glory and dirt, he filled his coal bucket from a heap of fuel in one of the deserted stalls and went in to supper.

There was a spice of winter in the air the next morning. Philip was forced to don his overcoat, which he detested, and was further supplied with a pair of leather mittens. He did not protest, as he would ordinarily have done, for he felt that he would not be scoffed at on his way to school.

He scuffed along whistling, with a careful eye open for his enemies of yesterday. At the corner he was respectfully greeted by Petey Martin. Philip contemptively gazing at the sky, ignored him.

"Hello, Philip," said Petey.

He turned and looked upon Petey as from a great height.

"Oh," he said. "That's you, is it?"

"Why," said the Martin boy, "I just wanted to know, are you sore at me? Why, you know I didn't write Phil—I didn't write that on your barn. Louie Born did. I just thought I'd come and tell you."

Here was information of value. Philip considered, and decided to accept Petey's overtures.

"Well," he said, "I'm not sore, now. I won't lick you again."

He marched on pompously, the other boy tagging after.

"But you can tell Louie that I'm going to lick him, and I'm going to lick Bruiser Young. You tell 'em that I'm going to bang the heads off of 'em. That Bruiser Young's been going around here all swelled up, anyhow. I'm going to lick him. You tell him that."

"You going to lick both of 'em?" Petey asked.

"You bet I am. Didn't I lick all of 'em yesterday? Well, I can do it again."

Up the street appeared a flash of plaid, surmounted by white furs and a saucy little beaver hat. Philip reddened, but took the bold course.

"Here comes Lola Cameron," he said. "I'm going to walk to school with her. You run along."

As he strolled magnificently beside the chirping little girl, Philip saw Petey attain the school gate and enter the yard. His heart swelled within him. Here he was, dispatching messengers of war, and walking to school with the prettiest girl in the sixth-year grade! She was the prettiest girl in the world, he amended, after a moment's thought.

He cast a side glance at her.

"Why, say now," he said. "Do you—would your mother—that is, could I come some night and see you?"

She smiled demurely.

"If you'd like to," she said. "I think you could."

His heart was thumping as she left him at the gate. He had never dared to utter such words to a girl before. He did not know they could be said so easily. His new-found confidence in himself was justified. He regretted for an instant that he had not had the courage to ask such a simple question long ago.

He turned toward a knot of boys who stood expectant in the yard. Petey Martin was standing in front of them.

"Hello, kids," said Philip, airily.

They winced at his use of "kids," but gratified at his notice, gathered round him.

"I was going to tell you," continued Philip, after a moment's pause, "that my father says I can have a bob-sled party

as soon as it snows. You fellows can come if you want to. I'm going to take Lola Cameron."

Things had changed since yesterday. To be on party-going terms with this noted fighter was an honor. There was a murmur to this effect from the crowd.

"That's swell," said Scrubby Willifer, whose cap was set on an angle to avoid a large bump that adorned his head.

Louie Born and Bruiser Young who had been hanging about the school steps, now diffidently approached. Petey had delivered his message, but they had an apparent feeling that Philip would not assault them under the windows of the school.

"Philip," said Louie. "Ah—say, Philip—"

"Well," said the conqueror, sternly. "What do you want?"

"I wanted to tell you that—I just was going to say I was sorry I wrote that on your barn. I was going to rub it out, but—"

The lie melted under the eagle glance of the injured Philip.

"Well," I'm sorry," Louie concluded.

"All right," the new hero said. "I won't lick you, and you can now come to my bob-sled party. You—he drew his breath for his great effect and glanced about to make sure the boys were listening—"You can take Queenie Bowser!"

As he moved away, there came to his ears the voice of Petey Martin lifted high.

"Sluggo Philip's going to let Louie go to his party, but he says he'll lick Willie Young."

Sluggo Philip! Willie Young! He turned on the school steps and saw the late Bruiser climbing over the back fence, bound homeward. As he walked into the class room, his bosom swelled with conscious importance. He was champion now!

The Matinee Idol

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up presently into her own special gait, and Bertini almost pulls Rosalie to her feet.

"I think I am too tired," protests Rosalie after the second round. "I will not dance any more."

The Signor has held her rather close for comfort. Not this way did the honest habitant boys hold one at the ho-downs back home. There was more fun at a bush hop, far more.

"You sure are one nice, large gloom!" says the Signor, with a short laugh.

"Very well, then. Here's a seat."

So they stopped. Rosalie played wallflower for the next hour. Bertini danced with several other girls, the kind that did not mind being gripped tightly. At length Rosalie got up and crept from the room. Bertini had staggered against a table once and nearly fallen. He had been taking a number of glasses between the dances for she had watched him closely. Rosalie sought the dressing-room and in five minutes was out on the street alone.

Having no car-tickets with her she walked eleven blocks to her rooming-house.

Next morning she overslept. A dizziness on waking brought instant reminder of the previous night's gaiety. The Signor, she remembered, had mentioned something about "a little ride to-morrow evening." She wondered if he would forget. She must chide him about taking too much wine. The scales had not yet completely fallen from the eyes of Rosalie Duprez.

Too late for the factory, she dressed lazily. Then she gathered up some blouses in need of laundering and wrapped them in a piece of newspaper. This was a good time to take the parcel to that new hand laundry Héloïse Allard had recommended. Where was it now? Oh, yes, over on St. Anne Street. A laundress over there "did" two waists for a quarter—washed, clear-starched and ironed. A wonderful bargain! Héloïse said the house was a tenement right next a bottling works. You couldn't miss it.

Rosalie found it.

