

A Black Cat for Luck

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have caused Solomon in all his glory to hide his head abashed.

Pearl's plans for the evening included a dinner at one of the most highly gilded Broadway restaurants, to be followed later by dancing at a noted cabaret. O'Hagan offered no further objections, although before the dinner was over he was looking pale and tired, and he was limping painfully when the four young people entered the cabaret.

"Tim, I'll leave you an' Mary to talk over old times," Pearl announced lightly. "Mr. Fink wants to learn me the last new step. Believe me, he's some dancer."

"You're some dancer yourself, girl," retorted the gallant Mr. Fink. O'Hagan's honest blue eyes followed his sweetheart's yellow head and violent red gown somewhat wistfully. Then with an effort he turned to the girl who sat so quietly by his side.

"This suits me all right," he said, rising manfully. "But maybe you'd rather be dancin', Mary? I see a fellow over there I used to know. Shall I bring him here and introduce him?"

"Oh, no, Tim—please, I'd so much rather sit here with you," the girl said hurriedly. "If—if you don't mind."

"Sure I don't. This suits me fine," O'Hagan repeated.

So the two talked on and on while Pearl Dalley and Mr. Fink fox-trotted. Little Mary had a way with her which the worried lover found very soothing, and occasionally, when some reminiscence of the old days made her blush and smile, revealing perfect, dazzlingly white teeth and a singularly alluring dimple. O'Hagan almost forgot to wonder how much longer his promised wife intended to keep on dancing with that "fresh girl."

No suspicion of his sweetheart's love entered O'Hagan's honest mind, however, when other eyes proved to be only a repetition of the first. He thought it natural that a pretty girl should prefer fox-trotting with an accomplished dancer. Mr. Fink to sitting tamely at the side of a disabled lover. But Mary Maloney, shocked at what seemed to her callous cruelty ventured to remonstrate with Pearl, and Pearl fiercely resented what she termed her friend's "freshness" in "buttin' in."

Two weeks later O'Hagan entered the stuffy parlor of the Dalley flat wearing an oddity stirred and excited look.

"It's us for Coney Island to-night, Pearl," he announced.

Pearl protested vehemently. It was a warm June night, but she preferred a cabaret to a Sound steamer. However, the quiet firmness which the big policeman could exert when he chose was seen in the manner in which he not only carried his point, but also deflected Mr. Fink's attempt to monopolize Miss Dalley.

"Not to-night, Fink," O'Hagan said pleasantly. "I got somethin' I want to talk over with Pearl."

Out of earshot, but in plain sight, O'Hagan drew a newspaper from his pocket and directed Miss Dalley's attention to a certain paragraph with a big, clumsy finger. Then he said something violently, which she evidently objected violently. And so it went on, the man explaining, pursuing, pleading, the girl at first angrily voluble, then sullenly silent.

Presently O'Hagan left her and after ten minutes informing Mr. Fink that he could join Miss Dalley at ten down by Mary with a heavy sigh.

"Well, Mary, it's all over between me an' Pearl," he said slowly.

"Oh, no, no!" gasped the girl. "Don't give up, Tim. She'll be sorry to-morrow."

"It's all over," O'Hagan retorted grimly. "You'd oughta heard the way she knocked Strike."

"What's Strike got to do with it?" Mary asked lazily.

"Why, Mary, I told you about Strike an' how kinda worried I was on account of not gettin' to see him before I come away," O'Hagan reminded her somewhat reproachfully, for her sympathy had been most comforting. "And there was a place in the New York 'American' to-night askin' where was Tim O'Hagan, the big motor cop. You see, the boys don't know what hotel I'm stoppin' at, an' I ain't been writin' to nobody on account of no hand. And the paper says," the man went on huskily, "there's a black cat in Chicago that's dyn' for want of a sight of him."

"Ah, think of that now—the poor kitty!" exclaimed little Mary, aghast. "When do you start, Tim?"

"At noon to-morrow," O'Hagan said with decision. "But Pearl's kicked somethin' fierce when I showed her the paper an' asked would she go with me. We could get a license an' be married in the mornin'; but, gee, you'd think I was askin' her to jump off Brooklyn Bridge."

"It must of kinda upset her. Pearl is crazy about New York, and she wain't expectin' to leave for more than a month yet. You let me talk to her, Tim."

She rose impulsively, but a firm hand pressed her gently down again.

"Not on your life!" O'Hagan said quickly. "Pearl's throwin' me down twice, an' that's plenty."

"But she—she can't mean it," Mary stammered.

