

Entered as Second-class Mail  
at Postoffice, Indianapolis.NOBODY'S GIRL  
By ANNE AUSTIN author of the PENNY PRINCESSCOPYRIGHT 1928  
BY NEA SERVICE

## CHAPTER I

THE long, bare room had never been graced by a picture or a curtain. Its only furniture was twenty narrow iron cots. Four girls were scrubbing the warped, wide-planked floor, three of them pitifully young for the hard work, the baby of them being only 6, the oldest 9. The fourth, who directed their labors, rising from her knees sometimes to help one of her small crew, was just turned 16, but she looked, in her short, skimpy dress of faded blue and white checked gingham, not more than 12 or 13.

"Sal-lee," the 6-year-old called out in a coaxing whine, as she sloshed a dirty rag up and down in a pail of soapy water, "play-act for us, won't you, Sal-lee? Tend like you're a queen and I'm your little girl. I'd be a princess, wouldn't I, Sal-lee?"

The child sat back on her thin little haunches, one small hand plucking at the skimpy skirt of her own faded blue and white gingham, an exact replica, except for size, of the frocks worn by the three other scrubbers. "I'll tend like I've got on a white satin dress, Sal-lee—"

Sally Ford lifted a strand of fine black hair that had escaped from the tight, thick braid that hung down her narrow back, tucked it behind a well-shaped ear, and smiled fondly upon the tiny pleader. It was a miracle-working smile. Before the miracle, that small, pale face had looked like that of a serious little old woman, the brows knotted, the mouth tight in a frown of concentration.

But when she smiled she became a pretty girl. Her blue eyes, that had looked almost as faded as her dress, darkened and gleamed like a pair of perfectly matched sapphires. Delicate, wing-like eyebrows, even blacker than her hair, lost their sullenness, assumed a lovely, provocative arch. Her white cheeks gleamed. Her little pale mouth, unpuckered of its frown, bloomed suddenly, like a tea rose opening. Even, pointed, narrow teeth, to fit the narrowness of her delicate, childish jaw, flashed into that smile completely destroying the picture of a rather sad little old woman which she might have posed for before.

"All right, Betsy!" Sally cried, jumping to her feet. "But all of you will have to work twice as hard after I've play-acted for you, or Stone-Face will skin us alive."

Her smile was reflected in the three oldish little faces of the children squatting on the floor. The rags with which they had been wiping up surplus water after Sally's vigorous scrubbing were abandoned, and the three of them, moving in unison like mindless sheep, clustered close to Sally, following her with adoring eyes as she switched a sheet off one of the cots.

"This is my ermine robe," she declared. "Thelma, run and shut the door. . . . Now, this is my royal crown," she added, seizing her long, thick braid of black hair. Her nimble, thin fingers searched for and found three crimped wire hairpins which she secreted in the meshes of the plait. In a trice her small head was crowned with its own magnificent glory, the braid wound coronet-fashion over her ears and low upon her broad, white forehead.

"Say 'A royal queen am I,' 6-year-old Betsy shrieked, clasping her hands in ecstasy. "And don't forget to make up a verse about me, Sal-lee! I'm a princess! I've got on white satin and little red shoes, Sal-lee!"

Sally was marching grandly up and down the barrack-like dormitory, holding Betsy's hand, the train of her "ermine robe" upheld by the two other little girls in faded gingham, and her dramatically deepened voice called "verses" which she had composed on other such occasions and to which she was now adding, when the door was thrown open and a booming voice rang out:

"Sally Ford! What in the world does this mean? On a Saturday morning!"

The two little "pages" dropped the "ermine robe," the little "princess" shrank closer against the "queen" and all four, Sally's voice leading the chorus, chanted in a monotonous sing-song: "Good morning, Mrs. Stone. We hope you are well." It was the good morning salutation which, at the matron's orders, invariably greeted her as she made her morning rounds of the state orphanage asylum.

"Good morning, children," Mrs. Stone, the head matron of the asylum, answered severely but automatically. She never spoke except severely, unless it happened that a trustee or a visitor accompanying her.

