

# The New Year's Girl



## A New Year's Fantasy

By PHILIP KEAN

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THE long line of people stretched down the winding walk in front of the White House and through the gate and out into the street. On New Year's day all the world might come and shake hands with the president, and it seemed as if half the world had availed itself of the privilege.

Marcia Marks felt almost overpowered by the thought of the honor that was before her. Marcia had not yet learned to shrug her shoulders at high position and august officials. She had been in Washington only three weeks. That she was soon to have a peep at the wonders of which she had heard so much seemed like a part of the fairy lore which she had loved as a child. She wished that there was some one who might share her pleasure. But she had made no friends, so she shifted from one foot to the other, moving forward slightly as far up at the other end of the line people were admitted through a magic door.

It was very cold, but Marcia's heart was warm. For the first time in her life she was earning money, and she was sending part of it home. Then, too, she had a new hat, which was a



"Won't You Get in Here With Me?"

great cause of happiness. It was the first really lovely hat that she had ever possessed.

She did not dream that her exquisite blonde beauty framed by the big hat was attracting the attention not only of the pedestrians but of the occupants of the autos and of the carriages that drove slowly in line toward the other entrance, where a privileged few were admitted at once to the blue room. Marcia feasted her eyes on the pretty gowns, and for the first time as she stood there in the cold a little bit of envy entered her heart. Why shouldn't she ride in luxurious comfort? She had beauty and youth, and loved a good time.

But even as the thought entered, she put it away. Wasn't she lucky enough with her \$60 a month and her new hat? And once more her face was bright, and she held her head high.

Then suddenly she gave a startled glance under the brim of her hat, as the door of a great motor car opened and a voice said: "Won't you get in here with me?"

The woman who spoke was beautiful with the beauty of old age. Under her wide hat her hair was white, but she held herself with grace and dignity. "Oh," Marcia faltered, and the lady said, quietly: "Get in, my dear. I will explain later."

So Marcia, followed by the eyes of the crowd, stepped into the wonderful car, which went slowly up the driveway.

Then the beautiful lady turned to her with sparkling eyes. "Was your grandmother Martha Witherspoon?" she demanded.

"Why—yes—"

The beautiful lady clapped her hands. "I knew it the minute I laid my eyes on you," she said. "As you stood there with your head held high in that haughty little way, and with your blue eyes and your red-gold hair—it was as if my dear school friend had come back to me."

"Grandmother is the dearest thing," Marcia said, "and as pretty as ever."

"I lost track of her," the beautiful lady told her, "when I went abroad years ago, and when I saw you I wasn't going to run the chance of not finding you again—so I made you get in, and made you lose your place in the line."

"Oh, I don't mind that," said Marcia. "I can go back to the end and wait."

"Indeed, you won't," said the beautiful lady. "I am going to take you right along with me to the blue room. I am to stand behind the receiving line, and you shall meet the president and go on to the east room, and wait from me there."

"But I am not dressed for that," Marcia demurred.

"I am going to play fairy godmother, and put my wrap on you. Your gloves are all right, and your hat, and you shall have my violets, and presto!—you will be a young lady of fashion."

Marcia protested, but for just a moment the curtains of the closed car were drawn, as the wrap was slipped

from the entry godmother's shoulders and transferred to Marcia's more slender ones, and then the crowd, looking on saw two exquisitely gowned women, side by side, the younger one blushing beautifully over her bouquet of violets and valley lilies.

The rest was a dream to little Marcia—the entrance into the brilliantly lighted rooms, the music, the rustle of silken gowns, the presentation to the president. She drew a great breath of delight, as she settled herself finally in a corner of the east room.

But there was more to follow, for in a few moments the fairy godmother sent the prince. He was the nephew of the beautiful lady and he was to take care of Marcia.

And he did take care of her, most graciously, and he talked with her as if she were a princess instead of a very shabby little girl, with her shabbiness covered by a borrowed cloak.

"Aren't you warm?" he said to her once, and Marcia said, hurriedly: "Oh, no." But when he said again: "I think you'd better let me take your wrap," she laughed and confessed:

"It's your aunt's cloak, and I wish you could see what a very shabby little suit I am wearing under it."

