

The background of the cover features a close-up of the American flag, showing the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes. A decorative floral garland with white, red, and blue flowers is draped across the flag. The text is overlaid on the lower portion of the image.

**Angela's
Temptation**



Isabella Alden

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It was a very warm morning, and the basement kitchen in which Angela had been at work, was dark and hot. Her work was by no means done; the floor must be scrubbed, and everything in and about the kitchen put into perfect order, and the dishes were not all washed. Yet Angela stood in the middle of the room, her cheeks very red, and a look almost of despair in her beautiful Italian eyes, as she gazed at the fragments of a handsome cut-glass pitcher which lay at her feet. That pitcher she knew was very much prized by Miss Ethel, Mrs. Parker's only daughter; and whatever Miss Ethel liked was doubly dear to her mother's heart. It was only this morning that Angela had received a caution to handle it carefully, and here it lay in a dozen pieces!

She could not have told how it happened. She had remembered the caution given her, and had rinsed and

dried the pitcher with the utmost care, and was climbing to the top shelf to set it away. At that moment a gust of wind had blown one of the closet doors against her elbow, and so startled her that she almost lost her balance, and then the pitcher somehow had escaped from her grasp.

Poor Angela! Perhaps you cannot think how bitter was her temptation. As quickly as thought can travel, she was back in her Italian home, leaning against one of the tall pillars of Madame Carara's workroom, watching the kettle which hung over the fire, and polishing the elegant fruit plates, and doing more dreaming than anything else. It was very warm, she remembered, and she was bare-footed, and wore nothing but her loose blouse and skirt; and had the sleeves pushed up above her elbow, and sat thinking, what if she were the mistress of this beautiful home, instead of the little kitchen girl whose duty it was to wait on all the other servants, and do anything that they did not like to do? If she were the mistress, she would wear, she thought, a white silk dress trimmed with diamonds and lace, and would order her gondola to be made ready, and would float about on the lovely green and gold and purple water, just as long as she pleased; for dinner she would have—and then she had jumped up quickly, hearing Rosa's call, and had forgotten that she had a plate on her lap, and it had

smashed itself!

Angela believed that she would never forget that morning. There had been no chance to hide the mischief; if there had been, she would not have told of it for the world; but Rosa was upon her even before she could gather up the tell-tale pieces; then, oh, how Angela had been scolded! Yes, and whipped! The Italian lady with whom she lived was not above raising her own strong arm to punish Angela. Her poor head and ears and neck had tingled and ached all day from the blows which they received. But worse than that, Angela was not allowed to go to the great fete which was held for two days, and to which she was to go that afternoon. Instead, she spent the long bright afternoon shut up in her room, weeping bitterly.

That was a year ago; but every detail of the day was as vivid to her mind this July morning as though she had just lived through it. Many things had happened since. She had crossed the great ocean, and come to America to live, and was a Sunday-school scholar, and a Junior Christian Endeavor member—A large girl for that society, older than the most; but they had made room for her and been good and kind, and Angela loved them.

But what hard fate followed her that her troubles must come so near to holidays? Tomorrow would be the

fourth of July, the American fete day, as Angela called it; and tomorrow afternoon they, the Juniors, were to go on the cars out to the Superintendent's lovely home, and have games on the lawn, and tea in the summer house, and ice cream and fireworks in the evening! And she was to go with the rest. Mrs. Parker had planned a new white dress for her, with pink ribbons to match her eyes, Miss Ethel said, though surely her eyes were not pink! In the way of all this beauty lay a mountain, in the shape of a broken pitcher.

Do you begin to understand Angela's temptation? To be sure there was no Rosa to spy out her trouble. Cook was away for the day, and Mrs. Parker and Miss Ethel would not be downstairs until nearly lunch time. Nothing would be easier than to hide out of sight forever the broken pieces, and let Mrs. Parker suppose the pitcher safe on the top shelf where it was usually kept. If only Miss Ethel had not wanted to send cream in it this morning to that sick girl, it would be there now! Couldn't she say nothing about it until after the Fourth-of-July fete? Only until then; after that she would be willing to tell the whole story, and take the hardest whipping any girl could receive.

