

THE VISIONING

A NOVEL BY SUSAN GLASPELL

1911

CHAPTER I

Miss Katherine Wayneworth Jones was bunkered. Having been bunkered many times in the past, and knowing that she would be bunkered upon many occasions in the future, Miss Jones was not disposed to take a tragic view of the situation. The little white ball was all too secure down there in the sand; as she had played her first nine, and at least paid her respects to the game, she could now scale the hazard and curl herself into a comfortable position. It was a seductively lazy spring day, the very day for making arm-chairs of one's hazards. And let it be set down in the beginning that Miss Jones was more given to a comfortable place than to a tragic view.

Katherine Wayneworth Jones, affectionately known to many friends in many lands as Katie Jones, was an "army girl." And that not only for the obvious reasons: not because her people had been of the army, even unto the second and third generations, not because she had known the joys and jealousies of many posts, not even because bachelor officers were committed to the habit of proposing to her—those were but the trappings. She was an army girl because "Well, when you know her, you don't have to be told, and if you don't know her you can't be," a floundering friend had once concluded her exposition of why Katie was so "army." For her to marry outside the army would be regarded as little short of treason.

To-day she was giving a little undisturbing consideration to that thing of her marrying. For it was her twenty-fifth birthday, and twenty-fifth birthdays are prone to knock at the door of matrimonial possibilities. Just then the knock seemed answered by Captain Prescott. Unblushingly Miss Jones considered that doubtless before the summer was over she would be engaged to him. And quite likely she would follow up the engagement with a wedding. It seemed time for her to be following up some of her engagements.

She did not believe that she would at all mind marrying Harry Prescott. All his people liked all hers, which would facilitate things at the wedding; she would not be rudely plunged into a new set of friends, which would be trying at her time of life. Everything about him was quite all right: he played a good game of golf, not a maddening one of bridge, danced and rode in a sort of joy of living fashion. And she liked the way he showed his teeth when he laughed. She always thought when he laughed most

unreservedly that he was going to show more of them; but he never did; it interested her.

And it interested her the way people said: "Prescott? Oh yes—he was in Cuba, wasn't he?" and then smiled a little, perhaps shrugged a trifle, and added:

"Great fellow—Prescott. Never made a mess of things, anyhow."

To have vague association with the mysterious things of life, and yet not to have "made a mess of things"—what more could one ask?

Of course, pounding irritably with her club, the only reason for not marrying him was that there were too many reasons for doing so. She could not think of a single person who would furnish the stimulus of an objection. Stupid to have every one so pleased! But there must always be something wrong, so let that be appeased in having everything just right. And then there was Cuba for one's adventurous sense.

She looked about her with satisfaction. It frequently happened that the place where one was inspired keen sense of the attractions of some other place. But this time there was no place she would rather be than just where she found herself. For she was a little tired, after a long round of visits at gay places, and this quiet, beautiful island out in the Mississippi—large, apart, serene—seemed a great lap into which to sink. She liked the quarters: big old-fashioned houses in front of which the long stretch of green sloped down to the river. There was something peculiarly restful in the spaciousness and stability, a place which the disagreeable or distressing things of life could not invade. Most of the women were away, which was the real godsend, for the dreariness and desolation of pleasure would be eliminated. A quiet post was charming until it tried to be gay—so mused Miss Katherine Wayneworth Jones.

And of various other things, mused she. Her brother, Captain Wayneworth Jones, was divorced from his wife and wedded to something he was hoping would in turn be wedded to a rifle; all the scientific cells of the family having been used for Wayne's brain, it was hard for Katie to get the nature of the attachment, but she trusted the ordnance department would in time solemnly legalize the affair—Wayne giving in marriage—destruction profiting happily by the union. Meanwhile Wayne was so consecrated to the work of making warfare more deadly that he scarcely knew his sister had arrived. But on the morrow, or at least the day after, would come young Wayneworth, called Worth, save when his Aunt Kate called him Wayne the Worthy. Wayne the Worthy was also engaged in

perfecting a death-dealing instrument, the same being the interrogation point. Doubtless he would open fire on Aunt Kate with—Why didn't his mother and father live in the same place any more, and—Why did he have to live half the time with mama if he'd rather stay all the time with father? Poor Worth, he had only spent six years in a world of law and order, and had yet to learn about courts and incompatibilities and annoying things like that. It did not seem fair that the hardest part of the whole thing should fall to poor little Wayne the Worthy. He couldn't help it, certainly.

