

JUST A GIRL

BY JANE PHELPS

ZENA RENTS A FLAT FOR HERSELF AND MOTHER

Chapter 125

"I shall soon be able to send for mother," I said to Mary about six months after her marriage.

"That means that you will leave us," her voice trembled a little although she smiled.

"Yes, but I shall try to get an apartment near here so we can be together often. You will love my mother, I am sure."

"I think I shall be afraid of her," Zena said. "I never knew any real five ladies like your mother must be."

"She is fine, Mary, and that is why you will not be afraid of her, but will be fond of her instead. I know she longs to be with me, although she has been fairly happy with Aunt Susan."

"I think so too! and it was selfish of me to feel sorry to lose you. I don't know how well I'll ever get along with the shop when you ain't here to advise us. Tom said the other night that you were earning a salary and didn't get it."

"Nonsense! and Mary, mother's coming will make no real difference in those things. I shall always be just as much interested in you and Tom, and in the shop. I may not be able to be with you quite as much but you can come to me, and in that way I'll be in touch with each other constantly. But mother isn't here yet. I have to find a flat, just three rooms, and furnish it all complete."

"I'll help! and Zena, there's a new apartment house just finished about two blocks from here. It looks awfully nice on the outside."

"We'll go and look at it tomorrow."

I had saved two hundred dollars, beside sending mother more than ever before, and buying myself some working clothes. I was sure I could furnish my three rooms and would not need mother's money, since she would take it all and manage the house. I was positive we would get along nicely. I had not mentioned my plan to Mr. Claxton, although I intended to before I decided upon anything, as I would have to give him as reference perhaps.

The house was just as nice inside as out. I looked at several of the apartments, and finally took the refusal of three rooms and bath up two flights of stairs. The rent was twenty-five dollars a month, all and more than I felt I should pay. But I had to make mother climb any higher, altho the one above was \$22.50.

The agent asked me for references, as I expected.

I told Mr. Claxton, explained my plan to bring mother on to live with me, and asked if he was willing the agent should telephone him as to my ability to pay, and as to my desirability as a tenant.

"Certainly! and Miss Stewart, I shall give you \$40.00 a week hereafter. Your work it worth it."

I was delighted. Now I would not feel that perhaps I had paid too much rent for the apartment. Surely with \$40.00 a week mother and I could live very comfortably even if things were high.

It would take me at least two, or three weeks to get ready for her, and as the increase in my salary was to go into effect immediately it would be a great help in paying her railroad fare.

I hated to spend even a cent after I had rented the flat. I begged after every penny I spent that didn't go toward furnishing it, and getting it ready for mother. Mary helped me every minute she could spare from the shop. She made the curtains, covered pillows, and mended linen, even insisting on taking some of the sewing to the shop to do if trade were dull. Tom, too, helped me wonderfully, and saved me a good deal by doing many things I should have been obliged to hire a man to do. I had done without you, I said as I bade them good night after we had all spent a long evening at the flat.

"I don't know what we should have done, or been, without you, Zena. We are very happy to be able to help," Mary said seriously.

"Something happened to please you," he remarked casually.

"Yes, I heard from an old friend. I too had tried to speak carelessly, but knew that I had blushed.

"It must be a very dear friend to care you so much," I said. "I made some careless answer, and tried to hide my feeling of delight that I had not been forgotten. But once or twice I caught Mr. Claxton looking at me queerly, and he too mentioned my changed manner."

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BABY COVERED WITH ECZEMA

When 4 Days Old. Cross and Cried. Cuticura Heals.

"My baby brother had eczema which began when he was about four days old. It came in little pimples and then a mass, and he was covered. He could not sleep, and he cried."

"This lasted about two months before we tried Cuticura. It helped him, so we bought more, and he was all healed after we had used two cakes of Soap and two boxes of Ointment." (Signed) Miss Almada Williams, Youngs Cove, N. B., May 22, 1918.

Use Cuticura Soap, Ointment and Talcum for all toilet purposes.

Soap 25c, Ointment 25c and 50c. Sold everywhere. Canadian Depot: The Canadian Soap Co., Ltd., 100 St. Paul St., Montreal. Cuticura Soap shaves without soap.

A LONG-DELAYED COMMUNICATION

Chapter 126

One day the post man brought me a letter from mother enclosing a note from our old lawyer. Mother had been here, not to tell our address, and so no one had been able to find us through him. It may have been, probably was, foolish, but mother nor I wished any of our old friends to know anything about us. Silly pride, many many who would not have felt and acted the same under the same conditions.

