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*Marianna sniffed, "The hole was a big one, Deacon. It will cost you fifty cents," said she. "Besides I had to fade the seat so the match would be better."*

MARIANNA was queer. There was no doubt of that. Queer, at least, judged by the standards of yesterday. She had a fondness for cats, and admitted having no regrets for her childless condition. She was very neat and clean but, having quite a squint and a curious way of sniffing, she was never much for looks. Just the same it was thought she had once had a comely figure. Now, however, she stooped a little from continual washing and water-carrying, and her hands that once must have been small, were always wrinkled and red.

But to return to her queerness. She never went to church, no matter how the good ladies she worked for urged it upon her. Marianna sniffed, good-naturedly knocked off a dime from her day's wages as a concession to such goodness, and let it go at that. She never ate meat, yet she always kept two pigs in her little back garden—a black pig and a white pig. When they were good and fat she drove them to the next village and gave them to Toby Snell, a good-for-nothing Lofoten fisherman. Then she bought two more little pigs—a white one, and a black one, and so

the thing began again. Toby never visited Marianna, that, the ladies of Grenbo knew very well. But, asked about it Marianna merely sniffed, said that pork was very welcome to the Lofoten fisherman, and that she really knew nothing about him.

Nor was this all of her queerness. She grew herbs in her garden and all manner of weeds. What she did with them nobody knew. And it is quite true she had a scandalous way of talking to her pigs. "How are you to-day, my little soul?" she would say to the white pig, "and you, brother?" to the black one. And the pigs would grunt and poke their noses through the fence quite as though they approved of it.

Ingeman, the Deacon, caught her at it on a day he was come to fetch the trousers she had mended for him. "My

good Marianna, is it decent do you think, to address a pig as if it had a soul?"

Marianna sniffed. "The hole was a big one, Deacon. It will cost you fifty cents," said she. "Besides, I had to fade the seat so the match would be better. Patches always are a worry with their brightness."

"Yes, yes, of course," the good

Deacon agreed, something flustered. He had a suspicion that Marianna was accusing him of stinginess—the trousers were very old. "Yes, of course. But the pigs! Now, you must know, Marianna, that the Creator in His wisdom gave souls only to human beings. Is it reverent, then, to address them as you do? Pigs, my dear Marianna, are only pigs."

At that Marianna smiled. And when she smiled it was really curious how pleasant she could appear; like a rough headland seen in a mist at sea. "Ingeman, it's true. Pigs are pigs. . . . Now that I think of it, forty cents would do me. Yes, Ingeman, pigs are pigs."

And the Deacon counted out four dimes into her old red hands, well content with himself, his tact, and the patch on his trousers.

## LITTLE SOULS

### A Powerful Two-Part Story of Human Values

By LAURA GOODMAN SALVERSON

But Marianna, would you believe it, laughed behind the good man's back and winked at the white pig in his clean little sty. "Little soul," said she, "our brother spoke better than he knew." And, as I live, the little white pig wrinkled his snout in a very good imitation of a Sunday smile.

Marianna, you will now agree, was not quite right in her head. That, too, was the opinion of her countrymen and doubtless accounts for their willingness to overlook her queerness and to underpay her labors. Nonetheless she seemed very happy, and never left Grenbo except to drive the pigs to Toby. Her little thatched cottage stood on the edge of the village. Behind it was a ridge of hills and beyond that the big pine forest. In winter it must have been very lonely, but Marianna never complained of it, nor yet of the long walks to the several homes she served.

On Mondays she washed for Fru Jensen, the Doctor's wife. On Tuesday she ironed. On Thursday and Friday she did the same for Dame Christine and Hilda. On Saturdays she cleaned the parsonage, bathed the six children and helped to fry "Fatman" for the Sabbath guests. On Sundays she stayed home with her cats, and on Wednesdays did the village mending. Marianna was useful, there was no denying that. Even the midwife had recourse to her help when business was rushing. Besides, she was a great comfort to the ladies she served. To her they talked as to no one else. Why not? What mattered it if one admitted the shortcomings of a husband or a lover to old Marianna?

