

Warner Anne

# A Woman's Will



Anne Warner  
**A Woman's Will**

«Public Domain»

**Warner A.**

A Woman's Will / A. Warner — «Public Domain»,

# Содержание

Part I	5
Chapter One	5
Chapter Two	9
Chapter Three	19
Chapter Four	27
Chapter Five	33
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	37

# Warner Anne

## A Woman's Will

### Part I

### THE RISE OF THE STORM

#### Chapter One

“GOOD-BYE – good-bye, Rosina!” cried Jack, giving one last violent wave to his handkerchief. And then he put it back in his pocket, because the crowd upon the deck of the departing Liner had now become a mere blur in the distance, and distant blurs seemed to his practical nature unworthy any further outlay of personal energy. “But oh!” he added, as he and Carter turned to quit the dock, “how the family are just agoing to revel in peace for these next few months! The Millennium! – well, I don’t know!”

“I do not see how you and your Uncle John ever came to let her go off all alone like that,” Carter said, with a gloom that did not try to mask a terrible reproach; “she’ll be so awfully liable to meet some foreigner over there and – and just marry him.” He threw up his cane as he spoke, intending to rap on the boarding by which they were that instant passing.

Jack thrust his own cane out quickly and barred the other with an excellent fencing *fente*.

“No rapping on wood!” he cried sharply; “not after that speech! – you know!”

Carter turned two astonished eyes friend-ward.

“What do you mean?” he asked; “do you mean to say that you’d stand her marrying any one over there for one minute?”

“Stand it!” said Jack, “would we *stand* it, did you say? My dear fellow, how plainly you betray the fact that you are in love with Rosina. We, – myself and the family, – on the contrary, live with her. The difference in the two propositions is too tremendous to be quickly grasped by you even, but it is just about the same distance as that between theory and practice.”

“Nonsense!” said Carter, with an air of deep annoyance.

“I’ll tell you how I personally regard Rosina,” Jack went on, paying no attention to the other’s exclamation; “I look upon her as very likely to marry abroad, because I don’t know of but one man at home clever enough to be able to marry her.”

He laid his hand upon Carter’s shoulder as he spoke, and Carter, who didn’t at all understand what he meant, thought that he understood, and was correspondingly happy.

They boarded the ferry then, and went from Hoboken straight back to civilization.

The “Kronprinz” meanwhile was slowly wending her way down the river, past the skyscrapers, and out towards the open sea.

Rosina, already established in her chair, with a mother-of-pearl lorgnette upon her lap and a pair of field-glasses swinging from the card-holder, felt more placidly happy than she had in years. If those left behind who supposed that she was going abroad to get a second husband could but have gazed into her heart, they would have comprehended the utter and complete falsity of their views.

Her year and a half of widowhood had been one long-continued period of quiet ecstasy.

Standing alone in her own room the morning after the funeral, she had made a vow to never marry again.

“Enough is as good as a feast,” she had said, surveying her crape-draped self with a deep sense of satisfaction; “it never approached anything like a feast, but it certainly has taught me to know when I have had enough.”

And then new orders had been issued to every department of her establishment, and a peace approaching Paradise reigned in her heart.

When Carter, in a moment of daring courage, found words in which to unfold the facts of his case, she listened in a spirit of intense wonder that he could really be stupid enough to suppose that she would consider such an idea for a minute.

Carter, his heart jumping wildly about behind his shirt-bosom, thought that her look of amazement was a look of appreciation, and wound himself up to a tension that was quite a strain on the situation.

“I’m going abroad in May,” was her sole response when he had quite finished.

“Oh, my God! don’t go and marry some one over there!” he cried out, in the sudden awful stress of the moment.

“I shall marry no one,” she declared with freezing emphasis. “The very idea! you all seem to think that I am anxious to render myself miserable again; but I assure you that such is very far from being the case.”

Poor Carter was stricken dumb under her lash, but he loved her none the less, for it must be said that there was a certain passionate sweetness in both the bow and quiver of Rosina’s mouth which always took the worst of the sting out of all of her many cruel speeches. And yet that very same bow and quiver were bound to breed a fearful doubt as to the degree of faith which one might be justified in holding in regard to the impregnability of her position. Very likely she herself did firmly intend remaining a widow forever; and yet —

And yet? —

Oh, the thought was unendurable!

Carter refused to endure it anyhow, but for all that the days had moved right along until that worst of days came into being, leaving him on the dock and sending the “Kronprinz” out to sea.

And, if the truth must be told, it is to be feared that if Rosina’s unhappy suitor could have caught a glimpse of her as night fell over that same day’s ending, his sickest doubts would have found food for reflection and consequent misery in her situation, for when Otilie, the Swiss maid, came up on deck with a great, furred wrap, the most personable man aboard was already installed at her mistress’s side, thanks to a convenient college acquaintance with her dearest of cousins; and the way that the personable man grabbed the cloak from Otilie and heaped it gently around its owner would have stirred the feelings of any casual lover whose bad luck it might be to happen along just then.

Rosina nestled back into the soft fur folds and smiled a smile of luxurious content.

“I am so thoroughly imbued with utter bliss,” she said; “only to think that I am going *where-ever* I please, to do *what-ever* I please, just *when-ever* I please, – indefinitely.”

“It sounds like Paradise, surely,” said the man, dropping into his own seat and tucking himself up with two deft blows administered to the right and left of his legs; “what do you suppose you’ll do first?”

“I think that I shall do almost everything first,” she answered laughing, and then, taking a long look out upon the twinkles of Fire Island, she sighed deeply and joyfully, and added, “Ah, but I’m going to have a beautiful time!”

The man plunged a hand into his breast-pocket.

“Did you ever smoke a cigarette?” he asked.

“Never!” she exclaimed delightedly; “never till this minute. But will you teach me now?”

He looked at her and laughed, his silver case in his hand.

“You must not go too fast at first, you know. Are you sure that it will not make you ill?”

“Oh, yes, yes! I’m sure!”

“Perhaps it isn’t really the first time,” he suggested.

“No, it isn’t really the first time, but it will be the first time in just about one minute.”

He laughed again and held out the case; she took one from it and looked at it in a way that proved her ignorance.

“Does it make any difference which end?”

“Not with that kind.”

“Have I anything to bite, or to pinch, or to poke?”

“No, only something to light.”

“Very well, light the match.”

“I’m so original,” said the man; “you see I say nothing about your eyes.”

“I noticed your thoughtful consideration,” she replied with a smile. “Many thanks. And now the match, please.”

He scratched it somewhere and offered it. The cigarette lit easily, being of a good kind, and the same light did him equal service.

“How do you find it?” he asked presently.

“I find it horrible,” she gasped; “but my husband never would have allowed it, and so I shall go through with it to the bitter – the *awfully* bitter – other end.”

“Don’t stick to it if it makes you feel badly,” he said a little anxiously; “remember you have the whole wide ocean before you.”

“Yes,” said Rosina, “I – I was just thinking of that.”

“Are you apt to be seasick?”

“Sometimes I have to lie still a day or two.”

“In your chair?”

“In my berth.”

“Please throw it away at once; I don’t want you to be lying still in your berth a day or two on *this* voyage, you know.”

There was a very earnest note in his voice; she took the cigarette from between her lips and looked at it meditatively.

“Do throw it overboard immediately,” he begged.

“Oh, I couldn’t.”

“But I entreat!”

Then she began to laugh.

“It isn’t the cigarette that I can’t manage, – it’s the throw!”

He sprang to his feet with one vast and comprehensive untuck.

“A thousand pardons! Give it to me.”

She held it out and he took it to the rail. The offshore breeze was growing into a wind that blew the stars out as fast as they appeared and caused the bosom of the ocean to appear unduly agitated.

“Let us walk about a bit,” he suggested, coming back, and noting a certain vagueness in her expression; “come, it’s the best thing for us both, – exercise, you know.”

She smiled faintly.

“I think so too; if you’ll just unswathe me, please.”

He extricated her, and they made the tour of the deck three times.

“Do you get off at Plymouth?” he asked, when they finally came to a standstill beside their own chairs again.

“No, at Cherbourg.”

“And then Paris?”

“Naturally.”

“And then?”

“Anywhere I want to.”

“I’m going to Hamburg and then to Berlin; with me it’s a case of business first and pleasure afterwards.”

“Berlin’s a nice place,” she said thoughtfully; “I’ve been there twice.”

“Wouldn’t you enjoy going there again?”

“No.” She shook her head. “No, I don’t believe that I should. You see I went to Berlin both times with my husband, and my present state of mind is such that if I think Berlin will recall my husband to me, I’d rather remain permanently in Cherbourg.”

She stooped and gathered up her rugs preparatory to building a new nest.

“Did you travel much with your husband,” he asked, taking the nest materials from her and sorting them over his arm.

“Yes, I did.” She sat down in the chair. “I travelled a great deal with him; but I intend to travel a great deal more now that I’m without him.”

The man was busy with her cloak and pillows and rugs. They were quite a combination, and the combining was rather a dangerous occupation, the lateness of the hour considered. He lost his head just a little bit.

“You might some day have another,” he suggested in a tone low enough to be thrilling to the thrillable.

Rosina squared herself smilelessly, and the electric deck-light which faced her seat showed up her sobriety in unmistakable colors.

“Watch me!” she said briefly, and her enunciation was clear and very distinct.

He heard.