Mr. Harkness had written a note to mother about Kenneth Lawrence. It seemed that Kenneth had visited New York, that he had found out that Mr. Harkness was father's lawyer, had visited him, and asked for our address. Mr. Harkness had refused to give it, but said:

"The young man was so persistent I promised to let you know he inquired for you. He gave me his address, and I would have forgotten it, and begged me to ask Zena to write him a note telling him where he could write her."

My heart almost stopped beating. So he had not forgotten after all. I laughed and cried, then took myself to task for being hysterical. I had been asked for me, but meant nothing. I was not the gay butterfly, Zena Stewart, he had known, but a very different girl. I was a serious working girl. I had not danced in years; I seldom went to any place of amusement. I had learned that a girl must conserve her strength, and get on in the business world, especially a girl inclined to frilliness.

He had been intrigued with the other Zena, the gay, laughing, happy, indulged daughter of a millionaire who played away the hours and days, dancing, motoring, etc. Why should I think he would care for this one, the gray, serious girl who never played at all any more, and whose mind was filled with the price of securities instead of dancing and theatres.

Yet I could not altogether banish the happy feeling his asking for me had aroused. I had dreamed of him too long, had too often visualized him in my thoughts in my lonely hours.

Two days after receiving mother's letter I wrote Kenneth. It was hardly more than a note. I simply told him I had heard of him from Mr. Harkness, and that he told me he (Kenneth) had asked for my address. I gave him the flat mother and I would occupy almost as soon as he received my letter. Then I waited. I had told him nothing of myself, my changed condition. Time enough for that if he wrote me.

Yet I went about my work in a happy excited manner that drew a puzzled look from Mr. Claxton, question from Jennie Wilcox, and a wondering news, or something, from Jennie said. "You fairly radiate happiness."

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hard for me. I had not enjoyed the other home so many years, and I had become attached to such poverty that this little flat seemed a veritable palace to me if mother were with me.

The day I sent for mother I received a letter from Kenneth Lawrence.

MRS. STEWART ARRIVES. Chapter 127

The letter from Kenneth was very short. He said: "I have tried very hard to find you, but failed. That hard-headed old lawyer would give me no satisfaction until I worried him into promising to send my request to your mother."

I have thought of you very much in the last years. Are you still single? Yes, you must be. You signed your 'Zena Stewart.' Often when I am riding the ranch thoughts of you keep me company. I recall every time I was with you, and what you said and did. No other girl ever interested me half as much. I want to see you again, Zena, May I?"

"I ask to see you, yet it is very uncertain when I can get away—not for several weeks at least. A big ranch carries with it big responsibilities—one cannot evade. Mine are great just now because my superintendent, who has been with me for years, is away on his first vacation. Not even to see you more quickly can I call him back. So I must wait, not even daring to hope that you will be disappointed because of the necessity."

"I judge you and your mother have settled in Chicago. I cannot say, but he glances at me as if just so many miles brings me. I am much alone, and solitude, loneliness, breeds strange dreams. I have no way of knowing your thoughts of me—or have you even remembered? Your kind little note makes me think you have not utterly forgotten the Western fellow who flitted across your landscape for a few weeks—so long ago."

"I think now that I can be in Chicago in about three weeks. Let me know if you will be there at that time, and will—I was going to say—he glad to see me. I will change it to will you let me see you. My regards to your mother. Until then,

"Very sincerely your friend," "Kenneth Lawrence."

There was not much in this letter to cause a girl to feel elated. Yet—he had remembered, he wanted to see me again. That at last soothed my pride that often rebelled when I thought of him because I had no way of knowing he ever thought of me, or remembered that time in New York when he had sought me.

But mingled with this feeling was another. Kenneth Lawrence had been my ideal man. It was a very immature, girlish ideal, to be sure, but I had hugged it close and in a way it had prevented me from becoming interested in any one else. I believe many girls and women are influenced by meeting a man who inflames their imaginations, and whom they hold in their hearts as the ideal man for them, and so perhaps miss much that is good in life because of the virtues with which they endow the man whose casual acquaintanceship has taken a hold upon their imagination.

I knew Kenneth Lawrence was different from the young man with whom I had associated in that he was more serious at the time I met him than the others at his age. That, should occasion arise, these other boys as they grow older would have proved just as capable, did not occur to me. I had seen only the frivolous side of their lives. Tony Deland had proven his business acumen when large interests were left him upon his father's death. But of the others I knew nothing, and the serious Kenneth had remained the man who would make a serious girl or woman happy, because he himself had been a worker, a producer.