"Now it beats me," began Dame Christine, the baker's lady, one Thursday morning as she counted out the linen, the socks and the towels, "how that Julius Ren can shut his eyes to bald fact. Of course, you don't see what's going on in church, Marianna, since you never go there, no matter how I urge it, but if you did—even you would know how true it is. Elma simply ogles Hendrick. Now, it's all very well to say—as my sister Hilda foolishly does—that it's innocent flirtation. Hendrick is my brother-in-law and a rich man to boot. I won't have him led into temptation by this painter's lady."

Marianna sniffed. "There's a hole in this table cloth, Dame Christine—like a little burn."

"Herre Gud!" shouted Christine. "It's that Hendrick again. Always he's smoking, that man, always it's my best linen he burns! Never mind, Marianna, put it aside to be mended. As I said, it's a crime. Absent-minded, that's Hendrick. With a crook of her finger that woman could make him do anything. 'A pretty wife has that painter,' I said to him only last night; and would you believe it, Marianna, he didn't know what I was talking about."

"Will you have salt in the water for Milly's dress?" asked Marianna, sniffing loudly.

"The pink one? Yes. Oh, that Milly! Just like her father, that's Milly. What do you think, it's to Oslo she wants to go, that young one, to study music. Can you beat it? But that was Peter in his youth—now here, now there; never satisfied when things were going good. Thank Heaven Papa left his money as he did. How else do you think I could have this shop and hire a pastry cook from Denmark?"

"The Stroms' baby came last night," ventured Marianna, rubbing for dear life on a white baker's smock.

Dame Christine made a noise that sounded like the hiss of an angry kettle. "God forbid I should be irreverent, but it's a mess I say. There's too many Stroms now!"

Very seldom did Marianna effect an opinion. Now, however, she shook the smock free from its wet folds, scanned it for possible molasses stains and with a very definite sniff, retorted quite sharply; "Vilmor isn't so bad. There's worse, Dame Christine."

"Herre Gud! that wild one? If he don't drink like his Papa, I'm no judge. With that curly head and roving eyes?"

Marianna was in a queer mood indeed. "I washed the dishes at the Frolic, Saturday night. It was a sight to see that boy dance. Such a singer, too! Now that I think of it, the best piece of all was the Finger Dance . . . Milly and Vilmor."

Dame Christine drew in her breath sharply. To see her, one would have thought the breath her last. But thanks to stout stays and a resolute mind, she remained intact. She even smiled—crookedly, it is true, but with determination. "My good Marianna, I clean forgot it, but I've a dress upstairs, my last year's cashmere. I meant to give it to you long ago. Don't let me forget it when you go. Oh, yes, that foolish dance! Of course there was nobody, that is anybody, there. As I understand it, the Girls' Guild gave it for the benefit of somebody or other. A foolish thing, Marianna, not worth repeating. Girls are girls, you know, Marianna."

And again that smile of Marianna's wiped away ugliness. "Yes, that's so, Dame Christine. Girls are girls."

That Saturday Marianna found Fru Bing in tears. Tomi, a child of three, had just broken the teapot from the



*Marianna smiled, retrieved the doctor's hat from the corner where he had flung it, and with that and a little case of at him with her crooked eyes. "It's not so bad, Doctor—work, and is it a leg*

best china set—all because Herr Bing had insisted on serving lunch to that painter's lady. And added to this she felt very ill, so ill in fact, that she didn't wonder but what it was another baby. She didn't in the least want another baby, and she didn't care how sinful it was to say so. So far as she could see there was no sense at all in the way God made people. And at best it was bad enough to be a woman.

Marianna's crooked eyes took in the situation well enough. The house was very untidy and smelled mildly of camphor oil, smoked fish, and ammonia water. Friday's dishes were piled on the kitchen table and those of to-day lay scattered willy nilly, any place where little hands had left them. Jens and Knut, red-cheeked young rascals, were playing at ball in the porch; Solvie and Selma, the twins, tugged and pleaded in an effort to separate the two youngest, who were fighting and scratching in a corner of the dining-room. Fru Bing simply sat in her rocker and wept. Upstairs in the study something made a terrible crash and a door flew open.

