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GLORY AND THE OTHER
GIRL

Annie Donnell

Glory and the Other Girl

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Annie Hamilton Donnell

Glory and the Other Girl

Chapter I

Glory ran in the last minute to bid Aunt Hope good-by. That was the one thing that she never forgot.

“Good-by, auntie. I'm off, but I'm not happy. *Happy!* I'm perfectly mis-er-a-ble! If only I had passed last year! To think I've got to go back to that baby seminary, and the other girls will have entered at Glenwood! Oh, dear! I'll never be able to catch up.”

“There, dear, don't! Keep brave. Remember what a pleasant vacation we've had, and this is such a lovely day in which to begin all over. I wouldn't mind ‘beginning over’ again to-day!”

Aunt Hope was smiling up at her from the cushions of the big couch, but Glory's lips trembled as she stooped to gather the thin little figure into her strong girlish arms.

“Auntie! Auntie! If you only could!” the girl cried wistfully. “If you could only take my place! It isn't fair that we can't take turns being well and strong. But, there,” she made a wry face to hide her emotion, “who'd want to be poor me to-day and go back on that horrid train to that horrid, horrid school!”

“Glory Wetherell, I believe you're lazy!” Aunt Hope laughed. “A Wetherell lazy! There, kiss me again, Disappointment, and run away to your ‘horrid train!’”

But out on the landing Glory paused expectantly, taking a rapid mental account of stock in readiness for the coming questions. “She'll call in a minute,” the girl thought tenderly, waiting for the sweet, feeble voice. “The day auntie doesn't call me back I sha'n't be Gloria Wetherell!”

“Gloria!”

“Yes'm. Here I am. I've got my books, auntie.”

“*All, Glory?*”

“Every single one.”

“All right, dear!” came in Aunt Hope's soft voice. And Glory went on downstairs, smiling to herself triumphantly. Such luck! When had she been able to answer like that before?

“Gloria!” again.

“Yes, auntie. Oh! oh! yes, I *did* forget my mileage book, auntie. I'll get it this minute. But, auntie,” – Glory stopped at the foot of the stairs. Her discomfited laugh floated upward to the pale little invalid – “I've felt of my head and it's on. I didn't forget that! Good-by.”

“Dear girl – my Little Disappointment!” murmured the invalid, sinking back on her pillows, with a tender sigh. “Will she ever grow heedful? When will she come to her own?”

Oddly enough, at that moment Glory was saying to herself, as she hurried down the street, “I wish she wouldn't call me her ‘Disappointment’ like that – dear auntie! There's any quantity of love in it, but I don't like the sound of it. It reminds me of the trains I've missed, and the books I've forgotten, and – oh, me! – all the lessons I haven't learned! I wish auntie didn't care so much about such things —*I don't!*”

It was a splendid September day. The sweet, sharp air kissed the girl's fresh cheeks into blushes and sent her feet dancing along with the very joy of locomotion. In spite of herself Glory began to be happy. And the girls were at the station to see her off – that was an unexpected compliment. They ran to meet her excitedly.

“Quick, quick, Glory! We've ‘held up’ the train as long as we can!” they chorused. “Didn't you know you were late, for pity's sake? And it's the Crosspatch Conductor's day, too – we've had an awful time coaxing him to wait! But he's a real dear, after all.”

“Give me your books – help her on, Judy! There, take 'em quick! Good-by.”

“Our sympathies go-o with – yo-oo-ou!”

The chorus of gay voices trailed after her, as she stood alone on the platform. With a final wave of her book-strap she went dolefully inside. Suddenly the September getting-off intoxication oozed out of her finger-tips. She tumbled into the nearest seat with a sigh. It was even worse than she had anticipated.

“I wish the girls hadn't come down,” she thought ungratefully. “Sending their condolences after me like that! I guess I could see the triumph in Judy Wells' face, and Georgia Kelley's, and all their faces. They were hugging themselves for not having to go back to the seminary. Nobody's got to but just poor me. I declare, I'm so sorry for you, Glory Wetherell, and I think I'm going to cry!”

The “girls,” all four of them, had graduated the previous spring. Only heedless, unstudy-loving Glory had lagged over into another year, and must go back and forth from little Douglas to the Centre Town Seminary all by herself. Every morning and every night – the days loomed ahead of her, not to be numbered or borne. Well, it was hard. No more merry chattering rides, as there had been last year when the girls were her companions. No more gay little car-feasts on the home trips, out of the carefully hoarded remnants of their dinners.