## Chapter Two

THERE was at that particular date a man in Düsseldorf who was quite as set in his ideas as Rosina was in hers. He was lingering from day to day at the Hotel Heck, engaged for the most part in no more arduous pursuit than the awaiting of a telegram from his family. His family were at Evian, on the Lac de Génève, and if they decided to go from there to Paris, he wanted very much to visit Switzerland himself. But if, on the contrary, they merely ended in transferring their abode from Evian to Ouchy, as was very likely to prove to be the case, he had fully made up his mind to pass the early summer months in Leipsic. In Leipsic he had an interest – the one great interest of his existence. The family had but scant sympathy with the force of the Leipsic attraction; their ambitions were set in quite another direction, and all their hopes and plans and wishes were bent to the accomplishment of that one end. They desired most ardently that he should take unto himself a wife, because he was the last of his race, and there was a coronet hung up in the skies above his head. The natural effect of such anxiety upon the uncommon temperament of this particularly uncommon man was to decide him definitely to remain single forever, and because he had always proved himself of a strength of resolve and firmness of purpose quite unequalled in their experience, they felt justified in the gravest fears that in this case, as in all others, he would remain steadfast, keeping the word which he declared that he had solemnly pledged himself, and so become the last of a line whose castle had crowned the crag which it defended since the Goth was abroad in the land.

To be sure, he was not yet so old but that, when he casually glanced at a girl, the girl, her mother, and his mother all immediately held their breath. But he was old enough to have proved the futility of the hope by the casualty of the glance over and over again. And so his people were completely out of patience with him, and he and they found it accordingly more agreeable to take even their Switzerland in individual communion-cups. Therefore he remained in Düsseldorf, wandering in the Hofgarten, listening to the music in the Tonhalle, and occasionally quieting his impatience for the Lake of Lucerne, where his childhood had been passed, by writing a few pages to Leipsic, the scene of his studies and the spot where his one incentive to labor dwelt.

After three weeks of manifold hesitation the family at last concluded to let it be Paris, and thus Southeastern Europe was thrown open to the recalcitrant. It being now quite middle June, he took his way southward with a leisure born of the warm summer sun, and spent a month *en route*. The Storks of Strasbourg and the Bears of Berne both ate of his bread before the final definite checking of his trunks for Lucerne took place. But the cry at his heart for the Vierwaldstattersee and the Schweizerhof became of a strength beyond resisting, and so he turned his back upon the Jungfrau and his face towards the Rigi, and slept beneath the mist-wreaths of Mount Pilatus that very night.

It was the next morning that Rosina, walking on the Quai with an American man (not the one on the “Kronprinz,” however), first observed an especially tall and striking-looking individual, and wondered who he was. With her the wonder was always straightway followed by the ask, so she voiced her curiosity forthwith.

“That man?” said her companion, turning to make sure who she was referring to, “that dark man with the gray gloves? oh, that’s Von Ibn. He’s to be very great indeed some day, I’m given to understand.”

“Hasn’t he stopped growing yet?”

“There is ‘great’ and ‘great,’ you know. He is in for both kinds, it appears.”

“Because of his ‘von’?” demanded Rosina, whose thirst for knowledge was occasionally insatiable.

“No, because of his violin.”

“Does he play?”

“You show ignorance by asking such a question.”

“He plays well, then? – is known?” —

“He is a composer.”

She turned abruptly to the side and sank down on one of the numerous seats before which the endless procession of morning promenaders were ceaselessly defiling.

“Let me look at him!” she cried below her breath; “how more than interesting! He appears just as one might imagine that Paganini did before he made his famous bargain.”

The American stood beside her and waited for the object of their watching to turn and pass again. He was quite willing to humor his charming country-woman in any way possible. He did not care who she might take a fancy to, for he was himself engaged to a girl at Smith College, and men who fall in love with college girls are nearly always widow-proof.

Presently Von Ibn came strolling back. He was very tall, as befitted one half of his name, and very dark, as befitted the other, and around his rather melancholy eyes were those broad spaces which give genius room to develop as it will. He had black hair, a black moustache, and a chin which bore witness to the family opposition. Rosina, who chanced to be a connoisseur in chins, looked upon his with deep approval.

“Do you know him?” she asked, looking up at the man beside her; “oh, if you do, I do so wish that you would present him to me. He looks so utterly fascinating; I am sure that I shall like to talk to him.”

The American appeared frankly amused.

“I should really enjoy seeing you turned loose upon Von Ibn,” he said, “it would be such wild sport.”

“Then be nice and bring him to me, and you can have all the fun of standing by and watching us worry one another.”

Her friend hesitated.

“What is it?” she asked impatiently; “why don’t you go? Is there any reason why I may not meet him? Is he a gambler who doesn’t settle fair? Has he deserted his own wife, or run away with any other man’s? Does he lie, or drink beyond the polite limit, or what?”

“Why, the truth is,” said the American slowly, “many people consider him an awful bore. The fact is, he’s most peculiar. I’ve had him stare at me time and again in a way that made me wonder if he was full-witted. I don’t know anything worse against him than that, though.”

“If that’s all,” Rosina answered, laughing, “you need not fear for me. I’ve lived in good society too many years not to know how to deal with a bore. A little idiosyncrasy like that will not mar my enjoyment one bit. Do go and get him now.”

“But some consider him a very big bore indeed.”

“One can see that at the first glance, and just on that account I shall have infinite patience with him.”

“I warn you beforehand that he’s very much of a character.”

“I always did like characters better than people who were well-behaved.”

The American took one step away and then halted.

“Your mind is set upon meeting him?”

“Yes, quite; and do hurry. He may disappear.”

He laughed.

“Possess yourself in patience for five short minutes,” he began, but she cut his speech off.

“There, there, never mind; while you’re talking he’ll take a train or a boat, and I’ll be left to go geniusless to my grave.”

He lifted his hat at once then and walked away without another word, although inwardly he marvelled much that any woman should care about meeting that man – that particular man; for he was one of those whom the man bored out and out.

The Schweizerhof Quai is long, but not so long but that you may meet any one for whom you chance to be searching within ten minutes of the time of your setting out. The young American was favored by good luck, and in less than half that time returned to Rosina's bench, his capture safely in tow. She rose to receive them with the radiant countenance of a doll-less child who is engaged in negotiating the purchase of one which can both walk and talk. Indeed her joy was so delightfully spontaneous and unaffected that a bright reflection of it appeared in the shadows of those other eyes which were now meeting hers for the first time.

"Shall we walk on?" she suggested; "that is the pleasantest, to walk and talk, don't you think?" Von Ibn stood stock-still before her.

"What will monsieur do?" he asked, with a glance at the other man.

"He will enjoy walking," Rosina answered.

"But I shall not. I find nothing so tiresome as trying to walk with two people. One must always be leaning forward to hear, or else hearing what is not amusing."

After which astonishing beginning he waited, pulling his moustache as he contemplated them both. The American glanced at Rosina as much as to say, "There, I told you that he was the worst ever!" But Rosina only smiled cheerfully, saying to her countryman:

"Since Herr von Ibn feels as he does, I think *you'd* better go and study the Lion or meditate the glaciers, and leave me here with this lion to do either or both."

The American laughed. He might not have been so amused except that he knew that she knew all about the girl in Smith College. Such things count sadly against one's popularity, and being a man of sense he recognized the fact.

"At your service, madame," he said; "I'm going to turn the care of you over to our friend for the remainder of the promenade hour. He will no doubt appreciate to the fullest extent the honor of the transferred charge."

Von Ibn bowed.

"I do appreciate," he said gravely; "thank you. Good-morning."

Then as the other walked away he turned to Rosina.

"Was I impolite to him?" he asked, in quite the tone of an old and intimate friend.

"Yes, very," she answered, nodding.

"You are then displeased?"

"Not at all; I wanted him to go myself."

"Ah, yes," he exclaimed eagerly, "you feel as I. Is it not always *ungemüthlich*, three people together?"

"Always."

He glanced about them at the crowd of passers-by.

"It is not pleasant here; let us take a walk by the river, and then we can talk and come to know each one the other," – he paused – "well," he added.

"Do you really want to know me – well?" she asked, imitating his pause between the last two words.

"Yes, very much. I saw you in the hotel this morning when you came down the stair, and I wanted to know you then. And just now when we passed on the Quai I felt the want become much greater."

"And I wanted to know you," she said, looking and speaking with delicious frankness. "I wanted to know you because of your music."

"Because of my music!" he repeated quickly; "you are then of interest in the music? you are yourself perhaps a musician?" and he turned a glance, as deep as it was burning, upon her face.

"A very every-day musician," she replied, lifting her smile to his deep attention. "I can accompany the musician and I can appreciate him, that is all."

“But that is quite of the best – in a woman,” he exclaimed earnestly. “The women were not meant to be the genius, only to help him, and rest him after his labor.”

“Really!”

“Of a surety.”

“But what made you want to know me?” she continued. “I had a good reason for desiring your acquaintance, but you can have had no equally good one for desiring mine.”

“No,” he said quickly and decidedly; “that is, of an undenyng, most true.” He knit his brows and reflected for the space of time consumed in passing nine of the regularly disposed trees which shade the boulevard just there, for they were now moving slowly in the direction of the bridges, and then he spoke. “I do not know just why, yet I am glad that it is to be.”

“Would you have asked some one to introduce you if I had not sent for you?”

He thought again, this time for the space of six trees only, then:

“No, I do not think so.”

“Why not? since you wanted to meet me.”

“I never get myself made known to any one, because if I did that, then later, when they weary me, as they nearly always do, I must blame myself only.”

“Do most people weary you – later.”

“Oh, so very much,” he declared, with a sincerity that drew no veil over the truth of his statement.

Rosina, remembering the American’s views in regard to him, stifled a smile.

“Our friend,” she asked, “the man who presented you to me, you know, does he weary you?”

Von Ibn frowned.

“But he is a very terrible bore,” he said; “you surely know that, since you know him.”

Then she could but laugh outright.

“And I, monsieur,” she demanded merrily, “tell me, do you think that I too shall some day – ?”

He looked at her in sudden, earnest anxiety.

