

MAIN STREET

The Story of Carol Kennicott

BY SINCLAIR LEWIS
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(Continued From Yesterday)

Carol was watching Uncle Whittier. She knew from his last expression that he was not listening to Aunt Bessie but herding his own thoughts, and that he would interrupt her bluntly. He did.

"Will, where 'n I get an extra pair of pants for this coat and vest?" he wanted to say too much.

"Well, guess Nat Hicks could make you up a pair. But if I were you, I'd drop into Ike Rifkin's—his prices are lower than the Bon Ton's."

"Humph. Got the new stove in your office yet?"

"No, been looking at some at Sam Clark's but—"

"Well, y' ought get 'n. Don't do to put off getting a stove all summer, and then have it come cold on you in the fall."

Carol smiled upon them ingratiatingly. "Do you dears mind if I slip up to bed? I'm rather tired—cleaned the upstairs today."

She retreated. She was certain that they were discussing her, and fondly forgiving her. She lay awake till she heard the distant creak of a bed which indicated that Kennicott had retired. Then she felt safe.

It was Kennicott who brought up the matter of the Smalls at breakfast. With no visible connection he said, "Uncle Whit is kind of clumsy, but just the same, he's a pretty wise old coot. He's certainly making good with the store."

Carol smiled, and Kennicott was pleased that she had come to her senses. "As Whit says, after all the first thing is to have the inside of a house right, and then the people on the outside looking in."

It seemed settled that the house was to be a sound example of the un-Clark school.

Kennicott made much of erecting entirely for her and the baby. He had a chest of drawers for the baby, and a comfy sewing-room. But when drew on a leaf from an old accountbook he was a paper-saver and string-picker; the plans for the garage, he gave much more attention to a cement floor and a work-bench to a gasoline-tank than he had to wing rooms.

She sat back and was afraid.

In the present rookery there were odd things—a step up from the hall to the dining-room, a picturesqueness in the shed and bedraggled lilac bush. But the new place would be smooth, standardized, fixed. It was probable, now that Kennicott was past forty, and settled, that this would be the last venture he would ever make in building. So long as she stayed in this ark, she would always have a nesting place, and but once she was in the new house, there she would sit for all the rest of her life—there she would die. Desperately she wanted to put it off, against the chance of miracles.

While Kennicott was chattering about a new wing-door for the garage she saw the swing-doors of a prison.

She never voluntarily returned to the project. Aggrieved, Kennicott stopped drawing plans, and in ten days the new house was forgotten.

Every year since their marriage Carol had longed for a trip thru the East. Every year Kennicott had talked of attending the American Medical Association convention, "and then afterwards we could do the East up brown. I know New York, and I've spent pretty near a week here—but I would like to see New England and all these historic places and have some sea-food." He talked of it from February to May, and in May he invariably decided that coming to Breenahan's disturbing flavor of travel and gaiety, she wanted to go, but she said nothing. They

The weariness of dish-washing had increased her desire to go. She pictured herself looking at Emerson's manse, bathing in a surf of jade and ivory, wearing a trottier and a summer fur, meeting an aristocratic stranger. In the spring Kennicott had pathetically volunteered, "I'd pose you'd like to get in good long time this summer, but with Gould and Mac away and so many patients depending on me, don't see how I can make it. By zolly, I feel like a tightwad then, not taking you." Thru all this restless July after she had talked Breenahan's disturbing flavor of travel and gaiety, she wanted to go, but she said nothing. They

spoke of and postponed a trip to the Twin Cities. When she suggested, as tho it were a tremendous joke, "I think baby and I might up and leave you, and run off to Cape Cod by ourselves!" his only reaction was "Golly, don't know but what you may almost have to do that, if we don't get in a trip next year."

Toward the end of July he proposed, "Say, the Beavers are holding a convention in Joralemon, street fair and everything. We might go down tomorrow. And I'd like to see Dr. Calibree about some business. Put in the whole day. Might help some to make up for our trip. Fine fellow, Dr. Calibree."

Joralemon was a prairie town of the size of Gopher Prairie.

Their motor was out of order, and there was no passenger-train at an early hour, when she suggested, as tho it were a tremendous joke, "I think baby and I might up and leave you, and run off to Cape Cod by ourselves!" his only reaction was "Golly, don't know but what you may almost have to do that, if we don't get in a trip next year."

Dr. Calibree was a squat, clean-shaven, conscientious-looking man of forty. He was curiously like his own brown-painted motor car, with eye-glasses for windshield. "Want you to meet my wife, doctor—Carrie, make you acquainted with Dr. Calibree," said Kennicott. Calibree bowed quietly and shook her hand, but before he had finished shaking it he was concentrating upon Kennicott with, "Nice to see you, doctor. Say, don't let me forget to ask you about what you did in that eye operation, golly, case—that Bohemian woman at Wahkeesyan."

