

"Chuck that, Douglass," George broke in. "You've done enough without comparing those two girls before me."

"In love with Margaret, yourself?" Alan queried. "Go in and win." But George had suddenly taken his departure.

That night he rang the doorbell and asked for Miss Delano. She came out with a smile on her face but it was such a sad little smile that George longed to take her in his arms and comfort her. They talked on many subjects, while George used his utmost tact to guide their conversation into safe channels and at last he rose to go.

"Come again, won't you, George," she said. "I've had such a pleasant evening. I began to think that you had forgotten me. You stayed away so long." George promised and walked home on air.

The intimacy between them returned in time but George wanted to be quite certain that she had no thoughts for Alan. So one evening he said to her, "I had a letter from Alan Douglass to-day."

"I don't want to hear anything about him, please. I don't ever want to hear anything about him. I will ask you to never mention his name again in my presence. I hate him and his name." George was satisfied there could be no mistake in her tone or expression.

"Could you love me," he began. "I am not handsome but I would love you always. I have loved you for a long time. It was for that reason I did not come to see you after your — after I knew—," he stammered, and didn't know quite how to finish the sentence. He caught her hand and said hoarsely, "After I knew I loved you and couldn't have you. Could you love me, Margaret?"

"I don't know," she answered softly. "How do I know? How can I tell you are not the same as —? You see my faith is shaken. You all seem the same to me. Yet you have always been good to me — and not coming to see me when you say you loved me then — that ought to be proof." She spoke hesitatingly as if she did not know what to say or how to say it. "But is it? You have asked too soon, George. You should have waited. I can't tell, you know. Wait awhile."

"Dearest, I would wait forever if I knew you would come to me at last. But don't make me wait too long."

"I will try not to. But you will please not come again until I send for you." As he was saying good night, he begged her for a kiss. "No, but there's my hand."

For two weeks he lived on hope. He had not seen her nor heard from her. Then one day he broke the seal of a letter and read hastily, "Come to-night, Margaret."