But how Worthie would love those collie pups! They would evolve all sorts of games to play with them. Picturing herself romping with the boy and dogs, prowling about on the river in Wayne's new launch, lounging under those great oak trees reading good lazying books, doing everything because she wanted to and nothing because she had to, flirting just enough with Captain Prescott to keep a sense of the reality of life, she lay there gloating over the happy prospect.

And then in that most irresponsible and unsuspecting of moments something whizzed into her consciousness like a bullet—something shot by her vision pierced the lazy, hazy, carelessly woven web of imagery—bullet-swift, bullet-true, bullet-terrible—striking the center clean and strong. The suddenness and completeness with which she sat up almost sent her from her place. For from the very instant that her eye rested upon the figure of the girl in pink organdie dress and big hat she knew something was wrong.

And when, within a few feet of the river the girl stopped running, shrank back, covered her face with her hands, then staggered on, she knew that that girl was going to the river to kill herself.

There was one frozen instant of powerlessness. Then—what to do? Call to her? She would only hurry on. Run after her? She could not get there. It was intuition—instinct—took the short cut a benumbed reason could not make; rolling headlong down the bunker, twisting her neck and mercilessly bumping her elbow, Katherine Wayneworth Jones emitted a shriek to raise the very dead themselves. And then three times a quick, wild "Help—Help—Help!" and a less audible prayer that no one else was near.

It reached; the girl stopped, turned, saw the rumpled, lifeless-looking heap of blue linen, turned back toward the river, then once more to the motionless Miss Jones, lying face downward in the sand. And then the girl who thought life not worth living, delaying her own preference, with rather

reluctant feet—feet clad in pink satin slippers—turned back to the girl who wanted to live badly enough to call for help.

Through one-half of one eye Katie could see her; she was thinking that there was something fine about a girl who wanted to kill herself putting it off long enough to turn back and help some one who wanted to live.

Miss Jones raised her head just a trifle, showed her face long enough to roll her eyes in a grewsome way she had learned at school, and with a "Help me!" buried her face in the sand and lay there quivering.

The girl knelt down. "You sick?" she asked, and Katie had the fancy of her voice sounding as though she had not expected to use it any more.

"So ill!" panted Kate, rolling over on her back and holding her heart.
"Here! My heart!"

The girl looked around uncertainly. It must be a jar, Katie conceded, being called back to life, expected to fight for the very thing one was running away from. Her rescuer was evidently considering going to the river for water—saving water (Katie missed none of those fine points)—but instead she pulled the patient to a sitting position, supporting her.

"You can breathe better this way, can't you?" she asked solicitously.
"Have you had them before? Will it go away? Shall I call some one?"

Katie rolled her head about as she had seen people do who were dying on the stage. "Often—before. Go away—soon. But don't leave me!" she implored, clutching at the girl wildly.

"I will not leave you," the stranger assured her. "I have plenty of time."

Miss Jones made what the doctors would call a splendid recovery. Her breath began coming more naturally; her spine seemed to regain control of her head; her eyes rolled less wildly. "It's going," she panted; "but you'll have to help me to the house."

"Why of course," replied the girl who was being delayed. "Do you think I'd leave a sick girl sitting out here all alone?"

Kate felt like apologizing. It seemed rather small—that interrupting a death to save a life.

"Where do you live?" her companion was asking. She pointed to the quarters. "In one of those?"

"The second one," Katie told her. "And thank Heaven," she told herself, "the first one is closed!"

