

# MAIN STREET

## The Story of Carol Kennicott

By SINOLAIR LEWIS

"Yes, I'm sure she's very bland. But I wouldn't tell her my heart's secrets if I were you, my dear. In fact that there's only one professional man's wife in this town who doesn't plot, and that is you, you blessed, credulous outsider!"

"I won't be cajoled! I won't believe that medicine, the priesthood of healing, can be turned into a penny-picking business."

"See here: Hasn't Kennicott ever hinted to you that you'd better be nice to some old woman because she tells her friends which doctor to call in? But I oughtn't to—"

She remembered certain remarks which Kennicott had offered regarding the Widow Bogart. She flinched, looked at Guy beseechingly.

He sprang up, strode to her with a nervous step, smoothed her hand. She wondered if she ought to be offended by his caresses. Then she wondered if he liked her that, the new Oriental turban of rose and silver brocade.

He dropped her hand. His elbow brushed her shoulder. He stepped over to the desk-chair, his thin back stooped. He picked up the cloisonne vase. Across it he peered at her with such fondness that she was startled. But his eyes faded into impersonality as he talked of the jealousies of Gopher Prairie. He stopped himself with a sharp, "Good Lord, Carol, you're not a jury. You are within your legal rights in refusing to be subjected to this summing-up. I'm a tedious old fool analyzing the obvious, while you're the spirit of rebellion. Tell me your side. What is Gopher Prairie to you?"

"A bore!"

"Can I help?"

"How could you?"

"I don't know. Perhaps by listening. I haven't done that tonight. But normally—Can't I be the confidant of the old French plays, the tiring-maid with the mirror and the loyal ears?"

"Oh, what is there to confide? The people are savorless and proud of it. And even if I liked you tremendously I couldn't talk to you without twenty old hexes watching, whispering."

"But you will come talk to me, once in a while?"

"I'm not sure that I shall. I'm trying to develop my own large capacity for dullness and contentment. I've failed at every positive thing I've tried. I'd better 'settle down,' as they call it, and be satisfied to be—nothing."

"Don't be cynical. It hurts me, in you. It's like blood on the wing of a hummingbird."

"I'm not a humming-bird. I'm a hawk; a tiny leashed hawk, pecked to death by these large, white, flabby, wormy hens. But I am grateful to you for confirming me in the faith. And I'm going home!"

"Please stay and have some coffee with me."

"I'd like to. But they've succeeded in terrorizing me. I'm afraid of what people might say."

"I'm not afraid of that. I'm only afraid of what you might say!" He smiled to her; took her unresponsive hand. "Carol! You have been happy here tonight! (Yes, I'm begging!)"

She squeezed his hand quickly, then stretched her away. She had but little of the curiosity of the flirt, and none of the intriguer's joy in furtiveness. If she was the naive girl,

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Guy Pollock was the clumsy boy. He raced about the office; he rammed his fists into his pockets. He stammered, "I—I—I— Oh, the devil! Why do I awaken from smooth dustiness to this jagged rawness? I'll make—I'm going to trot down the hall and bring in the Dillons, and we'll all have coffee or something."

"The Dillons?"

"Yes. Really quite a decent young pair—Harvey Dillon and his wife. He's a dentist, just come to town. They live in a room behind his office same as I do here. They don't know much of anybody—"

"I've heard of them. And I've never thought to call. I'm horribly ashamed. Do bring them—"

She stopped, for no very clear reason, but his expression said, her faltering admitted, that they wished they had never mentioned the Dillons. With spurious enthusiasm he said, "Splendid! I will." From the door he glanced at her, curled in the peeling leather chair. He slipped out, came back with Dr. and Mrs. Dillon.

The four of them drank rather bad coffee which Pollock made on a kerosene burner. They laughed, and spoke of Minneapolis, and were tremendously tactful; and Carol started for home, through the November wind.

CHAPTER XIV.

She was marching home.

"No. I couldn't fall in love with him. I like him, very much. But he's too much of a recluse. Could I kiss him? No! Not Guy Pollock at twenty-six—I could have kissed him then, maybe, even if I were married to some one else, and probably I'd have been glib in persuading myself that 'it wasn't really wrong.'"

"The amazing thing is that I'm not more amazed at myself, I, the virtuous young matron. Am I to be trusted? If the Prince Charming came—"

"A Gopher Prairie housewife, married a year, and yearning for a 'Prince Charming' like a beehive of sixteen! They say that marriage is a magic change. But I'm not changed. But—"

"No! I wouldn't want to fall in love, even if the Prince did come. I wouldn't want to hurt Will. I am fond of Will. I am! He doesn't stir me, not any longer. But I depend on him. He is home and children. 'I wonder when we will begin to have children? I do want them.'"