“I hope otherwise,” he declared fervently.

While talking they had passed the limits of the Quai, crossed the big, sunny square, and come to the embankment that leads to the foot-bridge. The emerald-green Reuss rushed beside them with a smooth rapidity which seemed to hush the tumult of its swift current far underneath the rippling surface. The old stone light-house – the town’s traditionary godfather – stood sturdily for its rights out in mid-stream, and helped support the quaint zigzag of that most charming relic of the past, the longest wooden foot-bridge of Lucerne. A never-ending crowd of all ages and sexes and conditions of natives and strangers were mounting and descending its steps, hurrying along its crooked passage, or craning their necks to study the curious pictures painted in the wooden triangles of its pointed roof.

“I like the bridge better than I do the Lion,” Rosina remarked; “I think it is much more interesting.”

Von Ibn was looking down into the water where they had stopped by the bridge’s steps. He did not pay any attention to what she said, and after a minute she spoke again.

“What do you think?”

He made no answer. She turned her eyes in the direction of his and wondered what he was looking at. He appeared to be lost in a study of the Reuss.

“Do you always think before you speak,” she said, somewhat amused, “or are you doing mental exercises?”

But still no reply.

Then she too kept still. Her eyes wandered to a certain building on her left, and she reflected that necessity would shortly be driving her there with her letter of credit; but further reflection called to her mind the fact that she had intrusted Otillie with a hundred-franc note to change that morning, and that would be enough to carry her over Sunday. The Gare across the water then attracted her

attention, and she reviewed a last week's journey on the St. Gotthard railway, and recalled the courtesy of a certain Englishman who had raised and lowered her window not once but perhaps twenty times. And then her gaze fell upon the skirt of her dress, which was a costume most appropriate for the Quai but much too delicate for a promiscuous stroll through the town streets.

"That is superficial!" Von Ibn suddenly declared.

She quite started.

"What is superficial?"

"Your comparison. You may not compare them at all."

"May not compare what?"

"The bridge and the Lion. The bridge is a part of life out of the Middle Ages, and the Lion is a masterpiece of Thorwaldsen."

Rosina simply stared at him.

"Is that what you have been thinking of all this long time?" she asked in astonishment.

"Was it so long?"

"I thought so."

"What did you think of in that so long time?"

She told him about the bank, and the Englishman on the Gotthardbahn, and her dress. He smiled.

"How *drôle* a woman is!" he murmured, half to himself.

"But I think that you are droll too," she told him.

"Oh," he said energetically, "I assure you, madame, you do not as yet divine the tenth part of *my* drollness."

She smiled.

"Do you think that I shall ever become sufficiently well acquainted with you to learn it all?"

He regarded her seriously.

"If you interest me," he remarked, "I shall naturally see much of you, because we shall be much together. How long do you stay in Lucerne?"

"Until Monday. I leave on Monday."

He looked at her in dismay.

"But I do not want to leave on Monday. I have only come the last night. I want to stay two weeks."

She felt herself forced to bite her lips, even as she replied:

"But you *can* stay two weeks, monsieur."

He looked blank.

"And you go?"

"Naturally; but what does that matter? You would not be going where I went anyway."

"Where do you go?"

"To Zurich."

"Alone? Do you go alone?"

"I have my maid, of course; and I am to meet a friend there."

"A friend!" His whole face contracted suddenly. "Ah," he cried, sharply, "I understand! It is that Englishman."

"What Englishman?" she asked, utterly at a loss to follow his thought.

"Your friend."

"But he's an American."

"You said he was an Englishman."

"I never did! How could I? Why, can't you tell at once that he is an American by the way that he talks?"

"I never have hear him talk."

She stared afresh, then turned to walk on, saying, “You must be crazy! or aren’t you speaking of the man who presented you to me?”

“Why should I be of any interest as to that man? Naturally it is of the Englishman that I speak.”

“What Englishman?”

“But that Englishman upon the Gotthardbahn, of course; the one you have said was so nice to you.”

She began to laugh.

“Oh, pardon me, but you are so funny, you are really so very funny;” then pressing her handkerchief against her rioting lips, “you will forgive me for laughing, won’t you?”

He did not smile in the least nor reply to her appeal for forgiveness; he only waited until she was quiet, and then went on with increased asperity veiled in his tone.

“You are to see him again, *n’est-ce pas?*”

“I never expect to.”

“Really?”

“Really.”

He stopped short and offered her his hand.

“Why?” she asked in surprise.

“Your word that you do not hope to meet him again.”

She began to laugh afresh.

Then, still holding out his hand, he repeated insistently.

“Tell me that you do not expect to meet him again.”

They were in one of the steep, narrow streets that lie beyond the bridges and lead up to the city wall. It was still, still as the desert; she looked at him, and his earnestness quelled her sense of humor over the absurdity of the situation.

“What shall I say to you?” she asked.

“Tell me that you do not expect to meet him again.”

“Certainly I do not expect to meet him again; although, of course, I might meet him by chance at any time.”

He looked into her face with an instant’s gravest scrutiny, and then some of his shadow lifted; with the hand that he had held out he suddenly seized hers.

“You are truthfully not caring for him, *n’est-ce pas?*” he demanded.

Rosina pulled her hand from his grasp.

“Of course not,” she said emphatically. “Why, I never saw the man but just that once.”

“But one may be much interested in once only.”

“Oh, no.”

“Yes, that is true. I know it. Do not laugh, but give me your hand and swear that he does not at all interest you now.”

She did not give him her hand, but she raised her eyes to the narrow strip of blazing sky that glowed above the street and said solemnly:

“I swear upon my word and honor that I do not take the slightest interest in that English gentleman who so kindly raised and lowered my windows when I was on the St. Gotthard last week.”

Von Ibn drew a breath of relief.

“I am so glad,” he said; and then he added, “because really, you know, it had not been very nice in you to interest yourself only for the getting up of your window.”

“He put it down too,” she reminded him.

“That is quite nothing – to put a window down. It is to raise them up that is to every one such labor on the Gotthardbahn. To let them down is not hard; very often mine have fell alone. And much smoke came in.”

Rosina walked on and looked the other way, because she felt a need of so doing for a brief space. Her escort strolled placidly at her side, all his perturbation appearing to have vanished into thin air with the satisfactory disposal of the English problem. They came to the top of the street and saw the old town-wall and its towers before them. The sun was very hot indeed, and the tourists in cabs all had their parasols raised.

“I think we had better return,” she said, pausing in the last patch of shade.

Von Ibn looked at his watch.

“Yes,” he said, “we must; *déjeuner* is there now.”

So they turned down into the town, taking another of the steep, little streets, so as to vary the scenery of their route. After a little he spoke again.

“And you are sure that you go Monday?”

“Yes, indeed.”

“To Zurich, and then to where?”

“Then to Constance.”

“And then?”

“I do not know where we shall go next.”

He started slightly, and a fresh cloud overspread his face.

“Much pleasure to you,” he said, almost savagely.

She looked up quickly, surprised at his tone, but her answer was spoken pleasantly enough.

“Thank you; and the same to you – all summer long.”

In response he shrugged his shoulders so fiercely as to force her to notice the movement.

“Why do you shrug your shoulders like that?” she demanded.

“I am amused.”

“You don’t look amused.”

He raised his eyebrows.

“I am amused to see that all women are the same; I have that thought just now.”

“Are you in the habit of shrugging your shoulders whenever that thought occurs to you?”

He tossed his head to one side.

“Women are all the same,” he repeated impatiently.

“In what way?”

“They can never tell the truth!”

“What makes you say that?”

“You.”

“I?”

“Yes.”

She felt very nearly vexed.

“Please explain,” she commanded.

He simply gave another shrug.

She decided to keep her temper.

“I might be clever enough to read minds,” she said mildly, “and still be dense about divining shoulders; I confess I miss the point that you’re trying to make with yours.”

He was silent.

She glanced sideways at him and was thoroughly startled at the black humor displayed in his countenance.

“What is really the matter?” she asked, anxiously.

“Nothing.”

She gave him another quick look, and saw that he saw her look and avoided it. Then she was angry at such poor taste displayed in the first hour of a new acquaintance, and almost thought of

turning from him and insisting on being left to return to the Schweizerhof alone. But something kept her impulse in check.

“He is a genius,” she thought, “and they are entirely different from other men,” so she waited a moment and then spoke with the utmost earnestness.

“Please tell me what it all means, monsieur; why are you like this?”

“Because,” – he cried with a sudden passionate outburst of feeling, – “because you have lied to me!”

“Monsieur!” she exclaimed, in a shocked voice.

“You have done that,” he cried; “you have lift your eyes to heaven and swear that you were not interested in him, and then – ” he stopped, and put his hands to either side of his collar as if it strangled him.

She grew pale at the sight of his emotion.

“Is it that man still?” she asked.

“But naturally it is that man still! *Je ne me fâche jamais sans raison.*”

“But what is there new to worry about him?”

She dared not contemplate smiling, instead she felt that the Englishman was rapidly becoming the centre of a prospective tragedy.

Von Ibn scowled until his black brows formed a terrible V just over his eyes.

“You do expect to see him in Zurich,” he declared.

“But I told you that I didn’t.”

He laughed harshly.

“I know; but you betrayed yourself so nicely.”

“How?”

“Just now, when I say where do you go from Constance, you quite forget your part, and you say, ‘I do not know where *we* shall go next.’ Yes, that is what you say, ‘*We —we!*’”

“And if I did.”

“But of a surety you did; and I must laugh in my interior when I hear your words.”

“Oh,” she exclaimed quickly, “you must not say that you laughed in your interior, it isn’t good English.”

“Where must I laugh within myself?”

“We say, ‘I laughed *to* myself.’”

He gave another shrug, as if her correction was too petty a matter to rightfully command attention at that crisis.