"Lean on me," directed the girl in pink, with a touch of the gentle authority of strong to weak. "Don't be afraid to lean on me."

Kate felt the quick warm tears against her eyelids. "You're very kind," she said, and the quiver in her voice was real.

They walked slowly on, silently. Katie was trembling now, and in earnest. "My name is Katherine Jones," she said at last, looking timidly at the girl who was helping her.

It wrought a change. The girl's mouth closed in a hard line. A hard, defending glitter seemed to seal her eyes. She did not respond.

"May I ask to whom I am indebted for this kindness?" It was asked with gentleness.

But for the moment it brought no response. "My name is Verna Woods," came at last with an unsteady defiance.

They had reached the steps of the big, hospitable porch. With deep relief Katie saw that there was no one about. Nora had gone out with one of her adorers from the barracks.

They turned, and were looking back to the river. It was May at May's loveliest: the grass and trees so tender a green, the river so gently buoyant, and a softly sympathetic sky over all. A soldier had appeared and was picking twigs from the putting green in front of them; another soldier was coming down the road with some eggs which he was evidently taking to Captain Prescott's quarters. He was whistling. Everything seemed to be going very smoothly. And a launch was coming down the river; a girl's laugh came musically across the water and the green; it inspired the joyful throat of a nearby robin. And into this had been shot—!

Katie turned to the intruder. "It's lovely, isn't it?" she asked in a queer, hushed way.

The girl looked at her, and at the fierce rush of things Kate took a frightened step backward. But quickly the other had turned away her face. Only her clenched hand and slightly moving shoulder told anything.

There was another call to make, and instinct alone could not reach this time. For the moment thought of it left her mute.

"You have been so kind to me," she began, her timidity serving well as helplessness, "so very kind. I wonder if I may ask one thing more? Am—am I keeping you from anything you should be doing?"

There was no response at first, just a little convulsive clenching of the hand, an accentuated movement of the shoulder. Then, "I have time enough," was the low, curt answer, face still averted.

"I am alone here, as you see. I am just a little afraid of a—a return attack. I wonder—would you be willing to come up to my room with me—help make a cup of tea for us and—stay with me a little while?"

Again for the minute, no reply. Then the girl turned hotly upon her, suspicion, resentment—was it hatred, too?—in her eyes. But what she saw was as a child's face—wide eyes, beseeching mouth. Women who wondered "what in the world men saw in Katie Jones" might have wondered less had they seen her then.

The girl did not seem to know what to say. Suddenly she was trembling from head to foot.

Kate laid a hand upon the quivering arm. "I've frightened you," she said regretfully and tenderly. "You need the tea, too. You'll come?"

The girl's eyes roved all around like the furtive eyes of a frightened animal. But they came back to Katie's steadying gaze. "Why yes—I'll come—if you want me to," she said in voice she was clearly making supreme effort to steady.

"I do indeed," said Kate simply and led the way into the house.

CHAPTER II

And now that they were face to face across a tea-table Miss Jones was bunkered again. How get out of the sand? She did not know. She did not even know what club to use.

For never had she drunk tea under similar circumstances. Life had brought her varied experiences, but sitting across the teacups from one whom she had interrupted on the brink of suicide did not chance to be among them. She was wholly without precedent, and it was trying for an army girl to be stripped of precedent.

They were sitting at a window which overlooked the river; the river which was flowing on so serenely, which was so blue and lazy and lovely that May afternoon. She looked to the place where—then back to the girl across from her—the girl who but for her—

She shivered.

"Is it coming back?" the girl asked.

"N—o; I think not; but I hope you will not go." Then, desperately resolved to break through, she asked boldly: "Am I keeping you from anything important?"

A strange gleam, compounded of things she did not understand, shot out at her. To be followed with: "Important? Oh I don't know. That depends on how you look at it. The only thing I have left to do is to kill myself. I guess it won't take long."

Kate met it with a sharp, involuntary cry. For the sullen steadiness, dispassionateness, detachment with which it was said made it more real than it had been at the water's edge.

