



Wished to talk to me. The knowledge that I loved him with a full and perfect love that was to my own secret...

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?" he asked. "The words the moment I saw her face grow pale."

"I never," I answered. "I knew it," he said. "Ah, Kate, no woman's eyes are ever the same after a lover has looked into their depths..."

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ness about the estate, Lady Culmore had disappeared and Urie came to me.

"Miss Foster," he said, "do not waste this beautiful evening indoors. Our host and hostess have both withdrawn. Let us enjoy the last rays of the sun. Will you come?"

"Would I? My heart went out to him in answer. Whether could he have led that I would not have followed?"

"You will not need hat or cloak this lovely evening," he continued.

"A black shawl of Lady Culmore's lay on the couch. He wrapped it in Spanish fashion around my head and shoulders."

"I will show the flowers their queen," he said. "Let us leave the world, with all its cares and miseries behind us, Miss Foster, and go for an hour into fairy-land."

"Wherever we like to make it," he replied. "We shall find ours near the lake."

"I shall I ever forget the scent of the magnolia, which was in full bloom, and filled the air with perfume?"

"Sweet, it is fairy-land," I asked. "Wherever we like to make it," he replied. "We shall find ours near the lake."

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me kissed your lips—sweet as they are—? May I have the first kiss, Kate?"

"And there, in the glory of the evening sunset, my lover kissed me for the first time; and that kiss bound my heart to him forever."

"The sun had set, leaving the water gold and gray, before we remembered how time was flying. The birds had all gone to rest, and in nature seemed to repose when we rose to return to the house."

"Mr. Culmore," I began. "Never," Mr. Culmore again, "Kate," he said. "Mine is not a very melodious name, but you must try to love it. Say 'Urie' always when you speak to me."

"Urie," I said, shyly, "do not tell anyone just yet. Let me grow accustomed to it first."

"I will do as you wish, my darling," he said, "but for a short time only."

"And then, although we were so near the house that any one could see us from the windows, he kissed me again."

"CHAPTER X. "Kate," cried my lover impatiently, "there are limits to human endurance."

"Very small limits they are," I retorted. "You, Urie, are the most impatient of men."

"The dark handsome face smiled. "You do not mean it, Kate. If I thought you did..."

"I shall not kiss me again, Urie; I have made up my mind. Yesterday, I am sure, the gardener saw you."

"He may see me again to-day, if he likes," laughed Urie. "If a man may not kiss the girl whom he is going to marry, pray tell me whom he is to kiss?"

"That was a problem I was unable at the moment to solve. "Strange that we should both be thinking of the same thing! I was just about to tell you that human endurance has its limits, and that I shall not bear this kind of thing much longer."

"I know very well that 'this kind of thing' meant silence as to our engagement, but I was so unwilling to speak of it."

"It was a glorious morning at the end of June. My lover—heaven bless his handsome head and dark beautiful face—had come out to smoke a cigar under the chestnut tree. As a matter of course, I must go with him. Sir Rudolph had ridden over to accompany him. Urie had declined to accompany him. "We will have a little picnic of our own Kate," he said. "I will have a cigar or two, you shall have some fruit, and we will improve the shining hours."

"He arranged a most comfortable seat for me, and placed some fruit where I could easily reach it—rich ripe strawberries and purple grapes."

"Now, you have nothing to do but to sit still, Kate, look charming, and let me admire you. Do you know that you look like the morning itself? Your eyes are so bright, and you have the dearest colors. Your hair—what dark hair it is, Kate—has a ring of light and waves. Altogether, I am more in love than ever with my future wife!"

"He knelt by my side, kissed my hands, kissed my lips, called me by every endearing name. I wondered for a moment whether he would always love me in this fashion, or whether coldness or estrangement would come to us as it had come to Sir Rudolph and Lady Culmore."

shadowed house, by that shadowed heart, where husband and wife speak of our love there, a shadow will fall over it."

"His face grew grave, the laughter died from his eyes. "I understand," he said, in a low voice, "and I sympathize sincerely. The sun had set, leaving the water gold and gray, before we remembered how time was flying. The birds had all gone to rest, and in nature seemed to repose when we rose to return to the house."

