

Pet's cheeks were flushed and her eyes full of tears as she listened to his low-spoken words of commendation. There was something in his presence and tone that thrilled her soul with a strange new sense of power, and aroused a longing to make the most of herself and her talents. "If only you would teach me?" she faltered.

"I wish that I might, Miss Mason, but can only tarry in the city a few more days at longest. I am on my way to Australia on important business, but if I may, will call for an hour to-morrow, or perhaps the next day, evening, and we will play once more together."

"I—we will all be delighted," she answered.

The sun was shining brightly when Pet awoke the next day.

"It must be late," she thought, "but I am so tired; and how my head aches!"

She lay a few moments when there was a step outside and a low rap on the door.

"Come in Aunt Celia, I am awake at last," she said apologetically. Aunt Celia held a yellow envelope in her hand as she entered.

"How are you feeling, dear?" she asked gently.

Pet told of her headache, but all the time she wondered why her aunt looked so grave. "I am sorry you are not feeling well as I have bad news for you. Your Uncle Max is quite ill, and they think it best for you to come home at once."

"Uncle Max! Oh Aunt Celia, will he die?" cried the girl springing up with eyes wide open with horror.

"There, there! child, do not distress yourself. He will probably recover, but I think they all want you home again. I will not consent to your going if you are sick, so better be as quiet as possible."

But try as she would, the poor child was unable to go down stairs that day. Aunt Celia first thought that she could go alone from Chicago, whither her uncle had business; but when she saw that Arthur would go to Oregon with her if no one else did, she determined to go herself. She could not help a feeling of relief that Arthur was to be out of the way of Pet's charms; and she had her own reasons for desiring the match between the former and Miss Cramer.

As for the young man, himself, he scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry at the turn affairs had taken. Anything to get the girl out of that wretched Frenchman's way, he thought.

"Hang it all! I may as well have it out before she goes," he soliloquized. "I love her, and if she gives me the least hope, I will let mother rave if she wants to. What do I care?"

"Will Monsieur tell me what is the trouble with Mademoiselle?" So absorbed had young Draper been in his own thoughts that he had not noticed the approach of the Frenchman until he stood beside his desk.

The sight of the man with his white face and dark, pleading eyes irritated him beyond endurance.

"She is sick as a result of your devilish nonsense last evening. And now look here, sir, send in your bill, and then never cross our threshold again. Do you understand? No adventurers hanging about here frightening young girl's out of their senses by threats of suicide. Remember!"

Without a word M. Le Grand turned away, and Arthur was conscious of having done a mean, unmanly thing.

"Confound him, let him keep away then," he muttered, trying to forget the white face. "Suppose I shouldn't be hard on the fellow for falling in love with *ma chère*, as he calls her, when I have committed the very same crime myself. I believe she is more than half-in-love with that Gettwood, though, like Monsieur, he is old enough to be her father; and he was decidedly impressed. Why on earth don't some of them fall in love with Caroline Cramer, and rouse my jealousy or else rid me of her? Thank goodness, we ain't engaged, though it amounted to much the same thing when Pet came here."

At dinner Pet sent a sealed missive to him by one of the servants, with the request that he deliver it to Monsieur.

"I see myself!" he thought, but he said: "Tell Miss Mason it will be all right."

"Now, what am I to do?" he soliloquized again. "I must know the contents to proceed intelligently. If it is a refusal it must be delivered; if not, he shall not know that she remembered him at all. As her cousin, and the only one in possession of her secret, I have a right to open it, and I will." But he never did, for at that moment his foot slipped on an icy flag-stone—he was on his way to the bank—and he fell, striking his head on an iron railing. He knew no more until he opened his eyes in his father's private office.

He only saw Pet a few minutes that evening, and she made no allusion to either Monsieur or the letter. As he bade her good-night he held her hand for a moment and whispered—

"I shall sorely miss you little one."

She was weak and half sick. No wonder she forgot, for the moment, to guard her secret. A great sob heaved her breast, and when he turned her face up to look into her eyes the tears were falling fast.

"Oh, Arthur!" she whispered, and then breaking away, ran into her room.

"Can it be that she loves me?" he asked himself, and hope filled his heart.

In the morning he tried in vain to speak with her alone; she seemed to avoid him, and he concluded that he had been mistaken.

To be continued.