"Up two flights and turn to your left. Knock on the second door," directed a slatternly young girl who was "minding"

a baby on the steps of the tenement.

"And knock hard, miss."

Rosalie picked her way along a grimy hallway and ascended the stairs. Another hallway odorous with boiling cabbage, and then another flight of stairs! The house was full of sounds, scolding women and crying babies, and the yells of urchins racing through the halls. But out of the clamor, loud and distinct there now arose two more insistent noises, a rancous Hibernian voice and a dull drub-dubbing sound. Rosalie approached the second door. She caught words. It was the Irish person speaking.

"—and 'tis the same thing every day, ye great shiftless muldoon! There ye sit an' me breakin' me back (rub-dub) over the wash-board all day long. This minnit there's three tubs to empty (rub-dub-dub), an' much ye care so long as ye can rest yer carcass in an aisy chair wid a pipe."

A deeper voice returned this boquet, with extras. Then it rollicked forth into a scrap of song. Quickly on the heels of this rose a baby's wail.

Rosalie knocked timidly. The splashing of water went on, also the rub-dub-dubbing, but a voice said:

"Isn't that a knock I'm after hearin'?"

Open the dure, Mike."

"Open it yerself. Haven't I got the baby on me knee?" returned the other voice.

The baby howled harder. Heavy, shuffling steps that shook the floor approached, and the door was opened by a large, blowy Irishwoman with a heated face on which beads of honest sweat stood out. Her scant hair was drawn tightly back from her brow and ended in a lump about the size of a walnut on the top of her head. She panted slightly. Behind her on the bare floor frolicked three small children, shrieking and tumbling about. At one side near a faded curtain that only half hid an untidy bed sat a big man in a bare, wooden rocker. He held an infant on his knee. Rosalie caught a glimpse of soiled shirtsleeves and a stubby black pipe and a black head. Then with an odd suddenness the man rose and drew the curtain before him. But Rosalie had recognized him.

"Were ye knockin' long?" asked the laundress as she wiped her soapy arms on her apron. "Sure an' 'tis quite pale ye are wid the long climb. Sit ye down, do."

Rosalie didn't move, though the woman offered her a chair. She seemed rooted to the spot.

"'Tis a wonder I heard ye at all wid Mike an' the kid both whoopin' it up. Sure at that the kid has the better voice, an' 'tis musical an' honest Irish, while Mike will be singin' dago songs that no one can understand."

"Who—who—who is Mike?" faltered Rosalie.

"Who is Mike, is it? Me husband, Miss. He sings at a viddy-villy theater up town, he does. But 'tis meself makes as much as he does. What were ye after?"

"N—nothing. I guess I've got the wrong number," said Rosalie in a choked voice.

And she wheeled and fled. Down the stairs she stumbled, half-blindly, and reaching the bottom almost fell against a young man standing there.

"Rosalie!" a voice exclaimed. "It's I. Don't you see, petite? I am waiting for you. I followed you all the way."

"Pierre!"

"But—what's wrong?" and the boy frowned.

"Oh, Pierre! N—nothing. I—I'm glad to see you!"

"Are you?"

"Yes, yes. You say you followed me?"

"Tried to catch up with you, but you walked too fast and turned so many corners. I lost sight of you more than once. But I saw you go in here so I waited. Why do you tremble like that? Has anyone frightened you?"

"Y—yes. No. That is—oh, let's hurry away from here, Pierre," and Rosalie shuddered.

They did, Pierre much mystified.

"How do you come to be off work? Are you on the night-shift again, Pierre?" asked Rosalie, becoming calmer.

"I've quit work."

"For good?"

"For good. I go home to-morrow. Back to Ville Madonne."

"Pierre! But why?"

"I am tired of the city. I long for the old free life, Rosalie. I want to hunt and fish and trap, to breathe clean air again."

Rosalie fell silent. They reached her rooming-house with few other words. The girl was experiencing a queer, beaten, hopeless feeling. The bottom seemed to have dropped out of the universe.

"I will say good-bye," Pierre observed, as they stopped.

"I—I've missed you, Pierre, these last three days."

"Have you?" he said, unbelievably.

"And—and I'll miss you worse now. I—I'll die with loneliness!"—and a tiny sob caught in her throat.

Pierre laughed harshly.

"You want to marry a singer and live in town. I'm leaving you free so you can do so."

"But Pierre I—I guess I don't now," and Rosalie traced a pattern on the pavement with the toe of her shoe.

"Good-bye, Rosalie. I must go."

A large tear splashed down on the shoe. Rosalie choked down a sob. Pierre stirred restlessly.

"Pierre?" and she flashed a glance up at him.

"Yes, petite?"

"I'm going back with you, back to Ville Madonne!"

And she did—as Madame Latupe!

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Couldn't Help It

A little girl had just been dressed in clean clothes, and went out to play. In a short time she came back covered with dirt. Her mother was much put out, and asked her how she came to be so dirty.

"Well, mother," she said, "isn't I made of dirt?"

"Yes, dear, but what has that to do with it?"

"Well, you know, mother, it will keep working out."

Having Eyes, He Saw Not

One day last summer a tourist drove hurriedly up to the home of Enos A. Mills at the foot of Longs Peak, leaped out and approached the naturalist. "Mr. Mills," he said brusquely, "I have been told that there is fine scenery in Estes Park. I want to get you to show me some of it."

The naturalist's eyes turned toward the hundred-mile sweep of snowy mountains that cut the blue sky, then swept the valley below and rested on noble crags and streams that wound among groves of pine and aspen. Slowly he shook his head.

"I guess you must have been misinformed."

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