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"No, she has never betrayed him even by a thought," I said. "And I saw the dark face grow pale. "Kate," asked my lover, solemnly, "have you ever tried to imagine what Lady Culmore could possibly have done?"

CHAPTER XI. From that hour Urie Culmore was a changed man. The bright, the shadow that lay over the others had spread now to him. He was silent, abstracted, and gloomy. At times he seemed to try hard to become his old genial self again, but the attempt always failed."

"What was the mystery that hung over Ullmore, that seemed to blight every one it touched? Something about a little child; yet Lady Culmore had had no children, no little brothers and sisters. What could it be? It seemed useless thinking."

"The change in my lover grieved me exceedingly. It was not that he loved me less—I could see that—but that his mind was so preoccupied. He had been anxious that our engagement should be made public; now he never spoke of it. He had been anxious that we should be married in the autumn; now he never mentioned marriage. Yet I felt quite sure in my heart that it was not for want of love, nor because he loved me less."

"One morning—it was in the beginning of July, and the tiger-lilies were all in bloom—he was standing in the porch, looking round him with certainly the saddest expression I had ever seen on his face. I went up to him and clasped both my hands round his arm."

"You look so unhappy, Urie," I said. "You have never been yourself since the day of our picnic. What can I do to win back the smiles?"

"Dear with me, my darling," he said, "until I have made up my mind what to do. Kate," he added suddenly, "you are one of the noblest of women."

"I told him how I had found her by the lakeside; her face buried in the grass, crying to Heaven for pardon—that it had been all for love of him. My lover was silent for some time after that."

"I seem a dishonorable thing," I said, "to try to discover a secret that is evidently kept from me; but, if anything could lead me to bring them together, or even to re-establish ordinary kindness and civility between them, it would be a good deed."

"Still, my lover, always so quick of speech was silent. "Kate," he said, after a time, "are you sure that Lady Culmore used to love you?"

"Not once, but a hundred times," I replied. And then I saw that his face had grown pale. "All for love," he repeated. "That would imply that she admitted having done something wrong, but that it was for his sake."

"I have always thought, Urie—that she did some wrong to him." "What could she have done?" he continued. "She loves him too entirely to have given a thought to any one else."

"No, she has never betrayed him even by a thought," I said. "And I saw the dark face grow pale. "Kate," asked my lover, solemnly, "have you ever tried to imagine what Lady Culmore could possibly have done?"

"I will not have you sigh, dearest," said my lover. "Sighs must not pass such lips as yours—lips made for smiles and kisses."

"Ah, sweet sunny hours, sweeter than words can tell, how quickly they passed, and how blissful they were!" I said. "I am saying, Kate," continued Urie, "that I have come to the end of my endurance. To love you as I do, yet not to be at liberty to give full expression to that love, is torture. Last night, when you were singing, you looked so captivated that I could not resist."

"I loved you at first sight, Kate," he said. "You were sitting here by the lake when I saw you. You do not know the charm of your own face. Yet you are in the world of men. I could not imagine who you were, for my brother had not told me of the new addition to his household; but I thought you the loveliest girl I had ever seen; and Kate, in that first moment, my heart went out to you, and it has never come back. I wanted to tell you this day ago, but I have hesitated; you seemed so unconscious of it all. To trouble you with the cares of love seemed like breaking into some beautiful sanctuary; yet I do not see why I should not be happy. If I can, Kate, I love you, and I want you to be my wife."

"That was the answer to my prayer. "I love you so dearly, so well, Kate, that I will devote my life to you. Will you love me in return?"

"I did not tell him all—how I had loved him from the first moment I had heard his voice. Some few details kept secret even from him. We plighted our troth by the side of the lake—a troth that has not been broken, and never will be."

"His wife! How little I dreamed that I should ever hear those words! I had loved him with a love that was all humility. "You delight my eyes just as you gladden my heart, Kate," said my lover. "It seems to me always as though you move to some sweet hidden music. You confess that you love me, Kate?"

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