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Glenloch Girls

Grace M. Remick

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To

my little cousin

KATHARINE McC. REMICK

whose unfailing interest and appreciation have helped me to
write this book.

Introduction

This is the story of a pleasant winter in the lives of some everyday girls and boys. That doesn't sound exciting, does it? And yet, if you stop to think, you will remember that most girls and boys live comparatively simple lives and that it is given only to a few to have strange adventures and do valorous deeds. Ruth Shirley, one of the girls, expects to be very forlorn, but, finding a new home in Glenloch, she is welcomed by the kindest of friends and becomes a Glenloch Girl in heart and name. One of the boys is obliged to learn the lesson of patience and courage when that which he most prizes is taken away and he supposes it will never be regained. Like all the rest of us, these young people have their follies and faults. On the whole, however, they are truthful, good-natured, peaceable young citizens, full of the business of the hour, but beginning already to plan for the mysterious future which to them promises so much. Those who are interested in the story of their good times together may be glad to read in "Glenloch Girls Abroad" how Ruth meets her father, what tidings she has from Glenloch, and something of the new friends she makes on the other side of the ocean. They will be interested also in the further doings of The Social Six, as they are related in "Glenloch Girls' Club." And the adventures and good times of "Glenloch Girls at Camp West."

GRACE M. REMICK.

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"I WAS AFRAID YOU WEREN'T COMING,"

"DO YOU PROMISE TO KEEP OUR SECRETS?"

"LET ME GIVE YOU YOUR PRESENT NOW"

"IT'S VERY FINE AND BRAVE OF YOU"

IT HAPPENED AS SHE HAD WISHED

"IS YOUR LEMONADE GOOD?"

"TELL THEM YOUR NEWS"

CHAPTER I

RUTH'S FATHER

Just as the key clicked in the lock and the front door opened, a bright face peeped over the baluster from the hall above. "Why, papa," said a dismayed voice, "you're very early and I'm not dressed. I wanted to be at the door to meet you tonight of all nights."

"I'm sorry I'm not welcome, Ruthie," said papa, pretending to be very much hurt. "Shall I go out and walk up and down the block until you are ready to receive me?"

"No, indeed, you absurd boy. I'll be down there in three minutes and a half. Don't get interested in a book, will you, for I want to talk with you."

"Ail right, my dear," replied papa dutifully, and Ruth flew off to her room to put the finishing touches to her toilet.

A few minutes later she appeared in the library with flushed cheeks and very bright eyes. "Now, Popsy, sit down here," she said, leading him to the big armchair and sitting down in front of him. "Do you know what day this is, sir?" she continued, trying to look very stern.

"I think I do," he answered meekly; "it's the seventeenth of September, I believe."

"And what day is that?" still more sternly.

"That is, why, bless my soul, so it is, that's --"

"Your birthday," finished Ruth triumphantly. "And we're going to celebrate it just by ourselves. You aren't going out this evening, are you, Popsy?"

"No, dear, I shall be very glad to stay at home with you. I am afraid, though, that I shan't be a very good birthday boy, for there are some business plans that are troubling me, and I want to talk them over with you."

"Business plans?" said Ruth, surprised. "Why, papa, I never supposed I could help you about business plans."

"These particular plans have so much to do with you, little girl, that it's only fair to tell you about them before I decide. However, we won't talk about them until after dinner, for I'm as hungry as a bear."

"Well, do run upstairs and get ready now, for dinner will be ready in a few minutes, and I'm dying to give you your birthday surprise."

"Dear me, I thought it was enough of a shock to have a birthday, without more surprises. Give it to me by degrees, please, for in my starving condition I can't bear much."

Ruth watched her father as he ran lightly up the stairs, and wondered if any other girl had such a great, strong, handsome papa. "He's my very best chum," she said to herself, "and sometimes he doesn't seem a bit older than I do."

Just as the maid announced dinner, papa appeared and Ruth met him at the foot of the stairs with a sweeping courtesy. He responded with a ceremonious bow, and the proffer of his arm, which Ruth took with great gravity.

"Aren't we grand?" she said in a satisfied tone. "It makes me feel dreadfully grown up to have you treat me so politely."

"I'll stop then," laughed papa. "Fourteen is old enough, and I don't want my girl to turn into a young lady just yet."

"Now shut your eyes, Popsy, and don't look until I get you into your chair," said Ruth as they reached the dining-room door.

Her father obediently shut his eyes, and Ruth led him to his place at the table. Then she slipped around to her own chair, and clapping her hands said triumphantly, "Now look."

"Oh—o-oh!" gasped her father, almost before he had opened his eyes. "This is truly superb. Ruth, you're an artist."