The two men, on the front seat of the car, chanted gotters and ignored her. She did not know it. She was trying to feed her illusion of the detachment of shop talk. Stroking his chin, drawing in the ecstasy of being erudite, Kennicott inquired, "Say, doctor, what success have you had with thyroids for treatment of pains in the legs before child-birth?"

Carol did not resent their assumption that she was too ignorant to be admitted to masculine mysteries. She

was used to it. But the cabbage and Mrs. Calibree's monotonous "I don't know what we're coming to with all this difficulty getting hired girls" were gumming her eyes with drowsiness. She sought to clear them by appealing to Calibree, in a manner of exaggerated liveliness, "Doctor, have the medical societies in Minnesota ever advocated legislation for help to nursing mothers?"

Calibree slowly revolved toward her. "Uh—I've never—uh—never looked into it. I don't believe much in getting mixed up in politics." He turned squarely from her and, peering earnestly at Kennicott, resumed, "Doctor, what's your experience with unilateral pyelonephritis? Buck-burn of Baltimore advocates resection and nephrotomy, but seems to me—"

Not till after two did they rise. In the lee of the stonily mature trio Carol proceeded to the street fair which added mundane gaiety to the annual rites of the United Fraternal Order of Beavers. Beavers, human Beavers, were everywhere: thirty-second degree Beavers in gray sack suits and decent derbies, more flip-pant Beavers in crash summer coats and straw hats, rustic Beavers in shirt sleeves and frayed suspenders; but whatever his caste-symbol, every Beaver was distinguished by an enormous shrimp-colored ribbon lettered in silver, "Sir Knight and Brother, U. F. O. B. Annual State Convention." On the motherly shirtpast of each of their wives was a badge, "Sir Knight's Lady." The Duluth delegation had brought their famous Beaver amateur band, in Zouave costumes of green velvet jacket, blue trousers, and scarlet fox. The strange thing was that beneath their scarlet pride the Zouaves' faces remained those of American businessmen, pink, smooth, eye-glassed; and as they stood playing in a circle, at the corner of Main Street and Second, as they tooted on fives or with swelling cheeks blew into cornets, their eyes remained as owlish as they were sitting at desks under the sign "This Is My Busy Day."

Carol had supposed that the Beavers were average citizens organized for the purposes of getting cheap life-insurance and playing poker at the lodge-rooms every second Wednesday, but she saw a large poster which proclaimed:

BEAVERS
U. F. O. B.
The greatest influence for good citizenship in the country. The jolliest aggregation of red-blooded, open-handed, hustler-emp good fellows in the world. Joralemon welcomes you to her hospitable city.

Kennicott read the poster and to Calibree admired, "Strong lodge, the Beavers! Never joined. Don't know but what I will."

Calibree admonished, "They're a good bunch. Good strong lodge. See that fellow there that's playing the snare drum? He's the smartest wholesaler grocer in Duluth, they say. Golly, he'd be worth joining. Oh say, are you doing much insurance examining?"

They went on to the street fair. Dining one block of Main Street were the "attractions"—two hot-dog stands, a lemonade and pop-corn stand, a merry-go-round, and booths in which balls might be thrown at rag dolls, if one wished to throw balls at rag dolls. The dignified delegates were shy of the booths, but country boys with brick-red necks and blue ties and bright yellow shoes, who had brought sweet-hearts into town in somewhat dusty and listed Fords, were wolfing sandwiches, drinking strawberry pop out of bottles, and riding the revolving crimson and gold horses. They shrieked and giggled; peanut roasters whistled; the merry-go-round pounded out monotonous music; the barkers bawled, "Here's your chance—here's your chance—come on here, boy—come on here—give that girl a good time—give her a swell time—here's your chance to win a genuine gold watch for five cents, half a dime, the twentieth part of a dollar!" The prairie sun jabbed the unshaded street with shafts that were like poisonous thorns; the tinny cornices above the brick stores were clattering in tight scorching new shoes, up two blocks and back, up two blocks and back, wondering what to do next, working at having a good time.

Carol's head ached as she trailed behind the unsmiling Calibrees along the block of booths. She chirruped at Kennicott, "Let's be wild! Let's ride on the merry-go-round and grab a gold ring!"

Kennicott considered it and heartily assented, "Think you folks would like to stop and try a ride on the merry-go-round?"

Calibree considered it, and mumbled to his wife, "Think you'd like to stop and try a ride on the merry-go-round?"

Mr. Jones shivered as memory carried him back across the years into the autumn storm.

"Cold," he said. "I think I never was so cold in my life; the wind fairly shrieked and the sleet stung our faces like needles."

