

# **The Enchanted Barn**

By

Grace Livingston Hill Lutz



SHE WAS ALMOST BREATHLESS WHEN SHE REACHED THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL AND STOOD IN FRONT OF THE GREAT BARN

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OF THE HILL AND STOOD IN FRONT OF THE GREAT BARN. [Page 20](#)**

Author of "Marcia Schuyler," "Phoebe Deane,"  
"The Obsession of Victoria Gracen," etc.

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# **THE ENCHANTED BARN**

## CHAPTER I

Shirley Hollister pushed back the hair from her hot forehead, pressed her hands wearily over tired eyes, then dropped her fingers again to the typewriter keys, and flew on with the letter she was writing.

There was no one else in the inner office where she sat. Mr. Barnard, the senior member of the firm, whose stenographer she was, had stepped into the outer office for a moment with a telegram which he had just received. His absence gave Shirley a moment's respite from that feeling that she must keep strained up to meet his gaze and not let trouble show in her eyes, though a great lump was choking in her throat and the tears stung her hot eyelids and insisted on blurring her vision now and then. But it was only for an instant that she gave way. Her fingers flew on with their work, for this was an important letter, and Mr. Barnard wanted it to go in the next mail.

As she wrote, a vision of her mother's white face appeared to her between the lines, the mother weak and white, with tears on her cheeks and that despairing look in her eyes. Mother hadn't been able to get up for a week. It seemed as if the cares of life were getting almost too much for her, and the warm spring days made the little brick house in the narrow street a stifling place to stay. There was only one small window in mother's room, opening against a brick wall, for they had had to rent the front room with its two windows.

But, poor as it was, the little brick house had been home; and now they were not to have that long. Notice had been served that they must vacate in four weeks; for the house, in fact, the whole row of houses in which it was situated, had been sold, and was to be pulled down to make way for a big apartment-house that was to be put up.

Where they were going and what they were going to do now was the great problem that throbbed on Shirley's weary brain night and day, that kept her from sleeping and eating, that choked in her throat when she tried to speak to Mr. Barnard, that stared from her feverish eyes as she looked at the sunshine on the street or tried to work in the busy monotony of the office.

They had been in the little house nearly a year, ever since the father died. It had taken all they could scrape together to pay the funeral expenses, and now with her salary, and the roomer's rent, and what George got as

cash-boy in a department store they were just barely able to get along. There was not a cent over for sickness or trouble, and nothing to move with, even if they had anywhere to move, or any time to hunt for a place. Shirley knew from her experience in hunting for the present house that it was going to be next to impossible for them to find any habitable place for as little rent as they were now paying, and how *could* they pay more? She was only a beginner, and her salary was small. There were three others in the family, not yet wage-earners. The problem was tremendous. Could it be that Carol, only fourteen years old, must stop school and go to work somewhere to earn a pittance also? Carol was slender and pale, and needed fresh air and nourishing food. Carol was too young to bear burdens yet; besides, who would be housekeeper and take care of mother if Carol had to go to work? It was different with George; he was a boy, strong and sturdy; he had his school in the department store, and was getting on well with his studies. George would be all right. He belonged to a baseball team, too, and got plenty of chances for exercise; but Carol was frail, there was no denying it. Harley was a boisterous nine-year-old, always on the street these days when he wasn't in school; and who could blame him? For the narrow, dark brick house was no place for a lively boy. But the burden and anxiety for him were heavy on his sister's heart, who had taken over bodily all the worries of her mother. Then there was the baby Doris, with her big, pathetic eyes, and her round cheeks and loving ways. Doris, too, had to be shut in the dark little house with the summer heat coming on, and no one with time enough or strength enough to take her to the Park. Doris was only four. Oh, it was terrible, *terrible!* and Shirley could do nothing but sit there, and click those keys, and earn her poor little inadequate salary! Some day, of course, she would get more—but some day might be too late!

She shuddered as the terrible thought flashed through her mind, then went on with her work again. She must shake off this state of mind and give attention to her duty, or she would lose even this opportunity to help her dear ones.

The door of the outer office opened, and Mr. Barnard entered.

"Miss Hollister," he said hurriedly, "if you have those letters ready, I will sign them at once. We have just had word that Mr. Baker of the firm died last night in Chicago, and I must go on at once. The office will be closed for the rest of the day. You can let those other matters that I spoke of go until to-morrow, and you may have the day off. I shall not be at the office at the usual hour to-morrow morning, but you can come in and look after

the mail. I will leave further directions with Mr. Clegg. You can mail these letters as you go down."

