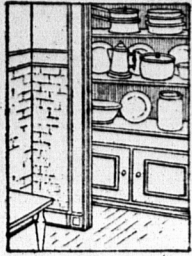


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### After Ten Years

BY MARION RUBINCAM  
FAMILY AFFAIRS  
Chapter 107

"It will be so dull for you here," Millie said again and again during the visit.

"Dull!" Paul exclaimed once. "I don't know your usual way of living, but I assure you it is much more hectic than mine—ours, I should say now." And he smiled at Patty as he corrected himself.

"I shall tell you a great secret," Millie said, leaning towards her with a mock serious expression. "I hate Broadway cabarets. In my youth I know I indulged—but since I have acquired years, wisdom and a wife!"

"She ran along the list. Some where on it was a dinner by Mrs. Werner. This item particularly pleased Millie.

"I wish you'd been here," she said, putting her hand on the window. "But after the mad spree you had, you wouldn't have had time to come. But everyone was so nice about it, she didn't dare ignore me, and that made her furious."

"Then we went to the city, and she was sure she had seen the last of us. Didn't she have things her own way though? She ran the town, so they all tell me."

"Well then we came back, with our anyone knowing. I wrote mother not to say a word. But she was ready in the unforseeable part, and she thought it was grand that way—we were poor, so we could be dropped."

"Did she drop you?" asked Patty. "Being dropped was the desired thing under those circumstances," Millie smiled in a pleased fashion.

"She did try to—I swore I'd show her. Well, she had a job when we got out of the house again. And she had a much more important job than to try to get us out of the house, and found we'd got her day before."

"You see," Millie went into details, anxious that "everything should be understood." "Corps told the party just below the top, by old Mrs. Werner had made up her mind in time she might have had the place we took. But she wasn't like. She thought that Cora was being freakish moving out of town like that. Then she found that this new smart neighborhood is going to be right there—we're going to form a sort of colony. And I've got the best lot and going to have the biggest house. It's costing all we have, but it will be worth it."

"Why will it be worth it?" "Because then I can cut out Mrs. Werner whenever I want, that's why." Millie's little face wore an expression of almost effluence.

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unsurpassed in purity and goodness, is nourishment in a form that seldom fails.

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FOR INDIGESTION

"I'm going to be next president of the club. She won't have a chance. She grunted a little to herself.

"So this was the reason!" Patty had a sudden revelation of Millie's character, all its good and its bad. She had been discontented, the discontent was really the result of an inner craving for something better than she had. Her opportunity came, the one she had longed for, though like so many of us poor mortals, she did not recognize that it was an opportunity; she took it for a calamity. Once away in the city, she longed to see the world as narrowly as ever she had at home. Millie did not have it within herself to grow bigger and better. She was essentially a sort who must be the foremost figure in any circle of people. It did not matter how small that circle nor of what sort.

"You happy," said Millie. "Are you?"  
A WALK REPEATED  
Chapter 108

Paul came to her one morning—the morning of the day they were to leave.

"I don't know how you feel," he said, putting her hand on the window. "But after the mad spree you had, you wouldn't have had time to come. But everyone was so nice about it, she didn't dare ignore me, and that made her furious."

"Then we went to the city, and she was sure she had seen the last of us. Didn't she have things her own way though? She ran the town, so they all tell me."

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### The Wall Flower

by Marion Rubincam  
A GIRL  
Chapter 1

"There is nothing exciting or alluring about Bridge Street, Norris City. It looked like any Bridge Street, or Main Street or Market Street, in any small town that has long since given up hope of being anything but a small town. It is the summer its ugliness glared at one in the hot sun. In the spring it was muddy, and in the fall cold and discouraged. Perhaps it looked like this in midwinter when white snow hid it and many tasteless icicles from roof beams, and covered with delicate frosty lace work the windows where Joe Kelly displayed boots and James Dyer was of beans and packages of spaghetti."

It was mid winter now, and the snow was doing its best to cover the streets and tracks and the ugly pavements.

Pandora Nicholson, as she shivered along with a lock of her shoulders huddled against the cold, thought only that this was blowing up hard, and that this would probably settle down to a blizzard. She turned into Dyer's grocery after barely hesitating upon the threshold. Through the doors she could see a crowd of people, buying provisions. She dreaded going in—simply because most of the men and women would turn around and look at her.

Most of them she knew—but that only made it worse. For she would have to speak to them. She would have to raise her eyes, and she hated to do that. And Mr. Dyer would sing out, "Good evening, little one!" Which would make all the rest of them turn to look at her. It was Dyer's method of being polite, and courteous. Everyone under 18 was "little one" and everyone over 18 was "ma'am". He had the reputation in the village of being a sociable man and was very popular.

However, things had to be bought, so the girl went in. The bell over the door, shaken by a strip attached to the door itself, set up a harsh jangle. This was to warn Dyer that a customer was about, when during the slack part of the day he retired to the cellar to knock boxes apart or decant cheap vinegar from a barrel into bottles labelled "Dyer's Special Extra Fine Brand".