"We finally struggled to shore, however, and made a landing at the mouth of Salmon creek."

"Let's make a big fire and warm up the first thing," Bob said, and we all three fell to work with a vim getting cotton weed logs together for a big bonfire."

"By the time we were satisfied that we had wood enough to make a fire to match the weather we had a pile 15 or 20 feet high and when we lit it and it began to burn, it was so hot we had to keep a very respectful distance or get burnt."

"We worked like good fellows, getting our little tent pitched, frying our bacon and boiling the coffee, but by the time we had eaten we were quite sure the storm would blow over and that we should have our hunt as we had planned."

Mr. Calibree smiled in a washed-out manner, and sighed, "Oh, no, I don't believe I care to much, but you folks go ahead and try it."

Calibree stated to Kennicott, "No, I don't believe we care to a whole lot, but you folks go ahead and try it."

Kennicott summarized the whole case against wildness: "Let's try it some other time, Carrie."

She gave it up. She looked at the town. She saw that in adventuring from Main Street, Gopher Prairie, to Main Street, Joralemon, she had not stirred. There were the same two-story brick groceries with lodgesigns above the awnings; the same one-story wooden millinery shop; the same fire brick garages; the same prairie at the open end of the wide street; the same people wondering whether the levity of eating a hot-sandwich would break their tab-

They reached Gopher Prairie at nine in the evening.

"You look kind of hot," said Kennicott.

"Yes."

"Joralemon is an enterprising town, don't you think so?"

She shook. "No! I think it's an ash-heap."

"Why, Carrie?"

He worried over it for a week. While he ground his plate with his knife as he energetically pursued fragments of bacon he peeped at her.

(Continued Tomorrow)

DOINGS OF THE DUFFS

One Way of Carrying Them Out

BY ALLMAN



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

Work Today? Shucks!

BY BLOSSER



EVERETT TRUE

AS CLERK TIES UP PURCHASE

BY CONDO



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

BY AHERN



BUSTER TRIED TO CROWD THE THANKSGIVING DINNER

ADVENTURES OF THE TWINS

by Clive Roberts Burton



"It looked like Fairyland, as indeed it was, or part of it."

The Land of Underneath, where Pim Pim reigned, and where Nancy and Nick were starting forth on new adventures, was a most remarkable place. True, it was under the earth, with the entrance by the dog-wood tree (where human eyes could not see it—unless, like the Twins, they were enchanted Shooes), but that was no reason why it should be ugly or unattractive. To judge the Land of Underneath by the ground we dig down in to plant potatoes, would be like judging a beautiful palace by the ugly, gray slates on the roof. One could not see the sky after entering, but then with glow-worms and fire-flies and phosphor-scented beetles to throw lights on the shining walls and ceilings, which in turn caught like a thousand candles, it was as bright as day in most places. And as the ceilings were hung with crystals of every shape and size and different colors, it all looked like

Star Seattle Story Book

By Mabel Cleland

Page 530 FORTY YEARS AGO (Chapter 2)

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(Continued Tomorrow)

Confessions of a Movie Star

CHAPTER XX—THREE WOMEN AGREE ABOUT LOVE

"What's the big hurt in love?" I asked.

Motherdear flushed. Sometimes I think she has, at her age, more feeling than I, who am supposed to be entering the silly sentimental period of girlhood.

"Since you ask, you must be old enough to guess, May."

"But I can't guess! So tell me!"

"Forgetting!"

"Forgetting? The pain of loving is forgetting? Then Ginette was right."

"What did Ginette say?"

"That Cissy is a piker."

Motherdear scowled. I hastened to explain:

"I don't like the word any better than you do. It's Ginette's idea of 'forgetting in love.'"

"Before I answer that, little girl, think of what happened this afternoon. You say poor Cissy was quite in earnest; nevertheless, you kept seeing the situation as if it were a play?"

I nodded.

"You never forgot your role one single minute?"

"Not a second."

"Well, as long as you take proposals that way, I don't think you'd better accept any man."

"As long as I can see myself and my suitor objectively, I'll not be really in love?"

"How will I be an excellent test?"

"How will I know, then? How will I know?"

Motherdear mused before she replied:

"When you forget yourself absolutely. When you no longer see yourself as a picture in a frame, or an actress on a set. When you think only of the man who is talking to you—and never of yourself!"

"Nothing like that has ever happened to me yet, Motherdear."

"When it does, you will have said 'yes' before you know it."

"I did not sleep very well that night. Always and always I kept thinking that if three women as different as Motherdear and Ginette and Rose would agree on any one idea about love, it must be true."

If they agreed, it love passes, why—why should I let love bother me?"

(To Be Continued)

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