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Left to its own devices, the boat glided along quietly and then struck a rock. The jar startled the girl, and with a little cry she pushed the man away from her. In another moment they were both in the water. Miss Kent rose first and reached out for the cap-sized boat, but in a second Arnold was beside her.

"Lay your hand on my shoulder, Dorothy. Don't try to swim; make no resistance. There is no danger if you do as I say."

The girl obeyed him silently, and with a few strong strokes he reached the shore of a small island in the middle of the stream. He struggled up through the tangled underbrush that grew down into the water, and pulled Dorothy after him. Then he shook himself like a great Newfoundland dog, and picking Dorothy's bedraggled little figure up in his arms, ran hurriedly through the woods.

Miss Kent was proudly conscious of the man's great strength, but she made no comment until she came within sight of a picturesque bungalow.

"Where are you taking me?"

"To my shooting-box, dear. I always meant you should see it, but not under quite such conditions as this." He laughed gayly. The relief of having her safely on land again was so great! He put her down on the steps and went forward to unlock the door. "I am going to build a fire and get you dry immediately, you poor little wet thing! I am a pirate who has captured a princess. Will it please your royal highness to enter?"

Arnold threw open the door and held out his hand to Dorothy. She rose and let him lead her into the cosy room that opened up before her. It was essentially a man's room. Gun's, pipes and fishing tackle were jumbled together in sportsmanlike confusion. Some racing prints hung upon the wall, and a row of steins upon the shelf testified to the owner's fondness for beer. Big Fayal chairs stood invitingly about, near which were little tables littered with books and tobacco. "You are to sit down, dear, because you are much too wet, but I'll stand and turn ourselves about like apples on a string. In the mean time, you are to drink this." Arnold produced a flask from the cupboard and poured out a little whisky. "That will take off the chill." Dorothy drank obediently, moving about the room while Arnold laid the fire with a skill and dexterity born of much experience. He was supremely happy and felt like a boy on a holiday. It was such a joy to know that Dorothy loved him, and then to have her here in his own domain gave him a happy sense of possession. So filled was he with the keenness of his own emotions that he did not notice how quiet and passive Dorothy had suddenly become. She was watching him intently. No part of his personality escaped her, and now in his role of host he took no greater strength and fascination. It seemed to Dorothy that in the past half hour she had lost control of the situation. She who always prided herself upon holding the lines in her fingers! She had been carried into the place where Arnold was master. Was

he dominating her, too? What impulse tempted her to give him that kiss? From that moment she capitulated.

Arnold rose from the hearth on which the wood was crackling merrily, and turned to Dorothy. "There, dear, you will soon be quite dry. Why, you look like a child, with all those curls about you!" He ran his fingers through her hair, which the dampness had curled in to tight little rings about her head.

"I am not a child." In her desire to assert herself Dorothy's voice sounded petulant and rebellious. Arnold pulled up a chair. "After all, you will have to sit down, dear; you are very tired."

"But I'm not tired! Why should I be? I've done nothing except be a fool?"

"Dorothy!"

"Oh, let me revile myself," she said bitterly; it will save you the trouble of doing it later!" She frowned slightly and bit her lip as if in pain. There was a strange tightening about her heart that had given her much trouble of late.

Arnold sat on the arm of her chair and leaned lovingly over her. "My poor little prisoner, are you tired of the pirate already?" "And if I were," she said, with an attempt at her old manner, "would you release me?" "I would never keep you against your will, dear; but all this is nonsense. Kiss me, to prove it!"

But the girl shivered and drew away from him. "Two months ago," she said slowly, as if dragging the words out, "I promised to marry Mr. Rand. 'Rand of Wall street,' the papers call him. He is not without honor in his country, though I never thought of him as a prophet." She twisted her fingers nervously together in an effort to gain control of herself. The man sat quite still, his eyes riveted on her face. "I never pretended to love him; the subject was not mentioned between us. He wants his establishment managed by a clever woman, and he thinks it worth twenty thousand a year. I thought so, too—then. We had at least one point in common."

"Dorothy," the man broke in, reaching out for her nervous little hands, "it is hideous to hear you talk so. Rand is nothing in your life, nothing! You have given yourself to me."

"Ah, you do not understand, and it tortures me to go on explaining. After I had sold myself into bondage, I got out of town and came up here to breathe a little. No one knew of the step I had taken; I could not endure the thought of being discussed. And then you dropped in one day after that, and you rested me. I found myself relying upon you more than I would have believed it possible to rely on any man, and I needed the strength of your friendship. I never meant you should love me."

"You could not help it, dear."

The girl slipped from the chair and sank down on the hearth with a sob that turned the man heart-sick. She looked such a bit of a thing crouching there with the fire-light dancing about her.

"I tried to make you believe I was shallow and frivolous. Always I have treated you flippantly, until today. But you wanted to go beneath the surface, and now the gold you were searching for is

only dross after all."

Arnold drew the girl up off the floor and put her into the chair; her very weakness appealed to him.

"You kissed me not long ago, little girl. Does that not count for anything?"

"I was mad, reckless, what you will! And I am paying the penalty!" She shivered, and rubbed her hand under her breast, where the pain was growing convulsive. Her clothing still clung about her in wet, heavy masses, and the chill increased despite the glow of the fire in front of her. She seemed to have no strength to resist anything; circumstances were proving too much for her—it was hardly fair play.

Arnold threw another log on the fire, and poured out some whisky, he believed, cured anything, and Dorothy was in desperate need. He must get the chill out of her before he dared start away, and already the twilight was falling about them.

"Dear," he said gently, "you are ill—it has all been too much for you. Drink this, and give way to it. If you sleep I will roll you in a blanket and put you in the bottom of the boat. I have one under the house, you know, and in an hour I can get you safely home."

But Dorothy shook her head and pushed the glass away. "It poisons me. Kneel down in front of me, dear, and put your hand on my heart—so. It makes the pain easier." She spoke with great difficulty, and a sharp spasm contracted her so that she put her hands over her face to hide the suffering, but Arnold drew them away and laid them about his neck. He put his arm around her, and, with his other hand pressed over her heart, held her away from him a little, in a grip that was like a vice. The firm support strengthened her for a moment, and she began to speak, but the man interrupted her.

"I can't let you talk, dear heart. Why should you try? After a bit you will be better, and then we shall have years of conversation. Think what an opportunity for you!" He tried to speak lightly, but his voice sounded rough.

The girl looked steadily at him. Arnold was appalled at the change in her—she had grown so strangely solemn.

"I love you," she said, her words coming in gasps—"you must let me say it. I did not believe it until today, but I have lost myself respect! I wonder you want to touch me!"

For answer he bent his head and kissed her. With a cry she tightened her arms about his neck, and then they relaxed, helplessly; her head fell forward.

Arnold jumped to his feet, pulling her up with him.

"Dorothy! Dearest! For God's sake, speak!" but the girl lay quite still in his arms and made no sound. She slept, but not as he had prophesied.—The Romancer.

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