

lived up, so far as he could, to the traditions in which he had been born.

She wondered what color his eyes were, and even as she wondered they opened, at first drowsily, then widely as they suddenly turned and met hers. They were dark, she discovered—very dark, almost black. Indeed, they seemed quite black under stress of their owner's varied emotions as he stared at her.

"I hope I haven't startled you," she said gently. As he seemed unable to answer at once, she went on.

"I should not have come, of course. I know you don't want to meet strangers. But—I could not feel that we were strangers." He was making it hard for her, with his silence and his intent, almost resentful glance. "You see," she added with a smile, "we both came from Weyo, as I told you in my first note—and I remember you when you were a boy."

"You—you do?" he stammered. A change took place in his expression, a change which she could not analyze. Was it merely resigned acceptance? It looked like that.

"Of course you are Miss Belden," he ended, quietly.

She was encouraged. At least he was not asking her to go.

"Yes. Do you remember me at all?"

For the first time he smiled. It was an ironical smile, and his voice when he spoke matched it.

"Of course," he said again.

She went on, resolutely. "Your grandfather's garden was one of the fairy places of my imagination," she told him, "because none of us children was ever invited to enter it. I used to look at the high brick wall that shut us out, and imagine the garden peopled with all sorts of things—fairies and gnomes and trolls. And sometimes I was horribly sorry for you because you had to live there, and sometimes I envied you."

She stopped. For a full moment he did not speak, but stared out over the water, his expression changing again. She felt that he understood. So much had happened since those old days! At last he turned to her with the air of one who has made up his mind, who has actually squared his shoulders to meet the issue of the moment.

"You were a schoolgirl then," he said at last, in the casual conversational tone of a courteous but not especially interested host. "A little girl with golden hair that always seemed blowing in the wind."

"Yes, I was fourteen, and rather untidy about ribbons. Of course you can't really remember much about me," she plumed hopefully.

"O, yes, I do." The words were reassuring, but his voice lacked warmth. "You and your father permeated Weyo like an atmosphere. When people there were not talking about your father's public gifts they were gossiping about your ponies and your birthday parties and that sort of thing. And I remember seeing you quite often riding or motoring, always with your hair blowing out like a golden mane."

She had not liked part of this speech, nor the manner in which it was delivered. But, after all, he was a sick soldier, and, in a way, an old friend. Also, having shut out all others, he had at least received her, and that was progress enough for one day. She would go away and think him over before venturing another interview. She rose.

"We have established a common interest," she declared lightly, "and now I am going. I promised Miss Greeley I wouldn't stay long. But—I'm coming again."

He made no effort to detain her, nor did he apologize, grimly or humorously or bitterly, as many of the poor boys did, for his inability to show her the courtesy of rising. He merely inclined his head.

"Good-bye," he said. And as an obvious afterthought, "Thank you."

She hesitated. Then, "May I come again?" she asked, and wondered at herself. She had not intended to ask that question. He waited perceptibly before replying, and she felt the blood mount to her cheeks and was furious with herself and the phenomenon. Why did she mind a rebuff from this man when, after all, the whole episode was purely a part of the postwar work she had taken up? It was not personal. The phrase was reassuring and she repeated it—"not personal at all."

"Why—why, yes," she heard him say at last. Then, slowly, as if he had realized his ungraciousness, he smiled up at her.

"Please come again," he said. It was her first glimpse of the enchanted prince. She laughed triumphantly.

"I didn't give you much chance to escape me," she handsomely admitted. "Will you tell me what was in that garden when I come again? I have always wanted so dreadfully to know."

"I will tell you," he said gravely. "It was really rather a jolly old place. The odd part of it is that when I was a kid I thought, too, that it was full of goblins. It had

a lot of dark, mysterious spots. I used to slay goblins in those corners—lots of 'em! And"—he looked at her—"I used to rescue you from all sorts of perils. You, of course, were the obvious princess," he ended, more lightly. That, surely, was "personal" enough. To her amazement, it made her heart contract. He was still the enchanted prince, and he had come to this—to suffering and poverty and neglect. For a speechless moment she stood looking down at him. Then she put out her hand into his.

"We shall have wonderful things to talk about," was all she could say as she left him.

But when she made her second visit, three days later, it was not immediately of haunted gardens that she talked. Since their first meeting she had been thinking of Farrand to an amazing degree. Her thoughts were like birds which, after brief flights, returned to him as to their home. She told herself that this was because he was from Weyo—avoiding any analysis of why that simple fact had suddenly taken on a peculiar significance and importance. She must plan for him. She must make that home town take an interest in its distinguished son. She must find out why he was in such financial straits. She must enlist dad's aid. All this being so, of course she must think of Farrand.

