

NOBODY'S GIRL

BY ANNE AUSTIN author of the PENNY PRINCESS COPYRIGHT 1928 BY NEA SERVICE

THIS HAS HAPPENED
The summer she is 16, SALLY FORD, orphan, is "farmed out" to Clem Carson, farmer and severe taskmaster. There she meets DAVID NASH, handsome student of scientific farming, who is working on the Carson farm for the summer. David likes Sally and she likes him. They are in love. But Clem Carson is so enraged by Carson's insinuation about him and Sally that he strikes him, sending him crashing to the ground. Not knowing whether Carson is dead or not, Sally and David decide they must get away as quickly as possible. All that night they tramp through fields toward the town of Stanton. At daybreak they come to a railroad track and find a train on the spur. Sally is overjoyed to see her friend, EDDIE COBB, a former orphan, who ran away to join the carnival. She tells him their plight and he asks WINFIELD BYBEE, owner of the carnival, to make a plan for them. Bybee agrees and sends David to the cook's car. MRS. BYBEE, the real manager of the show, gives Sally the role of Princess Lalla, crystal gazer. Sally makes her first bow on the carnival platform. She is thrilled to see ROSS WILLIS, friend of Pearl Carson, come forward to have a fortune told. NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XV

WHILE Ross Willis, awkward and embarrassed, shuffled to the canvas chair which Gus, the spieler, whisked forward, Sally reflected that there was no need for her to remember any of the multitudinous instructions with which Mrs. Bybee had primed her for her job of "seeress."

She curved her small, brown painted, gilded-nailed hands over the crystal and bent her veiled face low. In a seductive, sing-song voice she began to chant, bringing some of the words out hesitantly, as if English had been recently learned and came hard to her "Turkish" lips.

"I see ze beeg fields—wheat fields, corn fields—ees it not so?" She raised her shaded eyes coyly to the face of the young farmer. The crowd pressed close, breathing hard, the odors of their breath and perspiration coming up on hot waves of summer air to the gaily dressed little figure on the platform.

"Yes, I mean, sure, Princess." Ross Willis stammered, and the crowd laughed, pressed closer still. Two or three women waved quarters to attract the attention of Gus, the spieler, who stood behind her, to add her if necessary.

"You are—what you call it?—a farmer," Sally went on in her seductively deepened voice. Oh, it was fun to "play-act" and to be

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paid for it! "You va-ry reach young man. Va-ry beeg farm. You have mother, father, lil' seester." Thank heaven, her ears had been keen that night of Pearl's party, even if she had been inarticulate with shyness! "You ar're in love. I see a gir-rl, a beeg, pretty gir-rl with red hair an' blue eyes. Ees it not zo?" Her little low laugh was a gurgle, which started a shout of laughter in the crowd.

"Yeah, I reckon so," Ross Willis admitted, blushing more violently than ever.

"Oh, you Pearl!" a girl's voice shrilled from the crowd.

"You marry with thees gir-rl, have three va-ry nize child's," Sally went on delightedly. "After all, why shouldn't Pearl marry Ross Willis, since she could not have David?" "Zo! That ees all I see," she concluded with sweet gravity. "Zee creestial she go dark now."

Ross Willis thanked "Princess Lalla" awkwardly and dropped from the platform to the grass-strewn ground, entirely unaware that the marvelous seeress was little Sally Ford.

Confidence and mirth welled up in Sally. She began to believe in herself as "Princess Lalla," just as she had always more than half-believed that she was the queen or the actress whom she had impersonated in the old days so recently ended forever, when she had "playacted" for the other orphans.

The next seer after knowledge of "past, present and future" was not so easy, but not very hard either, for the applicant was a girl, a pretty, very urban-looking girl, who wore a tiny solitary ring on her engagement finger, and who had been clinging to the arm of an obviously adoring young man. For the pretty girl Sally obligingly foretold a happy marriage with a "dark, tall young man, va-ry handsome," a long journey and two children. The girl sparkled with pleasure, utterly unconscious of the fact that "Princess Lalla" had told her nothing of the past and very little of the present.

Quarters were thrust upon her thick and fast. Because of the brisk demand for her services, Sally gave only the briefest of "readings," and only a few muttered angrily that it was a swindle. To a middle-aged farmer she gave a bumper wheat crop, a new eight-cylinder car, a prospective son-in-law for the girl whom Sally had unerringly picked out as his unmarried daughter, and the promise of many splendid grandchildren. To a freckled, open-faced, engaging youngster of 19, thrust upon the platform by his adoring mother, she grandly promised nothing less than the presidency of the United States as well as riches and a beautiful wife.

Some of her prophecies, such as twin babies for the newly married couple, brought shouts of laughter from the crowd, and some of her vague guesses as to the past went very wide of the mark, as the applicants did not hesitate to tell her—the old maid, for instance, who looked so motherly that Sally lav-

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ishly endowed her with a husband and three children; but nearly everyone who paid a quarter for what "Princess Lalla" could see in the magic crystal went away wondering and thrilled and satisfied.

During the first lull between performances, Sally slipped out of the "Palace of Wonders" and daintily mingled with the crowds outside. It was all beautiful and wonderful to Sally, who had been to a circus only once in her life and never to a carnival before.

Before the tent which housed the big glass tank into which "bathing beauties" dived and in which they ate bananas and drank soda-pop under water, she encountered Winfield Bybee, enormous, majestic, benign, for it was a good crowd and a fine day, and money was pouring into his pockets.