But Mother was coming! I had no time to speculate, or to worry. She arrived late after the shop was closed, so Mary and Tom went to the train with me to meet her. I was so proud and happy when she alighted. She looked so sweet, she was so dear to Tom and Mary, telling them she already felt acquainted with them because of my letters, that she put them at once at ease. Tom insisted upon calling a taxi.

"My dear little girl!" Mother took me in her arms. "Don't you suppose I see through your little subterfuge? That I know you spent so much for my room that you had to economize on your own? Everything is very wonderful, dear, but you the most wonderful of all. I don't yet understand how you brought up as you were—have been able to do it."

"My bringing up was a hindrance, Mother—at first, it made things seem harder than they were." I answered lightly. "But now nothing seems hard. I have a nice position, everyone is kind to me, and I am earning enough to be independent and have you. What more could a girl ask?"

"And you never regret the old times, the friends you loved?"

"Not any more. My time and thoughts are too filled with work. And Mother, dear, I couldn't go back now—not the butterfly life I led before I knew what it was to work. I think I have changed—perhaps more than I realize."

I thought of Kenneth Lawrence. Would he think me changed for the worse?

"You have changed, dear, but it is only nature that you should. Care, responsibility, and hard work would change any girl. I wish I might have helped you more."

"It's a slave you'll be to this little flat now, Mother dear! Meals to get, dishes to wash, cleaning to do, and the marketing. You won't have much time to be lonely."

"I feel that your Father knows we are together at last and that he is happy that it is so. I cannot even yet think of him as

dead. He is a very living presence to me."

"And to me, Mother. In all these hard years things he said, his advice, have been in my mind and have helped me. Yes, I am sure that Dad knows, and is glad."

"After we had unpacked all Mother's things and put them in place, hung her clothes in the closet, or laid them in the bureau drawers, we went to market. Mother would do strange for a time, and I wanted to show her the way to the nearest grocery. After we had made our simple purchases we went to the pancake shop for lunch. I had not told Mother we were coming, and her delight was amusing. Tom, too, was so pleased that Mother said:

"You and your friends will spoil me, Zena. And what a darling shop! And I never ate such girlish cakes."

"Pancakes, Mother! This is a pancake shop."

"After we finished our luncheon we went slowly home and spent the afternoon talking as only mother and daughter who had been so long-separated could talk. Mother started me when she asked:

"Did you communicate with that woman, Mrs. Lawrence after I sent you Mr. Harkness' letter?"

"Yes, I wrote Kenneth Lawrence. I gave him my address," I replied, slowly to Mother's question. Some way I felt a reluctance to talk of Kenneth, even to her.

"Have you heard from him since you wrote?"

"Yes, just a short letter. He says he may come to Chicago before long. His superintendent is away and he is very busy."

"You will be glad to see him, I expect. Although we did not know him very well. Mother had said 'we' as was natural to her. In the old days my friends were her friends, and I never had a chance to receive anyone they did not know. Kenneth had been Claudia's cousin, and so welcomed. But neither Father or Mother knew him well, but I felt that I did—not only as I remembered him, the good times we spent together, but because he held him in my thoughts ever since."

"I shall be glad to read the acquaintance," I replied quietly. As I said it my heart beat more rapidly and I felt my face flush. I changed the conversation before Mother noticed.

In the days that followed I was often tempted to tell her how I felt about Kenneth Lawrence. But it seemed so foolish in me to have held him so in my thoughts all these years without knowing any one who had been in contact with what it would be when he saw me so changed—that I said nothing. He was almost a phantom lover, if such a term as 'lover' could be used—a dream companion whom I had endowed with all that makes a man desirable. Perhaps he, too, had changed. I dismissed the thought almost as soon as it came. He had been a ranchman when I met him, was still one, while I and my life had altered in every particular. But not even to Mother would I confess my fear that he might be disappointed when he saw how different I was from the happy, carefree girl he had known. Not that I wasn't happy, especially now that I had Mother with me, but I had lost much of the vivacity, the girlishness that had been mine in the long ago before Dad left us.

Mother had written Mr. Claxton a little note of thanks for her flowers, and I also had told him how we had appreciated his thoughtful-

SOLVE THESE RIDLES WIN THIS CAR

When a bear goes into a dry-goods store what does he want?



Answer SLIM NU

What is it that every living person has seen but will never see again?



Answer DRY E YEAST

What is that which you break by just naming it?



Answer ICE LENS

What is the difference between a 1900 dime and an 1899 cent?