"I wonder whether I remembered to tell Bea to have hominy tomorrow instead of oatmeal? She will have gone to bed by now. Perhaps I'll be up early enough—"

"Ever so fond of Will. I wouldn't hurt him, even if I had to lose the mad love. If the Prince came I'd look once at him, and run. Darn fast! Oh, Carol, you are not heretic nor fine. You are the immutable vulgar young female."

"But I'm not the faithless wife who enjoys confiding that she's 'misunderstood.' Oh, I'm not, I'm not!"

"Am I?"

"At least I didn't whisper to Guy about Will's faults and his blindness to my remarkable soul. I didn't! Matter of fact, Will probably understands me perfectly! If only—if he would just back me up in rousing the town."

"How many, how incredibly many wives there must be who tangle over the first Guy Pollock who smiles at them. No! I will not be one of that herd of yearners! The coy virgin brides. Yet probably if the Prince were young and dared to face life—"

"I'm not half as well oriented as that Mrs. Dillon. So obviously adoring her dentist! And seeing Guy only as an eccentric foggy."

"They weren't silk, Mrs. Dillon's stockings. They were flax. Her legs are nice and slim. But no closer than mine. I hate cotton tops on silk stockings."

"Are my ankles getting fat? I will not have fat ankles!"

"No. I am fond of Will. He works—one farmer he pulls through diphtheria is worth all my yammering for a castle in Spain. A castle with bath."

"This hat is so tight. I must stretch it. Guy liked it."

"There's the house I'm awfully chilly. Time to get out the fur coat. I wonder if I'll ever have a beaver coat? Nutria is not the same thing!"

"I mustn't forget the hominy—"

She was flying into the hall, Kennicott looked up from the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"Hello! What time did you get back?" she cried.

"About nine. You been gadding. Here it is past eleven!" Good-natured yet not quite approving.

"Did it feel neglected?"

"Well, you didn't remember to close the lower draft in the furnace."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. But I don't often forget things like that, do I?"

(To be Continued.)

Purchased a Home.

Claude Weeks has purchased a residence in Consecrion from Mrs. Mabel Yott, Trenton. The place was formerly the property of the late Richard Osborne and Mrs. Osborne. Mr. Weeks and sisters are removing to their new home accompanied by the best wishes of numerous friends and neighbors.

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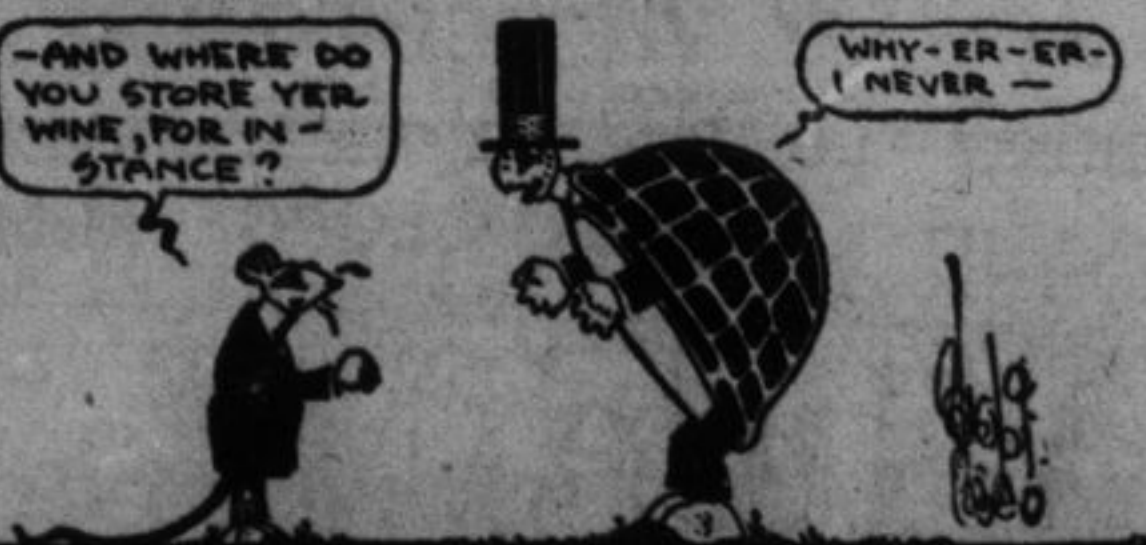
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### A QUEER HOUSE



"Your house, said Mr. Platt, is nice. But where, sir, is your attic? A house that's so arranged appears to me somewhat errat-ic. Besides, the house you carry round has nothing like a cellar. My wife has asked the reason why. And I would like to tell her."

Beaver—glossy. Like to run my fingers over it. Guy's mustache like beaver. How utterly absurd!

"I am, I am fond of Will, and—Can't I ever find another word than 'fond'?"

"He's home. He'll think I was out late."

"Why can't he ever remember to pull down the shades? Or Bogart and all the beastly boys peeping in. But the poor dear, he's absent-minded about minute—mumsh—whatever the word is. He has so much worry and work, while I do nothing but jabber to Bea."