"Well, well," he grinned down at her. "I hear from Gus that you're knocking 'em cold. Better run along in now, and you might see how many of the rubes you can make follow you into the Palace of Wonders. We don't want to give 'em too much of a free show. And remember, gir-rl, for every quarter Princess Lalla earns a fortune teller, little Sally Ford gets a nickel for herself. Don't take many nickels to make a dollar!"

"Oh, Mr. Bybee, I'm so happy I'm about to burst," Sally confided in him in a rush of gratitude. "But—do you think it's very wrong of me to pretend to be a crystal gazer when really I can't see a thing in it to save my life?"

Bybee bellowed with laughter, so that the crowd veered suddenly toward them. He stooped to whisper closer to her little brown-stained ear: "Don't you worry, sister. As old P. T. Barnum used to say, 'There's a sucker born every minute,' and old Winfield Bybee knows that they liked to be fooled. You just kid 'em along and send 'em away happy and I reckon the good Lord ain't going to waste any black ink on your record tonight. It's worth a quarter to be told a lot of nice things about yourself, ain't it?"

As she tripped swiftly across the dusty lot toward the Palace of Wonders, the crowd following her grew larger and larger. Becoming bolder because she felt that she was really "Princess Lalla" and not timid little Sally Ford, she deliberately flirted with the men who pressed close upon her, even waved a little brown hand invitingly toward the big tent.

When she reached the tent door, the barker leaned down from his booth, behind which was set a small platform, and beckoned her to mount the narrow steps. Smilingly she did so, and the barker introduced her.

"Here she is, boys—the Princess"

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Sally bowed, her little brown hands spreading in an enchanting gesture; then she skipped down the steps, the great ropes of black hair, wound with strands of imitation pearls, flapping against the vivid green satin tunic.

She was very tired when the supper hour came, but the thought that she would soon see David again lent wings to her sanded feet. She was about to hurry out of the Palace of Wonders, released at last by the apparently indefatigable spieler, Gus, when a tiny, treble voice called to her:

"Princess Lalla! Princess Lalla! Would you mind carrying me to the cars?"

Sally, startled, looked everywhere about the tent that was almost empty of spectators before it dawned on her that the tiny voice had come from "Pitty Sing," the smallest woman in the world, sitting in a child's little red rocking chair on the platform.

All of Sally's passionate love for little things—especially small children—surged up in her heart. She skipped down the steps of her own particular little platform and ran, with outstretched hands, to the tiny figure. "Pitty Sing" was indeed a pretty thing, a very doll of a woman, the flaxen hair on her small head marcelled meticulously, her little plump cheeks and pouting, babyish lips tinted with rouge. In her miniature hands she was holding a newspaper, which was so big in comparison with her midjet size that it served as a complete screen.

"Of course, I'll carry you. I'm so glad you'll let me," Sally glowed and dimpled. "You little darling, you!" "Please don't baby me!" Pitty Sing admonished her in a severe little voice. "I'm old enough to be your mother, even if I'm not big enough." And the tiny, plump hands began to fold the newspapers with great definiteness.

Sally's eyes, abashed, fluttered from the disapproving little face to

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Indiana Republican leaders, shocked by the sudden death of Senator Frank B. Willis of Ohio, joined today in expressing tribute for his character and attainments.

Senator Arthur R. Robinson said "Senator Willis was a conscientious public servant, patriotically devoted to the welfare of his country. His judgment on public questions was highly respected by his colleagues in the Senate, with whom he was always popular. I feel a sense of keen personal loss in his passing, for I had known and admired him for more than a quarter of a century."

Others who eulogized the deceased Senator in formal statements included Governor Ed Jackson, Miss Dorothy Cunningham, Indiana Republican National committee woman; Frederick E. Schortemeier, Secretary of State; Dr. E. S. Shumaker, Indiana Anti-Saloon League Superintendent; Louis Ludlow, Washington correspondent, and M. Bert Thurman, manager of Senator James E. Watson's presidential campaign.

Senator Willis was well-known throughout Indiana, having addressed many Republican meetings in this State. In January, 1922, he addressed the Indiana Republican Editorial Association at the Severin.

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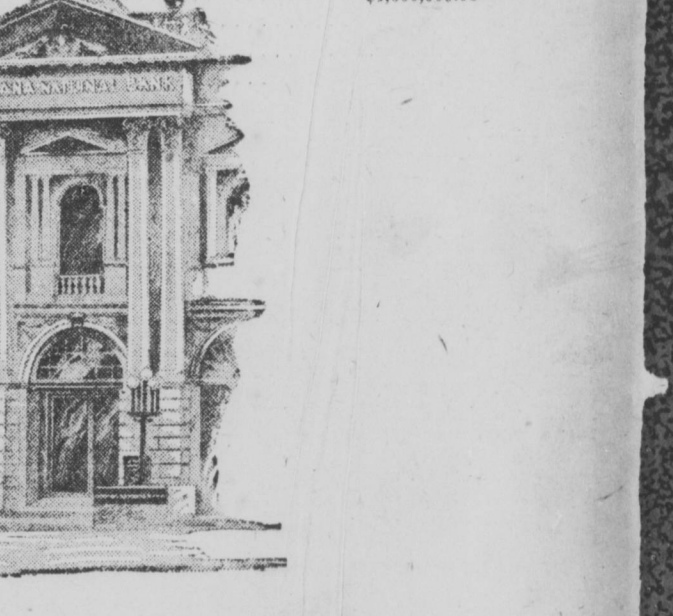
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