"Vilhelmina," came the Pastor's voice sharply. "Vilhelmina, can't you keep the children quiet? For an hour, at least, I've been stranded in the gospel." And bang went the door again.

Marianna, soaping a great pan of water, sniffed vociferously. "Pigs," said she with conviction, "are pigs."

"What did you say?" asked poor Fru Bing hopefully. But old Marianna made such a clatter with the dishes as she plunged them in the water that the question went unanswered. Moreover, the children were now in a ring about her. They were a nuisance, those young ones. To keep them from being altogether a hindrance, old Marianna set them to sorting the dishes on the table beside her.

"Let the little ones have the spoons," said she, "and if you take anything else I'll jounce you in the water," she admonished the small mischiefs emphatically.

Selma was quite a minx, bright-eyed and thoughtful.

"Fru Ren holds her finger so," she illustrated, lifting a blue china cup daintily, "and Papa likes it, I know; he smiled every time!"

"Selma!" groaned her mother. "Where ever did you get the way of such talk? Your dear father has no eyes for vanity. How should he—he him a minister of God?"

Solvie always defended her sister. Here was a harsher nature, but a like quick perception. "It's true just the same, Mamma. He smiles at her all the time—in church and out. And in the grocer's, Fru Ingeman told Fru Christine when they were picking out a dress for Milly, that 'all men are alike—even the dear Pastor has an eye for a pretty face'."

"Oh, Herre Gud!" wailed Fru Bing, "I know I shall faint. Marianna put on the coffee pot. Solvie, you wicked, wicked child, how can you listen to such talk? And Marianna, would you believe, when Deacon Ingeman had the fever last winter it was my poor Olaf that sat up with him night after night."

"Folks is folks," sniffed Marianna. "Did you know there was a crack in the sugar bowl, Fru Bing? It's best to careful with it, I'd say."

"The sugar bowl, too? Always it is something—a shoe, a sock, a sugar bowl. Marianna, what I'm to do with another to care for I don't know."

"The Lord will provide," piped Berta, grinning like the imp she was. "The Lord will provide, the Lord will provide."

Fru Bing shot from her chair, forgetful of threatening faintness, caught hold of the five-year-old prophetess and smacked the most substantial part of her anatomy soundly. The result was disastrous. The baby screamed in sympathy, Selma knocked over a platter, and Berta, of course, sent up such a yell that even the Golden Gates must have rattled in sympathy.

In any event, from that direction came a significant



*opiates which were part of his very soul, twinkled again, maybe?*

thump, and this time the minister himself flung down from his study. Very red in the face was the good pastor, an ink smudge on his nose and his graying hair all on end. In one hand he held a razor strop and in the other a part of his sermon.

"Vilhelmina, which one is it this time—" he shouted, "which one, which one? Speak, woman, you are not always so dumb!" And then he saw old Marianna, unaffected and calmly polishing the glasses. The effect was curious. The strap went behind his back and a sheepish smile struggled to his face. "Well, well, Marianna, so you're here again."

"Yes, Pastor." The sniff was not at all antagonistic. "Yes, I'm here. When you ring I'll come to dust the study."

Poor man, he stood there bewildered. Berta looked at him from behind her mother's skirts, a taunting gleam in her young eyes. Selma and Solvie stood in the corner with downcast eyes as if the sight of this flustered father shamed them. Fru Bing wept into her handkerchief. The pastor looked like a man just regaining consciousness in the midst of shipwreck.

Marianna sniffed. "It's fine weather for the potatoes," said she, nodding at the window. "Fine as ever I see."

He sighed, thrust the strap in his pocket, looked at the page number of the sheet in his hand. It was only the third—and this was to be a special sermon. Plainly there was something he wanted to say, wanted to hear, felt in need of. But the sudden peace found him had a paralyzing effect. Fortunately, the baby had no doubt felt strange in the hush also. With calculated cunning he had crept to the sideboard and clambered upon a chair, but there luck left him. With a coveted dish of pickles in his fingers, he fell to the floor in ignominous defeat.

Unbelievable as it may seem, the good Pastor laughed . . . "Ah," said he to Marianna as he righted his youngest and wiped the vinegar from his round little face. "It's as the

saying goes, Marianna, boys are only boys."

