

EVERLEIGH

"Pilot"

Written by

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TEASER

EXT. MAIN STREET, CHICAGO

Chicago, 1905, workers raise a banner over a wooden platform: "National Purity Congress." A dance hall door flies open; gamblers, pretty girls, and ragtime music pour out.

The revelers collide with REVEREND ERNEST BELL (37) gaunt, sallow, in a worn black suit and clerical collar. He prepares to cross the street when an elegant hansom cuts him off.

Perched on the back is a striking redhead, NELLIE (26), her bosom animated by the carriage's bounce, she winks at Bell.

AT NATIONAL PURITY CONGRESS STAGE

Bell joins a group of serious looking men and women listening to a petite woman, CHARLTON EDHOLM (40).

EDHOLM

Brothers and Sisters of Chicago,
there is a slave trade in this
country, it is not black folks this
time, but little white girls -
seventeen, fifteen, thirteen years
of age -

Bell's mind is still on the redheaded siren who almost ran him over. He looks back toward the carriage, but it is gone.

OUTSIDE MARSHALL FIELD'S DEPARTMENT STORE

Two women approach the main entrance, ADA EVERLEIGH (35) beautiful, but understated, and her younger sister, MINNA EVERLEIGH (33), overly accessorized, but somehow still elegant and most certainly intriguing.

A REFORMER aggressively pushes a pamphlet into Ada's hands.

REFORMER

"For freedom did Christ set us
free. Be not entangled again with
the yoke of bondage."

Ada looks down at the pamphlet: "Stop the Traffic of Young Girls." Ada smiles at the reformer.

ADA

Amen.

Minna hooks her arm through Ada's and they enter the store.

INT. MARSHALL FIELD'S DEPARTMENT STORE

Minna and Ada move through the store with purpose and pride. They approach a counter and the SHOP GIRL naively smiles.

SHOP GIRL
Welcome to Marshall Field's. How
may I help you?

Ada gestures to a bottle of perfume.

ADA
The Blenheim Bouquet.

SHOP GIRL
An elegant choice.

Minna watches a young man in a well-tailored suit circle the floor of the department store; it is MARSHALL FIELD JR. (28), heir to the Marshall Field's fortune. Without looking back at the Shop Girl, she gives an order.

MINNA
We'll take it.

Minna crosses to the hat area. TWO WOMEN are expressing their disappointment in the selection.

WOMAN ONE
I thought surely I would find
something for Eleanor's luncheon.

Minna carefully looks through the selection of hats.

WOMAN TWO
I told you, these large department
stores only caterer to the parvenu.

The women begin to exit, walking past Marshall Field Jr. Minna, carrying a hat, stops Woman One.

MINNA
Might I trouble you for a favor?

Before the woman can answer, Minna continues.

MINNA (CONT'D)
You are about my sister's
complexion and I am considering
this hat for her.

WOMAN TWO
For goodness sake, ask a shop girl.

MINNA

It will just take a moment.

WOMAN ONE

Of course.

Woman One places the hat on her head and moves to the mirror to adjust it. Minna walks up behind her and smiles.

MINNA

It is stunning.

Minna glances back at Marshall, who is watching the exchange.

MINNA (CONT'D)

And so unique. I don't know that I've ever seen one quite like it.

WOMAN ONE

And it's not too much, not butter upon bacon?

MINNA

Wholly the opposite: refined, the very apex of taste.

WOMAN ONE

It really is everything I've been looking for.

Remembering, sadly, that the hat is intended for someone else, Woman One begins to take it off. Minna stops her.

MINNA

No, it was made for you. Please.

WOMAN ONE

I couldn't, your sister...

MINNA

You know, I think she might enjoy a bottle of Blenheim Bouquet even more.

Woman One, thrilled with her new find, purchases the hat as Marshall Field Jr. approaches Minna.

MARSHALL FIELDS JR.

An impressive sales pitch, but sadly, you've lost yourself a hat.

MINNA

"Give the lady what she wants."
Isn't that the precept?

MARSHALL FIELD JR.

Indeed it is.

(He smiles.)

Marshall Field Jr.

Minna extends her hand.

MINNA

A pleasure. Might I give you a tip
Mr. Field?

MARSHALL FIELD JR.

I would relish it.

MINNA

It is all fine and good to give the
customer what he wants, but the art
is in giving him what he wants,
before he knows he wants it.

She pulls an envelope out of her purse and hands it to him. Marshall sees it is addressed to him. Confused he looks up at Minna, but she has already walked away. Without looking back Minna adds.

MINNA (CONT'D)

10pm. We dine late.

EXT. MAIN STREET, CHICAGO

Minna and Ada exit the store into the bright light of day. The Shop Girl chases after them carrying a package.

SHOP GIRL

Miss, miss!

Ada and Minna gracefully spin around.

SHOP GIRL (CONT'D)

You've forgotten your perfume.

MINNA

No, darling, that's for you.

The sisters board their carriage. Seeing Nellie displayed on the back, the Shop Girl blushes.

AT NATIONAL PURITY CONGRESS STAGE

Close on Edholm, her face red with fervor.

EDHOLM

The saloon and the brothel are twin barbarities. We must vote out the one and burn down the other!

The energy of the crowd builds. A woman faints. Men shout in agreement, fists in air. Bell watches the hysteria build.

EDHOLM (CONT'D)

It must start here in Chicago, home to the most infamous and iniquitous brothel in America.

Reverend Bell turns around to see the Everleigh carriage racing down the street toward him, an elegant gold E painted on its door, billows of dust in its wake.

EDHOLM (CONT'D)

It must start now, as our glorious "Second City" has been branded with a new name...

A member of the crowd grabs a piece of fruit from a nearby cart and chucks it at the carriage. Others run to grab fruit.

EDHOLM (CONT'D)

a scarlet name...

INT. MARSHALL FIELD'S DEPARTMENT STORE

Marshall Field Jr. opens the invitation: "You are invited to an intimate evening at The Everleigh Club" as he says:

MARSHALL FIELD JR.

Everleigh.

EXT. NATIONAL PURITY CONGRESS STAGE

Almost in unison with Marshall Field Jr., Edholm pierces the word through the crowd like a dagger at the carriage.

EDHOLM

Everleigh!

An apple flies toward Nellie's head, she drops her handkerchief and catches the apple in her hand.

Bell runs to pick up her handkerchief.

As the carriage pulls away, Nellie bites the apple and grins.

END TEASER