“I wish I'd kept up in mathematics and things!” lamented Glory, gazing at the flying landscape with gloomy eyes. “If I'd known how this was going to feel, I'd have done it if it killed me. Think of a year of this! Two times three quarters of an hour is an hour and a half. Let me see – in the three terms there'll be three times sixty-five days. Three times sixty-five is” – Glory figured slowly – “one hundred and ninety-five days! An hour and a half in one day – in one hundred and ninety-five days there will be – oh, forever!” groaned Glory. She sat and looked into the year to come with a gloomy face. In spite of herself she multiplied one hundred and ninety-five by one and a half.

“That's the number of hours you're going to sit here on a car-seat, is it?” she demanded of herself. “It's a nice prospect, isn't it? You'll have a charming time, won't you? Aren't you glad you didn't keep up in things?”

It did not occur to Glory that she might employ the time in study. Studying very rarely “occurred” to Glory, anyway. She went back and forth from little Douglas to the Centre Town “Seminary for Young Ladies” because of Aunt Hope. Aunt Hope wanted her to, and Aunt Hope was a dear. She would do even that for Aunt Hope!

The slow local train lurched on between grainfields and cattle-dotted pastures, and the pretty, dainty little maid on the back seat sat on, with the plaintive face of a martyr. In spite of herself the Other Girl smiled. The Other Girl was not dainty, nor was she pretty unless she smiled. The uptwitch of her mouth-corners and the flash of white teeth helped out a great deal. She had never had occasion to laugh much in her fifteen years of life, but now and then she smiled – when she saw girls playing martyr, for instance!

“It's funny, if she only knew it,” the Other Girl thought. “There she sits feeling abused because she has to go to school – oh, my goodness, goodness! She feels that way, I'm certain she does! It's printed in capitals on her face. Diantha Leavitt, do you hear? – there's a girl back there feeling abused because she's got to go to a Young Ladies' Seminary! If you don't believe me, turn square round and look at her.”

The Other Girl was sitting sidewise on her seat to give her a slanting view from under her shabby sailor of the trim little tailor-made figure on the back seat. She had been watching it ever since the train drew out of Douglas. She had recognized it at once as one of the five trim, girlish figures that had got on at the same place the previous spring. School-books and schoolgirl nonsense tell their own story, and, besides, hadn't they always got off at Centre Town, and wasn't there a Young Ladies' Seminary there? You could put two and two together if you *didn't* study arithmetic – if your name *was* only Diantha Leavitt and you worked in the East Centre Town rubber factory, instead of going to school.

The Other Girl's admiring eyes had taken in all the dainty details of gloves, tiny chatelaine watch, and neat school satchel out of which protruded green and brown books. With a fierce little gesture the Other Girl had slid her own hands under her threadbare jacket. They were reddened and rough.

"I should like to know if she can smell rubber clear back there," she thought. "You ought to go ahead to the front o' the car, Diantha Leavitt. Don't you know dainty folks don't like the smell of rubber? Oh, my goodness – goodness – goodness! I wish I could get out o' the reach of it for one day in my life! *One day*– doesn't seem like asking a great deal, does it?"

She straightened and turned her back to the dainty girl of luxury on the rear seat. She would not look again. But straight ahead, on the very front of the car, her gloomy, roaming gaze was stayed. What was this she saw? The pretty, plaintive face of the schoolgirl, in the mirror! She could not get away from it. The two pairs of blue eyes seemed to be looking directly into each other, but the Other Girl's were full of angry tears. The Other Girl sat up, straight and defiant, and stared ahead unswervingly. Mentally she was taking a scornful inventory of her own shabbiness.

"My feather is perfectly straight; – it rained Saturday night, and I haven't had any time to curl it over the poker. It doesn't belong on a sailor, anyway, but it's better than a hole right into your hair! It covers up. My jacket collar is all fringy round the edges, and the top button is split. My necktie has been washed four times too often – ugh! I smell rubber!"

Glory consulted her little chatelaine watch impatiently.

"I hope we're 'most there!" she sighed. "If this hasn't been the longest ride! I know one thing – I shall bring my crochet-work to-morrow, and my tatting, and my knitting-work, and my – patchwork! There's more than one way to 'kill' time." She smiled to herself a little. From the cover of the tiny watch Aunt Hope's picture looked up at her, smiling too. Glory nodded back to it.

"Yes'm, I've got everything – I haven't forgotten a thing. And I'm going to be good," she murmured, as she shut the sweet face out of sight.

The train slowed up. Glory was feeling better because of the little draught of Sweet Face Tonic, and she was even humming a tune under her breath when she stepped down on to the platform. She stepped daintily along with her pretty head held up saucily and her skirts a-flutter. It wasn't so bad, after all, once off that horrid train – good riddance to it! Let it go fizzing and puffing away. The farther the better —

Suddenly Glory stood still and gazed downward at her empty hands, then at the fading curl of white smoke up the track. Her face was a study of dismay.

"Oh! oh! That horrid train has carried off my books!" she cried.

