

Never a Shadow Sinec.

BY CLARA ASPEN. CHAPTER II.

"Yes, I have come to the Lilies to live. Mrs. Lambert is my aunt." The young man gave vent to a soft, low whistle.

"Sorry," he said. Then laughing, and with his usual wearied expression displaced by mirth, he was such a very handsome fellow that Juliet was lost in admiration; but in an instant the girl's expression changed.

"Why?" she asked. "Well, you know," replied her companion, frankly, "I haven't seen such a pretty girl as you are since I have lived here, and I would like to have an introduction and call at your home, if it was any other place. But at the Lilies—out of the question," he concluded.

Then, as she regarded him in perplexity, he lifted his straw hat, and with a pleasant parting glance, pulled away out of the pool and round a sudden bend of the river out of sight.

Juliet breathed in the delicious odor of her lilies pensively, and turned homeward. Her adventure had been a pleasure, but it left a regret.

"I never met anybody so nice" she said. "But he will forget me." That evening her Aunt Lambert said:

"My dear, I hope you will be discreet as you are pretty—about making acquaintances, for one thing." "Yes, aunt," murmured Juliet, with a little blush.

"Be choice—be select. Above all, don't admit the Brennans to your acquaintance."

"Who are they, auntie?" "The Brennans are uncle and dephew, who live on the next estate separated by the river. Colonel Brennan is very wealthy, and Roland, his nephew, is his heir. The former is a bachelor."

"Why haven't I know them?" asked Juliet.

"On account of a family feud which has existed for twenty years," replied the old lady, solemnly. "Twenty years ago, my dear, you must know that my daughter, your Cousin Delight, was a very pretty girl. She was engaged to Colonel Brennan—then only Lieutenant Brennan. He seemed fond of her; she adored him. Suddenly, without cause or explanation, he jilted Delight—dropped the engagement in silence, and she making her wedding clothes! It nearly killed my poor girl.

"Her father threatened to shoot him, but I said, 'no violence!' I preferred the dignified course. I never nursed my poor child, dragged her about in travel—kept her from mourning herself to death—until I met Admiral Phillips, and I persuaded Delight to marry him. He was older than she, but he was rich and a fine man, and I knew that he would make her a good husband, and I knew that she would learn to love him. She did; but we have never forgiven Colonel Brennan—your uncle and I—and we never shall!"

"Hat he married?" asked Juliet, her blue eyes wide with this disastrous love tale.

"No. I never knew why," replied Mrs. Lambert.

Another afternoon found Juliet again in the garden.

Her footsteps strayed again to the lily pool.

Looking across the river, and seeing the walls of a grand, gray mansion rising among the green, a suspicion that she had already admitted one of the forbidden Brennans to her acquaintance crept into her heart.

Yet a blush and smile illuminated her lovely countenance as she saw the pretty canopied boat float out from among the willows.

"Good afternoon," called out the young man across the lily pads, and indeed he looked quite vivacious; "I was in hopes you would come down here. Isn't it a lovely day?"

He pulled up among the bobbing pads. "Would you like some more lilies?"

"Yes," returned Juliet, "but—but," she faltered, "I am afraid you are one of the Brennans, and I am forbidden to know them."

He looked up with an understanding glance and a smile.

"If I am, you will have to excuse me for it. We will have the lilies in any event," pulling at the long, glistening, pink green stems; "now these are regular beauties—the finest of the season. Glad I can do something for you. It's very jolly to have a young lady down here. I was lonesome. Do you want any more?" loading her hands. "Won't you come into the boat?" he added earnestly, seeming to apprehend that the meeting would now end; "it's nice here on the water, and very comfortable, and if I am a Brennan, I am respectable," he added.

He met her wistful eyes with sympathy. "You want to go—I see you do. And, you see, you don't know that I am a Brennan," he laughed. "No," faltered Juliet. And the sunshine was so bright on the crystal stream, the shadows so golden-green under the willows, the distance so alluring, she set a little foot in the boat and in a moment was far down the river, winding between the rushes.

A heaven on earth followed, "for gay youth loves gay youth," and green and blue were glad together that afternoon. But when Juliet sprang upon the grass again the smile faded from her face.

"I know well enough that you are Roland Brennan," she said. "Thank you for a nice time, but please don't ask me to go boating again. My aunt is very kind to me and I don't wish to disobey her."

"But what am I to do?" asked the young man quickly. "I never had such a pleasant afternoon in my life. Why, I'm terribly lonesome. My uncle won't let me associate with Tom, Dick and Harry, even if I wanted to, because we are rich and must keep up the dignity of the family. And he won't let me take up a profession or learn a business because he wants to keep me with him. He's a grand old fellow; but, oh, its dreadful here for me. I suppose you think it cruelty, but I've come to almost hate the place, and now I like you so well you—you are going to throw me over."

"Oh, no," said Juliet, blushing. "I couldn't do anything so rude," innocently. "I—I presume we shall meet sometimes?"

"Where?" "In society. I am to be at the picnic tomorrow; and my aunt is to take me next week to spend a few days with Mrs. Bellingham."

"Good! Then I see my way clear," exclaimed the young man throwing up his hat enthusiastically.

At the picnic at Mrs. Bellingham's hospitable house, at parties and balls, this Romeo and Juliet met, and, though the girl's heart quaked sometimes under her aunt's proud old eyes, and a sorrowful shame filled her breast, Roland Brennan's tact staved off discovery until late in the autumn.

Juliet knew that by a word, a smile, she made this handsome lover very happy, and if a proud and resentful relative was to be made miserable by the fact that she loved this forbidden young man as dearly as he loved her, she could not feel quite altogether to blame.

If Aunt Lambert had been stern she would not have cared at all, but she was the most indulgent of guardians, and Juliet could not be altogether happy, though she lay among the roses and fed on the lilies of life.

Then Mrs. Delight Phillips came from abroad. She was a pretty blooming woman of forty, evidently with a perfectly sound heart. She had been a widow a year. She had sunny smile, and Juliet liked her.

The latter had committed herself to a secret skating expedition with Roland Brennan. The river was frozen for the first time, and both were passionately fond of the amusement.

She had run lightly down the snowy garden, and had caught Roland's arm with a merry salutation, when two figures, warmly wrapped in furs, stepped from under the pine trees.

Roland started violently; the little skates dropped with a clang from Juliet's nerveless hand. "Juliet!" cried Aunt Lambert, reproachfully.

"Mr. Roland Brennan!" pronounced Uncle Lambert, stiffly.

The four eyed each other solemnly in the moonlight. Roland was the first to recover himself.

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AN ENGLISH COMMENTARY.

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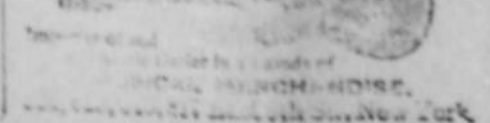
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