



MORNING GLORY

BY ELIZABETH CUMMINGS

HER real name was Eva Nelson; but the first time she came into the chapel Helen Kent, the school poet, exclaimed, "Oh, what a lovely Morning Glory!" And by that name she was called ever after while at school. Her gray eyes grew black when she was excited. Her pink and white complexion had the velvety look of a peach, and the glossy braids hanging at the back of her head were what hair-dressers call light drab. Tall and slender, with a slight Roman curve in her pretty nose, she had a straight way of carrying her head that gave her a graceful air of haughtiness. But she was really shy, and not at all haughty, and in a week every girl in the school adored her. The gown she wore that first day was a crisp white lawn, with quaint zigzags of pink and lavender in it, and at her throat and waist were bows of dainty ribbon, pink and lavender. Her gowns were always of a peculiar freshness and lightness. Even in Winter she was still a Morning Glory.

The school was crowded, and as Eva arrived late there was no place for her save in No. 40, Hall E., with Lois Hanna an odd girl and the best scholar in mathematics. The walls were dark, Lois's face had hard lines in it, in spite of her youth; and her black eyes, though they were fringed with long lashes, were as devoid of feeling as two black beads, save when she was looking at figures. Then they seemed to glow. She had never had a romantic and mesmeric acquaintance; but though they were very different, she and Morning Glory were soon fast friends.

Janeboro Academy was an old-fashioned place. Lilacs, snowballs and syringes made a thicket of bloom about it in Summer, and in Winter each tiny low room was warmed by a queer box-stove in which crackled a wood fire. There were only two men in the building—Ezra Betts, the steward, a withered old gentleman, slow and precise, and Pat Connor who filled the wood-rooms and took care of Madam Lund's fat horses and cows. The French master was never seen save in his class-room, and with his bright-eyed wife at Madam Lund's receptions, and Prof. Oldsoffer, the music master, never remained in the building a moment he was not compelled to, and often, she exclaimed, when listening to the performances of some pupil more destitute of musical feeling and perception than the average: "Ach Himmel! Wat haf I ton pe so afflicted?" It was Madam Lund's boast that her school was a model of order and discipline, and emphatically a female academy. Whatever its faults were, it was generally admitted to be a model school for girls, and its graduates would have done credit to schools of larger pretensions.

The teacher in mathematics, Miss Sophia McKenzie, was considered a superior person in her specialty; but she was not a favorite with the pupils, and seemed overshadowed by the other teachers. The girls said her looks were against her; but they were mistaken. It was her clothes. If her brown eyes and waving hair had been set off by

tasteful dress, in spite of her tiny figure, they would have called her pretty. But everything she had was pathetically poor and plain, and the prunella garters which she wore on her long feet, grew brown and threadbare before she cast them off. The girls were always making remarks about those feet; for they were not only long, but wide in a bony way, and sixes were scarcely big enough for them. Perhaps the girls would not have held the little woman responsible for their size, if it had not been her habit to dart swiftly and stealthily up stairs and down and pounce upon anyone engaged in what they considered a little harmless mischief.

"Without those ridiculous and enormous feet, which did not need wings, Miss McKenzie could not pounce," Helen Kent said.

Curiously enough, notwithstanding her habit of watching and spying after dark, Miss McKenzie was timid. Mice, spiders, worms and stray dogs and cows frightened her, and at night she trembled at every unusual sound, and thought it was a robber. Lois Hanna was one of the few pupils Miss McKenzie had never given any marks to; and Morning Glory, though there was not an hour in the day that she did not break some trivial rule, was so quick and such a favorite, she somehow eluded that teacher's vigilance till she had been at Janeboro four months.

It was a cold morning. So cold there were sparkling ferns, and pine forests, and branching beds of coral, pictured in frost upon the window panes; but Morning Glory did not mind the cold, and paused a moment, now here, now there, on her way to her room, to translate a sentence, to find a rule, or mark the fingering on a troublesome passage of music, thereby breaking the rule that students should be in their rooms at half-past seven. Morning Glory did not mean to break the rule; she only wanted to help her friends. As I have said, only wood was burned in the academy. On each floor there were small rooms set apart for wood and kindling, and No. 40, Hall E., was next one of them, and Lois was in it getting some chips.