She stepped forward to look at the newcomer. Pandora felt as though every pair of eyes burned holes straight through her. There were half a dozen people buying, true, but she covered her mouth for everyone's sake.

She advanced to the counter with one nervous, cold hand over her mouth. Whenever she was particularly shy, or frightened or unsteady, she covered her mouth with her hand. Young Dyer, the old-fashioned, grown-up man who was taken into partnership some day, greeted her quietly.

"Hello Dora, I'll wait on you in a minute. Better order, if you can't wait. You look like a regular blizzard, you won't get the sugar out for three days, I don't believe."

But when he came for her order you've given me a serious purpose and an ambition."

"Poor boy," laughed Patty, her chin resting on his head, her eyes looking dreamily far out over the valley. "I think I loved you because you were always so spoiled and irresponsible."

"Do you think you'll love me less?" "No," she said with conviction. "I don't think that anything would make much difference in our case. I love you just as much now as I did. Millie thought love ran out in ten years of married life, but Millie was wrong. She never was enough in love with Humphrey, and she let herself grow careless about her well-being, was disillusioned about her. I'll know better than that."

she asked only for a few supplies. And taking silence as consent, she went down the collar and raised heavy shovels of coal that hurt her back a bit, to feed the gigantic furnace-mouth. She shook away the dampers, to stir up the slushy fire bed, in spite of some warning called from above about not "wasting coal."

For if the fire went low and the house was cold, it meant only another complaint against her father, one of whose duties was to tend the heater.

When she came up, and went on with the numerous other tasks connected with the evening meal, she found that her uncle was in, just as the meat was ready, her father appeared.

"Late as usual," Aunt Maude scolded. "Where have you been? There was nothing special to keep you at the farm today—Saturday. I know—only it was so pretty out this afternoon. I tramped to the top of Knob Hill. He apologized. 'I forgot how soon it gets dark—I had to walk in the dark.' 'That's like you,' Aunt Maude commented briefly—her favorite comment by the way and one of invariable disapproval. The trail in the grandmother came down and at five o'clock they sat down to the evening meal."

This was the family—Grandma White, who was Maude's mother; the buxom, tireless Maude herself; her husband, Peter Nicholson, and his healthy, husky child of two people never once troubled with either nerves or imagination. And with them, though not really of the family, were Dora and her father Jim Nicholson, as great a contrast to his brother Peter as the girl was to her cousin.

Glady's made an announcement. "Ma, I've asked some folks for a party tonight—'it's Saturday. Can Dora make the refreshments?"

Glady's didn't ask "Dora will you make the refreshments?" After all, why should she? The supreme authority of the house was Aunt Maude—if Aunt Maude said yes, the thing was done. Dora did as she was told. In fact, Dora had thought about it, she would have considered it polite of Glady's to bother asking her mother. They had been through this before.

When they were ready to leave the table, Glady's remarked casually, "We'll have to dress so-as to look good. Dora, you do the dishes without me tonight—you don't have to dress till later."

"Of course," Dora answered—the expected answer.

It was a rule in the Nicholson house that the girls did the supper dishes. "I do the work and I'm tired. I'm entitled to my evenings," Aunt Maude would remark now and then. So after the meal, she sat and darned, or sewed, or mended, and then she read, and most often when people did not drop in to call, she lay in her chair and dozed. The magazine she was pretending to glance at, lying in her lap.

Dora sometimes wondered how anyone could sleep as much as her Aunt Maude.

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"It's why she keeps so fat," Dora's father said once. "When she's awake and working, she's going like a steam engine, but when she relaxes, she makes up for it by sleeping. Why grudge her forgetfulness?" At which Dora laughed a little.

She had an odd laugh, if indeed it could be called a laugh. When she even smiled, she had the same nervous trick of holding her hand over her mouth. This was because her Aunt Maude had constantly reminded her how ugly she was during the days she was losing her first teeth and acquiring mature ones.

"Hello! Look at the elephant tusks the child has," she remembered her aunt saying again and again during that period.

To be sure she said the same thing to her own Glady's a couple of years later. But the stolid Glady's only replied by opening her mouth wider and laughing at her mother, her chubby cheeks red as sun kissed apples.

But the little Pandora, super-sensitive as only a youngster can be, flushed with shame and hid her mouth when she laughed. In the proper time, her teeth became as white and even as anyone could wish. But the queer little nervous habit lasted.

That was only one of the many reasons why she was quite as glad to stay back in the kitchen and make refreshments for the party Glady's was having. So she cleared off the table while Glady's and her mother dressed, and was up to her elbows in spongy dish-water when Mrs. Nicholson came down an apron over her best gown, to lend a hand.

"We can have sandwiches and cocoa, there's lots of milk," that lady decided. "And the cake I made this morning. That ought to be enough for any party, I say, but Glady's wants fudge as well."

For all her own strong-mindedness and firm temper, she allowed herself to be hurried by her daughter to an astonishing degree up to her elbows in spongy dish-water when Mrs. Nicholson came down an apron over her best gown, to lend a hand.

"We can have sandwiches and cocoa, there's lots of milk," that lady decided. "And the cake I made this morning. That ought to be enough for any party, I say, but Glady's wants fudge as well."

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