Answer NICE NETS N

HERE are four riddles for boys and girls with wise heads. We told the artist to draw the pictures to represent the riddles, but he guessed the answers—and put them in too! So we barred him from the contest and told him to keep it a secret. Luckily, he got the answers all jumbled up, so you won't be any the wiser.

If you can unscramble the jumbled letters beneath each riddle picture and put them in their right order to spell the right words, you will have the right answers. It isn't an easy task. Good thinking, patience and perseverance may find you the answers. Try it.

If you think you have found the answers, write them carefully on a sheet of white paper. Put on nothing but your four answers and your name and address in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Handwriting, spelling, punctuation and general neatness will count if more than one answer is correct.

We will write and tell you immediately if you are correct, and send you a handsome illustrated list of all the prizes that you can win.

The Genuine Culver for girls and boys ever built. It has real steering wheel and gears with shifting lever, steel springs, powerful brake, pneumatic tires, hand-somely finished body and good upholstery. Very little gasoline. You will be proud of it if you win it.



1921 Model



THE PRIZES

- FIRST PRIZE, Genuine Culver Chummy Racer. \$250.00
Second Prize, Real Typewriter. 40.00
Third Prize, Genuine Autographic Kodak Folding Camera. 35.00
Fourth Prize, Magnificent Gold Watch and Chain or Girl's Wrist Watch. 25.00
Fifth Prize, French Baby Doll and Wicker Carriage. 15.00
Sixth Prize, Moving Picture Machine, with Film. 10.00
Seventh to Tenth Prizes, Self-filer Fountain Pens, each. 5.00

What Others Have Done You Can Do

Here are the names of only a few of the boys and girls to whom we have already awarded big prizes:

- Earl J. Beattie, Surf Inlet, B.C. Chummy Culver Racer, Value \$250.00
Harry Dwyer, Elgin, Ont. Typewriter
Harnes Fisher, Montreal, Que. Seven-Jewelled Watch
Helen Smith, Edmonton, Alta. Shetland Pony and Cart
Beatrice Hughes, Hazelton, B.C. \$50.00 Cash
Lyle Benson, Hamilton, Ont. \$100.00 Cash
Helen Beckett, Toronto, Ont. \$25.00 Cash
Florence Nesbitt, Annapolis, Ont. \$150.00 Cash
Helen Foster, Leamington, Alta. \$25.00 Cash
Frank Kirby, Three Hills, Alta. \$150.00 Cash
Mary Proctor, Vancouver, B.C. \$150.00 Cash
Eva Casson, North Bay, Ont. \$100.00 Cash and Carriage

The contest will close on June 20, 1921, at 5.30 p.m. We will send you the names of many others too. Only boys and girls 17 years of age or under may send answers, and each boy and girl will be required to perform a small service for us. Send your answers this very evening to THE PRIZES MAN, Dept. 24, 253-259 Spadina Ave., Toronto, Ont.

"My treat!" he whispered.

He found mother's luggage, attended to it, and relieved me from all trouble. It is nice to have a man around when one is travelling. When we reached home they would not come in.

"You and your mother will want to talk, and it is late," Tom said with his usual thoughtfulness.

When we opened the door the first thing I saw was a big box from a florist's shop. The janitress, who had a key, had opened the door, and left it. I opened the box. A perfect riot of color greeted my eyes, and I said:

"I trust your mother has had a pleasant journey. Please accept these as my greeting to her."

A HAPPY DAY TOGETHER. Chapter 128

"Who is Mr. Claxton?" Mother asked as she buried her nose in the flowers.

"My employer. I have mentioned him several times."

"Oh, yes, now I recall him, but I did not connect him with flowers for me. Why should I?"

"Why indeed? It was only one more proof of his kindness. I was very proud and happy that he should think of Mother, should try to make her arrival at the home in a silver frame, her lovely toilet articles he had given her only a little while before he died, which I had insisted she keep, and which gave the room an air of elegance when we had disposed them to advantage."

"My room is so pretty, dear, and yours so plain," she complained.

"I am a bachelor girl, Mother. I have no time for fofo-rooms. I intend to care for my own room, and if I had a lot of knickknacks around I am afraid they would not get dusted."

"My dear little girl!" Mother took me in her arms. "Don't you suppose I see through your little subterfuge? That I know you spent so much for my room that you had to economize on your own? Everything is very wonderful, dear, but you the most wonderful of all. I don't yet understand how you brought up as you were—have been able to do it."

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"I wish I might do more," she said with a glance that made me flush. "I am very glad for you, Mrs. Stewart. May I call on your Mother and you some evening?"