

Rough-Hewn

By Dorothy Canfield

(Continued From Yesterday.)

Neale Crittenden, 15 years old, is a typical, red-blooded American boy living with his parents in Union Hill, a small village near New York City. He has completed three years in preparatory school. Vacation time arrives and, with his mother and two sisters, he goes to the French Riviera to visit relatives, and his father, who is living with her American parents in the home of Franca Hernandez, a French woman. Marise's father is foreign agent in American business from Old Sincrona. French business woman is employed by the Allen as a secretary. Marise is deeply interested in the study of French and music. During vacation Neale becomes an enthusiastic reader and spends much time in his father's library. He rides a bicycle for recreation. One day he rides to Nutley, a village some distance away, and there runs across his old boyhood friend, Don Roberts, who is playing tennis with two girls, Polly and Natalie Underhill. Although Neale has never played tennis, he accepts an invitation to join in the game. Vacation over, Neale returns to his preparatory school and finishes his last year. Early the following autumn he passes the entrance examinations to Columbia university. Pending the opening of school he works at his grandfather's small mill. Marise is preparing to enter a musical contest. Her mother, glancing over the local French paper, sees a name that attracts her attention.

Mme. Garnier's son back from his two-year stay in New York, where he had been studying American business methods. Flora Allen looked up quickly at her pretty blonde smiling reflection in the mirror, turning her head to get the three-quarter view which was her favorite. So he was back, was he? So he was back. His dear mama must have decided that he was now old enough to protect himself from the golden-haired American ladies. So he was coming back to perch on the front edge of his chair and look volumes out of those great soft eyes of his that were so shy and yet could be so expressive. He was coming back to be so nervous and moved that his shuffling fingers could not hold his tea-cup, and yet so persistent that he came week after week when she was at home to visitors; so timid that he hadn't a word to say for himself, but so bold that he often spent the entire evening, romantically sitting on the

trampling like a leaf. He looked at her imploringly. "Go! Go! Urbin!" I whispered, trying to steel my heart against his youth and ardor. "Go, I am like an old woman to these, a mere child." His answer was to put one trembling arm around my bare shoulders and gently lay his velvet cheek upon my breast. I felt myself melting in a delicious languor. After all, why not? Where would the dear boy find a more devoted and delicate initiation into life. . . . Think into whose hands he might fall if I repulsed him!

"He raised his face adoringly to mine, drew me down to his lips. . . . Bordeaux than he had thought and he would not be back till a week from Saturday. She tossed this card with the letters on the table, and began to turn over the canary-colored books scattered on her desk. No, the volume was not there. She must have put it back long ago in the bookcase. She ran her finger along the titles on a shelf near her, found it, pulled it out, and there it lay in her hand. She sank down on the chaise-longue. But before she began to read, she sat for a moment, her lips curved, remembering what was in it, and remembering how more than two years ago she had looked up from it to see Jean-Pierre Garnier for the first time. Yes. . . . She opened the book, fluttered the pages, read a little here and there; and then, as if slowly drawn by an undertow, sank into the book, with a long breath.

After a time Jeanne let herself in, stood for an instant in the door, depositing her mistress, and passed on to Marise's room. But the novel-reader heard nothing, drowned deep in the book, reading very slowly, her eyes dwelling long on every word. . . . I awakened, thinking I heard my name called, slipped out of bed and went to the window. The moon poured liquid silver upon the garden, and there in the midst of it stood Urbin, slim and young as a lady's page, his soft eyes glittering like jewels. With a bound he leaped up toward me, and found a foothold on the rough stones of the old wall, so that he stood beside me with only the low window-sill between us. He took my hand in his. He was

trampling like a leaf. He looked at me imploringly. "Go! Go! Urbin!" I whispered, trying to steel my heart against his youth and ardor. "Go, I am like an old woman to these, a mere child." His answer was to put one trembling arm around my bare shoulders and gently lay his velvet cheek upon my breast. I felt myself melting in a delicious languor. After all, why not? Where would the dear boy find a more devoted and delicate initiation into life. . . . Think into whose hands he might fall if I repulsed him!

At times it overflowed, and she all but not have been so conscious of the dryness of his mouth, of the roaring of his pulse in his ears. He stared hard at the curtain, trying to interest his eyes in the design of the tapestry. But they could see nothing but what they had seen for two years. Liquid dark eyes looking straight into his heart, his poor heart that he could not hide from them; dark eyes that seemed to be looking wistfully for someone they did not find, something that he knew he could give, something that he longed to give with such an abandon of desire that he felt now, as so many times before, the sweat start out on his forehead. "It must soon begin," said his mother anxiously, leaning towards him, evidently fearing that the delay might bore him.

He smiled at her reassuringly. Dear Maman! How she did spoil him! How he had missed her, missed his home, those two years in America. He thought of the boarding-house on Fifty-ninth street with a qualm. How good it was to get back to a real home. . . . But there were fine things in America, too, even if they did not know how to create real homes, even if the men did not know to love their mothers, or cherish their wives. He had learned a great deal there, a great deal even beyond the revelation of new business methods. What he had learned commercially was enormous! He faced his future here in France, sure of success. . . . But he had taken in other things too—he was thankful that he had been

to Marise's native country and had learned something about the attitude towards women there—not that he would ever, ever treat Marise as American wives were treated, with that rough-and-ready, cowboy lack of ceremony, nor would he ever neglect her, leave her out of his life, as American husbands did. He would know how to combine the American honesty and sincerity with what no American ever felt or showed, with what no American woman ever experienced—tenderness, cherishing tenderness. He would be tender for Marise as no other human being could be; he would find the most exquisite ways to surround her with tenderness, to protect that sweet mouth of hers from bitterness or sorrow, or knowledge of the world's evil.

He looked down steadily at the floor, a knot in his throat, his heart aching, and swallowed hard. Three wooden thumps sounded from the platform, and the curtain drew it-

self aside, showing the stage decorated with a stand, two potted palms, an armchair, and a sprawling black grand piano with two cane-bottomed chairs before it. From the wings fringed in a red-checked young girl with a large bust, and brawny rough arms, hanging down over her starched white dress. Behind her trotted a short withered elderly woman, a black silk waist crossed over her flat chest, her scanty gray hair smoothed down in thin bandeaux over her ears. They sat down before the piano, opened the music, carried by the older woman, waited till she had adjusted drooping eye-glasses on her high thin nose, and had peeringly found her place. Then the young girl began to pound out the Raindrop Prelude while the other turned over the pages. The audience preserved a respectful silence, bestowing a minute attention



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