

of you!

Dick. Oh, come now, Bessie! Don't be cross!

Bess (*walking to window, L. B., and looking out.*) I won't "come now." I think you are cold-blooded.

Griffith (*laughing.*) Dick, my boy, you're in for it.

Bess. I think you're all cold-blooded! Laughing and—I could cry!

Dick (*crossing to window.*) Don't do that Bessie!

Bess. You have no sympathy for the—the poor and the oppressed. The idea of laughing because we only made four dollars, and (*with something between a sigh and a sob*)—and eighty-five cents. You don't care if our recital was a failure as long as you've won your wager. I'll never pay it (*turns to face Dick;*) never! I don't believe in wagers anyhow. You just coerced me into making it!

Dick. Why, Bessie, you——

Bess. Yes you did! Besides, I don't believe you've won. Four dollars and eighty-five cents would buy (*with sudden enthusiasm, running to Mr. N.*) Brother Jo—how many bags of peanuts would four dollars and eighty-five cents buy? (*Dick follows, and they bend over Mr. N. in poignant anxiety.*)

Mr. N. Let's see? How much a bag?

Dick. Ten cents.

Bess. No! Five cents. Who ever heard of paying ten cents a bag for peanuts? Ridiculous!

Mr. N. Well—five into four-eighty-five goes—five into forty-eight nine. Five into thirty five, seven. Ninety seven bags of peanuts.

Bess (*turning to Mrs. Jo, closely followed by Dick.*) And how many orphans are there in the Protestant Orphans' asylum? Oh, Eva, you know. Quick!

Mrs. Jo (*cautiously.*) Whole orphans, or half orphans?

Bess. Whole orphans!

Dick. Whole orphans and half orphans. How many?

Mrs. Jo. Well, when the last annual report was—er—issued, there were altogether thirty-seven whole orphans, and fifty-five half orphans.

Mr. N. What's all this about half or——

Bess (*dancing.*) That makes ninety-two. Good! Good! I've won after all. There's money enough for ninety-seven! Eva, if you had said ninety-eight I should have expired. Pay me, instantly, Mr. Dick Arlington! I don't approve of wagers and I shall never make another as long as I live; but you shall pay me this one, just to punish you for being so unfeeling about those poor orphans.

Griffith (*leaning back among his Turkish cushions.*) Ha! Ha! Fork over, Dick. You've lost.

Dick. Never! I don't believe that you can buy peanuts—good wholesome fresh-roasted peanuts that any self-respecting orphan would eat—for five cents a bag.

Bess. Pay your wager.

Dick. Not till I've satisfied myself about the price of peanuts. I'm going to ask a peanut man. There's one on the next corner. (*Starts off.*)

Bess. Then I'm going with you. You're not to be trusted. You might——

Dick. You're *not* going with me, Bessie Stephenson! You'll insist upon jehing him down. And my wager was made on the prevailing price of peanuts—fresh-roasted, double-jointed, self-respecting peanuts.

Mr. N. Stop this unseemly quarreling! I'll go myself and learn the price of peanuts. [*Rising.*] I'll be back directly.

Dick (*calling to Mr. N.*) Double jointed!——

Mrs. Jo. Yes, do go! Jo, you're a dear! (*After Mr. North's exit.*) He's delighted to have an excuse to get out. Some day a legal holiday will be the death of him! (*Goes to Indian basket filled with oranges on table R.*) Have an orange while we wait?

Bess. Oh yes! Let's eat oranges.

Dick and Griffith (*to Bess.*) Shall I fix one for you?

Mrs. Jo. Don't all speak at once! I suppose (*to Mrs. C.*) that you and I and Monday will have to fix our own oranges for ourselves! Nice to be a rosebud isn't it?

(*Dick and Griffith each set about fixing an orange for Bessie in mad haste, while she looks over the report her sister has left on the escritoire. Mrs. Jo and Mrs. C. halve an orange and begin to eat.*)

Bess. My! What a splendid business woman you are, Eva! How did you keep your columns of figures so straight? Mine are always biased like the leaning tower of Pisa.

Griffith (*finishing his orange first.*) Have an orange, Miss Bessie?