She walked the floor and cried, and wrung her hands in her intense Italian fashion, but she did not resolve to

carry out this plan. What was in the way? Why, as I told you, she was a Junior Endeavorer, Despite the fact that she had been only a year in this country, and spoke our language in a broken fashion which made some of the girls laugh, and found everything about her very new and strange, she had taken to her heart the pledge of the Juniors, and meant to keep it if she could. Moreover, the very night she was received as an active member, she walked home behind some of the large girls and heard their talk. There had been an Italian boy received at the same time, into the older society. One of the girls in speaking of it said, "I think he ought to have waited until he understood things better. Those Italians are not trustworthy people; father says it is all but impossible for them to tell the truth."

Then Miss Ethel had said, "Oh, I don't think so! I feel almost certain that our Angela is truthful, and would be, even though she were tempted."

Angela's face had glowed, in the darkness, with joy and pride over those words. This July morning she thought of them, and they finally settled for her the question of concealment. It was a dreadful trial; it was to her like giving up everything, for the time being, but she would do it.

A very red-cheeked, swollen-eyed girl knocked

presently at Mrs. Parker's door and was invited in. The kitchen work was all neatly done now, and Angela had taken up her heavy cross and gone upstairs. With eyes downcast and lips that quivered, she told her woeful tale. Silence for a minute, then Mrs. Parker said:

“Very well, Angela; I am sorry, of course; but I am glad you came directly to me with it, instead of leaving me to find it out for myself, as some might have done. Next time you will be more careful and close the door, so that the wind cannot cause you trouble. If you have finished in the kitchen, you may take these letters to the post-box, and stop at the corner and order some berries for luncheon.”

Could she believe her ears? She was not to be whipped, nor scolded, nor shut up in her room, nor given just a crust of bread to eat! None of these things. Instead, she went out on her errands, and returned, and was treated quite as usual.

Never was a happier heart than Angela's. It was actually pleasant to do right; one felt so glad over it. Yes, she could give up the fete, even, and be glad that she had told. Had not Mrs. Parker commended her?

In the evening, as she was going upstairs, Mrs. Parker said something about the basket she would need the next day for flowers. Angela stopped and turned, her

great eyes looking larger than usual.

“Ma’am,” she said, “for flowers?”

“Why, yes, child, don’t you remember that you are each invited to bring a little basket for flowers, and roots that you can plant?”

“Oh, but, ma’am, I am not to go! Surely I am not to go!”

Mrs. Parker looked bewildered. “Why not?” she asked. “I thought you wanted of all things to go.”

“Oh, yes, ma’am, yes, indeed! But you forget the pitcher.”

“The idea!” said Ethel, before her mother could speak. “Did you suppose we would keep you away from the lawn party because you had an accident and broke a dish?”

“Mother,” said Ethel the next day, as they watched Angela making an eager dash down the street, arrayed in her white dress with pink ribbons, “the child must have had a very hard life before she came to this country. Fancy being whipped and fed on crusts and water, and not allowed to go anywhere, because she broke a plate! I wonder if all Italians are cruel?”

“The Italians do not know Christ,” said Mrs. Parker. “It is acquaintance with Him which makes people patient, and forgiving, and long suffering.”

“But all people who are not Christians are not

unreasonable and cruel!”

“Oh, no; no, indeed! Some are very kind-hearted. But have you never wondered how much their surroundings and education in a Christian land, and the influence of Christian fathers and grandfathers had to do with their kind heartedness? In other words, we have Jesus Christ to thank for much that is not directly recognized as his work.”

The End

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ANGELA’S TEMPTATION

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P.O. Box 460458

Aurora, CO 80046-0458

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