"Mary helped me do it," said Ruth, smiling at the pretty maid; "but I planned it every bit myself. I thought I would make it a pink and white birthday because pink is your favorite color."

Mr. Shirley looked at the pretty table with appreciative eyes. In the centre a bowl of pink roses reflected in its shining facets the lights of the pink candies which filled the candelabra at the ends of the table. Broad, pink satin ribbons, with rosebuds and maidenhair fern dropped upon them at intervals, ran from the flower bowl in the centre to the comers of the polished table, and in front of papa's plate was a huge birthday cake resplendent with pink and white icing and glittering with candies.

"You don't have to eat the birthday cake first," said Ruth, as Mr. Shirley looked somewhat apprehensively in its direction. "You see I made it myself, and I thought I couldn't possibly wait all through dinner for it to be put on, so I told Mary we'd make it a sort of glorified supper, and we could have the cake to look at while we were eating the other things."

"Do you mean to tell me that you made this gorgeous concoction yourself?" asked papa, looking at her admiringly. "To think I should have had such a genius in my house and not have known it."

"I've been practicing ever since the first of September," answered Ruth proudly, "and Nora said that this one looked quite perfect. But you mustn't take too long over your supper, for there's another surprise coming when we are all by ourselves in the library."

"You don't say so. How can I wait until then?" said Mr. Shirley, beginning to attack the salad with great energy.

It was a delightful birthday supper, Ruth thought, for her father was his funniest self, and she laughed so much that she had scarcely time to eat. The cake was a great success, and Mr. Shirley praised the maker of it so warmly that she blushed rosily and flew around the table to give him a hug and kiss.

"Now for surprise number two," cried Ruth as they left the table and went into the cozy library. "Sit in the big chair, papa, and I'll bring it to you."

Mr. Shirley waited with pretended anxiety while Ruth opened a drawer in the desk and took out a small box. "This is for the best of fathers and the best of chums," she said giving it to him with a kiss.

"From the best of little daughters," he added as he opened the box. Inside was a velvet case and opening that he found a gold locket on which his monogram had been engraved.

"It's for you to wear on your watch-chain," said Ruth. "Now open it."

Mr. Shirley pressed the tiny spring, and the locket flew open disclosing two miniatures beautifully painted. One of Ruth with merry brown eyes and brown curls tied in a knot in her neck, and the other of a sweet-faced, tender-eyed woman whom Ruth much resembled.

"Popsy, dear," said Ruth, "I couldn't think of anything you would like half so well as these, so I took the money Uncle Jerry sent me last birthday and had them painted for you. Isn't it sweet of mamma?" she added softly.

"Nothing you could have given me would have pleased me so much," said Mr. Shirley with an odd little choke in his voice. "Those are the two dearest faces I could possibly see, and they shall go with me everywhere."

"I'm so glad you like it. And now, papa, let's have the business plans. It makes me feel very important to think that you are going to talk business with me."

"Dear, I'm afraid it's going to make you unhappy, and I hate to spoil our pleasant evening together. Shan't we get the birthday safely over, and put off the business plans until tomorrow?"

"Seems to me I remember that you are always telling me something about 'never putting off until tomorrow,' etc., etc. No, sir," she continued with mock sternness, "I want to hear all about it."

Still her father hesitated, until Ruth said hopefully, "You haven't lost all your money, have you? That would be so romantic and in-

teresting. I think I should go out as a cook, and perhaps you could get a place as butler in the same house. If it happened just now, though, I should have to feed them on birthday cake until I learned to make something else."

Mr. Shirley threw back his head and laughed. "You're a good planner,

Ruthie, but I hardly think you'll be obliged to go out as a cook just yet. I am sorry to disappoint you, but I really can't say that I have lost any money."

"Well, then, please tell me all about it, and I'll listen very quietly," said Ruth perching herself on the arm of the big chair.

"It's just this, little daughter," answered Mr. Shirley, putting his arm around Ruth and drawing her closer; "it has been decided that it will be a profitable thing for us to open a branch house in Germany, and it is important that some member of the firm should be over there for a year or two to start it."

"And are you the one to go?" cried Ruth, clapping her hands. "Why should you think that would make me unhappy, when it is one of the dreams of my life to go abroad?"

"That's just where the trouble comes, Ruthie," said her father tenderly. "I have thought it all over carefully, and I cannot make myself think that it would be right or wise to take you over there with me for the first year. For six months, at least, I shall be traveling nearly all the time, and I should neither want to take you with me nor to leave you in a pension."

