

afraid of the boarders who came to eat at her mother's table. Two years ago when she had commenced her work as cashier, and her mother had let the boarders go, she thought that at last she could be quietly happy. But she had not been. One of the boys that boarded there had been sympathetic. He had been impudent and saucy and earnest at times, till she liked him. And she was young.

If this had been all she might have been happy. But there was another girl, a Grace somebody or other. Joe did not make any secret of that. He gave Bert bulletins at regular intervals to let her know how he was getting along in his love affair, weather bulletins he called them. Bert would laugh when his bulletins were hopeful, and sympathize when they were doleful. But secretly she knew she liked the doleful reports best. Joe never suspected that her laugh and sympathy were not spontaneous.

Then after she began work and the boarders were gone, Bert was as lonesome as she had been when she was little. She did not see Joe very often, on the street sometimes or at church. Once he had come to the store to have his watch cleaned and when she had demanded a weather report he had turned his face away suddenly and said huskily, "That's all over now."

Then he had turned back to her and smiled as he explained that the weather was dark just now, no sign of a change.

Bert had dropped the subject and had talked about the new minister and the little girl next door. And after that Joe had got into the habit of coming up to see her of evenings, for sympathy, he said; they had dropped back into their old pleasant way of talking and joking. Joe never gave any more bulletins and Bert never asked for them.

It was all very pleasant. She did not think that Joe would fall in love with her. She accepted the fact that he was in love with Grace, without stooping to any of the little things she might have done to make him forget his old love affair. She even

tried to make her own feeling for him take on the same friendly tone that colored his thought of her. But she could not change love back to friendship.

She sat on the steps that spring evening and waited. She knew Joe was coming. He had been up Monday night a little while and had told her he would come again tonight. But her mind was so occupied with the things around her, the spring sounds and the tramp of small boys riding up and down the sidewalk on their broomstick horses that she almost forgot Joe. She kept wondering how the little three-year-old next door was getting along—she had been sick yesterday.

When one of the boys came prancing down past her, and she saw it was the little girl's brother, she called him to her and asked him: was his little sister very sick? He answered with a touch of family pride. He should say she was. The doctor was there before supper and his father was out on the road, and his mother was crying. You bet she was sick.

He wagged his head and scampered away up the street again. Bert told herself that she would go in the morning and ask about the little girl.

Then Joe came and for an hour Bert forgot the sick child and talked and laughed. Joe seemed happier than usual. She wondered why. Twice he had started to say that he had something to tell her but both times he had grown confused and nervous and had not told her. Bert herself grew a little confused but she tried to be indifferent to what Joe had to say. It couldn't be that he liked her. It grew quite dark and they talked spasmodically. Finally there was a long pause and Joe broke off a piece of the rosebush that grew by the porch and stripped off the leaves. Bert sat very still and very happy.

After awhile Joe began hesitatingly, "You know all about my love affair—"

Bert interrupted nervously, "I couldn't help it very well, you posted bulletins."

"I know," Joe answered lightly. Then he went on more earnestly, "You know I've