Old Marianna smiled and there was a twinkle in her crooked eyes. "That's so, Pastor . . . that's so. Boys are boys."

With a pat at his wife's shoulder the good man turned to go. It was incredible, but now it seemed that the sermon was shaping nicely in his mind. At the top of the stairs he called down lightly. "Call me at three, my dear Vilhelmina. I have a visit to make." And once again the study door shut—but not with a bang.

**T**HAT Sunday it rained and Marianna spent a quiet day in the house. In the morning she fed the pigs, sympathized with them over the inclemency of the weather and assured their little souls that the sun lurked behind the clouds. Then she unrolled the dress Dame Christine had given her with an eye to its deficiencies and a thought as to how it should be remade. It wasn't bad at all, which, curious to say, affected the old woman strangely. "Well, well," said she to her yellow Tabby, "is it as bad as that?" An altogether topsy-turvy view to take, as you must admit.

Later in the day, she took down from a big shelf that ran the width of the kitchen just above her old-fashioned stove, several wire trays containing hundreds of little plants nicely dried and aromatic. These she tied in neat little bundles and packed away in an empty shoe box. There were twelve of these shoe boxes under Marianna's bed, and the sight of them pleased her greatly. This done, she cooked herself a pot of coffee, ate a roll and fed her cats. In the evening she opened an old book; a very irreligious book I'm afraid, for she chuckled over it exceedingly. While she read, the cats rolled in a fresh supply of catnip and then, flanked on either side of their queer mistress, fell to delightsome slumber.

Marianna considered the sleek black, yellow and gray creatures with a fond eye when her reading was done, and seeing them curled in lazy repose, a curious warmth passed over her body. "Cats," said she as she turned back the coverlet of her bed, "are a deal of comfort." So ended the day.

Monday was raw, but a steady wind was driving the clouds away. Marianna had a keen weather eye. It promised a good day for drying and with a light step she set out through the mud for Fru Jensen's house on the far edge of the village.

Fru Jensen was the daughter of a Danish ship-builder and she never let the villagers forget it. In size she was rather small, inclined to corpulence, and a little gray at the temples. Her color, however, was very good and her teeth chalk-white—so white, in fact, that when her thin lips turned back in a smile, one was disagreeably reminded of the canine tribe. Fortunately, Fru Jensen had far too much dignity to indulge in many smiles. She had a way of sighing that was itself an art. Soul-shaking, deep-rooted sighs that induced a dozen fancies and suspicions. Such a sigh greeted Marianna that morning.

"Aah Hii," sighed the doctor's lady. "It's as I told Oscar, the rain has beaten down all the cabbage plants. Marianna, if you please, see that my dressing gown is kept from too hot water." Fru Jensen always gave her orders in this diplomatic way. "And yes, we really must not let Papa's woollens shrink. The last suit has certainly got into too much heat somehow."

"Well," said Marianna, "that's the way with wool."

"Aah Hii!" came the sigh again, deep and gusty like a wind from a cavern. "Aah Hii! The Doctor has just come home from the Bing's. Poor Lena Bing! Do you know, Marianna, I remember her when she was young and in boarding school. Poor, poor Lena Bing!"

Marianna sniffed and made a terrible racket adjusting the water pots on the huge iron range. "It's Knut, I suppose, with sour apples . . . or maybe Berta?" she intimated knowing better, but knowing also what was expected of her.

Fru Jensen sighed sorrowfully, put her hand to her heart and pretended a great disinclination to further conversation. "Doubtless the less said the better. A Doctor's confidences are sacred. Oh, poor Lena . . ." Out went her hands in a gesture of despair. "Marianna, it's not that I'm irreverent, but would you believe it, she's gone again!"

Marianna sent a shower of soap bits into the boiler, sniffed loudly and peered into the wood box. "When?" she asked at last and began to sort the colored clothes from the white.

Fru Jensen lifted her hands in horror. "My good Marianna, you would hardly expect me to be indecent enough to ask that! Herre Gud, no! I, a shipbuilder's daughter?"