"But—but you see it's such a lovely day. You know—you know it's such a beautiful place," was what the resourceful Miss Jones found herself stammering.

"Yes," agreed her companion, "pleasant weather, isn't it?" She looked at Katie contemptuously. "You think *weather* makes any difference? That's like a girl like you!"

Katie laughed. Laughing seemed the only sand club she had just then. "I *am* a fool," she agreed. "I've often thought so myself. But like most other

fools I mean well, and this just didn't seem to me the sort of day when it would occur to one to kill one's self. Now if it were terribly hot, the kind of hot that takes your brains away, or so cold you were freezing, or even if it were raining, not a decent rain, but that insulting drizzle that makes you hate everything—why then, yes, I might understand. But to kill one's self in the sunshine!"

As she was finishing she had a strange sensation. She saw that the girl was looking at her compassionately. Katherine Wayneworth Jones was not accustomed to being viewed with compassion.

"It would be foolish to try to make you understand," said the girl simply, finality in her weariness. "It would be foolish to try to make a girl like you understand that nothing can be so bad as sunshine."

Katie leaned across the table. This interested her. "Why I suppose that might be true. I suppose—"

But the girl was not listening. She was leaning back in the great wicker chair. She seemed actually to be relaxing, resting. That seemed strange to Kate. How could she be resting in an hour which had just been tacked on to her life? And then it came to her that perhaps it was a long time since the girl had sat in a chair like that. If she had had a chance, when things were going badly, to sit in such a chair and rest, might the river have seemed a less desirable place? She had always supposed it was *big* things—queer, abstract, unknowable things like forces and traits that made life and death. Did *chairs* count?

As the girl's eyes closed, surrenderingly, Katie was glad that no matter what she might decide to do about things she had had that hour in the big, tenderly cushioned wicker chair. It might be a kinder memory to take with her from life than anything she had known for a long time.

Katherine had grown very still, still both outwardly and inwardly. People spoke of her enviously as having experienced so much; living in all parts of the world, knowing people of all nations and kinds. But it seemed all of that had been mere splashing around on the beach. She was out in the big waves now.

She looked at the girl; looked with the eyes of one who would understand.

And what she saw was that some one, something, had, as it were, struck a blow at the center, and the girl, the something that really *was* her, had gone to pieces. Everything was scattered. Even her features scarcely seemed to belong to each other, so how must it not be with those other

things, inner things, oh, things one did not know what to call? Was it because she could not get things together it seemed to her she must make them all stop? Was that it? Did people lose the power to hold themselves in the one that made you *you*?

What could do that? Something that reached the center; not many things could; something, perhaps, that kept battering at it for a long time, and just shook it at first, and then—

It was too dreadful to think of it that way. She tried to make herself stop.

The girl's face was turned to the out-of-doors; to a great tree in front of the window, a tree in which some robins had built their nests. Such a tired face! So many tear marks, and so much less reachable than tear stains.

A beautiful face, too. If all were back which the blow at the center had struck away, if she had all of her—if lighted—it would be a rarely beautiful face.

The girl was like a flower; a flower, it seemed to Kate, which had not been planted in the right place. The gardener had been unwise in his selection of a place for this flower; perhaps he had not used the right kind of soil, perhaps he had put it in the full heat of the sun when it was a flower to have more shade; perhaps too much wind or too much rain—Katie wondered just what the mistake had been. For the flower would have been so lovely had the gardener not made those mistakes.

Even now, it was lovely: lovely with a saddening loveliness, for one saw at a glance how easily a breeze too rough could beat it down. And one knew there had been those breezes. Every petal drooped.

A strange desire entered the heart of Katherine: a desire to see whether those petals could take their curves again, whether a color which blunders had faded could come back to its own. She was like the new gardener eager to see whether he can redeem the mistakes of the old. And the new gardener's zeal is not all for the flower; some of it is to show what he can do, and much of it the true gardener's passion for experiment. Katie Jones would have made a good gardener.