And the prince said the cloak wasn't any prettier than the hat, and that the hair under the hat was the prettiest of all, and just then the beautiful lady came along and asked: "Have you made friends with my boy, Marcia?"

"I think he is lovely," she said, and blushed prettily.

She was carried off to dinner with the beautiful lady, and the prince went, too. And when Marcia took off the cloak he said he liked her in her simple little suit. "Only you must still wear the violets, because they match your eyes."

It was all very dear and delightful, but that night when Marcia went home to her poor little apartment she told herself that, of course, she must not expect anything more. It was a New Year's fairy tale, and that was all.

But the beautiful lady came every day and took Marcia out with her, and often the prince was there, and at last, one day, Marcia said: "Dear beautiful lady, you must not, you are spoiling me for everyday things."

But she did not say that the real reason for her protest was because of the prince. He was such a charming prince, and she felt that for her own peace of mind she must not see too much of him.

And as Marcia withdrew more and more, the prince one day demanded of the fairy godmother: "Where's our Cinderella?"

"She insists," the old lady smiled, "on sitting in the ashes. She says we are too fine for her with our pumpkin coaches and our palaces."

"Humph," said the prince. "I guess we will see about that." He thereupon sought Marcia in her shabby apartment.

Marcia's face was radiant as she welcomed him. "But you must not come again," she said, when he was leaving.

"Why not?"

"Because," said Marcia, which was not a real reason.

"I shall come as often as I please," he said.

Then Marcia stood up very straight and tall. "I am only a shabby little Cinderella," she said, "and I must



"But You Must Not Come Again," She Said, When He Was Leaving.

work, and I haven't the time to fritter away with fairy godmothers and princes who wear gardenias."

Then he looked very sober and asked: "Do you think I fritter away my time?"

"Yes," Marcia told him. "I do."

"Well, tomorrow I am going to work," he told her. "They have ordered me to the Philippines. And I shall be gone six months."

"Six months?"

Something in her voice made him say sharply: "You care?"

Marcia tried to say: "Oh, no," but her lips were white and her voice shook.

Then the prince gathered her into his arms. "You shall go with me, little Cinderella," he said. "From the minute I saw you in your fairy godmother's cloak, I knew you were the one woman."

"And I knew you were the one man," she told him later, "but somehow I felt that it would never really come true—for it seemed only a New Year's fantasy."



The New Year is but a mirror of the years that are past, and it may bring before you all that is best and brightest, helpful and heartening, truest and holiest, or it may sum up for you all that is debasing and dishonorable—you, alone, can determine these things.

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## The Conflict of the Years

By KENNEDY SEATON

THE year is dying. The battle bravely fought is o'er at last:

The aged warrior wounded to the death With Time's fell arrows, silently awaits The moment of release with laboured breath.

The issued of the long-contested fight, Or victory, or defeat, or welcomed truce, The unborn years shall certainly declare, And turn each well-aimed blow to gain and use.

The warmer, dying, contained by the night, Sees not or knows the gain that is to be, But dies in faith that right will surely win, And o'er the world will rule eternally.

The year is dawning. The young recruit takes up the unheathed sword

His aged sire but just now laid aside; And buckling on his armour, newly bright, Essays him forth to ventures yet untried.

Alluring dreams beguile his onward steps, And visions bright of victories to be won; He feels upon his brow the laurel crown, — And hears afar the coveted "well done!"

No thought of failure mars the blissful dream, No craven fear unnerves the heart of youth; Great tasks await him, and with faith as great, He steps into the fray, and strikes for truth!

## The Syrian New Year

ALL the Christians of New York do not observe Christmas as a time for Santa Claus. The Syrians, for instance, who live in the lower end of Manhattan Island, in Washington street, from the Battery up to Albany street, have an old custom of giving their presents on New Year's day. Then there also is a difference in the manner of giving. The Syrian children do not hang up their stockings. Neither do the parents disguise themselves as Santa Claus. On the contrary, the Syrian child invariably knows who is going to be his Santa Claus, and consequently is treated to no extraordinary surprise. There is one thing, however, of which he remains in ignorance, and that is the nature of the present he will receive.