"Well," said Marianna stubbornly, "Women is women, being so whatever their fathers were, shipbuilders or sailors."

Fru Jensen smiled her thin lofty smile. "My good Marianna, I'm not expecting you to understand the viewpoint of a lady. Naturally not. Oh, yes, now that I think of it—I have a cape that I meant to give you long ago. It's to the worthy poor we should give. I always say to Oscar and, as you know, he is heart and soul in all I think and do. We both understand, Marianna, the bitter struggle and the loneliness of your life. Now, as I said, we really must see to it that the washing is out before noon. It argues such bad house-keeping when the wash is late."

"It does that," said Marianna and plunged into the suds.

Perhaps an hour later the doctor's gig drove up and the little man, dapper and gray, dashed into the house in evident excitement. "Nina," he cried, "Nina? Where are you, Nina?"

Nina betrayed her presence in the easy-chair before the hearth, by that long-drawn miracle of a sigh. "What is it now, Oscar? You know, my dear, how bad excitement is for me!" Again the sigh.

Dr. Jensen alone, perhaps, of the world was immune to his Nina's sighs. "Get up woman," said he. (He was an excitable little body anyway.) "Get up, for God's sake, and help me get my emergency things together. I don't seem to find a damn thing." And 'round and 'round he went, his black bag in hand, sweeping bottles and cottons and a terrifying array of scissors and scalpels into its gaping mouth.

"Marianna, Marianna," cried Fru Jensen. "Come here quickly, Marianna. You see what a state my poor Oscar is in? It's as I say, they work him to death. He is so put upon, my poor dear Oscar!"

Poor dear Oscar had recovered himself somewhat in that whirling activity. He glared at his wife, his gray whiskers bristling angrily. "Work!" he shouted unreasonably. "Work! Why damn it, woman, it's work, and nothing but work that keeps me alive!"

Marianna smiled; retrieved the doctor's hat from the corner where he had flung it, and with that and a little case of opiates which were a part of his very soul, twinkled at him with her crooked eyes. "It's not so bad, Doctor—work. And is it a leg again, maybe?"

Dr. Jensen laughed. "No, Marianna, it's Ingeman's nephew. Seems the young fool accused Vilmar of short weights in the store—cheating the customers to steal food for the brood at home."

"Ingeman's Tomi said that?" wheezed Marianna, "Ingeman's Tomi?"

"Well, of course I don't say it's true . . . though the Stroms are an awful improvident lot."

Marianna's sniff approximated a snort. "Ja, improvising—but is it Vilmar, then, is in the need of a doctor?"

"Herre Gud, no!" snapped the doctor running for the door. "Nothing of the kind, but he threw poor Tomi right through the plate glass window. . . . Herre Gud, yes, he's an awful sight!"

That night on her way home, Marianna stopped at the Stroms'. The house was a giddy affair, apparently leaning in all directions at once. The impression it gave was curious, to say the least. It looked for all the world as if this indecision as to where it should fall was all that kept it upright and together. Marianna confided to her pigs one day that the Strom house was like a married woman.

**I**NSIDE, the place was a terror. Furniture there was none. But since the two boys had begun working and had come to adolescent years, some little improvements were visible. There were boxes covered with straw mattresses along the walls, and the stove was at least safe on a ledge of bricks. (Formerly it had hung upright on three uncertain legs.) In the centre of the room was a long pine table bare of covering and littered with jam pails, sardine tins and crusts of bread. By the one window, in a black rocker, sat Matilda Strom. Usually she was amiability incarnate, but to-day, even her fat face looked like a moon darkened by an uncharitable cloud. Under the table three dirty children, scarcely more than babies, played at rolling a rounded stone, while perilously near lay the new baby, contentedly nursing a whiskey bottle half full of sweetened barley water.

"Well, Matilda," began Marianna, sniffing eloquently as she slipped into a seat near her friend, "and how is it going to-day?"