And yet it was something less cold than the experimenting instinct tightened her throat as she looked at the frail figure of the girl for whom life had been too much.

"I must go now," she was saying, with what seemed mighty effort to summon all of herself over which she could get command. "You are all right now. I must go."

But she sank back in the chair, as if that one thing left at the center pulled her back, crying out that if it could but have a little more time there—

The girl in blue linen was sitting at the feet of the girl in pink organdie. She had hold of her hand, so slim a hand. Everything about the girl was slim, built for favoring breezes.

"I have one thing more to ask." It was Kate's voice was not well controlled this time.

"You may call it a whim, a notion, foolish notion; call it what you like, but I want you to stay here to-night."

The girl was looking down at her, down into the upturned face, all light and strength and purpose as one standing apart and disinterested might view a spectacle. Slowly, comprehendingly, dispassionately she shook her head. "It would be—no use."

"Perhaps," Katie acquiesced. "Some of the very nicest things in life are—no use. But I have something planned. May I tell you what it is I want to do?"

Still she did not take her eyes from Katie's kindling face, looking at it as at something a long way off and foreign.

"I am not a philanthropist, have no fears of that. But I have an idea, a theory, that what seem small things are perhaps the only things in life to help the big things. For instance, a hot bath. I can't think of any sorrow in the world that a hot bath wouldn't help, just a little bit."

"Now we have such a beautiful bathroom. I loathe hot baths in tiny bathrooms, where the air gets all steamy and you can't get your breath. Perhaps one thing the matter with you is that all the bathrooms you've been in lately were too small. Of course, you didn't *know* that was one thing the matter; like once at a dance I thought I was very sad about a man's dancing so much with another girl, a new girl—don't you loathe 'new girls'?—but when I got home I found that one of my dress stays was digging into me and when I got my dress off I didn't feel half so broken up about the man."

An odd thing happened; one thing struck away came back. There was a light in the eyes telling that something human and understanding, something to link her to other things human, would like to come back. She looked and listened as to something nearer.

Seeing it, Katie chattered on, against time, about nothing; foolish talk, heartless talk, it might even seem, to be pouring out to a girl who felt there was no place for her in life. But it was nonsense carried by tenderness. Nonsense which made for kinship. It reached. Several times the girl who thought she must kill herself was not far from a smile and at last there was a tear on the long lashes.

"So I'm going to undress you," Katie unfolded her plan, encouraged by the tear, "and then let's just see what hot water can do about it. And maybe a little rub. I used to rub my mother's spine. She said life always seemed worth living after I had done that." She patted the hand she held ever so lightly as she said: "How happy I would be if I could make you feel that way about it, too. Then I've a dear room to take you into, all soft grays and greens, and oh, such a good bed! Why you know you're tired! That's what's the matter with you, and you're just too tired to know what's the matter."

The girl nodded, tears upon her cheeks, looking like a child that has had a cruel time and needs to be comforted.

Katie's voice was lower, different, as she went on: "Then after I've brushed your hair and done all those 'comfy' things I'm going to put you in a certain, a very special gown I have. It was made by the nuns in a convent in Southern France. As they worked upon it they sat in a garden on a hillside. They thought serene thoughts, those nuns. You see I know them, lived with them. I don't know, one has odd fancies sometimes, and it always seemed to me that something of the peace of things there was absorbed in that wonderful bit of linen. It seems far away from things that hurt and harm. Almost as if it might draw back things that had gone. I was going to keep it—" Katie's eyes deepened, there was a little catch in her voice. "Well, I was just keeping it. But because you are so tired—oh just because you need it so.—I want you to let me give it to you."

And with a tender strength holding the sobbing girl Katie unfastened her collar and began taking off her dress.

CHAPTER III

"Kate," demanded Captain Jones, "what's that noise?"

"How should I know?" airily queried Kate.

"I heard a noise in the room above. This chimney carries every sound."

"Nonsense," jeered his sister. "Wayne, you've lived alone so long that you're getting spooky."

