

There were four of us. Edward, now a rollicking junior a Harvard; Ida, the beauty of the family; I, Nell, the torment of my mother, the aversion of my father, but the delight of my brothers, and Tommy, the pet of everyone.

According to my thinking no girl was ever so nice as Ida and no one so dear to a girl's heart as Tommy. I admired my brother Edward and he admired me, in his fashion. He preferred me to Ida, who could not ride horseback, would not scramble through a hedge, and considered climbing trees an unpardonable sin. She knew nothing of baseball or cricket; she wouldn't even take a long walk without an escort, while to me any escort other than Tommy or Edward was an unmitigated bore. Tommy and I were congenial spirits, so he liked me better than Ida, who was always hectoring him about his rude ways. But you may be as anxious to find Tommy as I was. As I called again a muffled sound came from the preserve closet. "What the dickens are you making such a racket for?" Tommy essayed to come down from the top shelf by the edges of the lower shelves, ladder fashion, when he made a misstep and tumbled to the floor, bringing two pots of jelly, making something of a clatter and smash.

"Now I'd like to know what's to be done?" he said savagely.

"Let's run. Hush! there's Sally going past the door. What is she saying about somebody wanting Miss Nell in the parlor? What do they want me for? Ida is there."

"Now what were you calling me for?" demanded Tommy when we had reached our retreat, an old rustic seat in the orchard.

"Why they said Mr. Kavanaugh's heir was come back and he's going to fence off Cowan wood from our place. What'll we do?"

"Is he going to do that? Stingy old curmudgeon!" and he shook his fist vindictively at the absent foe.

"Maybe he isn't stingy," I say. "He doesn't know. If I get a chance I'll ask him if we may go there, just once in a while."

"H'm; much chance you'd get to ask him. When could you ask him? When would we ever see his imperial highness?"

"Why—O, I know. I forget to tell you. He's in the parlor this very minute, and his carriage and horses are at the door. Such a magnificent turnout I never saw."

"Let's go back and ask him. O, go the front way so they won't think I have been around the closet."

"Come on. O, there's little Susie. She oughtn't to be here."

"Never mind; let's go on, Nell. She's all right. Some fellow must be in a tearing hurry—see those horses run!"

"It's a runaway," I gasped, as the horses swept round a turn in the drive. "Susie, run, run!"

"Don't, Nell, you are crazy. You can never reach her."

Perhaps I was, but I could and did reach her. But before I could get off the road the carriage struck and stunned me. I was roused by being lifted in some one's arms, and opening my eyes saw a strange face, with a pair of the deepest blue eyes bending over me. "Put me down. What are you going to do with me?" I asked imperiously.

A relieved smile crossed the anxious face as he replied, "My horses ran away. I am Harvey Kavanaugh. I am going to take care of you till you can help yourself. Is there anything else you would like to know?" with a saucy twinkle in his eye. "Now tell me who you are," he said, "and how you happened to make a heroine of yourself."

"I didn't make a heroine of myself. Susie was in the road and I got her out, but wasn't as quick as I ought to have been.

I am Nellie Ward and this is my brother Tommy."

"How did you children happen to be on this road at this particular time?"

If looks can kill, Mr. Kavanaugh certainly would have died at that moment, as I informed him that I was nearly seventeen years old.

Perceiving the source of my ire, he altered his manner and conversed very much as he would with his grandmother, till Tommy broached the subject of Cowan Wood and we received full permission to visit it whenever we pleased and as often as we pleased; then I unbent my dignity and was as gracious as I knew how to be.

Suddenly I recollected that it was nearly dinner time, and glad of any excuse to be removed from this embarrassing situation, Tommy and I made our adieux. Our mother blandly remarked at dinner: "The new land owner called and seemed very much pleased with Ida, and paid her very marked attention."

"Did he stay long?" innocently asked Tommy.

"Not so long as he might have staid, had not Fido spied his horses and barked till they broke loose and ran away, and he had to leave to look after them. I hope nothing serious happened."

By agreement Tommy and I never mentioned the adventure of that day, and when at his next visit we were formally introduced neither look nor word betrayed our secret. Mr. K. often joined us in our walks in Cowan Wood, and as time went by Tommy and I became very well acquainted with him. I was young and romantic and of course I thought he would make the very nicest brother-in-law that ever was, and was in a great hurry for him to begin to act loverlike toward Ida. But he was just as loverlike toward mamma or even toward me as he was toward her. Still as he used to call every few days we thought that Ida's chances to obtain a share in the estates were good.

One day we were very much astonished by the entrance of my brother Edward. Amid the greetings we asked "What brought you?"

"The train and an overwhelming desire to see Ida's young man. Have you named the day yet, Sis?"

Ida blushed and mamma helped her out with "Mr. Kavanaugh has not spoken yet, but I have no doubt as to his intentions."

"Has he fixed up the place since he came?"

"No, Edward, he has improved the grounds but not the house," replied mamma.

"When I live there—that is if I—" began Ida.

"Don't be modest, Ida. You know you mean to live there. What will you do when you are Madame K?"

"Well, I don't know as there is any immediate prospect of it, but if I should live there I'd have all the dark arches and pillars removed, and cover the west and south sides with deep porticos."

"Then you would spoil the whole," I broke in impetuously. "You would ruin the beauty by modernizing it so."

"You would find Mr. Kavanaugh wouldn't let you," said Tommy boldly.

"Perhaps you will have the opportunity of seeing what I can do."

"Perhaps I won't; he likes Nell twice as well as he does you."

An incredulous smile broke over her face. She was too secure in her own charms to fear any rivalry from her less showy sister.

"Well," Tommy persisted, "any way he talks to her and seems to be real glad to see her when we meet him in Cowan