She ended by thinking of little else. He had a fashion of suddenly visualizing himself to her—of coming into her line of vision. Sometimes his dark face was hard and gloomy. Sometimes his boyish smile with its unexpected sweetness, flashed out at her. He came when he chose—not when she was quietly alone and ready to receive him, but when she was entertaining at dinner, when she was at the theater, when she was chatting around some tea table, when she was listening to music—most of all, when she was listening to music. He came, and with him came the companion picture of the years—the young prince of the enchanted garden, a mysterious, boyish figure shrouded in shadow. His words, too, returned to her again and again. "You," he had said, "were the obvious princess." Yet she had been so young, had caught a distant glimpse of him so rarely. Where and when had he seen her?

It was of her plans that she talked when again she found him in his favorite haunt in the hospital grounds. And she was so absorbed in these, so sure of their appeal to him, now that an entente had been established, that at first she failed to perceive his lack of response. The ice had been broken. Surely she could plunge in.

"Two of the Weyo boys were at college here," she told Farrand, at the end of her almost uninterrupted monologue. "Of course, you remember them—Bob Gordon and Ted Fiske. They are coming to New York as soon as college closes. I want to bring them to see you. You won't mind their being younger than you, for Ted is the most amusing boy I know, and Bob sings like an angel. You will enjoy them immensely, and they will be so glad to come and so proud to know you."

She had said all she meant to say, but she would have gone on, feminine fashion, filling his silence with sound rather than lose the ground she felt that she had gained. Now, however, she was checked by the look in his eyes as he abruptly leaned toward her.

"Miss Belden," he said crisply, "will you do me a favor?"

"Of course, I will—any number of them." She was conscious that she had made some mistake. The voice in which he spoke had not been that in which one sues for favors. And her plans had been so well thought out! It had seemed so wise casually to give him his proper place among his old neighbors, to assume casually that he would accept it.

"Then I beg that you will say nothing about me to our Weyo friends, or to your father, or, in fact, to any one. I am glad to know you—I didn't give you much choice about that," she interjected nervously.

He went on as if she had not spoken.

"But to meet a lot of well-meaning people just now, wherever they come from or whoever they are, would do me more harm than good. I know this. I made it plain to the doctors and to Miss Greeley. And I shall be much obliged if you do not even mention my name to the friends you have spoken of. Is that understood?"

She felt like a schoolgirl severely disciplined by a master. The flag of her pride went down before the new experience.

"Why, of course," she stammered. "That is, I won't speak to any one I haven't already mentioned you to. I talked to dad about you the day I was here—"

"To what others did you speak? To those boys?" He fairly fired this question at her.

"No, but only because I haven't seen them," she honestly admitted. "And I wrote to Helen Moore, who

lived in Weyo when we did. She is married now and her home is in Philadelphia, but I knew she would be interested. However," she added in a different tone, her poise suddenly restored by the realization of how friendly had been her intentions in all this meddling, "you may be sure that neither Helen nor dad will trouble you. And I realize now that the way I myself leaped over your barriers was—was unpardonable. I must apologize for that."

She was sick at heart. What a blundering idiot she had been to treat this man as she had treated the others—as if he were like the others. She had forced herself upon him, she had patronized him, and she was just enough to admit that she deserved exactly what she had got for doing it.

"Please don't apologize." His voice had changed. From the first she had observed what an agreeable and well-bred speaking voice it was. Now it held an unsuspected quality of beauty and charm. "You are the exception," he went on. "There's always an exception, you know, to the strictest rules. I shall be frightfully cut up if you drop me."

"Really?" She was incredulous, but anxious to be convinced. She looked at him with eyes whose clear brown depths showed conflicting doubt and hope.

"On my honor." He was smiling at her, not sentimentally, but with frank good humor—his most charming, boyish smile. It illumined the situation like a sun breaking through clouds. She drew a breath of relief.

"Then we're going to be friends?" she asked, and again she wondered at herself. What inner force was driving her on, making her actually humble to this man? She told herself that it was pity—of course it was pity!

"Indeed, we are," he assured her. "But we're going to be mighty exclusive. We're going to meet in the old garden that interested you so much and depend on its high walls to keep out everybody else. Shall you mind that—for a little while? And is it a bargain?"

He was still smiling, but his eyes were serious again. She answered under the urge of that new, driving inner force.

