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THE CHIEF OFFICE

Flowers to Match

"What color is your gown, Dell?" asked Bob Gaines, eagerly. Dell considered. "Green," she said, solemnly, and Bob knew that the filmy creation she would wear to the Datters' masked ball would be yellow. It was Dell's way nowadays to tease him in this manner. They were both very young, and Bob was very much in love.

"Green," repeated Bob, just as if he believed it. "Then you will want to wear white flowers, eh? What's the matter with lily of the valley?"

Dell shook her sunny head. "They're too much like bridal bouquets," she said, flippantly.

"You don't seem to have much respect for bridal bouquets," he drawled. "I thought girls were rather keen about that sort of thing."

"Did you?" asked Dell sweetly. "When you are older, by dear Bobby, you will have met a number of girls and then you will realize that not all of them are like Pussy Datter."

"What's the matter with Pussy Datter?" demanded Bob.

"I'm sure I don't know! It must be because she has been a bridesmaid so many times that makes her positively silly about weddings."

"I thought all girls were that way," growled Bob.

"Perhaps your acquaintance is limited. There's Pussy, who is fond of weddings, and there's me."

"And you are not?"

"Dear me, no!" Bob frowned. "If you don't want any bridal flowers to wear with your green perhaps a few yards of smilax might answer," he said, glumly.

Dell laughed gayly. "I'd feel like a chandelier decorated for a wedding," she declared.

"What shall it be?"

"Violets," said Dell.

"Very well. But remember, Dell, some day I shall send you lilies of the valley—and you'll be glad to wear them!" declared Mr. Gaines.

"Well!" cried Dell a little breathlessly after he had gone. "What is the boy thinking of?"

Bob stopped at the florists and ordered violets. As he went out of the shop he picked up a small booklet from the counter and idly scanned it as he rode uptown.

It was a book for the sentimentalist. In it were set forth the fourteen important wedding anniversaries, from cotton to diamond. Also birth-month flowers and their expression.

Bob Gaines read that lily-of-the-valley meant success in love. "Violets mean courage."

He wondered if Dell knew that, too. Some girls might, if they were romantic.

"If violets signify courage—she suggested violets, and she must have meant to encourage me," he reasoned.

That evening he called her on the telephone.

"What do violets mean?" he asked solemnly.

"About two dollars," she said wickedly.

"Oh, pshaw! I mean the sentimental meaning—you know!"

"Oh, I did ask you for violets, didn't I?"

"Yes."

"Well, I've changed my mind, Bob. Bring me any flowers you care to."

The next morning Bob stopped in the florist's and ordered a bridal bouquet, made up of lilies of the valley, to be sent to Miss Dell Moore for the Datters' ball. His card went with it. "I shall hold you to your promise," he scribbled on it.

It was not easy to find Miss Moore at the Datters' ball. There were so many slim young creatures that might be Dell.

Bob Gaines, dressed as a cavalier, pursued a green gown through a crowded room and cornered it in an alcove. He recognized the golden glint of hair and the set of the ears behind the large white satin mask.

"Dell," he reproached her, "you are wearing daffodils!"

"Am I?" she asked pertly. "I thought they were orchids, really, I did!"

"They look horrid with that green gown—you look like an egg salad," he pursued cruelly.

"Thanks," she murmured.

"You promised to wear my flowers if they harmonized with your gown."

"I never did!" she denied.

"Dell!"

"But my name isn't Dell!"

"What is it, then?"

"Nell Gaines—yes, your own sister, Bobby! Ah, it was your own fault, sir—you did insist!"

"Awful!" commented Bobby, his head turning here and there in search of Dell Moore.

"But why the bride?" asked Nell coolly.

"What bride?" he turned quickly.

Coming slowly toward his corner was a slender young form whose carriage he recognized at once. She was gowned in white satin, and from her head there swayed a thick veil of white tulle and orange-blossoms. Her face was entirely hidden behind a mask. In her hand she carried a bridal bouquet of lilies of the valley.

It was his bouquet and they matched her gown!

"Nell!" he said to his sister hurriedly. "won't you beat it? There's a dear! It's Dell, and she's coming to—me!"

Nell squeezed his hand.

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