

Ganolph never knew why he took her that afternoon. He had never had a girl in his troupe before, but there was something in that little musical laugh, something in those large eyes that set his imagination astir. He may develop her as a great personality. She might have latent histrionic ability. Nevertheless, he could train her for the troupe and if he found that she had talents for other things, then he could develop them as she grew up.

Paulette was the only girl of the family outside, of course, of Mrs. Ganolph who looked after her. Mrs. Ganolph was a tireless, patient woman. She worked hard and conscientiously with that [xxx] Germanic spirit to make

to make things "go" for the sake of her husband and for the enterprise itself. She was a goodly woman with no extreme emotions about anything, other than to see that her job was done well. That the children were all taken care of and that they ate regularly and that they wore clean tights once a week, that each looked after his stage things and kept them spotlessly clean for six days. All members of the troupe had to report to her if anything needed sewing. If it were a minor thing, like a button, the boys were supposed to do it themselves. If it were a little more complicated, Paulette was told to do it.

She was an honest, conscientious hard-working woman

whose problem in looking after nine members of a troupe of acrobats was no small task. She needed help—someone to help her with the wardrobe, with the domestic work and there were many boys to feed and wait upon. Of course, three of the boys were grown up young men from eighteen to twenty-eight. One of the boys was married.

The wife of the son was a sullen, indolent girl, who refused to do any of the menial work, so it was placed on the shoulders of Paulette, who was kept busy almost all day.

The other four youngsters were very much like herself. They had been adopted at an early age and had grown up with the family. Each of them at the end of the week were given ten cents pocket money, providing there were no complaints. But complaints were always forthcoming, either acts of insubordination or some minor negligence, were the cause of [xxx] them their pocket money. A spot on their tights or an accidental tear in their street clothes, was an excuse to penalize them by taking it out of their pocket money.

As a consequence of this, the boys rarely got any spending money. They were always having to pay for some slight misdemeanor.

While playing in one of the smaller towns of England, Mrs. G was taken down with pneumonia. She did not last long, for it soon developed into double and within a month she died.

Paulette was now sixteen. She was developing into a beautiful girl. Although on the threshold of becoming a young lady, she was completely unconscious of her sex.

Those in the troupe were accustomed to her, so they never saw her beauty.

However, Mr. G. noticed that she was developing into a beautiful young girl.

It is at this stage in the lives of our Ganolph troupe that we wish to open our story. Since his wife died, G was becoming more irascible each year; even to his married son he was becoming unbearable. Although a full-grown married man, G's son was still dominated by his father. He was afraid of him. They had had many a set-to and the father had always come out on top.

He was a strong righteous man and kept everyone in the troupe under his domination. On one occasion, he had severely threatened his son, who had for the first time in his life opposed him and from that day on there was never a doubt as to who was the master of the troupe.

Nobody left G. because he had made them so dependent on him. He had trained each of them for one particular kind of job which was useless without the rest of the troupe. His son knew this, that's why he had to endure the reproving of his father

Paulette was now a lithesome young girl of sixteen with a lithe subtle body that grace personified. She was easy to throw and twist around from one to another when going through their acrobatics. But after a hard day's work, when she had been with the domestic chores of the seven members of the G family, the strain of the evening's performance was sometimes too much for her and she would at such times miss or fumble in one of the tricks. It was then that G showed no consideration for her and would bully and beat her for being clumsy. This ruthless treatment and brutality on these occasions was something to a part



insanity. While he was carrying her to the side of the wings in a hand-to-hand balanced, he would deliberately drop her to the ground. On one occasion he did this and she fell, striking her head, becoming unconscious.

Many of the other acts would at times interfere, but G was such a bully that he had everybody buffaloed.

Paulette was by nature of a happy disposition, if only she had a chance to be. But under the brutal domination of G, she smiled only when appearing before the public.

All children were given strict orders to always look bright and smiling when going through the performance.

If G saw one of the boys looking pre-occupied, he would wait until the culprit came to the side of the stage, then give him a resounding slap on the face and tell him to smile.

Each morning the troupe were up at eight o'clock and down to the theatre to practice until lunch.

Those mornings were always terrifying to the boys and Paulette

G would put them through their paces, making them do new dangerous tricks which were so hazardous that one slip during the practice of them would cost them their lives. But the courage of the boys on these occasions was inspired by their fear of G.

They would sooner risk their lives that way than to incur the wrath of G.

For some reason since G's wife had died, G treated Paulette more cruelly than before

This treatment of her seemed to be a madness with him. Many a time the boys got together and conspired to run away and leave him. One of the boys attempted this and G afterwards made his life a hell.

"If you don't like it, take you and your indolent wife elsewhere," he would say to the boy. As for the rest, they lived in continual terror of the old man.

His brutal nature was not without virtue, for it made the act one of the finest in show business. They were all beautifully trained and did the most miraculous tricks which were breathtaking to an audience. But the long hours of drudgery and torture that the boys went through at the hands of G were the price they paid for the excellence of their performances.

In spite of their joyous [xxx], their pert colored tights, their smiling chunky faces, the virility and apparent cheerfulness of their demeanors, which they wore when they were performing before an audience, there was little actual joy or cheerfulness in the lives of the Ganolph family behind the scenes. That twenty-five minutes each evening before the footlights was the sum total of every hour of drudgery, hard knocks and street discipline that went on morning after morning in the dark recesses of an empty stage.

Where old man G, a hard task master, stood [xxx], threatening, cuffing and occasionally whipping

a whimpering youngster who showed fatigue, became clumsy, or faltered while practicing a new trick.

The Ganolph family was a troupe of acrobats. They were nine in number. Although they were announced on the playbills as The Ganolph Family, they were not all actually related. But for G and his two sons, the other six were apprentices.

whom G had at various times picked up from orphanages and destitute families.

Who G had at various times in his peregrinations picked up in orphanages and from disturbed parents, making contractual agreements with a [xxx] or an orphanage for the adoption of a son or a parochial charge. He usually got them at the tender age of eight which age was efficacious for the training of an acrobat. Their limbs were subtle and their bones were not formed



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so that he could make of them whatever he thought they were best suited for, either tumbling or contortion.

Adopting children for his business was a profitable one. The initial sum given a widow for her boy was a meager one and a child from an orphanage he got for nothing. Paulette had been a parochial charge taken from an orphanage. Old man G had seen her there and for some reason had picked her out from among the rest

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a thin emaciated little creature with pointed features and with eyes that sparkled like amethysts. She caught his attention when he turned to find out where a sudden nervous musical little laugh had come from out of a group of orphans that stood waiting in the day room.

While G was looking over a particular [xxx] for apprenticeship, a sturdy, serious little youngster whom G in his Germanic gruff way was trying to make smile.

"Don't you smile, eh?" G was saying, more [xxx] than [xxx]!

then G grimaced, trying to indicate a smile. At this juncture, Paulette laughed.

There was something incongruous about the funny old German trying to make the boy laugh.