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## PRISCILLA'S CHANCES

By Louise Forslund

Author of "The Story of Sarah,"  
"The Ship of Dreams," etc.



"I SAW DE OLD LADY PY DE BEACH . . . DEN I VALK HOME MID HER DROUGH DE SNOW."

## Successiul Dutchtown Stories

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS,  
MADE FROM  
"DUTCHTOWN" MODELS,  
BY W. GRANVILLE SMITH

Old Billy Blom sat smoking his pipe of contentment, his red and gray striped stocking feet on top of the table instead of the stove, so that he might look out of the window at the baymen trudging homeward at the end of the day's work: while Mrs. Billy busied herself about the stove and the table with preparations for supper. Priscilla sat watching the two, a new dream-light in her eyes, a brooding tenderness, while her lips quivered with the unmistakable signs of a sweet secret struggling to be free.

"Ve been marriedt feefy year coom this May," Billy remarked very suddenly, and Priscilla started, shutting her mouth in swift alarm over her secret.

"Priscilly," went on the unconscious old Dutchman, "you can't neffer git a goldting veddin' yit."

The young spinster shook her head as if in sorrow, while Billy did likewise with his heavy Dutch pate.

"Too badt—Priscilly! I don't see vhad't de mens vas a-dinkin' off. Didn't you neffer haff no chance, mine dear?"

Priscilla's secret came so near choking her that she gurgled like a little child; but Mrs. Billy's bristles popped out all over.

"Vall, dhot's joost like a man!" snapped the old lady. "Neffar hadt no chances, eh? You joost go outd andt hundt from here to de Nordth Star andt you von't findt a vomans vhad't neffer hadt no chance. Priscilly, you tell him apout some of your chances."

Priscilla, looking at the grin of delight steadily growing broader on Billy's face, as it always did whenever he succeeded in teasing the old lady, laughed as she answered:

"Well, let me see. There was the half-witted son of the blacksmith—everybody knew about that, I thought. He used to bring me old horseshoes for good luck. He stutters, you know, 'S-s-s-say, Priscilla,' he used to ask, 'wh-wh-wh-why don't you love me?'"

"B-b-b-because! I used to answer. Now, you know, I couldn't take him."

There was an anxious note of en-

quiry in Priscilla's statement, but Billy shook his head dubiously.

"You mightd haf madet a man of aim. Many a feller goes to de church a plock-headt, and cooms outd mid sober, sound sense—dhot's honest."

"Poor thing! I don't wonder," murmured Priscilla.

"Vall, ho on," demanded Mrs. Billy, who wished Priscilla to vindicate herself thoroughly from the charge of no proposals. "Tell him who else you hif de mitten."

A swift, deep blush spread over Priscilla's face.

"The ones I have given the mitten!" she stammered. "Why a girl can't tell those things. They were mostly a good-for-nothing lot of fellows, though, and that's a fact."

"Hoodt-for-noddings, eh?" Mrs. Billy had grown very hot. "Are ve hoodt? Billy vent into de beer-saloons before I marriedt him. He vas

drunk two dimes already in de oldt country."

Priscilla sat up straight and stared at the model, temperate old Dutchman, but Mr. Blom only grinned like a boy proud of an escapade and nodded as he said: "Ya-ya, yes-yes, oom-oom. Dhot's honest!"

"Why, Mr. Blom! Drunk! You? Mrs. Billy, weren't you afraid to marry him?"

"Na!" with a smile. "He vas like efery odder man. A man's neffer no hoodt till he hits him a wife."

"You kin neffer tell how he vill turn outd till te hits marriedt," Billy sagely agreed.

"But, my goodness!" persisted Priscilla. "How could you fall in love with a man that drank like that?"

"I got blindt yit," answered Mrs. Billy. "You can no luff till you git blindt. Den when you kin see no more, luff cooms—ya, ya, ya, ya! The trouble mid you Pris-

cilly, is dhot you got eyes too sharp." Mrs. Billy's own material eyes were too weak to see the pink once more deepening in Priscilla's cheeks. "Coom now," she coaxed, "tell us vhad't vas de troubles mid dem odder mans. Dhot school-teacher—now—Meester Vheelcox?"

Priscilla's coloring grew so intense that it must have pained her, but Mr. Blom, deaf to what was going on, happily smiling in his reminiscences of the courtship days of long ago, saved the girl an answer by speaking his thoughts.

"I saw de oldt lady py de beach. I stoodt dere mid anodder feller andt she pass by. 'Ah-ha! I say to mine-self, 'dere hoes a hoodt von. I ho for her!' Andt I vent. Deedn't I, oldt lady?"

The old lady smiled and flapped her eyelids down as an indication of blissful, secret knowledge.

"Was that the first time you saw her, Mr. Billy?"

"Oh, my no! I seen her plenties off times, but I neffer dink she vas sooch a hoodt von till dhot day. Den I valk home mid her fife miles drough de snow."

"It is true love that comes in winter-time they say," murmured Priscilla, and, in a dream all of her own, she looked out of the window at Mrs. Billy's snowy garden.

Mrs. Billy's voice fell with an amusing note of consolation upon Priscilla's ears as she said:

"Summer or vinter, it cooms so quicker dhon a dunderstorm. You can't tell when he cooms. Maybe, when you ho home to-nightd already, some von vill see you pass by andt say: 'Dere hoes a hoodt von. I ho for her!'"

Priscilla's dimples began to show, her eyes to sparkle, but she grew serious and asked meditatively: "And does it go as quickly as it comes? That's the question."

Neither of the old folks answered, and Priscilla, looking at the two faces, grown to resemble each other through long years of companionship, felt reassured, and, at the same time, ashamed. She leaned forward, her hands folded across her knees, and addressed the old lady:



"De you remember de first dime you valked home drough de snow mid me mine dear?"