“This all does seem so foolish,” she said, “the idea of again having an explanation.”

“I do not care for you to explain,” he interrupted.

“Don’t you want to know what I meant?”

“I know quite well what you meant.”

“I meant my maid, she always travels with me.”

He looked his thorough disbelief.

“Very pretty!” he commented.

She glanced at him and wondered why she was not disgusted, but instead her heart swelled with a pity for the unhappiness that overlaid the doubt in his face.

“Just think,” she said softly, “our friendship is so very young, and you are already so very angry.”

“I am not angry; what I feel is justified.”

“Because I call my maid and myself ‘*we*!’”

He stopped short, and held out his hand.

“Will you say that it is only the maid?”

Then she felt sure that she should be obliged to scream outright, even while she was summoning all her self-control to the rescue.

They were come to an angle where two streets met steeply and started thence on a joint pitch into the centre of the town. She ran her eyes quickly up and down each vista of cobblestones, and, seeing no one that she knew either near or far, put her hand into his.

“Upon my word and honor,” she declared, with all the gravity which the occasion seemed to demand, “I swear that when I leave Constance my maid will be my only – ”

“*Assez, assez!*” he interrupted, hastily dropping her hand, “it is not need that you swear that. I can see your truth, and I have just think that it may very well come about that I shall chance to be in Constance and wish to take the train as you. It would then be most misfortunate if you have swear alone with your maid. It is better that you swear nothing.”

This kaleidoscopic turn to the conversation quite took Rosina’s breath away, and she remained mute.

“What hotel in Constance do you stop at?” he asked presently.

“The Insel House, of course.”

He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a note-book.

“Perhaps I will want to remember,” he said, as he wrote. Then he put up the book and smiled into her eyes; he had a beautiful smile, warm and winning. “I find that we are very *sympathique*,” he went on, “that is why I may perhaps come to see you again. People who can enjoy together are not many.”

“Have you enjoyed this morning? I thought you had not at all.”

“But, yes,” he protested gravely, “I enjoy it very much. How could you think otherwise?”

She felt silence to be safest, and made no reply. He too was silent for a little, and then spoke suddenly.

“Oh, because of that Englishman! But that is all over now. We will never speak of him again. Only it is most fortunate that I am not of a jealous temperament, or I might very well have really offended me that you talk so much about him.”

“It is fortunate,” she agreed.

“Yes,” he answered, “for me it was very good.”

They had come to the crossing of the great square, and the sunlight was dazzling and dancing upon the white stones of the bridge and the molten gold of the Vierwaldstattersee. The Promenade was deserted and even its shade was unpleasantly warm.

“Shall I see you this afternoon?” Von Ibn asked as they went leisurely through the heat.

“Perhaps.”

“I wish it was after the *déjeuner*,” he said, looking out upon the lake and the crest of the mountain beyond.

She wondered if she had better say “Why,” or not, and finally decided to say it. He brought his eyes back from the Rigi and looked at her.

“Because I have the habit of always sleeping after *déjeuner*,” he explained.

They crossed to the hotel. It was late, and more people were coming down in the lifts than going up.

“Are you tired?” he asked.

“Yes, I think that I am – a little.”

“I advise you to sleep too,” he said gravely.

“I always do.”

“So,” he cried triumphantly, “you see I say the truth when I say that we are very *sympathique!*”

Rosina looked up at him and her eyes danced; he returned the look with a responsive glow in his own big pupils.

“I am so glad we meet,” he exclaimed impulsively.

She stepped out of the lift and turned to dismiss him.

“And you?” he asked, bowing above her hand.

“I’m glad too,” she said, and her tone was most sincere.

## Chapter Three

LATE in the afternoon of the same day Othillie, coming in to wake her mistress from a nap which the morning's long walk had resulted in stretching to a most unusual duration, brought with her a great bunch of those luxuriantly double violets which brim over with perfume and beauty. There was also a note, very short, and couched in a flawless French.

If one must be roused out of a delicious sleep on a warm June day, surely violets, and such a note as accompanied these particular violets, were the least disagreeable means ever invented for accomplishing that end. Rosina's frown for Othillie changed into a smile for some one else, and she rose from among her pillows and submitted to her toilet with a good grace. Othillie, who was French enough and experienced enough never to need to be told things, divined what the note must have contained the second time that she saw her mistress glance at the clock, and so accelerated her ordinary rate of movement that even the gown of lace which appeared to fasten nowhere, was fastened everywhere ere the town bells rang five.

A few minutes after, a *garçon* in the hotel livery brought up a card, and, Continental etiquette made it quite *en règle* for Monsieur von Ibn to be ushered into the dainty little salon which the Schweizerhof permitted Rosina to enjoy (for a consideration), and there muse in company with his own violets, while he waited and turned his cane over and over in his gloved hands.

Then Othillie opened the portières beyond, and Rosina appeared between them, delightfully cool and fresh-looking, and flatteringly glad to see him.

"We seem like quite long friends, do we not?" he said, as he bent above her hand and kissed it lightly.

"Yes, certainly, I feel that I have the sensation of at any rate three weeks," she answered; and then she sank luxuriously down in a great *fauteuil*, and was conscious of an all-pervading well-content that it should be too warm to go out, and that he should be there opposite her while she must remain within. She was curious about this man who was so out of the ordinary, and the path along which her curiosity led her seemed a most attractive one.

"Why do you say three weeks," he asked; "why not three months or three years?"

"But in three years one learns to know another so well, and I do not feel –"

"Oh," he interrupted, "it is better as it is; perhaps you may be like I am, and get weary always soon, and then have no longer any wish to see me."

"Do you get tired of every one?"

He passed his hand across his eyes and sighed and smiled together.

"Yes, madame," he said, and there was a sad note in his voice, "I get often tired. And it is bad, because I must depend so deeply on who I speak with for my mind to be able to work after. *Comprenez-vous?*"

She made a movement of assent that he seemed to have paused for, and he continued.

"When I meet a stranger I must always wonder how soon I shall be finished with him. It comes very soon with nearly all."

"And are you sure that you are always the weary one?"

He looked blank for a moment, then,

"I have already bore you; yes?"

"Not at all, but I was warned this morning that you might possibly commit such a crime."

"And have I?"

She looked on his earnestness and smiled.

"Have I?" he reiterated; "yes?"

Then she spoke suddenly.

“Why do foreigners always say ‘yes’ at the end of every question that they ask in English? I get so tired of it, it’s so superfluous. Why do they do it?”

He reflected.

“It is polite,” he said, after a moment. “I ask you, ‘Do I bore you?’ and then I ask you, ‘Do I?’”

“But why do you think that it is polite to ask me twice?”

He reflected again, and then replied:

“You are equally droll in English; you are even more droll in English, I think. You say, ‘You will go to walk, will you not?’ and the ‘not’ makes no sense at all.”

It was her turn to reflect, and be forced to acquiesce.

“Yes, that is true.”

“And anyway,” he went on, “it is polite for me to ask you twice anything, because that shows that I am twice anxious to please you.”

“So!”

“Yes;” he took a violet from the bowl at his side and began to unclose its petals. “Why did he say that?” he asked, suddenly raising his eyes from the flower to her.

“He! who?”

“Our friend.”

“Why did he say what?”

“Why did he say that I was stupid? I have never been but nice to him.”

She looked startled.

“He never said that you were stupid.”

“You said that he told you that I was stupid.”

“No, I did not. I said that he warned me that – ”

“Oh, it matters not,” he broke in, shrugging his shoulders slightly, “*ça ne me fait rien*. What he may think of me matters me not at all. *Pauvre garçon*, he is so most uninteresting himself that I cannot expect interest from him. *Ecoutez-donc!* for him nothing exists but golf; for him where golf is there is something, elsewhere there is nothing anywhere. What did he say to me of Paris? he said that for him Paris was nothing, because no one plays golf; he said he could throw a dog all over the grounds any morning. I did not ask him what dog, or why a dog, for I thought it was not truly a dog, but just his bad American *argot*; and, if I must speak truth, pardon me that I find it very good that so stupid a fellow finds me dull. If he found me amusing, I should naturally know that I, too, must be a fool.”

He put the violet to his lips and smiled a little.

“He speaks but English,” he added; “he knows but golf, he has been around the world and has seen nothing. I am quite content to have such a man despise me.”

Then he was silent, biting the purple flower. Rosina rested her chin upon her hand.

“Please go on,” she said briefly, “I am listening.”

He looked at her and smiled.

“I do like Americans,” he went on, “and I see that all the women have small waists, and do not grow so large so soon, but I do not see why they do not learn many things and so become much more nice; why, for example, are they so ignorant of all the world and think their own country alone fine?”

“Are we so?”

“Yes, of a truth. Because I speak English I meet very many of America, and they always want to talk, so naturally I must listen, because no one can arrive at speaking louder surely. And so I must always hear how good the light is in America, and how warm the houses are in America, and how high the buildings are in America, and how much everything has cost – always how much everything has cost; that is always very faithfully told to me. And while I listen I must feel how very narrow to so speak is. And afterwards when I go on to hear how very poor the light is here, and how very cold the hotels are here, I certainly must feel how very ill-bred that is.”

He paused to get a fresh violet, and then continued:

“I see no possible beauty for a place of four walls fifty *mètres* high; and there can be no health where all is so hot night and day; and so I only listen and am content to be counted so stupid. Why do you go to Zurich Monday?”

The question terminated his monologue with such suddenness that she started involuntarily.

“Why do you ask?”

“Naturally because I want to know.”

“I go because I am anxious to be out of Switzerland before the first of July.”

“But Switzerland is very nice in July.”

“I know; and it is also very crowded.”

“Where shall you be in July?”

“I am not sure; probably in the Tyrol.”