Matilda shifted her fat bulk unhappily. "You wouldn't think it, Marianna," she answered in a remarkably sweet voice, "how nice we were getting along. Always sugar for the coffee and the baby no trouble at all, and now don't Vilmar pitch that good-for-nothing out the window." Matilda was no good at vehemence or harshness, but so far was she goaded now that she flared up with righteous anger. "Such a foolishness, Marianna, as if Vilmar shouldn't know that pitching his boss' nephew out the window would get him nothing. So now, of course, it's no job he has and Papa gone again on one of his weak spells." Matilda always referred to Johan's whiskey bouts as "weak spells".

"And Hans?"

"Oh, Hans, the little pot! Didn't he say to Herr Jergens that his Papa was not . . . well, not what Jergens said, and then didn't Jergens say he was a mouthy fellow and not to be trusted? Now Marianna, I ask you, is it true that my little Hans is a bad boy for sticking up for poor Papa?"

Marianna only sniffed, but while Matilda dragged out her mild complaint she had been eying the shelves behind the stove. There seemed very little on them; very little, that is, save empty tins. On the stove, however, stood a greasy pot full of vegetable soup. To-night at least, the Stroms were safe from their old enemy.

The thought was comforting. Marianna smiled. "Now, Matilda, don't fret. Life's life and that's sure, and it's mostly this and that—"

Just there her sentence was lost in (Continued on page 68)



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good light (*but no sunshine*). The leaves will grow stronger and take on a deeper green, while the flower-stems will develop their buds. In a heated atmosphere and a sunny window the flower-stalks wither and the leaves curl up. Give warm water when required.

If the pips are kept in a cool place and are started in succession the flowering season will be prolonged.

BULBS for Christmas flowering should be given immediate attention. It is better to plant only one variety in a pot, since they may not bloom together.

The Chinese sacred lily, a polyanthus narcissus, placed in a bowl of water, with pebbles to hold it in place, needs only a few days in the dark, and blooms in thirty to forty days.

There are rooms with only northern exposure where "flowers will not bloom." Such places are not impossible after all. Good effects can be secured from the great creamy or yellow calla, or a "Bermuda Spice lily" (*Amaryllis Johnsonii*) and these, as sold by reputable dealers, are of flowering size, unless otherwise specified. Callas should have a good supply of water while making growth and still greater supply when flowering. It should be remembered that Callas are natives of a warm climate and

prefer heat. They sometimes revert, the large spathe, commonly called the flower, is a bract, or leaf from which the floral axis rises. In a return to green it is interesting, if not as attractive as the white form. Yellow varieties are available as well as the old-time white one.

It should be said that Callas require rich soil, roots cramped and an abundance of water (preferably warm). If a large pot is used there is a growth of foliage and scarcity of bloom. A six-inch pot is sufficient except for extra large bulbs or tubers. It can be grown throughout the year, by use of fertilizers, but to allow a rest period is the better way.

The amaryllis (Bermuda lily) has a tenacious vitality, and starts into growth on the least stimulation. It produces its showy red flowers readily if protected from the frost, but if demands a period of rest. It can be dried off in summer and be made to bloom in winter, or vice versa. As soon as the bulbs are procured from the dealer, place them in damp moss, in a temperature of about 60°, near a window. Watch until a growth starts, and then pot up in a six-inch pot for an ordinary size bulb. When first potted, give little water, only enough to keep the soil from drying out. Keep in a warm room, in a sunny window, and increase the water as the plant grows.



## Little Souls

(Continued from page 5)

the stormy entrance of Vilmar—very scowling as to face and his eyes like pools of hot hate. Behind him came Hans, his red thatch on end, and his freckled face screwed up into as fierce an aspect as possible.

Marianna smiled. "Vilmar," said she with no preliminaries, "it's a stout arm you must have—Have you never thought of the sea?"

Vilmar stopped in his tracks. "What—what?"

"Have you never thought of the sea? It's no so bad following the sea. A captain, you know, Vilmar, is a wonder in his uniform."

Wave after wave of red surged to the boy's face, and the fierce anger gave way to pathetic hunger. "My God!" he burst out, with all the vehemence of youth, "what good are dreams to such as me? I never thought of the sea? What haven't I thought of? But who wants the son of a drunkard and a ne'er-do-well?"

