

A Christmas Honeymoon

By Frances Aymar Mathews

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CHAPTER XIII. Little Peter's Mistake.

MR. VAN ZANDT had come up to town early that afternoon; just before Christmas there was not much law business to be attended to. He had gone, as usual, into the library to read his Evening Post. He sat beside the fireplace where the Liverpat coal burned cheerily, opposite to him the pier mirror, some of its silver lining worn away, behind him the curtained arch. There were leather chairs and the leather lounge; bookcases on all four sides; the large table in the middle of the room had on it the violin case, the Godey's Lady's Book, Betty's last note to him, and the carte de visite he had taken from under her pillow, now in a crimson velvet passe-partout. By and by he laid down his paper, lighted a cigar and drew nearer to the fender; there was not a sound in the house; nor yet without for the snowfall had been heavy, and it had begun again to come down; not a sound save the cricket that chirped on his hearth. He heard it and smiled as he called it a lonely man's comrade; there had always been a cricket singing on that hearth in winter time, as long as he could remember. Presently sleighbells jingled in the street; the hearty laughter of youth reached his ears; a voice called out to the horses "Whoa, there, steady!" and then silence once more. His eyes traveled to the table to the carte de visite in the velvet frame.

Betty would not use the new strawberry roans. Each morning the coachman waited for orders; each morning Shaddle or Bridget told him there were none.

But Betty had come home. He himself had seen her. Why had she come? There was but one wall between them; should he break it down and march in and repossess his own?

But how could he do that? Nothing might be further from her desires than that he should show himself to her. She kept aloof. Well, but a woman could not put out her hand to a man unless the man first extended his. Should he write to her? He took up his pen. Absurd! To write to Betty when merely a wall divided him from her.

But that wall! Who had built it? He, Peter Van Zandt. What a fool he was! Of course Betty would not stir an inch toward the man who had built a wall up between her and him. He would have the wall torn down tomorrow. That was it, tomorrow. He got up and began pacing the floor restlessly, smoking all this while, so that by then the place was in a haze of filmy blue. Through it the fire shadows flickered and playing on the andirons, the Indian rug, the impoverished mirror, his own face.

If he could but tear down that wall now, with his fists and fingers. They had had harder work to do and had done it, over in the African mines. Yes, he would do it now. Do it himself, here were the window bars, heavy, quite fit and able to batter plaster, mortar and bricks to a ruin. Then the image of her standing under the bare trees in the park, expectant, eager, watchful for some-

one else, smote him to the heart, and he laughed a little, put down the tool he had seized, sat in his chair with his back entirely to the arch with once in all the years been displaced or touched by hand of his. He lighted a fresh cigar, and the smoke wreaths grew thicker, and the mist over all things more dense, and the cricket sang on, and the rest of it was silence and his hunger for Betty.

There may have been, indeed there were, other sounds there—the creak of rusty hinges, the sweep of brocade, the careful tread of two little feet lost almost to a childish waist, the soft purring of three pussy cats and the swish of their tails against the Turkish ottomans near the arch. The little boy, by no means abashed or frightened, saw the figure of the man through the haze, but not his face, for that was not toward him. He made a farther noise with his gigantic heels,

but the man did not hear. His mind was with the woman he loved. He smoked on.

Then Pierre de la Quereau made a more intentional sound with his boots. Still the man was oblivious. Finally the melodious voice of the child exclaimed, "Pardon, monsieur, but are you happiness or where is it, if you please?"

Then, to be sure, Peter Van Zandt started up from his dream chair and turned to behold the tiny figure emerging from the cavalry boots and the head roofed by the old army cap. This, to be sure, the little boy had lifted as he had spoken. When he succeeded in handling it he saw the stranger against whom his grandmother had so carefully warned him.

"Monsieur!" cried the astounded child.