He got up from his seat, went to the chimney-piece, lifted up a vase and turned it about in his hand with a critical air. Then he faced her again and said, with emphasis:

“I shall remain here all summer.”

“In Lucerne?”

“Yes; not perhaps always at the hotel, but somewhere on the lake. I am born here.”

“You are Swiss, then?”

“Yes; if I am Swiss because I am born here.”

“Were you born in Lucerne?”

“No, but at a place which my father had then by Fluellen. It is for that that I love the Vierwaldstattersee.”

“I wish that I had been born here,” Rosina murmured thoughtfully.

“Where are you born?”

“In the fourth house of a row of sixteen, all just alike.”

“How most American!”

She laughed a little.

“I amuse you?” he asked, with a look of pleased non-understanding.

“Oh, so very much!”

He came a little forward and smiled down at her.

“We are really friends, are we not?”

She looked into his big, earnest eyes.

“I think so,” she answered simply, with a little nod.

He moved slowly across the room and, going to the window, turned his back upon her.

“It is cooler out now, let us go out and walk. I like to walk, and you do too, do you not? yes?”

“Oh, *please* stop saying ‘yes’ like that, it makes me so horribly nervous.”

He continued to look out of the window.

“Are you nervous?” he said. “I am sorry, because it is very bad to be nervous.”

“I shall not be so if you will only cease tacking that ‘yes’ on to the end of every question that you find occasion to ask me.”

“What is ‘tacking’?” he asked, whirling around.

“Attaching.”

“Why did you not pronounce it plainly the first time?”

She rose slowly from her seat and retouched the violets where he had disturbed their carefully arranged disorder. He quitted the window and approached her side.

“I asked you to go out with me,” he reminded her; “will you go? Yes? – I mean ‘No’?” he added in hasty correction.

She bent above the flowers, just to see what he *would* say next.

“Can you go to walk so,” he inquired, “or shall I go down and wait while you undress?”

She straightened up.

"I can go out this way," she told him; "I have only to get my hat."

"And you will go now?"

"Yes, with pleasure."

"Is it long to get a hat? I will go down to wait for you, you know."

"It is five minutes."

"Is it really five minutes?" he asked anxiously; "or shall I be there very much longer?"

"If I say five minutes it will be five minutes."

He took his hat and cane in his left hand and extended the other to her with a smile.

"I will go and wait," he said.

She gave him her hand; he held it a minute, looking down into her eyes, which wavered and fell before his.

"*Comme vous êtes charmante!*" he exclaimed in a low voice, and, bending, pressed a kiss (a most fervent one this time) upon the fingers which he raised within his own.

After which he left the room at once.

Rosina caught a quick breath as she went in to where her maid sat mending some lace.

"Get my things, Ootillie, I am going out."

"What a beautiful color madame has," Ootillie remarked, as she rose hastily and went towards the wardrobe.

Rosina looked at herself in the mirror. She was forced to smile at what she saw there, for the best cosmetic in the wide world is the knowledge that the right person is waiting downstairs.

"Do hurry, Ootillie," she said impatiently, "and get me out a pretty, a *very* pretty, hat; do you hear?"

And then she felt with a glorious rush of joy how more than good life is when June is fair, and one is young, and —

"Where shall we walk?" he asked, when she came down to him.

"On the Quai, of course. No one ever walks anywhere else."

"I do often, and we did this morning," he replied, as they passed out through the maze of tables and orange-trees that covered the terrace before the hotel.

"I should have said 'no one who is anybody.'"

He looked at her, a sadly puzzled trouble in his eyes.

"Is it a joke you make there," he asked, "or but your *argot*?"

"I don't know," she said, unfurling her parasol; "the question that I am putting to myself just now is, why did not you raise this for me instead of allowing me to do it for myself?"

He looked at her fixedly.

"Why should I do so? or is *that* a joke?"

"No, I asked that in dead earnest."

"In dead – in dead – " he stammered hopelessly; "oh," he exclaimed, "perhaps it is that I am really stupid, after all."

"No, no," she laughed; "it is I that am behaving badly. It amuses me to tease you by using words that you do not understand."

"But that is not very nice of you," he said, smiling. "Why do you want to tease me?"

"I don't know, but I do."

He laughed lightly.

"We amuse ourselves together, *n'est-ce pas*?" he asked. "It is like children to laugh and not know why. I find such pleasure very pleasant. One cannot be always wise – above all, with a woman."

"I do not want to be wise," she said, as they joined the promenading crowd; "I much prefer to have my clothes fit well."

Then he laughed outright.

"*Vous êtes si drôle!*" he said apologetically.

“Oh, I don’t mind your laughing,” she said, “but I do wish that you would walk on the other side.”

“The other side of the street?” he asked, with surprise.

“No, no; the other side of me.”

“Why should I not be on this side as well as on that?”

“Because that’s the wrong one to be on.”

“It is not! I am on the very right place.”

“No; you should be between the lady and the street.”

“Why?” he demanded, as he raised his hat to some one.

“To protect her – me.”

“To protect you how? Nothing will come up out of the lake to hurt you.” Then he raised his hat to some people that she bowed to.

“It isn’t that, it is that the outside is where the man should walk. It’s the custom. It’s his proper place.”

“No, it is not. I am proper where I am; I would be improper if I was over there.”

“In America men always walk on the outside.”

“But we are not in America, we are in Lucerne, and that is Europe, and for Europe I am right. *Mon Dieu*, do you think that I do not know!”

Rosina shrugged her shoulders.

“I am really distressed when we meet any Americans, because I am sure that they think that you have not been well brought up.”

Von Ibn shrugged *his* shoulders.

“There are not many Americans here to think anything,” he said carelessly, “and all the Europeans whom we meet know that I am well brought up whichever side I may choose to walk upon.” He bowed again to some carriage people.

She trailed her pace a little and then paused; he was such a temptation that she could not resist.

“I do wish,” she said earnestly, “that to please me you would do as I ask you, just this once!”

He stopped short and stared first at her and then at the lake.

“I wonder,” he said slowly, – “I wonder if we are to be together ever after these days?”

“Why do you wonder that? Would you rather never see me again than do something to please me?”

“No, no,” he said hastily, a little shock in his tone, “but you must understand that if we are to be much together I cannot begin with the making of my obedience to suit you. And yet, if it is but for these two days, I can very well do whatever you may wish.”

He moved out of the line so as to think maturely upon such a weighty matter. She covered her real interest in his meditations with an excellent assumption of interest in the superb view before her. The Rigi was towering there, and its crest and the crests of all its lofty neighbors were brightly silvered by the descending sun. From Pilatus on the right, away to the green banks of Weggis and Vitznau on the left, the lake spread in blue and bronze, and by the opposite shore the water’s calm was such that a ghostly Lucerne of the under-world lay upside down just beneath its level, and mocked reality above by the perfection of detail. Little bright-sailed boats danced here and there, a large steamer was gliding into the landing by the Gare, and the music from a band aboard came floating to their ears.

That little gray mother-duck who raises so many families under the shelter of the Schweizerhof Quai presently noticed these two silent people, and, suspecting them of possessing superfluous bread, came hastily paddling to the feast. It made Rosina feel badly to see the patient little creature wait there below; but she was breadless, and could only muse over the curious similarity of a woman’s lot with a hungry duck’s, until the duck gave up in despair and paddled off, leaving a possible lesson in her wake.

“Oh dear!” she exclaimed then, “I’m going to Zurich Monday, and you’re going to stay here all summer; we shall never meet again, so what is the use of thinking so long over nothing!”

Then he put his hand up, gave his moustache ends a twist, and turned to walk on. He was still on the same side, and there was a sort of emphasis about his being there which made her want to laugh, even while she recognized the fact that the under-current of the minute was a strong one – stronger perhaps than she was understanding just then.

“You don’t feel altogether positive as to your summer plans, I see?” she queried, with a little glance of fun.

“I never am positive,” he said, almost grimly. “I will never bind myself even by a thread. I must go free; no one must think to hold me.”

“I’m sure I don’t want to hold you,” she laughed; “I think you are dreadfully rude, but of course you can do what you please.”

“You find me rude?” he asked soberly.

“Yes, indeed, I think you are very rude. Here we are still on the first day of our acquaintance, and you refuse absolutely to grant me such a trifling request.”

They had continued to follow the stone dalles of the embankment and were now near the end of the Quai; he stopped short again, and again stared at the mountains.

“Ask me what you will,” he said, after a moment’s pause, “and you shall have it; but to that first most absurd asking I shall always refuse.”

Her eyes began to dance.

“If I asked you to buy me an automobile!” she ventured.

He glanced at her quickly.

“Do you ask me for an automobile?” he demanded.

Her eyes wandered towards a certain shop on the other side of the carriage way.

“If I asked you for that necklace in the window there!”

He raised his shoulders slightly.

“Ladies prefer to buy their own necklaces,” he said briefly.

She gave him a furtive look out of the corner of her eye.

“Monsieur, suppose I beg you to take me back to the hotel and henceforth never speak to me!”

He did not appear in the slightest degree alarmed. Instead he put his hand beneath her arm and turned her for another round of promenade.

“I think the automobile will be best,” he said tranquilly. “I will find you a good chauffeur, and you can go to Zurich on its wheels.”

“I only said ‘if,’ you know,” she murmured.

“Yes, I know,” he replied; “but an automobile is always useful.” He thought a moment and then added, “About how much will you choose to pay for it?”

In spite of herself she started and stared at him. He met her eyes with a smile of mockery; Its innuendo was unbearable.

“You know very well,” she burst forth impetuously, “that I would never have thought of really accepting an automobile from you!”

Then he laughed again with fresh amusement.

“*Comme madame se fâche!*” he cried, “it is most droll! All that I may say you will believe.”