Ten minutes later Shirley stood on the street below in the warm spring sunshine, and gazed about her half dazed. It seemed a travesty on her poor little life just now to have a holiday and no way to make it count for the dear ones at home. How should she use it, anyway? Should she go home and help Carol? Or should she go out and see whether she could find a house somewhere that they could possibly afford to move to? That, of course, was the sensible thing to do; yet she had no idea where to go. But they did not expect her home at this time of day. Perhaps it was as well that she should use this time and find out something without worrying her mother. At least, she would have time to think undisturbed.

She grasped her little package of lunch that she had brought from home with her and looked about her helplessly. In her little thin purse was the dime she always carried with her to pay her car-fare in case something happened that she had to ride either way—though she seldom rode, even in a storm. But her mother insisted on the dime. She said it was not safe to go without any money at all. This dime was her capital wherewith to hunt a house. Perhaps the day had been given her by a kind heavenly Father to go on her search. She would try to use it to the best of her ability. She lifted her bewildered heart in a feeble petition for light and help in her difficult problem, and then she went and stood on the corner of the street where many trolley-cars were passing and repassing. Which one should she take, and where should she go? The ten cents must cover all her riding, and she must save half of it for her return.

She studied the names on the cars. "Glenside Road" one read. What had she heard about that? Ah! that it was the longest ride one could take for five cents within the limits of the city's roads! Her heart leaped up at the word. It sounded restful anyway, and would give her time to think. It wasn't likely, if it went near any glens, that there would be any houses within her means on its way; but possibly it passed some as it went through the city, and she could take notice of the streets and numbers and get out on her return trip to investigate if there proved to be anything promising; or, if it were too far away from home for her to walk back from it, she could come another time in the evening with George, some night when he did not have school. Anyhow, the ride would rest her and give her a chance to think what she ought to do, and one car was as good as another for that. Her resolve was taken, and she stepped out and signalled it.

There were not many people in the car. It was not an hour when people rode out to the suburbs. Two workmen with rolls of wall-paper slung in burlap bags, a woman and a little girl, that was all.

Shirley settled back in her seat, and leaned her head against the window-sash wearily. She felt so tired, body and soul, that she would have been glad to sleep and forget for a little while, only that there was need for her to be up and doing. Her room had been oppressively warm the night before; and Doris, who slept with her, had rolled from one side of the bed to the other, making sleep well-nigh impossible for the elder sister. She felt bruised and bleeding in her very soul, and longed for rest.

The car was passing through the thickest of the city's business thoroughfare, and the noise and confusion whirled about her ears like some fiendish monotonous music that set the time for the mad dance of the world. One danced to it whether one would or not, and danced on to one's death.

Around the city hall the car passed, and on up Market Street. They passed a great fruit-store, and the waft of air that entered the open windows came laden with the scent of over-ripe bananas, late oranges and lemons; a moment later with sickening fumes it blended into a deadly smell of gas from a yawning hole in the pavement, and mingled with the sweat of the swarthy foreigners grouped about it, picks in hand. It seemed as though all the smells in creation were met and congregated in that street within four or five blocks; and one by one they tortured her, leather and paint and metal and soap, rank cheese in a fellow traveller's market-basket, thick stifling smoke from a street engine that was champing up the gravel they fed it to make a new patch of paving, the stench from the cattle-sheds as they passed the railroad and stock-yards, the dank odor of the river as they crossed the bridge, and then an oilcloth-factory just beyond! The faint sweet breath of early daffodils and violets from an occasional street vendor stood no chance at all with these, and all the air seemed sickening and dreadful to the girl as she rested wearily against the window with closed eyes, and tried to think.

They slipped at last into the subway with a whirl and a swish, where the cool, clean smell of the cement seemed gradually to rise and drown the memory of the upper world, and came refreshingly in at the windows. Shirley had a passing thought, wondering whether it would be like that in the grave, all restful and sweet and quiet and clean, with the noisy, heartless world roaring overhead. Then they came up suddenly out of the subway, with a kind of triumphant leap and shout of brakes and wheels,

into the light and sunshine above, and a new world. For here were broad streets, clean pavements, ample houses, well-trimmed lawns, quiet people walking in comfort, bits of flower-boxes on the window-sills filled with pansies and hyacinths; and the air was sweet and clean. The difference made Shirley sit up and look about her, and the contrast reminded her of the heaven that would be beyond the grave. It was just because she was so tired and disheartened that her thoughts took this solemn form.