"Did you notice poor McKenzie's garters this morning?" whispered Morning Glory, skipping up and down before the wood-room door. "If I had such feet as hers I wouldn't wear congress garters and leave the straps out. Her toes touched each other, and with the hem of her gown they formed a perfect isosceles triangle."

"I must give you five demerits," said Miss McKenzie, suddenly appearing from no one knew where. "And you, Miss Lois, must have five for getting your kindling in study hours."

Morning Glory flushed crimson, even to the swan's down that finished the neck of her blue wrapper. She did not move; but Lois went into her room and closed the door softly, as her manner was.

"Do you want us to freeze?" asked Morning Glory, after a moment. "Lois isn't to blame. It was my turn to get the chips and things, and I forgot it."

Miss McKenzie sighed; but took up her note-book again. "I'm sorry, Miss

Nelson," she said, in her queer, dispassionate voice, "but I shall have to give you five more marks for neglect of duty."

"I don't care how many you give me, if you will take away the five you have given Lois," cried Morning Glory, ready to sob.

"She broke the rules, Miss Eva, and you are breaking them now. Go into your room, my dear," said Miss McKenzie, walking away.

The study hour passed in silence in No. 40. Lois rested her elbows on the table and with dogged perseverance mastered the problems in her geometry, and Eva, after tearfully gazing out of the window three-fourths of the time, suddenly concentrated attention and energy and mastered her Cicero lesson and the rules belonging to it in crabbled old Tumpst's grammar. But when the half-past eight bell rang for prayers, and the fair head and dark one were pressed close together before the tiny mirror, Lois whispered vaguely, "I hate that little, sneaking, spying thing!"

"Are you going to eat her?" exclaimed Morning Glory, lightly. "I don't understand her; but I'd give my prettiest sleeve buttons to be able to scare her with a woolly spider, or a big caterpillar."

"I've thought of something worth a dozen of that," said Lois.

About half a mile from the academy was the Janeboro Polytechnic School for Boys. Every Saturday the young ladies who had relatives in the city, or at the Polytechnic, were allowed to receive them in Madam Lund's parlors; and it happened that the day after the events occurred, which I have just narrated, Lois Hanna's brother Tom came to see her. That night, long after lights were out in the academy, a man, far too agile to be either Ezra Betts or Patrick Connor, ran lightly along the snow that hid the lawn, till he reached the east wing of the building. A window in the third story was opened, despite the cold. Madam Lund had a moment a small bundle went quickly up and plunged into it.

A week passed, and one evening, after the last bell had rung, and every young lady was supposed to be snugly in bed, Miss McKenzie softly opened her door and stepped out. She wore a dressing-gown and felt slippers, and went swiftly along, stopping at every door a moment. She was afraid—not of anything in particular, but of the darkness and the shadowy corners; for the moon was hidden in snow clouds. Suddenly a stranger in plain man sprang from she knew not where, and clasping his arms around her he murmured something, she knew not what, in her ear.

Shrieks that made Mr. Betts set up in terror in his bed in the basement, filled the academy, and when Madam Lund heard the screams, she came, each armed with a candlestick, rushed to the rescue, they found Miss McKenzie in strong hysterics.

"Burn some feathers, somebody!" cried Madam, pouring about a gill of camphor in the sufferer's nose and eyes, "and send Patrick for the doctor."

"Oh," moaned Miss McKenzie, struggling with her tormentors. "Find the man."

"What man?" cried Madam, seizing her candlestick.

"I don't know," sighed Miss McKenzie.

Mr. Betts and Pat Connor were at once summoned, and, much against their will, were compelled to search every wood-room in the building, while Madam and her daughters visited every bedroom; but no man was found. Madam, cold and cross, recollected Miss McKenzie's fears, and concluded the