

envy you, how I envy you. I've nothing—nothing to be in love with except (*she points*) my canary, and there comes a time Jane (*taking the cage*) when even a canary isn't half enough. One seems somehow to want more. Oh Jane—

JANE. But you don't understand Miss. If I was like you, with my Pa and me Ma in a lovely double frame on the dressing table it'd be alright. But there—I've got to tell somebody. (*beats her breast*) I'm a love child, I am.

MURIEL (*claps her hands*) A love child, Jane? How divine.* What is it? How pretty it sounds. (*dreamily*) A love child.

JANE. (*leaning towards her curiously*) Do you mean to say you *don't know*, Miss? It means I haven't got no Father.

MURIEL. But oh, Jane, how perfect. Just like the Virgin Mary.

JANE. (*furiously*) You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Miss Muriel, that you ought. Don't you know it's the most horrible thing that can happen to anybody, not to have a Father? Don't you know Miss, that's the reason what young girls like me jump off buses and in front of trains and eat rat poison and swoller acids and [*illegible*] themselves. Just because they 'aven't got a Father, Miss.

MURIEL. Does it mean . . .

GRANDFATHER. Muriel. (*enters room, rather feebly, kisses Muriel on forehead and then looks about* him, moving [*illegible*] gently*) And how is my little yellow bird this morning? How is my little darling canary?

MURIEL. Very well, thank you, Grandfather. Will* you have an egg and some bread? (*cuts up loaf*)

GRANDFATHER. And what is my little granddaughter going to do today? Is she going to warm her wings in the pretty garden and sit and read the newspaper to her grandfather—all about the bad wicked people and the bad world outside the Laurels?

MURIEL. The world outside the Laurels. (*covers her face with her hands and bursts into tears*)

GRANDFATHER. Muriel—my child—what is it?

MURIEL. Oh Grandfather, I do so want to go out into the world.

GRANDFATHER. What! My little bird to leave the nest and try to fly over the tall laurels? My little violet to peep from its leaf for prying hands to gather? My little Muriel to leave her old grandfather to wander quite abandoned on the dusty road? (*puts his hand to his heart and exclaims*) Ugh!

MURIEL. Grandfather, Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER. My heart. A chair. (*he sits [*illegible*], puts Muriel's hand over his heart*) Feel. Scarcely at all.