He turned to the other man. "Prescott, didn't you hear something?"

"Believe I did. It sounded like a cough."

"Well, what of it?" railed Kate. "Isn't poor Nora permitted to cough, if she is disposed to cough? She's in there doing the room for me. I'm going to try sleeping in there—isn't insomnia a fearful thing? But the fussiness of men!"

They were in the library over their coffee. Kate was peculiarly charming that night in one of the thin white gowns she wore so much, and which it seemed so fitting she should wear. She had been her gayest. Prescott was thinking he had never known any one who seemed to sparkle and bubble that way; and so easily and naturally, as though it came from an inner fount of perpetual action, and could more easily rise than be held down. And he was wondering why a girl who had so many of the attributes of a boy should be so much more fascinating than any mere girl. "There are two kinds of girl," he had heard an older officer once say. "There are girls, and then there is Katie Jones." He had condemned that as distinctly maudlin at the time, but recalled it to-night with less condemnation.

"Katie," exclaimed Wayne, after his sister had read aloud some one's engagement from the Army and Navy Register, and wondered vehemently how those two people ever expected to live together, "Nora's out on the side porch with Watts!"

"Do you disapprove of this affair between Nora and Watts?" Katie wanted to know, critically inspecting the design on her coffee spoon.

"I distinctly disapprove of having some one coughing in the room upstairs and not being satisfied who the some one is!"

She leaned forward, pointing her spoon at him earnestly. "Wayne, they say there are some excellent nerve specialists in Chicago. I'd advise you to take the night train. Take the rifle along, Wayne, and find out just what it's done to you."

"That's all very well! But if you'd been reading the papers lately you'd know that ideas of house-breaking are not necessarily neurasthenic."

"Dear Wayne, lover of maps and charts, let me take this pencil and make a little sketch for you. *A* is the chamber above. In that chamber is Nora. Nora coughs in parting. Then she parts. *B* is the back hall through which Nora walks. *C* is the back stairs which she treads. Watts being waiting, she treads—or is it kinder to say trips?—with good blithe speed. *D* is the side door and *E* the side porch. Now I ask you, oh master of engineering and weird mechanical and mathematical mysteries, what is to prevent Nora from getting from *A* to *E* in the interval of time between the coughing and the viewing?"

Prescott laughed, but Wayne only grunted and ominously eyed the chimney place.

"There!" he cried, triumphantly on his feet before his sister, as again came the faint but unmistakable little cough. "A little harder to make a map this time, isn't it? Talk about nerve specialists—!"

He started for the door, but Katie slipped in in front of him, and closed it.

"Don't go, Wayne," she said quietly; queerly, Prescott thought.

"Don't *go*? Kate, what's the matter with you? Now don't be foolish, Katie," he admonished with the maddening patronage of the older brother.

"Open the door."

"I wish you wouldn't go," she sighed plaintively, arms outstretched against the door. "I do hope you won't insist on going. You'll frighten Ann."

"Frighten *who*?"

"Ann," she repeated demurely.

"Ann—*who*? Ann—*what*?"

"Ann *who!* Ann *what!* That's a nice way to speak of my friends! It's all very well to blow up the world, Wayne, but I think one should retain some of the civilities of life!"

"But I don't understand," murmured poor Wayne.

"No, of course not. Do you understand anything except things that nobody else wants to understand? Ann is not smokeless powder, so I presume you are not interested in her, but it seems to me you might tax your brain sufficiently to bear in mind that I told you she was coming!"

"I'm sorry," said Wayne humbly. "I don't seem able to recall a word about her."

"I scarcely expected you would," was the withering response.

"Tell me about her," Captain Prescott asked sympathetically. "I like girls better than guns. Has Ann another name? Do I know her?"

Katie was bending down inspecting a tear she had discovered at the bottom of her dress. "Oh yes, why yes, certainly, Ann has another name. Her name is Forrest. No, I think you do not know her. I don't know that Ann knows many army people. I knew her in Europe." Then, as they seemed waiting for more: "I am very fond of Ann."