“I find you very exasperating,” Rosina exclaimed, her cheeks becoming hotly pink; “you amuse yourself in a way that transcends politeness. I honestly think that you are very rude indeed, and I *am* in earnest now.”

He made a careless movement with his head.

“Would you have preferred that I should believe you really expect of me an automobile?” he asked.

“You could not possibly have thought that anyhow, and so why should you have spoken as if you were afraid lest I might have meant it?”

He rapped on a tree with his cane as he passed it.

“‘Might,’ and ‘would,’ and ‘should,’” he said placidly, “those are the hardest words for a stranger to learn correctly.”

She felt her temper slipping its anchor.

“Probably when your tutor endeavored to teach you their difference you feared that yielding to his way might be sacrificing your independence, and so you refused to consider his instruction.”

He struck another tree with his cane.

“When you talk so fast and use such great words I cannot understand at all,” he said calmly.

Then she fairly choked.

“Are you quite really angry?” he asked with curiosity. She turned her face away and kept it averted.

“Let us go into the café of the Nationale and dine,” he proposed suddenly.

“No,” she said quickly, – “no, I must go home at once. I have a dinner engagement, and I must change my dress before I go.”

“Then I shall not see you this evening?”

“No” (very bitterly); “what a pity that will be!”

“But to-morrow?”

“I am going with a party to the Gutsch.”

“But that will not be all day?”

“Perhaps.”

He hesitated in his step, and then came to a full stop.

“Let us go up this little street,” he suggested. “I was there yesterday; it is interesting really.”

She continued to walk on alone and he was obliged to rejoin her; then he glanced downward somewhat anxiously.

“We cannot speak here,” he said in a low tone, “we know so many people that come against us each minute. Do walk with me up to the church there, we cannot go to the hotel like this.”

It is true that the Quai at Lucerne has a trick of slipping away beneath one’s feet to the end that the hotel is forever springing up in one’s face. At this moment it loomed disagreeably close at hand.

“If you want to walk farther, monsieur, you will have to walk alone; I am going home.”

For answer he took her arm firmly in his and turned her across towards the church street. Well-bred people do not have scenes on the Schweizerhof Quai, so Rosina went where she was steered by the iron grip on her elbow.

The instant that they were out of the crowd his manner and voice altered materially.

“You must forgive me,” he pleaded. “I thought that you understood; I thought that we were together amused; it was against my intention to offend you.”

She stopped and looked at a window full of carved bears and lions; various expressions contended in her face, but none of them were soft or sweet.

“You pardon me, do you not?” he went on, laying his fingers upon her arm, while beneath his heavy eyelids there crept a look which his family would have regarded as too good to be true.

She shook the hand off quickly with an apprehensive glance at their surroundings.

“I ask you ten thousand pardons,” he repeated; “what can I do to make you know my feeling is true?”

She bit her lip, and then a sudden thought occurred to her. Her anger took wings at once.

“Will you walk back to the hotel on the outside,” she asked seriously, looking up into his face.

He gave a quick movement of surprise, and then made his customary pause for decision.

“How drolly odd women are,” he murmured presently, “and you are so very oddly droll!”

“But will you do it?” she repeated insistently.

He took his cane and drew a line in the dust between two of the cement blocks of the sidewalk, and then he lifted his eyes to hers with a smile so sweet and bright, so liquidly warm and winning, that it metamorphosed him for the nonce into a rarely handsome man.

Few women are proof against such smiles, or the men who can produce them at will, and the remnants of Rosina's wrath faded completely as she saw its dawning. It seemed futile to try to be cross with any one who had such magic in his face, and so she returned the glance in kind.

"And you will walk home on the outside, will you not?" she asked, quite secure as to his answer now.

He laughed lightly and turned to continue on their way.

"Of a surety not," he said; "but we will be from now on very *sympathique*, and never so foolishly dispute once more."

At the dinner-party that evening was the young American who was engaged to the girl at Smith College.

"I saw you walking with Von Ibn this afternoon," he said to Rosina as they chanced together during the coffee-and-cigarette period.

"Where?" she asked. "I don't remember seeing you anywhere."

"No; he appeared to engross you pretty thoroughly. I feel that I ought to warn you."

"What about?"

"He isn't a bit popular."

"Poor man!"

"None of the men ever have anything to do with him; you never see him with any one, and it's odd, because he talks English awfully well."

"What do you suppose they have against him?"

"Oh, nothing in particular, I guess, only they don't like him. He isn't interesting to any one."

"Oh, there I beg to differ with you," she said quickly; "I saw him speak to some one to-day who I am sure found him very interesting indeed."

"Who was it?"

"Myself."

## Chapter Four

“HAVE you ever thought what is love and what is passion?”

It was the man who spoke as they leaned against the rail of that afternoon steamer which is scheduled to make port at the Quai by seven o'clock, at the Gare by seven-ten.

Rosina simply shook her head.

“I am going to tell you that,” he said, turning his dark gaze down upon the shadows in the wake behind them; “we part perhaps this night, and I have a fancy to talk of just that. Perhaps it will come that we never meet again, but when you love you will think of what I have say.”

“I never shall love,” she said thoughtfully.

He did not appear to hear her at all.

“It is as this,” he said, his eyes glowing into the tossing foam below: “many may love, and there may be very many loves; very few can know a passion, and they can know but one. You may love, and have it for one that is quite of another rank or all of another world, but one has a passion only for what one may hope for one's own. Love, that is a feeling, a something of the heart,” – he touched his bosom as he spoke but never raised his eyes, – “what I may have known, – or you. But passion, that is only half a feeling, and the other half must be in some other, or if it be not there it must be of a force put there, because with passion there *must* be two, and one *must* find the other and possess the other; that other heart must be, and must be won, and be your own, and be your own all alone.” He paused a moment and took out his cigarette case, and contemplated it and put it back. She leaned on the rail and listened, undisturbed by the strength of his speech. In the few short hours of their acquaintance the breadth of mutual comprehension between them seemed to be widening at a ratio similar to the circles spread by a stone striking still water.

“I am going to speak to you in my tongue,” he went on presently, “I am going to explain what I say with my music. Will you think to understand?”

“I will try,” she told him simply.

“It is so easy there,” he said; “I think if I had but my violin I could tell you all things. Because in music is all things. You must have feel that yourself. Only I fear you must smile at my language – it is not so easy to place your soul on a strange tongue.”

“I shall not smile,” she reassured him, “I am deeply interested.”

“That is good of you,” he replied, raising his head to cast a briefly grateful glance at her, “if you may only really understand! For, just as there are all colors for the painter to use, so are there all of the same within music. There is from darkness far below the under bass to the dazzle of sun in the high over the treble, and in between there are gray, and rose, and rain, and twilight, so that with my bow I may make you all a sad picture between the clefs or a gay one of flowers blooming from G to upper C. And there is heat and cold there too, – one gasps in the F flat down low and one shivers at the needle frost above high C. And there are all feelings too. I may sing you to sleep, I may thunder you awake, I may even steal your heart forever while you think to only listen in pleasure.”

“Not my heart,” said Rosina decidedly.

“Ah, now it reminds me what I have begin to tell you,” he exclaimed, – “of love and of passion. I must get some music and teach you that. Do you know the ‘Souvenir’ of Vieuxtemps?” he asked her abruptly.

“The ‘Souvenir d'Amérique’?”

“No, no,” he said impatiently, “not one of those. ‘Le Souvenir’ it is. Not of anything. Just alone. If we were only to be of some together I would teach it to you; I have never teach any one, but I would trouble me to teach you that.”

Then he paused and, producing his *étui* for the second time, lit a cigarette.

“It is like this,” he went on, staring again upon the now rapidly darkening waters, “you may learn all that I have begin to tell you there in that one piece of music. There is love singing up and up in the treble, and one listens and finds that nothing may be sweeter or of more beauty, and then, most sudden and terrible there sounds there, below, a cry, ‘E, – F, – F sharp, – G;’ and it is not a cry, rather a scream, strength, force, – a Must made of the music, – and one perceives of a lightning flash that all the love was but the background of the passion of that cry of those four notes; and one listens, one trembles, one feels that they were to come before they are there, and when they have come, one can but shake and know their force.” He stopped and took his cigarette from between his lips. “*Mon Dieu,*” he cried violently, “of what was the composer thinking when he beat out those bars? When you shall play them you shall take only your forefinger and draw all your strength within it, and when the notes shriek in pain you shall have one secret of passion there beneath your hand.”

He spoke with such force, – such a tremendous force of feeling, that her face betrayed her wonder.

“I frighten you, – yes?” he asked with a smile of reassurance; “oh, that must not be. I only speak so because I will that you know too. It is good to know. Many go to the end and never know but love and are very well content, but I think you will know more. I did love myself once. She was never mine, and the time is gone, and I have thought to suffer much forever, and then I have stop to suffer, and now I am all forget. But,” he flung his cigarette to the waves, and for the first time during his monologue turned squarely towards her, “but if I have a passion come to me *now, that* woman shall be mine! If I die for it she shall be mine. Because what I feel shall be so strong that she shall of force feel it too. Every day, every night, every hour, the need of me will go to her strongly and make her weaker, and weaker, and weaker, until she have no choice but of the being all mine. And so you are quite decided to go to Zurich to-morrow?”

He brought forth the question in such sudden change of subject that she started involuntarily. But then relief at the descent into the commonplace came on her and she replied:

“Yes, I want to go there to-morrow.”

“But why do you not want to on Tuesday – or next week?”

“My friend is there,” she reminded him.

His brow clouded, and she knew the reason why.

“You are so typically European,” she laughed; “I do believe that humanity over here has only two bases of action, and they are governed by ‘*Cherchez la femme*’ and ‘*Cherchez l’homme*.’”