The child picks out whosoever he thinks will treat him best in case he succeeds in meeting and greeting him at the proper time on New Year's day. Then comes a long yell for midnigh't, as the custom so prescribes it that the one who offers the first greeting at the beginning of the new year shall receive a fitting reward from the one greeted. A good wish for success and prosperity in the first hour of New Year's day is held by the Syrians to augur well for the following twelve-month, and the one who first wishes good prospects is entitled to a reward.

Custom prescribes that at the time of this New Year's greeting whatever the one greeted happens to hold in his hand becomes the property of the other. The one who receives the greeting is supposed to be so pleased with it that, acting upon the happy impulse of the moment, he hesitates not to requite his greeter with whatever he first can lay hold on. This latter custom originated in feudal times, when the Emir was omnipotent in his province and his followers depended for their sustenance upon his gifts and what he allowed them of the plunders of war.

Of course you can't nowadays surprise any Syrian early New Year's day fooling with a costly article. He can be depended on as knowing better, for either he would have to make a gift of it to the one who first greeted him, or else he branded as a miser. Wise Syrians carry candy to hand to the children who greet them.

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## To the Old Year

By Julia Jayne Walker

SO MANY days we've fared through gay and wintry weather, Old Year, I cannot let you go! Such great times we've had as we journeyed side by side!

None other so intimate as thou! No other friend, save thou, has witnessed my defeats, no other so cheerily shared my triumphs.

When friends proved unkind thou didst walk by my side and counsel patience. The hurts of wounded affection were healed; time alone endured. Thou wouldst usher in a new day, full of sunshine and the song of birds. Its blessed healing power didst revive my drooping spirit and soothe all wounds:

Thou didst bring me friends from afar. The meeting them in the flesh once again, the looking into loving eyes and holding hands warm with the grasp of friendship, proved a benediction after long years of wearying separation.

The turning point in life came to more than one young person about me. Crucial questions were decided which will make for weal or woe. Thou didst accompany me each day while I helped to guide young lives into making safe departure from the beater path. Farewells have been said which tore the heartstrings and made them bleed afresh with the ever new pang of parting.

And then a time came when a great wrench must be made. The old days were to be mine no more. I must turn my back upon the past and set my face resolutely towards the future. No matter how hard the road, nor how many heartaches and longings for the old path were involved in the treading of the new, there was to be no looking back. With gaze bent forward, the present must be lived; but there need be no fear, with a heart of courage within and God in his heaven overhead.

All these memories are linked with thee, Old Year! How can I let thee go? No matter how sad the retrospect, no matter how many sighs and heart-throbs, we have trod the way together. Thou, and not another, hast been my companion over both the rough and pleasant ways.

I feel so much at home with thee, Old Year! Thy face, so familiar, is the face of an old friend. But this stranger which comes on apace, hurrying to take thy place and to usurp thy privileges, I know naught of him. I know not what strange new ways he may usher in. He fills me with distrust and forboding.

He comes bringing vast possibilities for great things. Who knows whether he will realize his responsibility and seize the moment of achievement as soon as it is presented? If he proves to be a worthy heir of thine, he may add materially to the world's acquisition of science. Ere his life be ended, Tennyson's dream may be realized—navies "grappling in the central blue." Edison may be making houses of cement, which shall be adapted to rich and poor alike. Wireless telegraphy and wireless telephony may be as easily done as the same is upon wires today. Mr. Stead may have bridged the gulf between this land and the further shore, with his spirit communications. Medical scientists may have waged war against disease with such success that health may be reigning o'er the earth. Warfare between nations may have been made so destructive that universal peace will cover the land as a mantle of green covers the earth. But, Old Year, should he introduce all these innovations, he might also bring in his train: sorrows and burdens, new trials and toils. I shrink from letting him

I shall trust thy son to be worthy of

his sire, Old Year, to be like thee kind and sympathetic, no matter what fate may bring to me. Casting fears to the wind, I look toward the future with smiling confidence, asking only that strength may be given to bear whatever of ill or good fortune the New Year may bring.

Nevertheless, I am loath to part with thee, the friend of so many dear days that are gone into the irrevocable past.

Goodbye, old year, thou dost not go out of my life. Though I shall see thy face no more, the recollection of thy dear friendship will be sacred among my heart's innermost treasures

"Old year, you shall not die: We did so laugh and cry with you I've half a mind to die with you, Old year, if you must die."

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Seeing the New Year In