Matilda covered her ears. The silly motion maddened her son. "Oh, you know it well enough, Mamma, and it's all this pretending and lying and never facing facts that has got us where we are. To sit still and fool yourself—what good is it? No wonder folks think we are what they say . . . Even my mother won't let us be honest!"

Marianna got up quickly, and hurrying to the boy's side laid her wrinkled old hand on his arm. "Just a month you wait, Vilmar. Four weeks only, or maybe five, and my pigs are fat as butter. You wait till then, Vilmar, and maybe get in the wood for your Mamma."

Vilmar's face was a study; incredulity, doubt and amusement struggled there. Of Marianna's sympathy he was well aware, but queer she certainly was—simple. "Thanks, Marianna, but I don't just see where the pigs come in."

"Well, no," sniffed Marianna, and patted him kindly, "but wait." Then smiling guilelessly she turned to the gibraltar-like Matilda. "Would you believe it? The berries promise better than ever this year.

Yes, almost every day I see Dame Christine's Milly going to the hill with her pails. . . All over the dead timber where the fire swept there are those berries. Such a sight, you should see it, Matilda. The exercise would do you good."

**A**BOUT three weeks later on a Wednesday, as Marianna sat by her open window doing her mending, she saw Vilmar and Milly swinging along the road leading to the hill behind the cottage. Milly had a little basket in her hand and Vilmar flourished a willow stick, whisking at the grasses as they passed, and now that they were beyond the limits of the watchful village, laughter broke from them in happy gales. Marianna knew just the same that sighs followed that laughter—like clouds across the sun. And her heart warmed to Christine's Milly, who thus gallantly braved the wrath of the good villagers to spend an hour with the outcast. 'Twas a pity, she thought, that Ingeman's Tomi had not been wounded in the tongue rather than the neck and face. Poor Vilmar, even the minister saw nothing better ahead than a cell for him. Wild, bad-tempered, unsafe and untrustworthy . . . those were Dame Christine's words. And now Milly went laughing up the hill with him!

Marianna bent forward to see the young things better. On the window sill her big black Thomas was sunning himself, and at her feet lay sober Tabby. "What do you think of them?" asked the foolish old woman, tapping Tommy gently with her thimble finger. "What do you think of them, Herr Thomas?"

And would you credit it, that cat turned his green gaze upward and licked his whiskers quite as if he had been fed fresh cream! Marianna chuckled.

"Cats," she reaffirmed, "are a deal of comfort." But Tabby thought little of Thomas. Very indignant at being outshone, she arched her back, and yawned rudely, much as if to say: "Don't you believe him, Marianna, men are such deceivers."

Marianna, you must remember, was not quite right in her head. That accounts for the foolish way she had of pretending she understood these creatures. Tabby's efforts gained her a pat. And here in her own house Marianna said something that wild horses would not have gotten from her elsewhere. "Tabby," she whispered, "it's the gospel truth. I wouldn't be worried with the things myself!"

Some while later a soft wind began blowing and the clouds, that had been like floss along the horizon, drew together in knotted bulges that drove upward and darkened as they approached the sun. And the wind gathered strength. Still it was warm, but now it carried the unmistakable tang of the sea. It was going to storm.

Marianna thought of her pigs. They were in such fine fettle, almost ready for their journey. She certainly didn't intend to have any ill befall them. Once the pen had caved in with a storm and killed two perfectly healthy pigs.

These present two were big and heavy, but just the same she intended to bring them to the house. Reasoning thus, she got down a small leash attached to a leather collar. Pigs, Marianna would have said, had about as much intelligence, all things considered, as human beings. That is why she thought a collar and leash advisable.

As she entered the pen she talked to her "Little Souls" quite pleasantly and showed not the least impatience because the white pig did its best to elude her kind efforts. "Now, then, Little Soul," said she, "it's all for the best. How should I lead you to safety without a bit of a halter? Now be reasonable, Little Soul, and put on the collar and off we'll go to the place I've picked for you."

At last Little Soul consented to be lead, and eventually reached the safety of Marianna's kitchen. There remained Brother. Brother had a disposition as black as his hide. He didn't want to be saved, and said so with noisy irreverence. What's more, he ran as fast as his little feet permitted, away from old Marianna. And would you believe it, Marianna sat down, in the midst of the business, on a overturned bucket and laughed.