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(To be Continued.)

### Good Night Stories

By Blanche Silver

#### DAVID'S VISIT IN WATER LAND.

David sat on the shore watching the waves wash back and forth on the sands.

He was so busy thinking that he didn't hear the tiny footsteps until a hand touched his shoulder and a smiling face greeted his when he turned.

"Oh, Squeedee, I thought you had forgotten me!" David cried, jumping up and shaking the little elfin's hand. "I'm so glad you've come. I'm so lonesome that I don't know what to do!"

"Just the chap I'm looking for," laughed Squeedee. "I wonder if you'd like to come with me to call on Billy Lobster. I've been—"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" cried David, all excited. "I'm dying to see under the water. I've been watching the waves for a long time and I just wondered if the folks who live under there are as happy as we folks who live on land. Come along, Squeedee, let's hurry before it's too late." And David grabbed the elfin's hand and danced down to the edge of the water.

Squeedee whistled softly and two prancing sea-horses swam to his side. He climbed on the back of one of them and bade David get up on the other—and away they went right into and under the water.

At first David felt queer when the water closed over his head. But quick as a flash Squeedee touched him with his magic wand and David began to feel at home at once.

Billy Lobster wasn't at home, and

every one of his neighbors from old Mother Oyster to Snappy Crab was excited.

He had never stayed away so long a time before, and old Mother Oyster was afraid something had happened to him, but when he did come in sight every one was happy to see him.

mark the difference between the two claws.

"Why should they be alike?" laughed Billy Lobster. "They both have different work to do. This large claw with the blunt teeth serves as a sort of anchor. I can cling to the rocks with it. Now, the other claw—this one with the fine teeth—I use to capture and to tear up my food."

Then straightening out his body to its full length and drawing his tail up under his head until he looked like a shrimp, Billy Lobster dashed backward—as all good little lobsters should—and vanished in the distance.

David and Squeedee hopped upon their sea-horses and hurried back to the shore.

Even with washing charcoal does not become white.

Whoever touches a striped snake feels its fangs.



"Oh, Dear, Excuse Me!"

David had never before seen a lobster swim, and he laughed when he saw how funny he doubled his tail up under his head, gave a big shove, and ran into David and Squeedee.

"Oh, dear, excuse me!" said Billy Lobster, flopping around to see whom he had bumped into. "Why, if it isn't Squeedee and David! There's some disadvantage in walking backward—you can't always see whom you're bumping into."

He held out his claw to David, and David was surprised to find the two claws weren't alike. One claw had the inside edges furnished with large, blunt teeth, while the other claw was set with small, sharp points. David couldn't help but re-

Feb. 8.—The people are bustling prepared to Moberly station. Archie Gray, reeve of One, has returned home after spending a week in Kingston attending the county council.

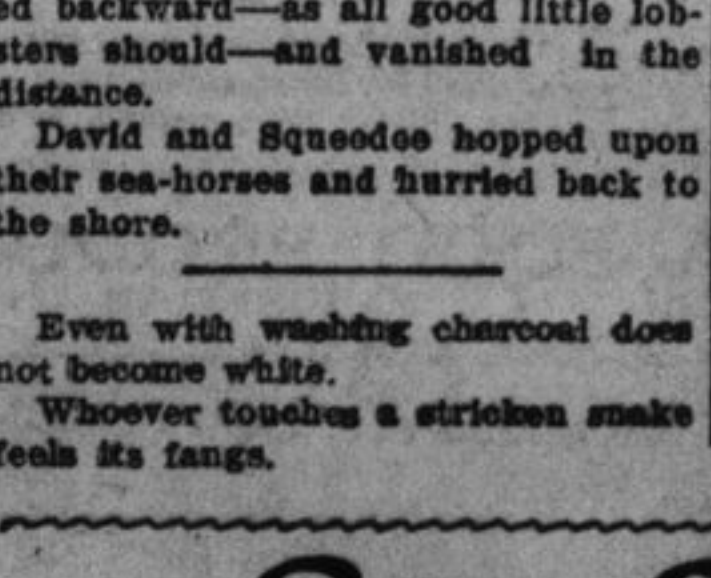
Mr. and Mrs. Mathew Ferguson and Mrs. Stella Stevenson and family spent a few days at Bollingbrook. Rev. Mr. Smith, Moberly, held service in this vicinity on Wednesday evening.

Visitors: Mrs. Archie Gray and son, Elwood spent Sunday at Wilbur Wesley's; Taylor Baker at John Osmore's; Mrs. Stella Stevenson at George McParlane's.

After a long period of ill health—about two years—the death occurred in Smith's Falls on Saturday of Margaret Purdon, widow of the late Thomas McGuire. She was a native of Elmestown township. Born there sixty-six years ago, and was the last of a family.

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