She had resumed her seat and the critical examination of her coffee spoon. The men were silent, respecting the moment of tender contemplation of her fondness for Ann. "Ann is a dear girl," she volunteered at last.

"Having had it impressed upon me that I am such a duffer," Captain Jones began, a little haughtily, "I naturally hesitate to make many inquiries, but I cannot quite get it through my stupid and impossible head just why 'Ann' is hidden away in this mysterious manner."

"There's nothing mysterious about it," said Kate sharply. "Ann was tired."

"And why, if I may venture still another blundering question, was poor Nora held responsible for a cough she never coughed?"

Once more Miss Jones surveyed the torn ruffle at the bottom of her skirt. She seemed to be giving it serious consideration.

"I am glad that I do not live in the Mississippi Valley," was the remark she finally raised herself to make.

"One of Kate's greatest charms," Wayne informed Prescott, "is the emphasis and assurance with which she unfailingly produces the irrelevant. Now when you ask her if she likes Benedictine, don't be at all surprised to have her dreamily murmur: 'But why should oranges always be yellow?'"

"I am glad that I do not live in the Mississippi Valley," Kate went on, superiorly ignoring the observation, "because the joy of living seems to be at a very low ebb out here."

"Honestly now, do you get that?" he demanded of his friend.

"Ann and I had planned a beautiful surprise for you, Wayne."

"Thanks," said Wayne drily.

"To-night Ann was tired. She did not wish to come down to dinner. Of course, I might have told you: 'Ann is here.' To the orderly, West-Pointed mind, the well oiled, gun-constructing mind, I presume that would present itself as the thing to do. But Ann and I have a sense of the joy of living, a delight in the festive, in the—the bubbling wine of youth, you know. So we said, 'How beautiful to surprise dear Wayne.' In the morning Ann, refreshed by the long night's sleep, was to go out and gather roses. Wayne—"

"The roses don't bloom until next month," brutally interrupted Wayne.

"Of course, you would think of that! As we had planned it, Wayne, looking from his window was to see the beautiful girl—she is a beautiful girl—gathering dew-laden roses in the garden. Perhaps Captain Prescott, chancing at that very moment to look from his window, would see her too. It was to be a beautiful, a never-to-be-forgotten moment for you both."

"We humbly apologize," laughed Prescott.

"Hum!" grunted dear Wayne.

CHAPTER IV

She stepped out on the porch for a moment as Captain Prescott was saying good-night. The moonlight was falling weirdly through the big trees, stretching itself over the grass in shapes that seemed to spell unearthly things. And there were mystical lights on the water down there, flitting about with the movement of the stream as ghosts might flit. Because it looked so other-world-like she wondered if it knew what it had just missed. She had never thought anything about water save as something to look beautiful and have a good time on. It seemed now that perhaps it knew a great deal about things of which she knew nothing at all.

"Oh, I say, jolly night, isn't it?" he exclaimed as they stood at the head of the steps.

"Yes," said Kate grimly, "pleasant weather, isn't it?" and laughed oddly.

"It's great about your friend coming; Miss—?"

"Forrest." She spoke it decisively.

"She arrived this afternoon?"

"Yes, unexpectedly. I was never more surprised in my life than when I looked up and saw Ann standing there." Katie was not too impressed to resist toying a little with the situation.

"Oh, is that so? I thought—" But he was too well-bred to press it.

"Of course," she hastened to patch together her thread, "of course, as I told Wayne, I knew that Ann was coming. But I didn't really expect her until day after to-morrow. You see, there have been complications."

"Oh, I see. Well, at any rate it's great that she's here. She will be with you for the summer?"

"Ann's plans are a little uncertain," Kate informed him.

"I hope she'll not find it dull. Does she care for golf?"

"U—m, I—Ann has never played much, I believe. You see she has lived so much in Europe—on the Continent—places where they don't play golf! And then Ann is not very strong."

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