Bess (*sweetly.*) Oh thank you Mr. Griffith? Were you fixing it

for me? So kind of you!

Dick (*beginning to eat his orange as if it had never been intended for anyone else.*) Choice fruit this, Mrs. Jo. Florida?

Mrs. Jo. No; California. Washington Navels. Tom sent them. He's out there this winter, you know. Who do you think he met there the other day? Edith Gardner!

Mrs. C. (*intensely interested.*) No! Chance to renew their old affair. I heard somebody say yesterday that Tom was—— (*They continue to chat aside.*)

Bess (*enjoying her orange.*) They say that the—er—native Californians eat their oranges from a—sort of suck them, don't you know, from a little hole in the top.

Dick (*determined to take part in the conversation.*) How interesting? (*Takes a fresh orange.*) Believe I'll try it. But I say Bess where's the hole?

Bess (*continuing to address Griffith.*) But it seems to me that the very nicest way is to use a spoon. That's the way they do in—
Griffith. Suppose I get a spoon for you? Shall I?

Bess (*more sweetly than ever.*) Oh if you will. It's such a nice way. You're awful kind.

Griffith (*to Mrs. Jo.*) I'm going to invade your silver closet. I know the way.

Mrs. Jo (*busily gossiping with her friend.*) Certainly. Go on.
Exit Griffith.

Dick (*plaintively, to Bessie, who is devoting herself to Monday.*) Bess, are you—you're not cross?

Bess (*to Monday.*) Never mind. Monday shall have some orange, so he shall.

Dick. Bessie Stephenson, what do you mean by ignoring me like this? Answer me! (*Indistinct murmurs from Bess, who continues to fondle the skye.*) Why do you accept this—cad's attentions and——

Bess (*to Monday.*) Never mind. In a minute he shall have some orange—so he shall.

Dick (*waxing wrathful.*) Why did you prefer Griffith's orange? Why did you address all your conversation to him? Why couldn't you have sent me for your spoon? I will have an answer.

Bess (*looking up in simulated astonishment.*) What? I—I don't—Why-ee, Dick, what is the matter? Are you angry? (*Dick looks abused and indignant.*) Oh, well, of course, if you're going to act this way, you can't expect——

Dick. What have I done to deserve such treatment? Tell me? Why should you prefer Griffith's oranges? Why couldn't I bring you your spoon?

Bess. Oh, well, if every little thing must be explained——

Dick (*brokenly.*) Have you no consideration for my feelings? I can stand a good deal—unkindness, coldness—to be utterly ignored—to—to—but to have some one else doing everything for you! It is too much. You might have let me brought you the spoon!

Bess. But, Dick! What a stupid you are! I didn't want it. You might have known it was only to get him out of the way. I think he's awful tiresome.

Dick (*somewhat mollified.*) Oh, was that it?

Bess. I thought, since he suggested getting it, that while brother Jo was gone, just to have something to do, I'd give Monday a little orange-juice; you know Monday adores orange-juice!

Dick. Oh—I didn't know.

Bess. And of course Monday can't take it without a spoon, and I didn't want to send you away. I—(*demurely*) I'd much rather talk to you.

Dick (*smiling.*) Oh!

Bess. Yes; you see I didn't want the spoon for myself. Why should I be sending anyone for a spoon, Dick, dear, (*looking up roguishly*) when I have you?

Dick (*insulted.*) Oh! Am I to infer, Miss Stephenson—(*peremptory knocks on door R. Enter L., Mrs. North with Griffith, bringing spoons.*)

Mr. N. Well, Bessie, peanuts are five cents; five cents a single bag. Wholesale at——

Dick. Five cents a bag? Double-jointed, fresh-roasted peanuts? Ruinous! (*Renewed knocks on door R.*)

Mrs. Jo (*crossing to door R.*) Then Bess has won! (*opens door.*) Jo, here's a message! (*Takes it from boy.*) Why it's for me! (*Opens it.*) It's from Sara Henderson. (*Reads:*)

"DEAREST EVA: I forgot to tell you last night, when we were counting up expenses, what I had paid out for flowers and messenger boys and crepe paper for that yellow shade, and different things.