But now her heart sank again, for she was in the world of plenty far beyond her means, and there was no place for such as she. Not in either direction could she see any little side streets with tiny houses that would rent for fifteen dollars a month. There were such in the city, she knew; but they were scarce, and were gobbled up as soon as vacant.

But here all was spaciousness, and even the side streets had three stories and smug porches with tidy rockers and bay windows.

She looked at the great plate-glass windows with their cobwebby lace draperies, and thought what it would be if she were able to take her mother and the children to such a home as one of those. Why, if she could afford that, George could go to college, and Doris wear a little velvet coat with rose-buds in her bonnet, like the child on the sidewalk with her nurse and her doll-carriage.

But a thing like that could never come to her. There were no rich old uncles to leave them a fortune; she was not bright and gifted to invent some wonderful toy or write a book or paint a picture that would bring the fortune; and no one would ever come her way with a fortune to marry her. Those things happened only in story-books, and she was not a story-book girl; she was just a practical, every-day, hard-working girl with a fairly good complexion, good blue eyes and a firm chin. She could work hard and was willing; but she could not bear anxiety. It was eating into her soul, and she could feel a kind of mental paralysis stealing over her from it, benumbing her faculties hour by hour.

The car glided on, and the houses grew less stately and farther apart. They were not so pretentious now, but they were still substantial and comfortable, with more ground and an air of having been there always, with no room for newcomers. Now and then would come a nucleus of shops and an old tavern with a group of new groceries and crying competition of green stamps and blue stamps and yellow stamps posted alluringly in their windows. Here busy, hurried people would swarm, and children ran and shouted; but every house they passed seemed full to

overflowing, and there was nowhere any place that seemed to say, "Here you may come and find room!"

And now the car left the paved and built-up streets, and wandered out between the open fields, where trees arched lavishly overhead, and little new green things lifted up unfrightened heads, and dared to grow in the sunshine. A new smell, the smell of rich earth and young green growing things, of skunk-cabbage in bloom in the swamps, of budding willows and sassafras, roused her senses; the hum of a bee on its way to find the first honey-drops came to her ears. Sweet, droning, restful, with the call of a wild bird in the distance, and all the air balmy with the joy of spring. Ah! This was a new world! This indeed was heaven! What a contrast to the office, and the little narrow stifling brick house where mother lay, and Doris cut strings of paper dolls from an old newspaper and sighed to go out in the Park! What a contrast! Truly, this was heaven! If she could but stay, and all the dear ones come!

She had spent summers in the country, of course; and she knew and loved nature, but it had been five years since she had been free to get outside the city limits for more than a day, and then not far. It seemed to her now that she had never sensed the beauty of the country as to-day; perhaps because she had never needed it as now.

The road went on smoothly straight ahead, with now a rounding curve, and then another long stretch of perfect road. Men were ploughing in the fields on one side, and on the other lay the emerald velvet of a field of spring wheat. More people had got into the car as it left the city. Plain, substantial men, nice, pleasant women; but Shirley did not notice them; she was watching the changing landscape and thinking her dismal, pitiful thoughts. Thinking, too, that she had spent her money—or would have when she returned, with nothing to show for it, and her conscience condemned her.

They were coming now to a wide, old-fashioned barn of stone, with ample grassy stone-coped entrance rising like a stately carpeted stairway from the barn-yard. It was resting on the top of a green knoll, and a great elm-tree arched over it protectingly. A tiny stream purred below at one side, and the ground sloped gradually off at the other. Shirley was not noticing the place much except as it was a part of the landscape until she heard the conductor talking to the man across the aisle about it.

"Good barn!" he was saying reflectively. "Pity to have it standing idle so long; but they'll never rent it without a house, and they won't build. It

belongs to the old man's estate, and can't be divided until the youngest boy's of age, four 'r five years yet. The house burned down two years ago. Some tramps set it afire. No, nobody was living in it at the time. The last renter didn't make the farm pay,—too fur from the railroad, I guess,—and there ain't anybody near enough round to use the barn since Halyer built his new barn," and he indicated a great red structure down the road on the other side. "Halyer useta use this,—rented it fer less'n nothing, but he got too lazy to come this fur, and so he sold off half his farm fer a dairy and built that there barn. So now I s'pose that barn'll stand idle and run to waste till that kid comes of age and there's a boom up this way and it's sold. Pity about it, though; it's a good barn. Wisht I had it up to my place; I could fill it."

"Make a good location for a house," said the other man, looking intently at the big stone pile. "Been a fine barn in its time. Old man must uv had a pile of chink when he built it. Who'd ya say owned it?"

"Graham, Walter Graham, big firm down near the city hall—guess you know 'em. Got all kinds of money. This ain't one, two, three with the other places they own. Got a regular palace out Arden way fer summer and a town house in the swellest neighborhood, and own land all over. Old man inherited it from his father and three uncles. They don't even scarcely know they got this barn, I reckon. It ain't very stylish out this way just yet."

"Be a big boom here some day; nice location," said the passenger.

"Not yetta while," said the conductor sagely; "railroad station's too far. Wait till they get a station out Allister Avenue; then you can talk. Till then it'll stay as it is, I reckon. There's a spring down behind the barn, the best water in the county. I useta get a drink every day when the switch was up here. I missed it a lot when they moved the switch to the top of the hill. Water's cold as ice and clear as crystal—can't be beat this side the soda-fountain. I sometimes stop the car on a hot summer day now, and run and get a drink—it's great."

The men talked on, but Shirley heard no more. Her eyes were intent on the barn as they passed it—the great, beautiful, wide, comfortable-looking barn. What a wonderful house it would make! She almost longed to be a cow to enter this peaceful shelter and feel at home for a little while.

The car went on, and left the big barn in the distance; but Shirley kept thinking, going over almost unconsciously all the men had said about it. Walter Graham! Where had she seen that name? Oh, of course in the

Ward Trust Building, the whole fourth floor. Leather goods of some sort, perhaps, she couldn't just remember; yet she was sure of the name.

The man had said the barn rented for almost nothing. What could that mean translated in terms of dollars? Would the fifteen dollars a month that they were now paying for the little brick house cover it? But there would be the car-fare for herself and George. Walking that distance twice a day, or even once, would be impossible. Ten cents a day, sixty cents a week—twice sixty cents! If they lived out of the city, they couldn't afford to pay but twelve dollars a month. They never would rent that barn for that, of course, it was so big and grand-looking; and yet—it was a *barn*! What did barns rent for, anyway?

And, if it could be had, could they live in a barn? What were barns like, anyway, inside? Did they have floors, or only stalls and mud? There had been but two tiny windows visible in the front; how did they get light inside? But then it couldn't be much darker than the brick house, no matter what it was. Perhaps there was a skylight, and hay, pleasant hay, to lie down on and rest. Anyhow, if they could only manage to get out there for the summer somehow, they could bear some discomforts just to sit under that great tree and look up at the sky. To think of Doris playing under that tree! And mother sitting under it sewing! Mother could get well out there in that fresh air, and Doris would get rosy cheeks again. There would not likely be a school about for Carol; but that would not hurt her for the summer, anyway, and maybe by fall they could find a little house. Perhaps she would get a raise in the fall. If they could only get somewhere to go now!

But yet—a barn! Live in a barn! What would mother say? Would she feel that it was a disgrace? Would she call it one of Shirley's wild schemes? Well, but what were they going to do? They must live *somewhere*, unless they were destined to die homeless.

The car droned on through the open country coming now and then to settlements of prosperous houses, some of them small; but no empty ones seemed to beckon her. Indeed, they looked too high-priced to make her even look twice at them; besides, her heart was left behind with that barn, that great, beautiful barn with the tinkling brook beside it, and the arching tree and gentle green slope.

At last the car stopped in a commonplace little town in front of a red brick church, and everybody got up and went out. The conductor disappeared,

too, and the motorman leaned back on his brake and looked at her significantly.

"End of the line, lady," he said with a grin, as if she were dreaming and had not taken notice of her surroundings.

"Oh," said Shirley, rousing up, and looking bewilderedly about her. "Well, you go back, don't you?"

"Yes. Go back in fifteen minutes," said the motorman indulgently. There was something appealing in the sadness of this girl's eyes that made him think of his little girl at home.

"Do you go back just the same way?" she asked with sudden alarm. She did want to see that barn again, and to get its exact location so that she could come back to it some day if possible.

"Yes, we go back just the same way," nodded the motorman.

Shirley sat back in her seat again contented, and resumed her thoughts. The motorman took up his dinner-pail, sat down on a high stool with his back to her, and began to eat. It was a good time now for her to eat her little lunch, but she was not hungry. However, she would be if she did not eat it, of course; and there would be no other time when people would not be around. She put her hand in her shabby coat-pocket for her handkerchief, and her fingers came into contact with something small and hard and round. For a moment she thought it was a button that had been off her cuff for several days, But no, she remembered sewing that on that very morning. Then she drew the little object out, and behold it was a five-cent piece! Yes, of course, she remembered now. It was the nickel she put in her pocket last night when she went for the extra loaf of bread and found the store closed. She had made johnny-cake instead, and supper had been late; but the nickel had stayed in her coat-pocket forgotten. And now suddenly a big temptation descended upon her, to spend that nickel in car-fare, riding to the barn and getting out for another closer look at it, and then taking the next car on into the city. Was it wild and foolish, was it not perhaps actually wrong, to spend that nickel that way when they needed so much at home, and had so little? A crazy idea,—for how could a barn ever be their shelter?

She thought so hard about it that she forgot to eat her lunch until the motorman slammed the cover down on his tin pail and put the high stool away. The conductor, too, was coming out of a tiny frame house, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand and calling to his wife, who stood in

the doorway and told him about an errand she wanted him to do for her in the city.

Shirley's cheeks grew red with excitement, for the nickel was burning in her hand, and she knew in her heart that she was going to spend it getting off that car near that barn. She would eat her lunch under the tree by the brook! How exciting that would be! At least it would be something to tell the children about at night! Or no! they would think her crazy and selfish, perhaps, to waste a whole day and fifteen cents on herself. Still, it was not on herself; it was really for them. If they could only see that beautiful spot!

When she handed her nickel to the conductor, she felt almost guilty, and it seemed as if he could see her intention in her eyes; but she told herself that she was not sure she was going to get off at all. She could decide as she came near the place. She would have to get off either before she got there or after she had passed and walk back. The conductor would think it strange if a young girl got off the car in the country in front of an empty barn. How would she manage it? There had been houses on the way, not far from the barn. What was the name the conductor had mentioned of the man who had built another barn? She might get off at his house, but still—stay—what was that avenue where they had said the railroad would come some day with a station? They had called it out as they stopped to let off the woman and the little girl. Allister Avenue! That was it. She would ask the conductor to let her off at Allister Avenue.

She watched the way intently; and, as they neared the place where Allister Avenue ought to be, her heart pounded so that she felt quite conscious, as if she were going to steal a barn and carry it home in her coat-pocket.

She managed to signal the car to stop quite quietly, however, and stepped down to the pavement as if it were her regular stopping-place. She was aware of the curious gaze of both motorman and conductor, but she held her head up, and walked a few steps up Allister Avenue until the car had whirred on out of sight. Then she turned anxiously, looking down the road, and there to her joy saw the stone gable of the great barn high on its knoll in the distance.

## CHAPTER II

Shirley walked down the dusty road by the side of the car-track, elation and excitement in her breast. What an adventure! To be walking alone in this strange, beautiful spring country, and nobody to interfere! It was her Father's beautiful out-of-doors, and she had paid her extra nickel to have a right to it for a little while. Perhaps her mother would have been worried at her being alone in the country, but Shirley had no fears. Young people seldom have fears. She walked down the road with a free step and a bright light in her eyes. She had to see that barn somehow; she *just had to!*

She was almost breathless when she reached the bottom of the hill at last, and stood in front of the great barn. The up car passed her just as she got there, and the people looked out at her apathetically as they would at any country girl. She stood still a minute, and watched the car up the hill and out of sight, then picked her way across the track, and entered the field where the fence was broken down, walking up the long grassy slope to the front of the barn and standing still at the top in front of the big double doors, so grim and forbidding.

The barn was bigger than it looked in the distance. She felt very small; yet her soul rejoiced in its bigness. Oh, to have plenty of room for once!

She put her nose close to the big doors, and tried to find a crack to look through; but the doors were tight and fitted well. There was no use trying to see in from there. She turned and ran down the long grassy slope, trying to pretend it was a palatial stairway, then around the side to the back of the barn, and there at last she found a door part way ajar, opening into what must have been the cow-stables, and she slipped joyously in. Some good angel must have been protecting her in her ignorance and innocence, for that dark basement of the barn would have been an excellent hiding-place for a whole regiment of tramps; but she trod safely on her way, and found nothing but a field-mouse to dispute her entrance; and it scurried hastily under the foundation, and disappeared.

The cow-stables evidently had not been occupied for a number of years, for the place was clean and littered with dry straw, as if it had fallen and sifted from the floor above. The stalls were all empty now, and old farm implements, several ploughs, and a rickety wagon occupied the dusty, cobwebby spaces beyond the stalls. There were several openings, rude

doorways and crude windows; and the place was not unpleasant, for the back of it opened directly upon a sloping hill which dropped away to the running brook below, and a little stone spring-house, its mossy roof half hidden by a tangle of willows. Shirley stood in a doorway and gazed with delight, then turned back to her investigation. This lower place would not do for human habitation, of course; it was too low and damp, and the floor was only mud. She must penetrate if possible to the floor above.

Presently she found a rough ladder, cleats nailed to uprights against the wall; and up this she crept cautiously to the opening above, and presently emerged into the wide floor of the real barn.

There were several small windows, left open, and the sweet spring air swept gently in; and there were little patches of pale sunshine in the misty recesses of the great dim room. Gentle motes floated in the sharp lances of sunshine that stole through the cracks; another ladder rose in the midst of the great floor to the loft above; and festoons of ancient hay and cobwebs hung dustily down from the opening above. After Shirley had skipped about the big floor and investigated every corner of it, imagining how grand it would be to set the table in one end of the room and put mother's bed behind a screen in the other end, with the old piano somewhere in the centre and the big parlor chair, mended, near by, the old couch covered with a portière standing on the other side, she turned her attention to the loft, and, gathering courage, climbed up there.

There were two great openings that let in the light; but they seemed like tiny mouse-holes in the great place, and the hay lay sweet and dim, thinly scattered over the whole big floor. In one corner there was quite a luxurious lot of it, and Shirley cast herself down upon it for a blessed minute, and looked up to the dark rafters, lit with beams of sunlight creeping through fantastic cracks here and there, and wondered how the boys would enjoy sleeping up here, though there was plenty of room down-stairs for a dozen sleeping-rooms for the matter of that.

Foolish, of course, and utterly impossible, as all daydreams always had been; but somehow it seemed so real and beautiful that she could scarcely bring herself to abandon it. Nevertheless, her investigation had made her hungry, and she decided at last to go down and eat her lunch under the big tree out in the sunshine; for it was dark and stuffy inside, although one could realize how beautiful it would be with those two great doors flung wide, and light and air let in.

The day was perfect, and Shirley found a beautiful place to sit, high and sheltered, where she would not be noticed when the trolley-cars sped by; and, as she ate her sandwiches, she let her imagination build a beautiful piazza where the grassy rise came up to the front of the barn, and saw in thought her mother sitting with the children at the door. How grand it would be to live in a home like this, even if it were a barn! If they could just get out here for the summer, it would do wonders for them all, and put new heart into her mother for the hard work of the winter. Perhaps by fall mother would be well enough to keep boarders as she longed to do, and so help out with the finances more.

Well, of course, this was just one of her wild schemes, and she must not think any more about it, much less even speak of it at home, for they would never get done laughing and teasing her for it.

She finished the last crumb of the piece of one-egg cake that Carol had made the day before for her lunch, and ran down to the spring to see whether she could get a drink, for she was very thirsty.

There proved to be an old tin can on the stones in the spring-house, doubtless used by the last tramp or conductor who came that way; but Shirley scrubbed it carefully in the sand, drank a delicious draught, and washed her hands and face in the clear cold water. Then she went back to the barn again, for a new thought had entered her mind. Supposing it were possible to rent that place for the summer at any reasonable price, how could they cook and how keep warm? Of course there were such things as candles and oil-lamps for lighting, but cooking! Would they have to build a fire out-of-doors and play at camping? Or would they have to resort to oil-stoves? Oil-stoves with their sticky, oily outsides, and their mysterious moods of smoke and sulkiness, out of which only an expert could coax them!

But, though she stood on all sides of that barn, and gazed up at the roof, and though she searched each floor diligently, she could find no sign of a chimney anywhere. Her former acquaintance with barns had not put her into a position to judge whether this was a customary lack of barns or not. There were two wooden, chimney-like structures decorating the roof, but it was all too evident that they were solely for purposes of ornament. Her heart sank. What a grand fireplace there might have been right in the middle of the great wall opposite the door! Could anything be more ideal? She could fancy mother sitting in front of it, with Harley and Doris on the floor playing with a kitten. But there was no fireplace. She wondered vaguely whether a stovepipe could be put out of the window, and so make

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