

Miss Black and The Lion

By
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IT WAS Spring, and the year 1936, when the ringing of church bells, and the chimes of Saint Judas summoned the people to worship on the Lord's Day. The neighborhood, an exclusive one, was bounded on the east by Fifth Avenue, and on the west the elevated structure of the Sixth Avenue railroad reared its head. In the middle of the block stood Saint Judas. It was a magnificent building of ancient architecture. Before it, like soldiers at attention, were the red-faced dwellings of the city's most prominent and intellectual citizens. From one of these houses into the balmy air of spring walked Miss Black. Under her arm she carried a pekingese which was a royal gift to her. On the sidewalk she gently placed the little dog, who feeling free shook herself vigorously and began to trot. Her head was as high as she could carry it, and her plume-like tail was also in the air. Ming, as she was called, was a beauty. Noot only was she a favorite with the intelligentsia who dwelt on the block, but also with the canine aristocracy which domiciled thereabouts.

Suddenly Ming stopped. It was by no means a strange thing for her to do. She firmly planted her fat paws on the pavement, rested her chin on them, and arching her back, stood still.

"No, Ming, darling," came in the musical voice of Miss Black, "you must walk. You will grow fat and ugly." But Ming does not budge. She then lifts her, and carries her for about a yard, and places her down. Ming starts pullink, then trots away. She reaches the corner, stands still, looks around, decides her walk will be northward, and crosses the street in that direction.

Turning the corner of the next street going east, Miss Black ran into Mrs. Simple the wife of the Chief Justice. Judge and Mrs. Simple had been friends of the parents of Miss Black who was exceedingly fond of the elderly couple.

"Why, my dear, how do you do?" said Mrs. Simple, "and Ming, are you being good on your walk?"

"Not very," said Miss Black. "I have already lifted her three times."

"And oh, Mrs. Simple, what has kept you from Saint Judas to-day?"

"I am told by my doctor that a daily walk of ten blocks would be marvelous for my figure, and on Sundays I find this time of day most convenient. Of course my membership is good, for the Judge gives a yearly subscription of \$1000."

"Isn't that splendid of the Judge?" remarked Miss Black.

"Really, Miss Black," continued Mrs. Simple "I do think that every one should be a member of a church. It lends a respectable feeling. I have never seen you at St. Judas, my dear; why don't you become a member?"

"I think you are right in what you

have said, Mrs. Simple. I can't begin to tell you how I enjoyed the Christmas service. It was heavenly!"

"Were you there?" asked Mrs. Simple.

"Oh no," was Miss Black's reply, "I tuned in on the radio, and they were singing 'Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth, Peace, Goodwill to all Men.'"

Said Mrs. Simple "Rev. O'Dedman kept the service. On that Day I worshipped with the Judge."

"It really seems to me, Mrs. Simple, that at this time of the world's history the present civilization enjoys a far less degree of peace than the beasts of the jungles."

"I really do think so my dear Miss Black, but what can we do about it?"

"When I think of the grip that ignorance and superstition are getting of the people, and causing so many youthful minds to turn towards crime, I am appalled. The first reaction of the average mind is murder. Dreadful, isn't it Mrs. Simple?"

"Only too dreadful, my dear, but what can we do about it? It seems as if the people in the world are gone mad."

"Not mad. Only last week I read somewhere 'The people have forgotten God, and God has made them to forget themselves.'"

"Oh, Miss Black, that is just what is wrong with the world to-day. You have hit the nail on the head when you say 'The people have forgotten God, and God has made them to forget themselves.' I'll ever remember this. But how much longer can things run as they are, I wonder?"

"I should think the cup is now pretty full, Mrs. Simple, but it has to overflow. A little more of it, I guess."

"By the way, my dear, what do you think I did on Friday morning?"

"Bought some more new dresses?" asked Miss Black.

"Not dresses this time, my dear," said Mrs. Simple "but the darlinest fur coat. I just could not help myself. Only six imported models, and this was just my size and style. It is a dream, and only costs \$5000."

"How lovely, Mrs. Simple! What does the Judge think of it?"

"At present he knows nothing about it. It is time enough when he receives the bill, then what can he do about it? Do let me help you with Ming, my dear. I would love to."

"I wouldn't dream of such a thing, She ought to walk again."

"Next Sunday, my dear, there will be a special service at the church for the unveiling of the statue of Saints Annanias and Sapphira. The Judge and I would love to call for you on our way over."

"It is very sweet of you both really. Whose work of art are they?"

"Mr. War, my dear. He lives on the block and has recently become a member of St. Judas. Just between you and me, my dear, he has an eye to business. There are a couple more saints to be immortalized. All the same he is the best sculptor of the age. Do you know the old Drake mansion on the corner of Fifth Avenue is at last tenanted?"

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