“*Mais c’est vrai, ça!*” he said doggedly.

“Not always,” she replied; “or perhaps not always in the usual sense. It is true that I am going to Zurich to meet some one, but it is so very innocent when a woman goes ‘*cherchant la femme,*’ and, as I told you before, it is a woman that I go to meet, or, rather, it is a girl.”

“Are you sure?” he asked suspiciously.

“You don’t believe my word yet, do you?”

“I did not say that.”

“No, but really you do not.”

He gave a slight shrug.

“My friend is an Irish girl,” Rosina went on placidly. “I do love her so. We shall have such a good time being together next week.”

“You are sure that she is not English?” the man asked, with a little touch of sarcasm in his inflection.

“If you could hear her speak you could tell that from her accent.”

Von Ibn took out his case and lit another cigarette.

“What hotel do you go at in Zurich?” he asked presently.

“I shall go wherever my friend is.”

“Where is she?”

"I don't know; I write her *Poste Restante*. She has been travelling for a long time with a Russian friend, – a lady," she added, with a jerk.

"I hope you will go to the Victoria," Von Ibn said slowly; "that is where I always have stay in Zurich."

"So that we may have our dining-room souvenir in common, I suppose?"

"It is a very nice place," he cried hotly; "it is not at all common! It is one of the best hotels in Zurich."

She hastily interposed an explanation of the error in his comprehension of her meaning, and by the time that he understood, the lights of Lucerne were hazing the darkness, while the Rigi and Pilate had each hung out their rope ladder of stars.

"What time do you travel in the morning?" he asked then, turning his eyes downward upon her face.

"By the first express; it goes, I believe, about eight o'clock."

"I shall not be awake," he said gloomily.

"I shall not be, either; but Otillie will get me aboard somehow."

"If it was noon that you go, I should certainly come to the Gare," he said thoughtfully; then he reflected for a short space, and added eagerly, "why do you not go later, and make an excursion by Zug; it is just on your way, and a so interesting journey."

"I know Zug, and the lake too; I've coached all through there."

"Then it would not again interest you?"

"No; I want to go straight to Molly as fast as I can."

"To Molly! Where is that? You said to Zurich you went."

She laughed and explained.

"Molly is the name of my girl friend."

"Ah, truly."

Then he was silent, and she was silent, and the lights of Lucerne continued to draw nearer and nearer.

"I wonder if I shall really never see you again," he said, after a long interval.

"I wonder."

"It is very unlikely that we shall ever meet again."

"Very."

In spite of herself her voice sounded dry.

"Where is your bank address?"

"Deutsches-Filiale, Munich, while I am in this part of the world. But why? Were you thinking of writing me weekly?"

"Oh, no," he said hastily, "but I might send you a *carte-postale* sometimes, if you liked."

She felt obliged to laugh.

"Would you send a colored one, or just one of the regular *dix-centime* kind," she inquired with interest.

Von Ibn contemplated her curiously.

"You have such a pretty mouth!" he murmured.

She laughed afresh.

"But with the stamp it is fifteen *centimes* anyway," he continued.

"Stamp, what stamp? Oh, yes, the postal card," she nodded; and then, "I never really expect to see you again, but I'm glad, very glad that I met you, because you have interested and amused me so much."

"American men are so very stupid, are they not?" he said sympathetically.

"No, indeed," she cried indignantly; "American men are charming, and they always rise and give their seats to women in the trams, which the men here never think of doing."

“You need not speak to me so hotly,” said Von Ibn, “I always take a cab.”

The ending of his remark was sufficiently unexpected to cause a short break in the conversation; then Rosina went on:

“I saw a man do a very gallant thing once, he hurried to carry a poor old woman’s big bundle of washing for her because the tram stopped in the wrong place and she would have so far to take it. Wasn’t that royal in him?”

He did not appear impressed.

“Does that man take the broom and sweep a little for the street-cleaner when he meets her?” he asked, after a brief period for reflection.

“We do not have women street-cleaners in America.”

Then he yawned, with no attempt at disguise. She felt piqued at such an open display of ennui, and turned from him to the now brilliant shore past which they were gliding.

After a minute or two he took out his note-book and pencil.

“Deutsches-Filiale, Munich, you said, did you not?”

She nodded.

“Can you write my name?” he asked.

“If strict necessity should drive me to it.”

“Write it here, please.”

He held the book upon the rail and she obeyed the request. Afterwards he held the page to the light until he was apparently thoroughly assured of some doubtful point, and then put it back in his pocket.

“I shall send you a card *Poste Restante* at Zurich,” he announced, as the lights of Lucerne blazed up close beside them.

“Be sure that you spell my name right.”

“Yes,” he said, taking out his note-book again; “it is like this, *n’est ce pas?*” and he wrote, and then showed her the result.

“Yes, that’s it,” she assented.

He continued to regard his book with deep attention.

“It exasperates me to have my name spelled wrong,” she went on; “doesn’t it you?”

“Yes,” he said; “it is for that that I look in my book.”

She came close and looked at what she had written, – “Von Ebn.”

“Isn’t that right?” she asked in surprise.

“It is your English E, but not my letter.”

“How do you spell your name?”

“I-b-n.”

“Oh!”

She laughed, and he laughed with her.

“That was very stupid in me,” she exclaimed.

“Yes,” he replied, with one of his rare smiles; “but I would have said nothing, only that at the *Poste Restante* I shall lose all my letters from you.”

“All! what leads you to suppose that there would ever be any?”

He turned and looked steadily at her, his eyes widely earnest.

“What, not even a post card?”

Rosina forgave the yawn, or perhaps she had forgotten it.

“Do you really want to hear from me again?”

“Yes, really.”

“Shall you remember me after I am gone?”

“*Natürlich.*”

“For how long?”

At that he shrugged his shoulders. Down below they were making ready for the landing.

“Who can say?” he answered at last.

“At least, monsieur, you are frank.”

“I am always frank.”

“Is that always best?”

“I think so.”

People were beginning to move towards the staircase. Below, the man stood ready to fling the rope.

“Let us go to the other landing and walk back across the stone bridge,” he suggested.

“There is not time; it is quite seven o'clock now.”

“But I shall not again be with you, and there is something that I must say.”

“You must say it here, then.”

The rope was thrown and caught, and every one aboard received the violent jolt that attends some boat-landings. Rosina was thrown against her companion and he was thrown against the stair-rail.

“Can you hear if I speak now,” he whispered.

“Yes.”

“You will see that I really interest myself in you.”

Just then some one in front trod on a dog, which yelped violently for three minutes; for a brief space speech was impossible, and then they were on the gang-plank, and he bent above her once more.

“I want to ask you something; will you do it if I ask you?”

“What is it?”

“Will you promise me to do it?”

They were now squeezing past the ticket *kiosque*.

“But what is it?”

“It is this – ”

A man behind stepped on Rosina's skirt and nearly pulled her over backward; something ripped violently and she gave a low cry. The man said, “*Mille pardons*,” and Von Ibn looked ready to murder him.

“Are you undone?” he asked her solicitously.

“No, I'm only badly torn.”

“Do you want a pin?”

“Yes; have you one?”

“*Malheureusement que non*.”

“I think that I can hold it up,” she said bravely.

“It is unpardonable – a such man!”

He turned to scowl again at the offender. They were now in the Promenade.

“He couldn't see in the dark, I suppose,” she murmured.

“But why was he come so near? If it was I who had torn from being too near, that would be quite different.”

“If you don't take care it will be exactly the same thing.”

He laughed, and gave way three inches.

“You have not yet promise,” he said then.

“Promised what?”

“To do what I ask.”

“Tell me what it is; if I can do it I will.”

He took her arm to cross towards the hotel.

“You can do it if you will,” he said; “it is this – ”

The Schweizerhof shone before them, great and white and sparkling; every window was lighted, every table on the terrace was full. Rosina quickened her steps.

“Oh, I’m so late,” she cried, “and I have *such* a toilette to make!”

Von Ibn had his hand upon her arm still.

“It is this,” he said emphatically, “promise me that you will go to the Victoria Hotel at Zurich; yes?”

Later in her own room, as Otilie dressed her hair, she closed her eyes and tried to reduce her thoughts to a rational basis. But she gave up in despair.

“From the ‘Souvenir’ to the Victoria,” she murmured; “oh, he is most certainly a genius!” then she sighed a little. “I’m sorry that we shall probably never meet again,” she added sadly.

## Chapter Five

ROSINA fairly flung herself off of the train and into the arms of Molly, and then and there they kissed one another with the warmth born of a long interval apart.

“Well, my dear,” began the Irish girl, when they found themselves five minutes later being rolled away in one of the villainous Zurich cabs, “begin away back in the early days of our sad separation and tell me everything that has happened to you since.”

“Not much has happened,” Rosina replied. “I crossed in May and got some clothes in Paris, and then came Lucerne, and this is June. Before I came over *nothing* happened. How could things happen while I had to wear a crape veil?”

“To be sure!” said Molly wisely; “and yet they do sometimes, – I know it for a fact. And anyway the veil is off now, and you look so well that I should think perhaps – lately?”

“Oh, *dear*, no,” said Rosina, turning quickly scarlet; “don’t harbor such an idea for a second. Nothing of that sort will ever happen to me again. A burnt child dreads the fire, and I can assure you I’m cinders to the last atom. But never mind me, tell me about yourself. That is much more interesting.”

“About myself is it you’re inquiring?” laughed the Irish girl; “’tis easy told. Last winter, like a fool, I engaged myself to a sweet young Russian colonel, and this spring he died – ”

“Oh, Molly!”

“Never mind, my dear, because I can assure you that *I* didn’t. Russians are so furiously made up that he couldn’t stand any of the other men that I was engaged to. My life was too broad a burden in consequence, and I was well satisfied at his funeral.”