"As a punishment for playing at your work you will spend an hour of your Saturday afternoon playing in the weaving room. And Betsy, if I find your weaving all snarled up like it was last Saturday I'll lock you in the dark room without any supper. You're a great big girl, nearly six and a half years old, and you have to learn to work to earn your board and keep. As for you, Sally—I'm surprised at you! I thought I could depend on you better than this. Sixteen years old and still acting like a child and getting the younger children into trouble. Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Sally Ford?"

"Yes, Mrs. Stone," Sally answered meekly, her face that of a little old woman again; but her hands trembled as she gathered up the sheet which for a magic ten minutes had been an ermine robe.

"Now, Sally," continued the



Sally

first thing you know and then I thought it was streaked with tears. Ford often played—imagining herself someone else, seeing familiar things through eyes which had never beheld them before.

"Yes, Mrs. Stone," Sally nodded. "Christine's bed." There was nothing in her voice to indicate that she had loved Christine more than any child she had ever had charge of.

"I suppose this new child will be snappish up soon," Mrs. Stone continued, her severe voice striving to be pleasant and conversational, for she was fond of Sally. In her own way. "She has yellow curls, though I suspect her mother, who has just died and who was a stock company actress, used peroxide on it. But still it's yellow and it's curly, and we have at least a hundred applications on file for little girls with golden curly hair."

"Thelma," she whirled severely upon the 8-year-old child, "what's this in your bed?" Her broad, heavy palm, sweeping expertly down the sheet-covered iron cot, had encountered something, a piece of broken blue bottle.

"It's mine," Thelma quivered, her tongue licking upward to catch the first salty tear. "I traded my broken doll for it. I look through it and it makes everything look pretty and blue," she explained desperately, in the institutional whine.

"Oh, please let me keep it, Mrs. Stone!"

But the matron had tossed the bit of blue glass through the nearest window. "You'd cut yourself on it, Thelma," she justified herself in her stern voice. "I'll see if I can find another doll for you in the next box of presents that comes in. Now, don't cry like a baby. You're a big girl. It was just a piece of broken old bottle. Well, Sally, you take charge of the new little girl. Make her feel at home. Give her a bath with that insect soap, and make a bundle of her clothes and take them down to Miss Pond."

She lifted her long, starched skirt as she stepped over one of the scrubber's puddles of water, then moved majestically through the door.

Clara, the 9-year-old orphan, stuck out her tongue as the white skirt swished through the door, then turned upon Sally, her little face sharp and ugly with hatred.

"Mean old thing! Always buttin' in! Can't let us have fun at all! Some other kid'll find Thelma's sapphire and keep it often her—"

"It isn't a sapphire," Sally said dully, her brush beginning to describe new semi-circles on the pine floor. "It's like she said—just a piece of broken old bottle. Well, Sally, she said she'd try to find you a doll, Thelma."

"You said it was a sapphire, Sally. You said it was worth millions and millions of dollars. It was a sapphire, long as you said it was, Sally!" Thelma sobbed, as grieved for the loss of illusion as for the loss of her treasure.

"I reckon I'm plumb foolish to go on play-acting all the time," Sally Ford said dully.

The floor of the big room had been completely scrubbed, and was giving out a moist odor of yellow soap when Miss Pond, who worked in the office on the first floor of the big main building, arrived leading a reluctant little girl by the hand.

To the four orphans in faded blue and white gingham the newcomer looked unbelievably splendid, more like the "princess" that Betsy had been impersonating than like a mortal child. Her golden hair hung in precisely arranged curls to her shoulders. Her dress was of pink crepe de chine, trimmed with many yards of cream-colored lace. There were pink silk socks and little white kid slippers. And her pretty face

had a smile that was as monotonous as theirs:

"Our heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this food and for all the other blessings, Thou givest us."

Sally Ford, keeping a watchful, pitying eye on her new charge, who was only nibbling at the unappetizing food, found herself looking upon the familiar scene with the eyes of the frightened little new orphan. It was a game that Sally

EYES OF STATE  
TURN TO CITY  
CAGE TOURNEY

Sixteen Regional Winners  
Start Friday in Tilts  
for Title.

## PROVIDE POLICE GUARD

Special Bus Service From  
Circle to Butler Gym  
Is Arranged.