"She means it all right," O'Hagan said with amazing resignation. "And I sure don't want to marry a girl who has no use for cats."

Their eyes met, and a beautiful color flushed Mary's pale face at the remembrance of their first meeting, when the tall and stocky single-handed a crowd of young toughs who were tormenting a helpless kitten, in spite of the frantic efforts of a small girl to rescue it. O'Hagan had not forgotten, either.

"Gee! How you did stand up to them toughs, tryin' to fight 'em for the sake of a bit of a kitten! I guess you know, Mary, how I feel about Strike."

She murmured something inarticulately. And then the mirror happened. Looking deep into those wide, pitiful gray eyes the big man asked himself suddenly how he could ever have cared for pretty, selfish Pearl Dalley after having known this brave little pal of his. What a fool, what a bonehead, he had been!

"Oh, Mary, you sure are a dear little thing!" he murmured half under his breath.

Then as the lovely color in her cheeks deepened, O'Hagan said daintily:

"Mary—Mary dearie, will you let me get the license for us, and go with me to-morrow? Well, don't speak yet," he begged. "If you'll trust me I'll take you straight to me sister Katy and court you as never a girl was courted before until—until you say you like me well enough to set up housekeepin' with me—and Strike."

The laugh with which he concluded was shaky, even abject, for the hero of the Sunday papers was humbly un- aware that little Mary's heart had been his ever since that far-off day when he had won a fight for a small girl and a forlorn yellow kitten. There was a pregnant silence, and then Mary asked tremulously:

"Do—do you think you could ever forget her—if I did marry you, Tim?"

"I've forgot her already," O'Hagan shouted from the depths of an honest conviction.

A great passion of longing to touch

those smooth braids of bright hair, to press his lips to that sweet girl mouth, shook his mighty frame. But O'Hagan was one of nature's gentlemen, and he only laid his big hand on her small cold one with protecting gentleness.

"I ain't even goin' to ask you for a kiss, Mary—yet," he said. "Not till I get you a diamond engagement ring, an' then," he added, showing his white teeth in a joyous laugh, "we're goin' to be married to-morrow, Mary ma'ourence; but you ain't goin' to miss nothin' by bein' married first an' courted after."

Thirty-six hours later, back at headquarters in Chicago, O'Hagan was confiding in an emaciated black cat which was purring contentedly on his mighty shoulder.

"It sure is a black cat for luck, old boy. It's you that saved me from gettin' tied up to Pearl Dalley."

"But you bawled in just in time, old fellow, an' now I'm married to little Mary. He busted his face in his dumb friend's soft fur as he whipsawed. "And she's the girl, Strike, to make home heaven for an old screw of a black cat and a big bonehead of a motor cop. It's no dream, Strike, neither, for—listen—now—before I come up here to report for duty she put her two arms around me neck and kissed me of her own free will. What d'you think of that, you old mascot, you?"

A Cemetery Bee

ONE day last month a number of people in our community gathered at the Friends' meeting-house at the cemetery for the purpose of paying their respects to the dead. Although haying had begun, and many of the farmers were extremely busy on the farm, all seemed to feel it their duty to their brave ancestors to take time from their work "even in war time" to spend a little while in beautifying the dear little cemetery.

When we think of some of the true men and women who have lived and worked for others, hewing out and building many of the houses which are still our homes, we are moved with a spirit of loyalty to the departed heroes. To-day, in this world crisis, we appreciate our departed heroes more than ever before. It was in this spirit that about 45 men and women worked to beautify the last resting place of their ancestors.

When the work was finished we stole a few minutes to read the inscriptions on the monuments and to bring to mind the sterling qualities of those whose last resting places were indicated. For instance, we read one inscription and recalled a noble woman who performed many, many kind deeds. She would leave her work and home every day for a whole summer and, dressed in homespun and her husband's high boots, would go through a wet swamp and back to wait on a neighbor who was ill of fever, and who had three small children to be cared for. This she did cheerfully, because all men are brothers. Many deeds of this nature were performed in those days.

All have gone to try the realities of another world, and we wonder if there will be any kind thoughts of us after we have been laid to rest in some quiet little spot where six feet of earth makes us all of one size. We wonder, too, if a good name is not rather to be chosen than great riches.

One of the men present spoke of the good work that the women of France are doing in decorating the graves of our brave Canadian soldiers, and that he thought it to be our duty to see that the graves of the brave heroes of other days were not neglected.

Supper was served on the grounds in front of the meeting-house and everyone went home feeling that they would be sure to be there again next year if their lives were spared.—The Doctor's Wife.

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