"Of course, it's a bargain, if you wish it so. What right have I to drag others into your life? I suppose we often forget that, in our association with convalescent soldiers," she added, with an almost fierce effort to pull herself together and change the nature of their talk. "We must often bore the poor fellows to death by bringing in people they don't know or don't care to know."

He followed her lead.

"It all depends, with most of the fellows, on whether those who come to see them are really interested in them. The men can always tell. And—well—they don't like to be patronized or made the objects of some butterfly's three-day charity impulse."

Despite herself, she again swung the conversation back to him. There was something she had to know.

"In your case," she said slowly, "I can understand. You have always shut everybody out—you and your grandfather. You must have been horribly lonely—but you seemed to prefer it, even when you were a boy. And evidently you have kept up your barriers all your life." Her voice stopped there, but he caught the unasked question. "Have you?"

"I was lonely, all right." He made the admission, then abruptly shied away from further revelations. The little girl with the blowing hair was knocking too urgently on the door of the past.

"What part of our garden will you play in?" he asked.

"O, are you going to give me some of it?" She had herself in hand now. This pity for him that made her heart swell and her throat ache should and would be diverted into practical channels.

"Of course. And I think the part you would like best is the sunken garden. That's off in the southwest corner, and you get into it by going down a little flight of red brick steps. When you are there you seem quite away from all the rest of the world. But you will invite me into it sometimes, won't you?"

"Let's go in now," she said.

At her request he described the garden in detail. It was an enchanting place—quite as mysterious and romantic as she had pictured it. The old man, it seemed, had lived his life there—pottering around it all day long, eating his meals in the open, reading and studying, even sleeping there, in a screened, flat hammock, on summer nights. Listening, Florence seemed to see his thin shadow even now, fitting in and out among the trees.

They were side by side on a stone bench in the sunken garden, discussing a favorite fairy tale, when her eyes fell on her wrist watch. She shook her head reproachfully.

"I've stayed an hour," she ex-

claimed. "Shocking! Miss Greeley won't let me come any more if I do this sort of thing. And my boys will think I have deserted them."

She made the last statement with clear deliberation. He was to understand that she had forever dissociated him from the mere rank and file of "the boys." They two were old friends. She rose from the camp chair and stopped at his side for a moment. Among the black hair on his temple was a narrow line of white. The impulse to touch it was almost overwhelming. She set her teeth.

"Is there anything I can send back to you?" she asked. "Or any message I can take into the hospital as I go by?"

"No, thank you," he said, almost absently. His expression, too, was almost absent. If pique had not been too trivial an emotion for that big moment, she would have indulged in it. He was so obviously resigned to her going! Her heart went down, down. Had she found him too late?

"I am just coming back slowly from the old garden and the kid I was," he said at last; and he added with a sigh that ended in a smile: "It's a long journey."

Recalling these words, and all his words, during the drive home, Florence realized how wholeheartedly he at least had played their little game. Throughout that hour he had kept her in the past. They had talked much about the garden—so much that she had a finished picture of it in her mind's eye. They had talked of childhood games and joys and make-beliefs; of favorite tales. But, she realized it now more fully than then, throughout that hour she had been his prisoner behind those walls. Not once had he permitted her to get outside of them even for a moment. Possibly he never would. It was almost as if he had immured himself beyond reach of the hands and voices of today. And yet those boyish moments had been so warm, so human, so wonderful.

She wondered if, at any time during the interview, he had been in pain. Certainly he had shown no sign of pain. He had not asked her to come again, but, of course, she would go again, and soon. How soon, she found herself thinking, could she go—with dignity? All rules, of course, went down where the boys were concerned. One overran them with entire impunity, mounted on the swift steed of one's good intentions. But it was different with Farrand! One could not overrun him, even when one desired to, and—one did desire to.

When she visited him the third time, after a dragging interval of four days, she carried out to his chair in the grounds a great mass of flowers and dropped them into his lap. It had seemed rather an absurd thing to do—but what could one offer a sick soldier who certainly did not eat? She saw at once that the flowers pleased him. He fumbled among them with his thin hands and raised a cluster of them to his face.

"These old-fashioned white roses might have grown in the garden. Don't you remember the two rows of white rose bushes I told you about, that lined the east walk?" he asked eagerly. "I don't suppose one could find roses like those nowadays, with the delicious old time perfume. In fact, I don't remember that any rose I have had since had any perfume at all."

The words, so casually spoken, made her turn away and, for a long moment, look out over the waters with unseeing eyes. Farrand had the look of a man whose flowers had all lacked perfume.

He pinned a rose in his tunic, kept a bunch of white roses in his hands, and looked regretfully at the mass left in his lap.