“Is it his mother that you are travelling with?”

“His mother! No, dear, I can’t stand any of the family now.”

“Whose mother is she?”

“She isn’t anybody’s mother. That’s how she can be sixty-five and look forty-two by gaslight.”

“Does she look forty-two by gaslight? Oh, imagine looking forty-two by gaslight!”

“By men’s gaslight she looks forty-two. Any woman could just instinctively see through everything from her wig to her waist, and that’s why she has grown to hate me so.”

“Does she hate you?”

“Hate me! Well, wait until you see her look at me. It’s a sort of cross between a mud-turtle and a basilisk, and she’s forever telling my age and telling it wrong. And she lays for every man that comes near me.”

“Why, Molly, how awful!”

“I’m going slowly mad. You’ve no idea! she’s so jealous that life is not only a burden, it’s a weight that’s smashing me flatter every day. I’m getting a gray hair and a wrinkle, and all because of her. And she wrote Ivan – ”

“Who’s Ivan?”

“He’s one of the men that I’ve accepted lately; he’s her cousin. He’s a prince and she’s a princess; but oh, my soul and body, my head is uneasy enough with lying and I’ve ceased to care a bit about the crown.”

“Why, Molly, wouldn’t you like to be a princess?”

“Not after this trip. Do you know what straits she’s driven me to? actually I came near taking a Turk at Trieste.”

“Did you?”

“No, I didn’t. I thought it over and I decided I wasn’t built for the monopoly of a harem.”

Rosina burst out laughing.

“Molly,” she gasped, “imagine *you* confined to only one man, and he your lord and master!”

“I couldn’t possibly imagine it, and I make it a point to never go in for anything that I can’t imagine. But, my dear, I must tell you the great news. Being engaged is an old habit with me; but” (she put her hand to her throat and felt within her high stock) “you must know that I am now actually in love, for the first time in my life, too.”

“Oh, Molly, since when?”

“Three weeks. Wait till I fish up my locket and you shall see him. Handsome is nowhere! And our meeting was *so* romantic. I was lying on the bottom of a boat waiting to be paddled into the Blue Grotto, and at the last minute a stranger came, and they laid him down at my feet. When we got into the grotto, of course we stood up; and it was lucky we did, for we fell in love directly, and of course we couldn’t have fallen unless we were standing.”

“Oh, Molly, who is he? do show me the picture.”

“That’s what I’m trying to do, but I think the clasp has hooked on to Captain Douglas’ locket, – you remember Captain Douglas! – I can’t pull it anyway. Never mind, I’ll show you to-night.”

“Is he English?”

“English, no; he’s Italian. Such eyes you never saw. They’re warmer than white porcelain tile stoves in early autumn. And he belongs to the Queen-mother’s regiment, and wears the most resplendent uniform and a gray cape that he just carelessly sweeps across his chest and up over the other shoulder – ah!”

Molly stopped to draw a deep breath and sigh.

“Where is he stationed?” her friend inquired.

“Rome; and he hasn’t a cent beyond his pay, so we can’t think of any future which makes him *so* blue.”

“Poor fellow! do you consider yourself engaged to him?”

“Of course I’m engaged to him. He came a whole day’s journey to propose. You don’t suppose I’d say ‘no’ to a chap who was awfully hard up, and then took a long, expensive trip just on my account! Besides, I’m most desperately in love with him, and he is the kind of man who couldn’t come to time any other way. He is a most awfully good sort – the sort that believe in everything. Why, he has such a high opinion of me that it’s almost depressing at times. I can’t live up to a high opinion; it’s all I can do to keep above a low one.”

“But how will it come out, Molly?”

“It won’t come out at all unless you tell it. No one else knows. He *can’t* say anything without compromising himself, and I’m not likely to let it out unless I some day pull up the wrong locket by accident.”

“But don’t it trouble you?”

“Trouble me! Why should it trouble me? It’s that old Russian woman who troubles me. I’d be idiotic to add to my miseries by thinking up any other torments while I’m around with her. Here we are at the Quai, – that’s the hotel yonder. And I’ve talked one continuous stream ever since we left the Gare and you’ve never said a word. Begin right off and tell me something about yourself. Who have you met since you came over in May? Of course you’ve met *some one*. Who?”

“An old French marquis,” Rosina told her thoughtfully.

“And no one else?”

“Oh, yes, of course there were loads of others. But this was such a dear old gentleman, when he kissed my hand – well, really, I almost felt like a princess.”

“But not like a marchioness?”

“Oh, dear no! I wouldn’t think of undertaking the gout before I’m thirty.”

“The Lord preserve me from dear old men!” Molly ejaculated with fervor. “Why, I had a baron propose to me last winter; he was actually so shaky that his valet was always in attendance to stand him up and sit him down. While he was pouring out his remnant of a heart I kept expecting to see the valet come running in to throw him at my knees. He was over eighty and awfully rich, but that

servant of his was too careful and conscientious for me to dare risk it, – a man like that with devoted attention and plenty of rare beef might live ten years, you know, – so I told him ‘no,’ and the valet came in and stood him up and led him away.”

The cab coming to a standstill before the hotel just at this moment, the two young women were forced to interrupt their conversation, and undertake the arduous labor of preparing for *déjeuner*. Otilie was just laying out the contents of the travelling toilet-case when her mistress came in to be dressed, and it was quite two hours later before any opportunity presented itself for renewing their talk. Then Molly came into the salon of the blue-and-white suite which the friends shared, and they curled up together on the divan, prepared to spend one of those infinitely delightful hours which are only known to two thoroughly congenial women who have had the rare luck of chancing to know one another well.

Molly began by winding her arm about her friend’s shoulders and kissing her warmly.

“Tis like Paradise to be with you instead of that fussy old woman,” she said warmly; “now go on with what you were telling me in the carriage, – the marquis, you know.”

“There isn’t any more to tell you about him, he’s all over, but I’ll tell you about some one else, if you’ll be good.”

“I’ll be good. Who, and where, and which, and what is the other?”

“I haven’t any faith in you, I’m afraid you will tease me.”

“Did I ever tease you before?”

“I was married then and I didn’t mind. I feel differently now.”

“I promise not to tease you one bit. Where did you meet him?”

“In Lucerne.”

“What’s his name? I know a lot of people who are in Lucerne just now. Perhaps I know him.”

“I wish that you did know him.”

“Tell me his name.”

“It’s the composer, Herr von Ibn.”

Molly screamed with joy.

“Oh, my dear, what luck you do have! Did he play for you? Have you heard any of his things?”

“No, unfortunately. You see I only met him on Saturday, and as I came away this morning we had to rush every second as hard as we could in order to become acquainted at all.”

“What fun to know him! He’s going to be so tremendously famous, they say; did you know that?”

“So they told me there.”

“And he plays in such a wonderful manner, too. What a pity he didn’t play for you. Don’t you love a violin, anyhow?”

“I don’t know,” said Rosina thoughtfully; “I think that I like a flute best, but I always think whenever I see a man playing on a violin that the attitude ought to develop very affectionate tendencies in him.”

“What kind of a fellow was he to talk to? Was he agreeable?”

“Most of the American men didn’t like him, I believe,” said Rosina; then she added, “but most of the American men never like any foreigners, you know, unless it’s the Englishmen, perhaps.”

“But what did you think of him?”

“I thought he was very queer; and he got the better of me all the time.”

“That ought to have made you hate him.”

“That is what seems so odd to me. I’ve been thinking about him all the time that I was on the train this morning. Do you know, Molly, that man was positively rude to me over and over again, and yet, try as I might, I couldn’t stay angry with him.” She paused and knit her brows for a few seconds over some recollection, and then she turned suddenly and laid her face against the other’s shoulder. “Molly, dear,” she said softly, “he had a way of smiling, – if you could only see it! Well!”

“Well!”

“I could forgive anything to that smile, – honestly.”

Molly looked thoughtful.

“Saturday to Monday,” she murmured apropos of nothing.

Rosina lifted her head and gave her a glance.

“I wish that *you* might meet him,” she said gravely.

“I wish that he was here in Zurich,” her friend replied.

At that instant there sounded a tap on the door.

“*Herein!*” Rosina cried.

It was a waiter with a card upon a tray; Molly held out her hand for the bit of pasteboard, glanced at it, and gave a start and a cry.

“Is anything the matter?” Rosina asked, reaching for the card. Her friend gave it to her, and as her eyes fell upon the name she turned first white and then red.

“It *can't* be that he is here in Zurich!” she exclaimed.

“This is his card, anyway.”

“Mercy on us!”

“Shall he come up here, – he had better, don't you think?”

“I don't know,” she gasped. “I'm too surprised to think! The idea of his coming here this afternoon! Why, I never thought of such a thing. He said good-bye *forever* last night. I – ”

“Show monsieur to the room,” Molly said to the man, cutting Rosina short in the full tide of her astonishment.

“Of course you must see him,” she said, as the door closed, “and, not being entirely devoid of curiosity, I can't help feeling awfully glad to think that now I shall see him too.”

She quitted the divan as she spoke and went to the mirror over the mantelpiece. There was something in the action that suddenly recalled Rosina to her senses, and she sprang to her feet and disappeared into the sleeping-room beyond, returning in two or three minutes bearing evidence of Othillie's deft touch. She found Molly still before the mirror, and as her own reflection appeared over her friend's shoulder the other nodded and laughed.

“You seem to have made a deep impression,” she said gayly.

“I can't understand it all,” Rosina began; “he made *such* a fuss over his good-bye last night and – and – well, really, I never dreamed of his doing such a thing as to come here.”

“I'm heartily glad that he's come, because now I shall meet him, and I've heard – ”

She was interrupted by a slight tap at the door, and before either could cry “*Entrez!*”

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.