"Monsieur le Marquis!" exclaimed the equally astonished man. Then certainly Mr. Van Zandt recovered himself, pleased in a sense to think that his small acquaintance had come to call on him. Admitted doubtless by Bridget or Shaddle, he had entered the room while the host had been unconscious, lost in thoughts of Betty. "I am glad to see you, sir," Van Zandt went on. "I did not hear the bell ring nor your entrance. Sit down." He wheeled a chair nearer the fire, which the three pussies evidently accepted as a note of welcome, for they began to bestow themselves in warm corners without further circumlocution.

But the little boy did not take the offered seat; he stood with his unwieldy cap in his hands and said, "No, I thank you, monsieur; I did not know this would be your house. I thought it was our house," he glanced back intuitively toward the curtained arch.

Mr. Van Zandt, not exactly comprehending, smiled amusedly; so little this man was doubtless a visitor with his grandmother, at Betty's house, and by some whim of childhood he had come around by the areaway very likely, and walked in.

"And how is that, sir?" he nevertheless inquired.

"I did not come to visit you, monsieur; not in the least. I ask your pardon. I came to find happiness and"—he looked around. "Please, monsieur, tell me, is it really here?"

"No, sir," Van Zandt answered slowly, "it is not."

"But"—little Peter was about to say, "Brigitte told me it was here," when his instincts forbade the use of any one's name as yet.

"But I am most happy to have you here," the host repeated.

"Monsieur, it is not that Grand-mamma," then he paused, searching all his inexperienced soul for the right word. "Grand-mamma, monsieur, is not happy. I am sure of it. And Bridget mean some one told me that happiness was on the other side of the arch, and I promised to myself, monsieur, to come through and find it, and have it for her when she gets home from Bloomingdale tonight, tomorrow." The little boy gave a deep breath of relief at the conclusion of his long speech.

The man stared at him in open bewilderment; then a light dawned. Betty's visitors, of course, the little boy and his green brocade grand-mamma, and some fairy tale, all mixed up in his curly hair.

Well, children and fairy tales were alike the unknown quantity to Peter Van Zandt, but this charming little guest of Betty's! Ah, yes, perhaps, certainly he could be led to talk of his hostess.

"I am glad you came," Van Zandt again repeated somewhat lamely. "Now, sit down."

"No, monsieur, I thank you. It is not the visit I could not. I promised grand-mamma never to visit the stranger. I will go back. Come," he said to the three pussies. "Strad, Ole Bull, Paganini, come home Monsieur will excuse us all for entering; it was a



"I came to find happiness. Is it really here?"

"mistake." Little Peter recalled his grandmother's word and used it as he drew himself and his tremendous boots away from his host.

Van Zandt watched him as if spell-bound as he retreated toward the brocade curtains; watched him arduously push them aside; beheld through the haze the arch, open as of old; the dust of years, the mahogany door ajar, the glimpse beyond of the staircase, the hat rack, the newel post of Mrs. Van Zandt's half of the double house. He saw the little boy urging his pussy cats and passing through before he had collected himself.

CHAPTER XIV. Peter and the Little Marquis Make a Secret, Also the Marquis Beholds the Carte de Visite.

THEN Mr. Van Zandt sprang to the child, and the two, man and boy, stood together on the sill of the dividing door.

"Come back!" cried the man, his firm hold upon the small arm.

"But, monsieur, I promised grand-mamma not to visit any stranger."

"I will write and explain to your grandmother, sir. She is stopping in there, is she not?" He indicated Betty's side of the old house.

"Yes, monsieur—of course—but—"

"You are looking for happiness, little boy, are you not?"

"Yes, monsieur, to give to grand-mamma."

"Come back; maybe you can help me to find it and then I will give some of it to you."

"You will, monsieur?"

"I will, upon my soul!"

"Then I will come." The three pussies had already returned to their warm corners as Van Zandt, taking the army cap from his little guest, led him back into the library through the haze of the curling smoke. He glanced down as he laid the cap on the table. He saw his own initials inside, dimmed but still legible. He looked at the Goliath boots and recognized these, too, as his own. He stared at the child.

"Now, sir, will you tell me how you came through there?" He looked over at the arch. "It will help us, Monsieur le Marquis, in our search for happiness."

"Monsieur, I play in the garret. It is there I find the boots and the cap. I find the keys on a peg as Ole Bull plays with the string."

"Yes?" Van Zandt assented eagerly. He remembered hanging them there very distinctly.

"Brigitte, monsieur, it was Brigitte who is very excellent and true, tell me that this large key was the one for this door, you see? She shows to me the door behind the portieres, and we make a plan to unlock the door—I do it, because Brigitte, when I demand what is on the other side, she says she thinks happiness is, so I unlock, I come in, I find monsieur."

Van Zandt was in the midst of a ridicule.

The wall not built; and Brigitte, who was she? To be sure, Bridget, of course. But why should or how could Bridget suppose to—pshaw!

The little boy, visiting Betty with his grandmother, doubtless old friends of hers in France, was a charming little romanticist. He had heard, he believed, somewhere, of just such fanciful children.

But the open arch?

The little boy meantime had been looking around, speculating according to his years as to whence happiness might come or in which article of furniture it might now be hidden. There presently he caught sight of the carte de visite in the crimson velvet passe-partout, and he cried out softly, "Oh, monsieur, monsieur, where, then, did you get this?" The little boy fetched a big sigh and knelt down by the table, his two arms trying to fold themselves on top of the frame, his large eyes fixed on the tiny picture.

"Well, sir," Van Zandt replied, "I'm afraid I stole it." He was unadvised at dealing with a child and mostly intent upon arranging mentally how to fetch his guest to speaking of Betty.

"Monsieur!" The little boy felt this to be untrue, but before he could add anything to his exclamation of reproach the man went on with:

"Why?"

"Because, monsieur, this," he put a

reverend little forefinger on the picture, "is madame my grand-mamma." "Are you not mistaken, sir?" The child shook his head.

"I have the same on my candle stand, monsieur, by my bed."

"But, sir, the name of this lady is not the same as yours. See, it is written on the card." He took the picture from its frame and held it up.

"Monsieur, I cannot read the writing."

"It says, 'Betty Van Zandt,'" the man read.

"Yes, monsieur," little Peter nodded slowly; "exactly. My mamma was, and my papa was De la Quereau; also my mamma, too," he explained to the best of his limited ability.

Peter Van Zandt stared on. There were tense thoughts racking his brain. Betty married to another? How? Impossible!

Presently his breath came hard as he spoke. "Your grand-mamma, sir. Would you tell me her name?"

"But, yes, monsieur. Grand-mamma's name is Betty Van Zandt."

Then the man's whole body shook, and his hands trembled and his lips, and his arms ached, and his soul was scathed, and he lifted the little boy up and stood him on the table, not letting him outside his hold, and he asked, "What is the name, do you know, of that grandfather of yours who would not like to have you and your grand-mamma go to Grace church?"

"His name, monsieur, I know well, is like mine, Peter—we say Pierre—Van Zandt. I have the middle name."

And the arms of the man enfolding the little boy very tenderly, very carefully, very holly, and he pressed his cheek to the little boy's cheek, as he said, "We will, we must find happiness for your grand-mamma, sir; but I will tell you where it is."

"Where, monsieur, where?"

Peter pointed to the other side of the curtains.

"It's over yonder, sir, in your grand-mamma's part of the house."

"But, no, monsieur, no. I am sure, because if it were grand-mamma would not sit always, I have seen it, with her looks this way."

Then for Peter Van Zandt the roof was lifted and he felt upon his head zephyrs from heaven. Then he laughed and lifted the little boy from the table and said, "Pierre."

"Yes, monsieur?"

"You know Christmas is coming; only three days off now?"

"Yes, monsieur, that is so," he was stroking Paganini's ears. Paganini sat, by his own selection, on top of the old violin case.

"And both your grand-mamma and I agree, you say, that it is a sad time of year?" The little boy nodded as he cuddled his pussy cat.

"But suppose we make it joyful, you and I; suppose we believe that happiness will be found by doing that; suppose we make a secret, just you and I, about Christmas; shall we? Will you?"

"Yes, monsieur, I will; anything for the happiness of grand-mamma," he drew nearer to Peter. "How shall we make the secret, monsieur?"

"For a moment Van Zandt did not reply; he was as yet a bit in the mists; but things were making themselves plain to him; he found himself facing the singular proposition of that radiant rose of a woman he had watched in Washington parade ground, as the grandmother of a little boy of seven; so little Peter had to wait. There were a hundred questions Van Zandt would have liked to ask this little boy; it was also a dilemma for him whether to disclose his own identity to the child or not.

But, Peter, with all his ardor of thirst for Betty, was level headed. Whereas his impulse was to pick up the small boy and rush with him straight over to the other side of the house and there await her homecoming, he at once saw that this could not be; that, in fact, after all, there must be, he would rather have it so, a second wooing of his wife.

So for these reasons little Peter had to wait. At last Van Zandt said: "Pierre, what do you say to a Christmas tree in your grandmother's drawing room? A surprise—you know, you must not tell."

"Yes, monsieur! A Christmas tree! Oh, that will be beautiful!"

"I will go shopping and get all sorts of things that I think your grand-mamma would like, eh?"

"Yes, monsieur," the child's eyes widened. The magnitude of all this robbed him of any lengthy speech.

"It can be done without letting your grand-mamma know, can it not?"

This brought little Peter to his language. "Ah, monsieur; I don't know. It is for me always to tell grand-mamma everything and—you see! Now I must go home." He became suddenly terrified with his own position.

"Pierre, look at me."

"Yes, monsieur, I look."

"I promise you to make it all right with madame your grand-mamma, on the word of a gentleman, how is that?"

"Monsieur!" the gallant little boy's intonation was perfect, but it was painfully evident that he had reservations.

Van Zandt felt this. He said, "Well, sir, what is the trouble, won't you tell me?"

"Monsieur," the little boy answered deprecatingly, seeming to sink farther down in his huge boots, "if you please, I do not know who you are, the name of you, monsieur."

Van Zandt felt the thrust, acknowledged its justice. He had wanted to hold his name, but could he now? Impossible.

"My name, Monsieur le Marquis, is Peter Van Zandt."

The little boy gave a sigh of relief.

"Monsieur, then is the same name as my grand-papa, one of them?"

"The same."

"The grand-papa for which we pray, grand-mamma and I, every night, on our knees."

"Do you?" The man's features quivered.

"But, yes, monsieur, and grand-mamma also cries a little, very often at this prayer. I don't love that grand-papa!" His red lips tightened.

"Don't you? Well, never mind about him just now. Tomorrow morning I will meet you when you go to Signor Pratt's and we will plan the rest."

"Monsieur, is it this that will make the secret?"

"Yes. The secret is the Christmas tree; remember."

"Yes, monsieur. I salute you, monsieur. I go!" The little boy once more collected his pussy cats and, through the smoky atmosphere, the army boots much impeding, the army cap over his ears, Peter watched him pass back whence he came; heard the knob turn, heard the cats mew; presently heard the cricket sing.

Then he took up the carte de visite and pressed it to his heart, then he crossed over and was glad to find that the little boy had forgotten to turn or to fetch off the key.

CHAPTER XV. Two Days Before Christmas.

LITTLE PETER was awake very early the next morning. For the first time in his whole seven years he had "something on his mind," as other folks phrase it; something weighing where not even a feather had ever weighed before—his promise to his grandmother to tell her what the "something" between Bridget and himself was when she should be home from her dinner at the Ogdens'.

Betty recollected Pierre's promise very well, but it was no part of her simple scheme of education to remind her boy of that which he should not forget—a promise. She was pulling on her cuffs preparatory to going shopping. Stradivarius was playing with her muff cord; little Peter was putting on her overshoes; he was also puzzling out his own tangled skein. Finally, with a great last pull at the second overshoe, he said, "Grand-mamma!"

"Yes, dear?"

"That between Brigitte and me, I cannot tell to you today."

"Very well, dear." In Betty's mind it was undoubtedly a Christmas gift which Miss Supple had led the path to buying. "Be sure not to go off the block with your sled after you come from Signor Pratt's."

"I will, grand-mamma."

"Kiss me, darling." Betty kissed him; she was down the stairs; little Peter lingered at the landing, then he dashed impetuously after her.

"Grand-mamma!"

"Yes?"

"I made the visit to the stranger?"

"Pierre!" Betty stood still, letting go of the doorknob.

"Mme. Grandmère, it was wicked, but so very pleasant; oh, yes. I did it."

"But, Pierre, dear, you promised?" She sat down on the hall chair and drew him to her.

He nodded. "I did, but I did not know how pleasant, how easy, it was."

"Dear, what now shall grand-mamma do with the little boy she cannot trust?"

"But you can trust. It was not the real visit," the little boy halted, "not the visit prepared. I did not know. It was as when Ole Bull jumps out of a dark corner. You don't know it until he does the jumps."

Betty's heart also jumped. Where had the child been lured to?

"Pierre, what stranger's house have you been in, tell me?" Her tone was as severe as she knew of.

"Grand-mamma, it is now that I know the name of him. He told me. He is exactly a gentleman, I am sure."

"Well, what is his name?"

"Peter Van Zandt, the same as the grand-papa for which we pray."

Betty sat still, very still, and the rose food died from her cheeks, and her fingers trembled as she tried to be nonchalant and button her gloves.

"Now it is that I have made the visit as Ole Bull jumps you will not be angry or sorry with me, grand-mamma?"

She drew the little boy closer. "No, dear; you have told me. That makes things right and—"

"But, grand-mamma, I have not told you all," he interrupted loyally. "That I cannot."

She scented the Christmas present and Miss Supple's injunctions, doubtless, not to reveal; so she laughed and answered, "No matter, by and by, perhaps at Christmas, eh, you will tell me all?"

"Exactly. Yes, grand-mamma, at Christmas," he pushed up her glove and pressed his lips to her wrist: "Goodby! goodby!" The roans and the coo came at the curb, but Mrs. Van Zandt with a smile shook her head to the coachman, and walked over to Broadway.

Then a rush for cap and coat, mittens, sled and violin case, Bridget and Shaddle both helping him, and off around the corner to see the stranger and to go to his lesson.

The butler and Miss Supple saw them meet from the window on the area.

"Maybe, come Christmas, Shad, the Master and mistress 'll—you know!" The faithful woman jerked her hand toward Mr. Van Zandt and the little boy.

"Maybe, come Christmas," remarked Mr. Shaddle in a wise but restrained

tone, "other things 'll come round, too, Biddy."

When Van Zandt and the little boy met that morning they plotted their secret without difficulty.

Van Zandt had seen Ned Davies; he already knew that Anny de Peyster had at last given in, and that after nearly thirty years of serving, the tireless Ned was to be rewarded; that on Christmas eve at 8 o'clock in the rectory of St. Michael's, Bloomingdale, Ned and Anny were to be married. Ned had confided to him in a curious matter of fact, curt fashion, that "no one was to be present except Anny's life-long best friend—Betty—and Anny's brother Nicholas."

So Peter knew that Betty would be away from the double house on Christmas eve up to a reasonably late hour at least. He did not, of course, know what the little boy had to tell him further, and this was that he was to go after all to the Ogdens' party, having overcome his scruples as to Mr. Lawrence, and that Shaddle was to fetch him home at half past 9.

All this suited Mr. Van Zandt perfectly. He said so to the little boy.

"Yes, monsieur." The child leaned thoughtfully against the railing, "M. Van Zandt!" with sudden determination. Conscience and duty worked strangely in this little lad's composition.

"Yes, sir."

"It is that I told grand-mamma, a little."

"You did, sir? What did you tell her?"

"Oh, monsieur, not the secret we make, no, but the name of you, that was all."

"I see. And madame your grand-mamma said—that did she say, Monsieur le Marquis?"

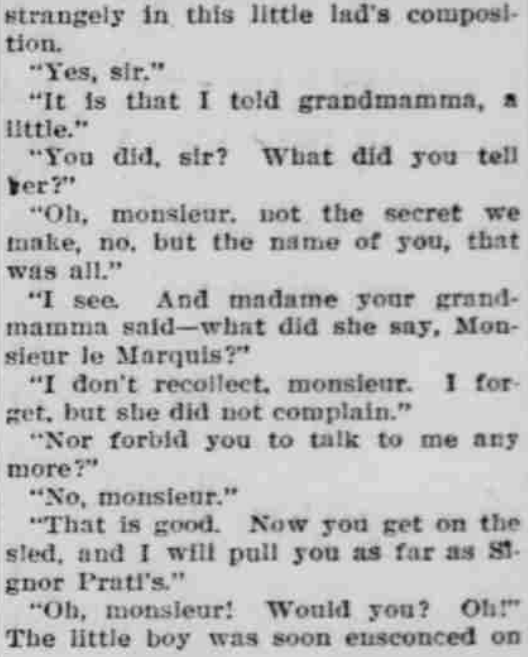
"I don't recollect, monsieur. I forget, but she did not complain."

"Nor forbid you to talk to me any more?"

"No, monsieur."

"That is good. Now you get on the sled, and I will pull you as far as Signor Pratt's."

"Oh, monsieur! Would you? Oh!" The little boy was soon ensconced on



"Oh, monsieur, not the secret we make, no."

the sled, clasping the violin case, and Van Zandt was pulling him rapidly along through the snow.

"Monsieur!" Pierre exclaimed after a silence as they were crossing Bleecker street. "Are you sure about finding the happiness for grand-mamma?"

The man stopped short and answered, "Yes; I am sure."

The little boy sighed with contentment and confidence.

"Peter!"

"Yes, monsieur?"

"When you come home from the party tomorrow evening I think that happiness will very soon after come home also, and I will be waiting for you, sir, when you arrive."

"Where, monsieur, will you be?"

"Very near to happiness, sir, and very near to that Christmas tree. Here we are at No. 12."

CHAPTER XVI. And a Little Child Shall Lead Them.

BETTY went up to Bloomingdale and Anny and Ned were married. Little Peter went to the party, and beneath the smiles of Miss Polly Manierre entirely forgot both his grandmother and the Christmas tree. Pillows and keys, oats, peas, beans and barley grows, Little Sally Waters, a Santa Claus with a bag full of toys and comfits—all served to distract the little boy's thoughts.

But when word came in at half past 9 that the butler had called for Master de la Quereau the whole of the secret rushed back into the boy's brain, and all the way down in the omnibus from Fifty-second street his energies were taken up with wondering as to what and how it all would be when he reached home—that is, almost all the way, for by the time the stage was jolting over Fifth avenue, in and out of the ruts and gullies of the big snow fall, little Peter had fallen fast asleep in Shaddle's arms, nor did he waken when they got out, and she laid him on the leather lounge in the dining room.

"The Lord love him, let him sleep!" Bridget adjured as she slipped off his coat and cap and pulled his velvet suit straight and smoothed his curls, cover-

ing him with an afghan. "Sure, 'll be better entirely for the two of them to meet alone by themselves!"

Shaddle nodded emphatically as they both tiptoed out of the room, turning the gas down to a point and leaving the door on the crack. They went into the pantry and waited.

Peter Van Zandt waited too.

He was in the drawing room. He stood quite in the middle of the velvet carpet with the medallion of roses and the blue border. His eyes went over the blue and gold brocade sofas and chairs, the etagere with its burden of Bohemian glass, alabaster figures, Wedgewood plaques; the whatnots in the corners, the papier mache tables inlaid with mother of pearl, the eisel with the vivid Croesey on it and, in the space between the long room, stood the finest Christmas tree that Jefferson market could afford.

Peter Van Zandt had been shopping indeed. There were toys for a little boy of all sorts and kinds, bags full of Galliard's bonbons, many parcels labeled for Bridget and Shaddle, the coachman, the charwoman, the postwoman, the chimney sweeper, the washman, the lamp lighter, the milkman, the choir boys of Grace church, the newsmen, the policeman, the dustman; Mr. Van Zandt had not forgotten any one.

And there were boxes of silks and laces and furs and jewels for Betty Van Zandt. Books and flowers and an Indian shawl; rare carvings from the newly opened ports of Japan and China; all the prettiest things he could find; the whole tree decked out, too, with yards of tinsel fringes and balls, sparkling in the gleam of dozens of tiny candles in their metal scones.

He had ordered the biggest logs to be piled on the hearth. Already the pussy cats had found this out and were basking in the blaze; nor had they been neglected by the master; three splendid collars with huge bows of red ribbon hung on a branch marked "For Stradivarius, Ole Bull and Paganini;" three fine painted saucers, too, for their milk.

For Van Zandt had taken the butler and Bridget somewhat into his confidence, perforce.

At twenty minutes past 10 he crossed the hall to glance at the sleeping lad, then he returned to the drawing room, his watch in his hand.

She must be coming soon.

Far off sleighbells; nearer, nearer still; a full stop before the door; he recognized De Peyster's voice speaking, although he had not heard it in years. Shaddle had heard the cutter stop, too, and yet neither he nor Bridget moved in their pantry.

Peter Van Zandt himself stepped out and opened the front door, then retreated, unseen, to the drawing room, closing that after him.

Betty must not be forced into a meeting. Betty must come herself.

Betty entered the hall; she had shaken hands with Nick and exchanged all sorts of merry wishes with him in the vestibule, for his horse was restive and he dared not leave it out of sight. Nick had shut the door himself and the bells had set up their music as Betty stepped inside.

What confronted her?

The open arch, the curtains gone, the wall she had believed built up there vanished. The vista clear of the library on the other side.

Her heart beating to burst, she went over to the sill; she saw the mahogany door wide swung, a rusty key in its lock. She paused to look about her. No one was to be seen, nothing heard save the cricket on Peter's hearth.

She went into the room—yes, she did. On the table lay the violin case, the "Godey's Lady's Book," her own little last note to Peter and an empty velvet passe-partout.

Betty stood still and stared around at it all. The room was the former, handsomely furnished, of course, but the former, disappointed place of the lonely man.

Where was Peter?

Where was the wall?

How desolate it was! Just the cricket singing to himself on Christmas eve.

Where was the little boy?

Where were Shaddle and Bridget?

Who had opened the front door for her?

Why was everything so still?

She set the clock right—it was half an hour slow—she took up the little hair broom and brushed the hearth clean, put the andirons closer and the poker and tongs and shovel upright, placed the droplight over the center of the table; and then, with a little sigh, half of complacency, half of poignant, unreasoning expectancy, Betty turned to go back whence she came.

Some one met her at the sill.

Some one who had said to himself, "She must come."

Instead he had gone to find her.

He did not speak. He took her into his arms, to his heart, his kisses upon her lips, all the pent up, long restrained passion of a whole man throbbing in his veins for her.

While they stood there looking into each other's eyes in the silence that is more than any words in any language the little boy had wakened from his nap and, having got a glimpse of the tree, came running to look for Betty.

"Grand-mamma!" he called, halting at the foot of the stairs. "Have you come home?"

"Yes," Peter Van Zandt answered for her.

"Where are you and is it that you have found the happiness, monsieur, as you promised, and can I give it to grand-mamma tonight?"

Then the little boy espied them and ran up to them, and Peter Van Zandt said: "Yes; I have found happiness and given it, I think, to your grand-mamma. Ask her."