Be there a Hoosier youth with heart so dead he does not know that the finals of the seventeenth State high school basketball tournament begins in the Butler University Field House here Friday at 9 a.m.?

The hopes and hearts of several hundred thousand Indiana high school students and older fans centered toward Indianapolis today as sixteen high school basketball teams and their hordes of followers made final preparations for the climax of the State's great winter pastime.

As the advance ranks began to arrive today, Indianapolis made final moves to welcome the visitors and enjoy the event herself.

Police Chief Claude M. Worley announced that police will work twelve-hour shifts Friday and Saturday.

## Assign 75 Policemen

Seventy-five officers will be assigned to handle traffic and crowds at and near the gym.

"Efficiency and courtesy will be our slogan. The police will leave nothing undone to make the stay of the visitors happy," Worley said.

The new Butler Field House, which will hold 15,000 fans, is located at Sunset Ave. and Forty-Ninth St.

Police and tourney officials advised that the best motor routes to the scene from the downtown section are out Capitol Ave., Meridian or Illinois Sts. and west on Forty-Ninth St.

No motor traffic will be permitted on Forty-Ninth St. west of Capitol Ave.

The end of the Illinois-Fairview street car leaves passengers six blocks from the gym. Those taking a Central Ave.-Meridian Heights car to Forty-Ninth St. are four blocks from their destination.

Butler University officials declared everything has been done to put the field house stands and playing floor in excellent condition.

Reinforcing of the stands has guarded against a repetition of a collapse such as occurred at the Butler-Notre Dame game a week ago Wednesday, they said.

The bleachers have been finally approved by the city building department, according to Fred W. Connell, board of safety president.

"We have taken every precaution to prevent recurrence of last week's accident at the State cage tourney and engineers are confident that the temporary bleachers are safe for Indiana's youth. The university complied with the orders of the city in every way. Parents of Indiana high school youths need have no fear of sending their children to the State meet," said Connell.

Because Eloise was a "new girl," Sally was permitted to keep her at her side after the noon dinner. It was Sally who showed her all the buildings of the big orphanage, pointed out the boys' dormitories, separated from the girls' quarters by the big kitchen garden; showed her the bare schoolrooms, in which Sally herself had just completed the third year of high school. It was Sally who proudly showed her the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine.

Eloise's hot little hand clung tightly to Sally's on the long trip of inspection of her new "home."

But her cry, hopeless and monotonous now, even taking on a little of the institutional whine, was still the same heartbroken protest she had uttered upon her arrival in the dormitory. "I don't want to be an orphan," she said.

"I don't want to be an orphan," the newcomer protested passionately, a white-slipped foot flying out suddenly and kicking Miss Pond on the shin.

It was then that Sally took charge. She knelt, regardless of frantic, kicking little feet, and put her arms about Eloise Durant. She began to whisper to the terror-stricken child, and Miss Pond scurried away, her kind eyes brimming with tears, her heart kind swelling with compassion for the little girl.

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

Eloise's hot little hand clung tightly to Sally's on the long trip of inspection of her new "home."

But her cry, hopeless and monotonous now, even taking on a little of the institutional whine, was still the same heartbroken protest she had uttered upon her arrival in the dormitory. "I don't want to be an orphan," she said.

"I don't want to be an orphan," the newcomer protested passionately, a white-slipped foot flying out suddenly and kicking Miss Pond on the shin.

It was then that Sally took charge. She knelt, regardless of frantic, kicking little feet, and put her arms about Eloise Durant. She began to whisper to the terror-stricken child, and Miss Pond scurried away, her kind eyes brimming with tears, her heart kind swelling with compassion for the little girl.

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

Eloise's hot little hand clung tightly to Sally's on the long trip of inspection of her new "home."

But her cry, hopeless and monotonous now, even taking on a little of the institutional whine, was still the same heartbroken protest she had uttered upon her arrival in the dormitory. "I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

Eloise's hot little hand clung tightly to Sally's on the long trip of inspection of her new "home."

But her cry, hopeless and monotonous now, even taking on a little of the institutional whine, was still the same heartbroken protest she had uttered upon her arrival in the dormitory. "I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."

"I know why Sally wasn't adopted," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine."