



PEG O' MY HEART

By J. Hartley Manners

A Comedy of Youth Founded by Mr. Manners on His Great Play of the Same Title—Illustrations From Photographs of the Play

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CHAPTER XXI. Complications.

BRENT turned away up again to the window seat crying, "Oh, this is unbearable!"

Ethel said quite calmly: "Is your wife all over again, eh?"

He came back to her. "No, I place you far above her, far above all petty suspicions of carping narrowness. Consider you as a woman of understanding."

"I am," she said frankly. "From what you've told me of your wife she must be too."

"Don't treat me like this!" he pleaded distractedly.

"What shall I do," asked Ethel with wide open eyes, "apologize? That's odd. I've been waiting for you to."

As Brent moved up toward the window Alaric came in behind him through the door.

"Hello, Brent," he called out heartily. "Hare ye?"

"Very well, thank you, Alaric," he said, controlling his surprise.

"Good. The dear wife well too?"

"Very."

"And the sweet child?"

"Yes."

"You must bring 'em along some time. The mater would love to see them, and so would Ethel. Ethel loves babies, don't you, dear?" Without waiting for Ethel to reply he hurried on. "And, talking of babies, have you seen Margaret anywhere?"

Ethel nodded in the direction of the garden. "Out there?"

"Splendid. The mater wants her. We've got to have a family meeting about her and at once." Alaric hurried out through the windows into the garden.

Brent hurried over to Ethel.

"I'm at the hotel. I'll be there tomorrow. Send me a message, will you? I'll wait up all night for one."

He pressed. "Will you?"

"Perhaps," replied Ethel.

"I'm sorry if anything I've said or done has hurt you."

She checked him just as her mother appeared at the top of the stairs. At the same moment Bennett, the maid, came in through the door.

Mrs. Chichester greeted Brent courteously.

"How do you do, Mr. Brent? You will excuse me?" She turned to the maid.

"When did you see my niece last?"

"Not this morn, madam."

"Tell Jarvis to search the gardens, the stables, to look up and down the road."

"Goodby, Mrs. Chichester—and—Ethel," said Brent. He looked meaningfully and significantly at Ethel as he stood in the doorway. The next moment he was gone.

Alaric hurried in through the window from the garden.

"Not a sign of Margaret anywhere," he said furiously, throwing himself into a chair and fanning himself vigorously.

"This cannot go on!" cried Mrs. Chichester.

"I should think not, indeed—running about all over the place."

Mrs. Chichester held up an open telegram.

"Mr. Hawkes telegraphs he will call tomorrow for his first report. What can Ethel do?"

"What will you?" asked Alaric.

"Am I to tell him that every tutor I've engaged for her resigned? Not one stays more than a week. Can I tell him that?"

"You could, mater, dear, but would it be wise?"

A moment later Peg entered with Michael cradled in her arms. She had



"Let us be honest with each other, Ethel," said Peg.

a roguish look of triumph in her eyes. Down the front of her charming new dress were the marks of Michael's nubby paws. Peg was also breathing quickly and evidently more than a little excited.

"Take that animal out of the room!" cried Mrs. Chichester indignantly the moment Peg appeared.

Peg turned and walked straight out into the garden and began playing with Michael on the grass.

Mrs. Chichester waited for a few moments, then called out to her, "Margaret!" then more sharply: "Margaret, come here! Do you hear me?"

Peg went on playing with Michael and just answered, "I hear ye."

"Come here at once!"

"Can Michael come in, too?" came from the garden.

"You come in and leave that brute outside!"

"If Michael can't come in I don't want to," obstinately insisted Peg.

"Do as I tell you. Come here!" commanded her aunt.

Peg tied Michael to one of the French windows and then went slowly into the room and stood facing her aunt.

"Look at your dress!" suddenly cried Mrs. Chichester as she caught sight of the marks of Michael's playfulness.

"Michael did that. Sure they'll come off."

Mrs. Chichester looked at the flushed face of the young girl, at the mass of curly hair that had been carefully dressed by Bennett for dinner and was now hovering around her eyes untidily. The old lady straightened it.

"Can you not keep your hair out of your eyes? What do you think will become of you?"

"I hope to go to heaven, like all good people," said Peg.

Mrs. Chichester turned away with a gesture of despair.

"What is it?" continued the old lady.

"I say what is it?"

"What is what?" asked Peg.

"Is it that you don't wish to improve? Is it that?"

"I'll tell you what I think it is," began Peg helpfully, as if anxious to reach some satisfactory explanation. "I think there's a little devil in me lying there, an' every now an' again he jumps out."

"A devil?" cried Mrs. Chichester, horrified.

"Yes, aunt," said Peg demurely.

"How dare you use such a word to me?"

"I didn't. I used it about meself. I don't know whether you have a devil in ye or not. I think I have."

Mrs. Chichester silenced her with a gesture.

"Tomorrow I am to give Mr. Hawkes my first report on you."

Peg laughed suddenly and then checked herself quickly.

"And why did you do that?" asked her aunt severely.

"I had a picture of what ye're goin' to tell him."

"Why do you constantly disobey me?" pursued the old lady.

"I suppose it is the original sin in me," replied Peg thoughtfully.

"What?" cried Mrs. Chichester, again taken completely aback.

"Oh, I say, you know! That's good! Ha!" And Alaric laughed heartily. Peg joined in and laughed heartily with him. Alaric immediately stopped.

Ethel took absolutely no notice of any one.

Peg sat down beside her aunt and explained to her: "Whenever I did anything willful or disturbin' as a child

me father always said it was the 'original sin' in me an' that I wasn't to be punished for it because I couldn't help it.

"Then he used to punish himself for my fault. An' when I saw it hurt him I use to do it again—for awhile at least. I think that was a grand way to bring up a daughter. I've been wonderin' since I've been here if an aunt could bring a niece up the same way." And she looked quizzically at Mrs. Chichester.

Jarvis came in with a letter on a salver.

"Well?" asked the old lady.

"For Miss Chichester, madam." And he handed Ethel the letter. "By hand, miss."

Ethel took the letter quite unconsciously and opened it.

"Who is it from?" asked Mrs. Chichester.

"Mr. Brent," replied Ethel indifferently.

"Brent?" cried Alaric. "What on earth does he write to you for?"

"He wants me to do something for him." And she tore the letter up into the smallest pieces and placed them in a receptacle on the desk.

"Come, Alaric." And Mrs. Chichester left the room after admonishing Peg that an hour would be sufficient, to sit up.

"Let us be honest with each other, Ethel," said Peg when the two girls were left alone. Peg went right over to her and looked at her compassionately.

"What do you mean?" said Ethel, with a sudden contraction of her breath.

"You like Mr. Brent, don't ye?"

So the moment had come. The little spy had been watching her. Well, she would fight this common little Irish nobody to the bitter end. All the anger in her nature surged uppermost as Ethel answered Peg, but she kept her voice under control.

"Certainly I like Mr. Brent. He is a very old friend of the family?"

"He's got a wife?"

"He has!"

"An' a baby?"

"Yes—and a baby." Ethel was not going to betray herself. She would just wait to see what course this creature was going to take with her.

They were now seated together, Ethel holding her little white poodle, at which Peg pointed contemptuously.

Peg went on:

"Of course I've never seen the wife or the baby because he never seems to have them with him when he calls here. But I've often heard Alaric ask after them."

"Well?" asked Ethel coldly.

"Is it usual for English husbands with babies to kiss other women's hands?" And Peg looked swiftly at her cousin.

Ethel checked an outburst and said quite calmly:

"It is a very old and a very respected custom."

"The devil doubt it but it's old. I'm not so sure about the respect. Why doesn't he kiss me aunt's hand as well?"

Ethel could not control herself much longer. It was becoming unbearable. As she crossed the room she said with as little heat as possible:

"You don't understand."

"Well, but I'm tryin' to," persisted Peg. "That's why I watch ye all the time."

Ethel turned. She was now at bay.

"You watch me?"

"Aren't ye the model?"

"It's contemptible!" cried Ethel.

"Sure I only saw the 'old an' respected custom' by accident—when I came in through there a month ago—an' once since when I came in again by accident—a few days afterward. I couldn't help seein' it both times. An', as for bein' contemptible, I'm not so sure the custom doesn't deserve all the contempt."

Ethel was now thoroughly aroused.

"I suppose it is too much to expect that a child of the common people should understand the customs of decent people."

"Mebbe it is," replied Peg. "But I don't see why the common people should have all the decency an' the aristocracy none."

"It is impossible to talk to you. I was foolish to have stayed here. You don't understand. You never could understand!"

Peg interrupted: "Why, I never saw ye excited before—not a bit of color in yer cheeks till now—except twice! Ye look just as ye did when Mr. Brent followed that old an' respected custom on yer hand," cried Peg. The young girl's eyes were ablaze. How vividly she remembered the eventful scene that confronted her when she first arrived at the Chichester home days before!

Ethel answered this time, excitedly and indignantly, giving full and free vent to her just anger:

"Be good enough never to speak to me again as long as ye're in this house. If I had my way ye'd leave it this moment. As it is—as it is—Her voice rose almost to a scream. Her rage was unbridled.

What more she might have said was checked by the door opening and Jarvis showing in Jerry.

Jerry walked cheerfully and smilingly into the room and was amazed to find the two young ladies glaring at each other and apparently in the midst of a conflict.

All power of speech left him as he stood looking in amazement at the combatants.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Temple of Friendship. CAME over to ask Mrs. Chichester's permission for you two young ladies to go to a dance to-night. It's just across from here at the Assembly rooms," said Jerry.

Peg beamed joyfully. It was just what she wanted to do. Ethel viewed the suggestion differently.

"It's very kind of you," she said, "but it's quite impossible."

"Oh," ejaculated Peg.

"Impossible?" ejaculated Jerry.

"I'm sorry," and Ethel went to the door.

"So am I," replied Jerry regretfully. "I would have given you longer notice only it was made up on the spur of the moment. Don't you think you could?"

"I don't care for dancing. Besides, my head aches."

"What a pity!" exclaimed the disappointed young man. Then he said eagerly, "Do you suppose your mother would allow Miss Margaret to go?"

"I'll ask her," and Ethel left the room.

Peg ran across, stopped the door from closing and called after Ethel:

"I didn't mean to hurt ye—indeed I didn't. I wanted to talk to ye—that was all—an' ye made me angry." Ethel disappeared without, even turning her head.

Peg came into the room ruefully and sat down on the sofa. She was thoroughly unhappy.

Jerry looked at her a moment, walked over to her and asked her, "What's the matter?"

"One of us girls has been brought up all wrong. I tried to make friends with her just now an' only made her angry, as I do every one in this house whenever I open my mouth."

"Aren't ye friends?"

"Indeed—indeed—indeed—we're not. None of them are with me."

"What a shame!"

"Wait until ye hear what me aunt says when ye ask her about the dance!"

"Don't you think she'll let you go?"

"No, I do not." She looked at him quizzically for a moment. Then she burst out laughing.

"Misther Jerry, will ye take me all the same if me aunt doesn't consent?"

"Why, Peg"—he began astonishedly, "but I haven't got an evenin' dress. Does it matter?"

"Not in the least, but—"

"Will this one do?"

"It's very charming; still—"

"Stains and all?"

"My dear Peg—"

"Perhaps they'll rub out. It's the prettiest one me aunt gave me, an' I put it on tonight—because I thought you—that is, some one might come here tonight. At least I hoped he would, an' ye come!" Suddenly she broke out passionately: "Oh, ye must take me! Ye must! I haven't had a bit of pleasure since I've been here. It will be wonderful. Besides, I would not rest all night with you dancin' over there an' me a prisoner over here."

"Now, Peg"—he tried to begin.

"It's no use, I tell ye. Ye've got to take me! Are you ashamed of me because I'm ignorant? Are ye?"

"Not a bit," replied Jerry heartily. "I was just the same at your age. I used to tramp at school and shirk at college until I found myself so far behind fellows I despised that I was ashamed. Then I went after them tooth and nail until I caught them up and passed them."

"Did ye?" cried Peg eagerly. "I will, too," she said.

"Will you?"

She nodded vigorously.

"I will—indeed I will. From now on I'll do everything they tell me an' learn everything they teach me if it kills me!"

"I wish you would," he said seriously.

"An' when I pass everybody else an' know more than any one ever knew—will ye be very proud of me?"

"Yes, Peg. Even more than I am now."

"Are ye now?"

"I am proud to think you are my friend."

"Ye'd ha' won yer wager. We are friends, aren't we?"

"I am yours."

"Sure I'm yours all right."

She looked at him, laughed shyly and pressed her cheeks. He was watching her closely.

"What are you laughing at?" he asked.

"Do ye know what Tom Moore wrote about friendship?"

"No. Tell me."

Peg sat at the piano and played very softly the prelude to an old Irish song.

Jerry said, surprisedly, "Oh, so you play?"

"After a fashion. Me father taught me. Me aunt can't bear it. An' the teacher in the house said it was dreadful an' that I must play scales for two years more before I try a tune. She said I had no ear."

Jerry laughed as he replied, "I think they're very pretty."

"Do ye? Well, watch them an' mebbe ye won't mind me singin' so much. An', after all, ye're only a farmer, aren't ye?"

"Hardly that." And Jerry laughed again.

"This is called 'A Temple to Friendship,'" she explained.

"Indeed?"

"An' it's about a girl who built a shrine an' she thought she wanted to put Friendship into it. She thought she wanted Friendship. After awhile she found out her mistake. Listen." And Peg sang, in a pure, tremulous little voice that vibrated with feeling, the following:

"A temple to Friendship," said Laura enchanted.

"I'll build in this garden—the thought is divine!"

Her temple was built, and she now only wanted

An image of Friendship to place on the shrine.

She flew to a sculptor, who set down before her

A Friendship, the fairest his art could invent!

But so cold and so dull that the youthful adorer

Saw plainly this was not the idol she meant.

"Oh, never," she cried, "could I think of enshrining An image whose looks are so joyous and dim. But you little god (Cupid) upon roses reclining. Well make, if you please, sir, a Friendship of him."

"So the bargain was struck; with the little god laden She joyfully flew to her shrine in the grove.

"Farewell," said the sculptor; "you're not the first maiden Who came but for Friendship and took away—Love."

She played the refrain softly after she had finished the song. Gradually the last note died away.

Jerry looked at her in amazement.

"Where in the world did you learn that?"

"Me father taught it to me," replied



"Don't say that," Jerry interrupted.

Peg simply, "Tom Moore's one of me father's prayer books."

Jerry repeated as though to himself: "Who came but for Friendship and took away Love?"

"Isn't that beautiful?" And Peg's face had a rapt expression as she looked up at Jerry.

"Do you believe it?" he asked.

"Didn't Tom Moore write it?" she answered.

"Is there anything better than friendship between man and woman?"

She nodded.

"Indeed there is. Me father felt it for me mother or I wouldn't be here now. Me father loved me mother with all his strength an' all his soul."

"Could you ever feel it?" he asked, and there was an anxious look in his eyes as he waited for her to answer.

She nodded.

"Have you ever felt it?" he went on.

"All me life," answered Peg in a whisper.

"As a child, perhaps," remarked Jerry. "Some day it will come to you as a woman, and then the whole world will change for you."

"I know," replied Peg softly. "I've felt it comin'."

"Since when?" and once again suspense was in his voice.

"Ever since—ever since"— Suddenly she broke off breathlessly, and, throwing her arms above her head as though in appeal, she cried:

"Oh, I do want to improve meself. Now I wish I had been born a lady. I'd be more worthy of—"

"What? Whom?" asked Jerry urgently and waiting anxiously for her answer.

Peg regained control of herself, and, covering down again on to the piano stool, she went on hurriedly:

"I want knowledge now. I know what you mean by bein' at a disadvantage. I used to despise learnin'. I've laughed at it. I never will again. I'm no one's equal. I'm just a little Irish nothin'!"

"Don't say that," Jerry interrupted.

"Thank ye for promisin' to help me, Misther Jerry. But would ye mind very much if the bad little somethin' had one more spurt before I killed it altogether? Would ye?"

"Why, how do you mean?"

"Take me to that dance tonight—even without me aunt's permission, will ye? I'll never forget ye for it if ye will. An' it'll be the last wrong thing I'll ever do. I'm just burnin' all over at the thought of it. My heart's burstin' for it." She suddenly hummed a waltz refrain and whirled around the room, the incarnation of childish abandonment.

Mrs. Chichester came slowly down the stairs, gazing in horror at the little bouncing figure. As Peg whirled past the newest post she caught sight of her aunt. She stopped dead.

"What does this mean?" asked Mrs. Chichester angrily.

Peg sank into a chair.

Jerry shook hands with Mrs. Chichester and said:

"I want you to do something that will make the child very happy. Will you allow her to go to a dance at the Assembly rooms tonight?"

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Chichester severely.

"I could have told ye what she'd say wurd for wurd," muttered Peg.

"I beg your pardon," said Jerry, straightening up, hurt at the old lady's tone. "The invitation was also extended to your daughter, but she de-

clined. I thought you might be pleased to give your niece a little pleasure."

"Go to a dance—uncharacteristic?"

"My mother and sisters will be there."

"A child of her age?" said Mrs. Chichester.

"Child is it?" cried Peg vehemently.

"Margaret," and the old lady attempted to silence Peg with a gesture.

"Please let me go. I'll study me head of tomorrow if ye'll only let me dance me feet off a bit tonight. Please let me!"

The old lady raised her hand commanding Peg to stop.

"It was most kind of you to trouble to come over, Jerry, but it is quite out of the question."

Peg sprang up.

Jerry looked at her as if imploring her not to anger her aunt any further. He shook Mrs. Chichester's hand and said:

"I'm sorry. Good night."

He turned and saw Peg deliberately pointing to the pathway and indicating that he was to meet her there.

Peg left alone, hurried over to the windows and looked out into the night. The moonlight was streaming full down the path through the trees. In a few moments Peg went to the foot of the stairs and listened. Not hearing anything, she crept upstairs into her own little mauve room, found a cloak and some slippers and a hat and just as quietly crept down again into the living room.

She just had time to hide the cloak and hat and slippers on the immense window seat when the door opened and Ethel came into the room. She walked straight to the staircase without looking at Peg and began to mount the stairs.

"Hello, Ethel!" called out Peg, all remembrance of the violent discussion gone in the excitement of the present.

"I'm studyin' for an hour. Are ye still angry with me? Won't ye say 'Good night'! Well, then, I will. Good night, Ethel, an' God bless you."

Peg's little heart beat excitedly.

The one thought that beat through her quick brain was:

"Will Jerry come back for me?"

(To be Continued.)

Temperature for Plants and Humans.

What does a plant need in the way of air and heat? By this of course house plants, not greenhouse varieties, are meant. The common run of house plants—geraniums, ferns, palms, etc.—ask only for a temperature of 70° day and 60° by night. This is a very suitable temperature for human beings, too. There must be fresh air for a plant every day, although they cannot stand a freezing draft any better than the housewife can. A door or window as far away from them as possible should be opened and the air be allowed to change gradually. A light cloth thrown over them will enable them to stand a good deal of cold air coming in. Forty-five Fahrenheit will not injure most plants.

A Sugar Plant.

An herb, called by the natives, ebe, but botanically Eupatorium bauidanum, grows wild in Paraguay. It is remarkable for its sweetness. Indeed, the native name means the "sugar plant." It grows along the border of the river Amambai, and attains a height of only about five inches. The smallest bit of this plant when placed upon the tongue produces a surprisingly sweet savor, which, it is said, lasts for hours. The saccharine power is much greater than that of sugar. Recent investigations indicate that the nectareous element in this plant closely resembles that of the licorice root.

Rule for Conversation.

"A little more silence, please," thundered the sage of Chelsea. Probably most of us talk too much in general, and too little about the things best worth speaking of. Less gossip and more goodness; less fault-finding and more encouraging; less timidity and more real though born speech—is not this a good resolution for our conversations?

Much Perfume in Dining Hall.

An Athenian host always had his dining hall perfumed when about to give a feast, and his drinking cups scented with myrrh, while during the course of the entertainment slaves sprinkled sweet essences upon the guests. In those days the perfume shops of Athens were the centers of gossip, intrigue, love and politics.

Had Worn Out Upper Garments.

'Twas Holiday time, and the gude-man had had an enjoyable round of bibulous pleasure, which his better half strongly disapproved of. "Look here," she began, "on every stomach there are three coats, and excessive indulgence in alcoholic liquors wears these coats away." "Well, Susan," he replied, "if that's so my poor old stomach has been going now in its shirt-sleeves a long time now."—London Tit-Bits.

Rope is as Strong as Steel.

Recent experiments show that manila rope is as strong as solid bar steel, weight for weight, whereas a leather belt is less than 40 per cent as strong, compared in the same way. A year's use will take 50 per cent of a rope's strength, after which the weakening is more gradual.

The Church Flag.

The church flag is the only one that may be flown above the flag of the United States. It is hoisted on the tall-mast of warships, above the national ensign, during the church service.