

the car. She would have fallen in the snow had not a man come to her aid.

Several hours later, after she had been put comfortably to bed, her landlady stepped into her room to ask if Barnes and Son went around to the homes to inquire for all their employees? 'Because,' continued the landlady, 'young Mr. Barnes was just here to find out if you had arrived safely.'

Margaret said nothing, but this act of Jack's changed her mental attitude toward her lover. Remorse set in, too. How had he managed to get back home in this dreadful storm? She could get no rest till she succeeded, after repeated failures, in getting into telephone communication with the Barnes' household. Jack answered the call, and with difficulty made her understand that he was at home and none the worse for his venture.

On the second day after the storm Margaret presented herself at the store as usual, looking pale and listless. She found a note on her desk asking her to see the senior Mr. Barnes at her convenience. Anticipating work, she reported at once. Instead of assigning her something to do, the gentleman, after kindly inquiries, said suddenly:

'Miss Donlin, why can't you like my boy a little? He is, if I do say it, clean and honest. He may have some faults—most of us have—but he is very lovable. If you could care a little for him you would make three or four people very happy,' he concluded with a whimsical smile.

'I do care a great deal,' exclaimed Margaret, surprised out of her reserve by the willingness of the man before her to sacrifice himself for his son. 'It is not because I do not care.'

'Then, why is it? The boy certainly loves you. He was nearly distracted when he found you had gone out into the storm alone, and he would not rest till he knew you were safe, though he had to come all the way back here for your address before he could go to seek you. Why have you given him so little encouragement? He told me last night that he had been trying for years to win you.'

'I did not know what ambitions you had for your only son, sir, and I did not want to interfere with his prospects by letting him marry his stenographer. His wealth and position are great enough to win him any one of the society belles he might wish. I feared to allow him to sacrifice himself socially.'

'My dear child,' interrupted Mr. Barnes, 'you are all wrong. Neither Jack nor I have anything to do with society, nor care what it thinks. We come of good, plain people, like yourself. If we are comfortable, it is largely due to hard work, energy, and determination. Had we been women instead of men, we must have worked as you have done, and I consider you Jack's equal in every respect. We like music and books and have a few personal friends, but society, as you speak of it, is nothing to us. So let Jack know you care for him as soon as you can, won't you, dear?'

'I will, the first chance I get,' replied Margaret, taking his kind, fatherly face between her hands and kissing him.

No chance to see Jack presented itself that morning. At noon his father asked Margaret to go home to lunch with them.

When Jack answered his father's summons, he found Margaret already in the cutter beside his father. 'I have put Miss Donlin between us to shield her as much as possible, Jack,' said Mr. Barnes playfully.

If Jack was surprised he gave no sign. He quickly took his place beside her, tucking in the robes and treating her as though her coming were an everyday occurrence.

The Barnes' home was about five miles from the store. It was too cold to do much talking, but Margaret had a good chance to study Jack's face and its expression in repose filled her with a vague alarm. She wondered if she had tested him too far and lost his affection.

'Mollie,' called Mr. Barnes to Jack's aunt as they entered the door, 'we have brought you some one to take care of. This child was out in the blizzard the other day and is suffering from the effects yet.'

'So I see,' responded his sister. 'I'll look after her,' and she folded the girl in a motherly embrace that brought tears to Margaret's eyes.

Then Aunt Mollie, as every one called her, took Margaret up to her own room for a little freshening up.

The lunch was a merry one, and all were sorry when it was over. Margaret sat opposite Jack and responded to every attempt he made to entertain her. As they rose from the table, Mr. Barnes said to his sister: 'We'll leave Miss Donlin to you, Mollie—you have lost all right to protest, Margaret. Please put her to bed and doctor her up. She needs it.'

When Margaret awoke from a long nap that afternoon she found her own trunk and a new one in her room. She smiled as she thought, 'Father is taking things for granted, certainly.'

Aunt Mollie, coming to see if she was awake, told her the trunks had come in obedience to her brother's order. Just then a maid brought in a box which contained pink roses and Jack's card. Margaret donned a simple white serge dress and pinned a cluster of the roses in her hair. A pink rose at her throat gave the touch of color necessary to relieve the whiteness.

Downstairs the girl found Jack standing near the fireplace deep in thought. 'A penny for your thoughts,' she laughed.

'They are worth more than that, for they were of you.'

'Of me! What about me?'

'I was wondering which battle this is in the struggle for independence. I have had to be somewhat of a turncoat in order to be always on the losing side, and I was just trying to decide whether I am a British subject or an American in the skirmish.'

'You're an American, but this is not a battle. This is the end of the war—Yorktown and surrender.'

'Do you really mean it,' he asked, though he had seen his roses and gained heart. 'I have been defeated so often, I need reassuring.'

'Absolute and unconditional surrender cancels all defeat,' she answered bravely.

'Prove it,' and he held out his arms. She had to take three or four steps, but she did not falter. She hid her burning face on his breast.

'Aunt Mollie,' Jack called a few moments later, 'you have a niece.'

'I thought I would have,' she called back. 'But I wasn't quite certain whether it would be a niece or a sister-in-law.'—*Magnificat*.

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