"Brother," said she, with tears in her crooked eyes, "brother, be reasonable. I can't let the storm get you. No, no, Brother, pork is too valuable in the Lofotten!" And at that she took advantage of poor Brother by pouncing on him when his eyes were turned skyward as though to test her prophecy, and so, with a

great deal of grunting and sniffing between them, Brother reached the kitchen too.

It was none too soon. Scarcely were the pigs settled down comfortably before Marianna saw that the shadows hung blue upon the pines and their top plumes swayed restlessly. Almost in the instant a blast of wind broke from the timber and thundered upon the little house. It lifted the thatch like an old man's hair and carried tufts of it away triumphantly. It battered at the walls and shrieked down the chimney and rattled the panes. But Marianna sat down contentedly, the ever-ready mending basket in her lap, the lighted lamp at her elbow. The old house had withstood half a century of storms there in the clearing; it might lose its thatch, but not security. It was rooted in the earth and one with the elements.

Marianna looked about her with affection. She loved the old house. Besides, her cats were all in—trust them for that!—and the pigs were snoring by the woodbox.

And this was Wednesday. With a benign smile Marianna scanned the Doctor's frock coat for the burn his Nina had discovered. Yes, there it was; a tiny hole, but needing delicate darning. "Anyway," Marianna told Tabby at her feet, "it's no so bad to be a mender of holes. No so bad at all. Thank God it's Wednesday."

**T**H E wind rose steadily; raging and roaring it drove a cloud of waste before it. An old kettle and a milk pail rattled on in helpless company; last year's leaves, dislodged from some hollow, whirled on dankly; somebody's wash was borne from beyond the hill; an endless stream of paper flapped and floated like the ghosts of murdered birds. And the darkness fell as only the darkness falls in the orient and the little Norway villages.

Marianna could not recall such another storm for years past—not at this time of year. Wherever there was a crevice, the wind blew in. Marianna shivered, glanced at the cats together in a huddle and decided that she must light a fire. If not, everything would be damp and disagreeable by morning. It seemed a waste of fuel, but doubtless little Hans would help her get in more.

The bright flame was scarcely on its ways up the flue when the sound of racing feet and a body falling heavily against her door, frightened the good Marianna out of all complacency. "Herr Gud!" she gasped, "Oh, Herr Gud!"—for hard on the heels of her fear came a wild suspicion.

(To be concluded)



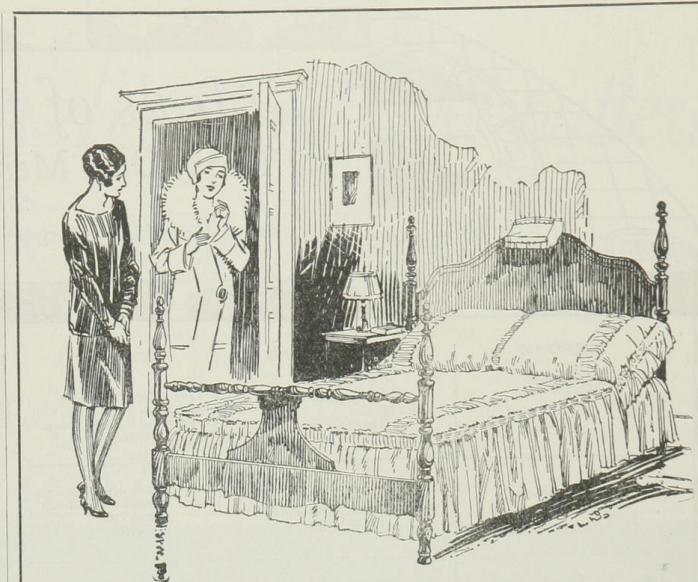
## The Black Cats' Hallowe'en Party

Continued from page 15

who first made black cats the fashion. I think your invitation said, 'Come out and spend the night!' It's only half spent—come on now—Let's dance till morning

light.'

And so they danced upon a roof, quite safe but all unseen. No wonder people said, "How scarce cats are this Hallowe'en!"



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