

THE PACER

Once there was a little girl named Alma who loved horses. From the time she was a tiny child the sight of horses in motion had fascinated her. Her father, who was a doctor, sometimes took her with him on his drives into the country. When she was only three or four years old, he would let her hold the reins and then she would imagine that she was guiding the horse. Of course, her father was fully aware that the gentle old Dobbin didn't need much guidance.

The little girl lived in a city apartment on the Main Street, directly across from a fire station. When the huge alarm gongs began to clamor shrilly, she flew to the window and watched spellbound as the great huge-hipped horses dashed out of the quickly opened doors, pulling the immense truck filled with fire-hose and equipment as easily as if it was a toy carriage. Just as the truck turned onto the street the last fireman made a flying leap, caught the over-hanging end of a ladder and clung to it precariously. Alma would remain at the window a long time, for she also liked to see the horses on their return when they moved more sedately, arching their heads proudly as though conscious of a good deed successfully accomplished.

Sometimes Alma's father took her by the hand and, walking over to the station, let her watch the firemen brush and curry their charges.

"Whoa! Careful now, boy, step over a little," the man would say and give his steed a gentle slap on the rump, as he moved along beside him in the stall.