Chapter II

Glory swung about on her toes and marched away to the Centre Town ticketman, whom she knew a little.

“Mr. Blodgett,” she cried, “what do you do when you get off the train and your books don't?”

The pleasant old face twinkled at her out of the little window. Mr. Blodgett's acquaintance with Glory had been enlivened by a good many such crises as this. In his mind he had always separated her from the other Douglas young misses as “The Fly-away One.”

“Forgot 'em, eh? Got carried off, did they? Well, that's a serious case. You'll have to engage a counsel, but I ain't sure you'll get your case. Looks to me as if the law was on the other –”

“Mr. Blodgett,” laughed Glory, “I don't want to get my ‘case’ – I want my books! What do folks do when they leave things – umbrellas or something – in their seats?”

“Never left an umbrella yourself, of course?”

“Ye-es – three,” admitted Glory, “but I never *did* anything – just let 'em go. This time it's my school-books, you see. It's different. I don't see how I'm going to school without any books.”

“Sure enough. Well, I'll see what I can do for you, my dear. I'll telegraph to the conductor to take 'em in charge and deliver 'em to you at your place, in the morning. How's that?”

“Oh, thank you, Mr. Blodgett. You're a regular dear – I mean you're very kind.”

“Don't change it, my dear. The first is good enough for me,” the old man laughed. He was thinking what a refreshing little picture his small window framed in. Was it like this his little girl would have looked if she had grown into girlhood? He gazed after the Flyaway One wistfully.

It was still early in the morning, and Glory loitered about in the crisp September sunshine with an hour of time to “kill.” There was but one early train to Centre Town, and that left Douglas at seven. It had not been so bad, of course, when the other girls came, too, but now! – Glory sighed pensively. So many things were bad now. The sun might just as well be snuffed out like a candle and it be raining torrents, for all the joy there was in living!

“That was my fourth Latin lexicon,” Glory exclaimed suddenly, with a vivid vision of Aunt Hope's grieved face. “I left two out in the rain, and lost a lot of leaves out of another, and now this one's gone on a tour! Poor auntie! I guess she might as well keep right on calling me Little Disappointment.”

It was an unpropitious beginning for the new term. Glory was obliged to refuse three times to recite, on the plea of her lost books, and double lessons loomed ahead of her dismally. But not for long – Glory never allowed “making up” to dispirit her unduly. Studying, anyway, was a nuisance, and the less time you let it give you the blues, the better. If you hadn't any books you couldn't study – naturally. Then why gloom over it a whole day?

“Well, dear?” Aunt Hope said that night, as they sat in the twilight together; “well, the beginning and the ending are the first day. How has it been? You look happy enough – I can feel the corners of your mouth, and they turn up!” The slender, cool fingers traveled over the girl's face in their own privileged fashion.

Glory remembered the books and drew down her lips hastily.

“I've been naughty, auntie,” she confessed softly.

“Oh, Glory! – again?”

“Yes'm, I'm afraid so. I'm afraid I've – lost something.”

Aunt Hope drew a long, patient breath before she spoke. Her fingers still lingered on the smooth cheeks and then wandered slowly to the tangle of soft hair. The little girl half hidden from her by the dusk was so dear to her!

“Tell me about it, Little Disappointment,” Aunt Hope said at length. And Glory told her story penitently.

“But I think it will come out all right, auntie, truly,” she ended. “I shall get them again to-morrow morning. Mr. Blodgett said he'd telegraph to have the Crosspatch Conduc – I mean the *conductor*– bring them with him to-morrow. It isn't likely anybody would steal a school satchel of books!” The bright voice ran on, quite gay and untroubled again. But Aunt Hope put up her hand and felt about for the laughing lips, to hush them. It had grown dark in the room.

“Glory, I am going to tell you a story,” Aunt Hope said quietly. “You are to sit a little closer to me and listen like a good little girl. Don't speak, dear.”

“I won't, auntie.”

“There was another girl once,” began Aunt Hope's gentle voice. “She had two things she loved especially – an Ambition and a Brother. She spelled them both with capitals, they were so dear to her. Sometimes she told herself she hardly knew which one she loved the better. But there came a time when she must choose between them, and then she knew. Of course it was the Brother. She put the Ambition away on a high shelf where she could not go to it too often and cry over it. ‘Stay there awhile,’ she said. ‘Some day I shall come and take you down and live with you again. Just now I must take care of my Brother.’

“For the girl and her Brother were all alone in the world, and she was the older. He was a little thing, and she was all the mother he had. For fifteen years she took care of him, and then one day she found time to take the Ambition down from the high shelf – she had not had time before. She took it down and clasped it in the old way to her breast. ‘Oh, ho!’ she laughed – she was so glad! – ‘Oh, *now*

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