"It's a pity to let those die," he said tentatively. "They ought to have some water."

She turned back to him and shook her head.

"No, they have come to die for you. I brought a lot more. Those are in a big pitcher of water at the head of your bed. These are for a fairy ring—to put in a circle around your chair and make a wish over."

He smiled. It was the smile she had begun to watch for hungrily, the boyish, charming smile under which his dark face seemed to flash into light.

"Who is going to make the first wish?" he asked.

"You are—first. Then I shall make one, too."

"All right," he said. "But I'll have my work cut out for me, thinking up a wish."

His face had clouded again. She looked at him, heavy-hearted and solemn-eyed.

"It would be nice if we could both make the same wish," she ventured.

"What would that be?" He asked the question almost indifferently, watching her as she now rose and began to drop the flowers around him, but seemingly feeling no great interest in the pretty game.

"That you may soon be as well and strong as you ever were, and"—she hesitated, then resolutely

brought out the rest—"that your ambitions may be re-awakened!"

He turned and gave her a sudden, sharp look.

"Just why do you say that?" The tone distressed her, but she held her ground.

"Dr. Brown tells me you are really amazingly clever—that you could do anything you attempted if only you would work up enough ambition to make an effort. But he said another thing that disturbed me very much," she rushed on, before he could interrupt. "He added that you had been getting on beautifully up till a fortnight ago, but that since then you have slipped back until you are as indifferent and almost as impossible to influence as you were when you came. Every one has noticed the change, but he says he can't account for it. That made me feel—unhappy. For, don't you see, I came in just about that time, to help you—and perhaps you were right. Perhaps you needed to be left alone. Possibly I have done you more harm than good. That's why I am making the ring—and my wish. When I have done it, I am going to leave you in peace."

All the time she talked she had been making her floral ring, glad of the opportunity to do something that made it possible to keep her face turned away from him. But now the circle was finished. She came and sat beside him on the little campstool that was already as much a part of his pet resort as the wheel chair on which he sat.

"Do you think it would be peace?" he asked, quietly.

"I don't know," she said, trying to speak steadily. "I don't know anything about you. You have never told me anything, you know, except about the garden."

"So you have decided to drop me?" He asked the question slowly, his dark eyes unwaveringly on her face.

She leaned forward, picked up one of the flowers in his lap, and slowly pulled it to pieces.

"Please don't put it that way," she said at last, in a voice so low he had to lean closer to hear it.

"Surely I have shown you how much I wanted to help, and—I have let you see how much I have enjoyed the effort. But I did trust myself in—there is no denying that, I think," she hesitated, but went on bravely. "I had subconsciously convinced myself that you were still the enchanted prince I used to think you were when I was a school girl. I wanted to save you from the ogres of pain and loneliness. But, apparently, I have merely made things worse for you—or something has. I believe Dr. Brown holds me responsible, or he wouldn't have spoken as he did. So—you understand—" She threw away a handful of petals with a gesture of finality, and raised her eyes to meet his. "I really have no choice."

For a long time silence lay between them like a substance which neither could remove.

"I wish," he said at last, "I could find the words to tell you what I've got to say. But—I can't!" The final admission was almost a groan. The sound brought her upright in her chair, her brown eyes seeking his, which did not meet them.

"Surely," she then said, "you know there is nothing that you can't say to me."

His eyes met hers and held them.

"You mean that?"

"Of course I mean it."

She waited, watching his face.

He drew a deep, shaken breath. "The second time you came here," he began, obviously forcing out the words "you spoke to me about Ted Fiske. Do you happen to remember Dan, the chauffeur his father had so many years?"

She felt chilled. What had the Fiske chauffeur to do with what he and she were discussing?

"Dan?" she repeated, confused. "Why, why—yes. He drove me thousands of miles, I suppose. I was always going off on trips with Ted's mother and sisters. Why do you ask?"

"Do you remember any of his children?"

Florence moved restively on the camp stool. She almost believed this was mere purposeless digression till once more she squarely met his eyes. Their expression brought her answer, in a rather breathless voice.

"I know he had several boys."

"Don't you remember any one of them?"

She might have been on the witness stand, at the mercy of a prosecuting attorney. The sternness of the question—and something that lay beneath it, and stretched and yanked—stimulated her memory.

"There was one—there was one—"

"Yes." The word came at her like a bullet.

"There was one who was always acting—I mean always playing a part among the other boys."

"Yes," he said, curtly. "Tell me all that you remember about him."

"Sometimes he was a king," she went on, unsteadily; "sometimes a

(Continued on Page Seven)