"But, father, I'd be willing to stay alone if I could only see you once in a while," cried Ruth with quivering lips. "Or you could get me a German governess, and — —"

"Darling, I've thought over every possible plan, and it still seems to me better for you not to go over during my first year," answered Mr. Shirley soberly.

"Oh, papa, I can't bear it," sobbed Ruth, burying her face on her father's shoulder. "We've been such chums for the last year, and I can't get along without you. Besides," she said, checking her tears

and looking at him with a pitiful attempt at a smile, "when mamma died she told me I must try to take her place and always take care of you, and how can I if you go so far away?"

There was another burst of sobs, and all Mr. Shirley could do was to hold her close and stroke the soft curls with a remorseful hand. At last when it seemed to him that he could bear it no longer she raised her tear-stained face, and said as she used to say when she was a little girl, "I'm going to be good now, papa."

"That's my brave girl," said Mr. Shirley much relieved. "Here, let me help you wipe your eyes, darling. You need something bigger than that scrap of a handkerchief after such a shower."

Ruth laughed weakly as papa sopped her eyes in an unskilful but efficacious manner. Then as she lay back in his arms quite tired out after her storm of tears she said soberly, "Tell me all the rest now, papa, please. What do you mean to do with me?"

"That is the hardest question of all to decide," answered Mr. Shirley gravely. "I never realized before quite how hard it would be to find a suitable home for such an attractive young person as you are. If Uncle Jerry would only find a wife and settle down within the next month you could go to him, but I'm afraid we can't manage that."

"Within a month, papa? Must it be so soon as that?" asked Ruth, looking at him with eyes that threatened to overflow again.

"I'm afraid it must, dear," answered Mr. Shirley. "You see the sooner I get to Germany the better it will be for the business, and if you and I have a hard thing to do we may as well get it over as soon as possible."

Ruth shut her eyes for a moment and clenched her hands. She was determined not to cry again, at least not when she was with her father.

"You must have some plan for me in your mind, papa," she said at last very quietly; "please tell me what it is."

"Well, dear, there are three ways out of it. You must either go to school, have some one come and live with you here, or go to live in the family of some one we know."

"I've always thought I should just love to go to boarding-school," said Ruth thoughtfully, "but now it seems to me I should hate it. And I should simply die if you left me in this house, for I should miss you and mamma every minute."

"That's just what I feared," said Mr. Shirley, "and as to the boarding-school plan, there are several reasons why I should prefer to give that up for this year. That leaves plan number three to be considered, and today I've had what I think is a brilliant idea regarding it."

"What is it, papa?" asked Ruth, beginning to get interested.

"It seems to me that if I leave you with any of our friends here in Chicago you will be constantly reminded of mamma and me and will miss us more than you would if you were in some place where we had never been together. Just as I was thinking this all over for the hundredth time this morning a letter came from my old college chum, Henry Hamilton. It was largely a business letter, but at the end he inquired for you, and said that they wished very much that they had a daughter growing up in their family."

"Seems to me I've heard mamma speak of Mrs. Hamilton," said Ruth musingly. "Didn't they play together when they were little girls?"

"Why, yes, of course they did. Mrs. Hamilton was Mary Ashley, and you remember that funny story mamma used to tell you about the time they thought they heard a burglar."

"Oh, yes, and how they went into Boston to a big fair and they lost Mary Ashley's mother, who was taking care of them and had such a funny time getting home," said Ruth.

"Well, I called on them the last time I went East, and found them living not far from Boston in a very delightful home, and when that letter reminded me of them today I thought at once that their home would be just the place for you if they were willing to take you."

"Are there any children in the family?"

"One boy about sixteen," replied Mr. Shirley.

"Dear me! I wish he had a sister. But, papa, have you any idea that they'll want to take a strange girl into their family for a whole

year? If they will take me I shall be so much nearer Europe, shan't I?"

"Of course you will, darling, and I somehow have the feeling that they'll be glad to have you with them," said Mr. Shirley. "Now if you agree with me that it is best to try this plan, I'll write tonight, for I'm sorry to say our plans must be made quickly."

Ruth's eyes filled with tears which she could not hide. "It all seems so horrid to me when I think of being without you, papa," she said slowly, "that I can't make any choice. You'll have to do just as you think best, and perhaps I shall learn to be brave."

Mr. Shirley hugged her tight for a moment without speaking. Then he said tenderly, "Darling, go to bed now and try to sleep. Perhaps in the morning things will look brighter to you. We'll talk it over then and see what is best to be done."

Ruth kissed him and tried to smile, "Goodnight, papa; I'll be a better chum tomorrow," she said with an effort, and then went quickly from the room.