

ALL FOR LOVE

OR,
Her Heart's Sacrifice

BY
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ALL FOR LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

A FAMILIAR SONG.

From a cottage window, embowered in azure morning glories,
a girl's sweet voice sang blithely:

“My heart with joy would thrill if you loved me,
'Twould give this life of mine its fill of ecstasy;
Each golden moment spent with you on wings of Joy
would flee;
The sky would be a ceaseless blue if you loved me!”

Berry Vining, the little village beauty, singing so blithely at her window of a love that as yet she had never known, was at the crisis of her fate, for at that very moment down the village street swept a gay cavalcade of riders, and as the sweet voice floated out upon the air, their glances turned upward in irrepressible admiration.

“What odds to me how dark the night if you loved me,
For in your eyes a beacon light of love I'd see;
My future, now a dark abyss, forever changed would be,
To sunny paths of rosy bliss if you loved me!”

She was so lovely, this little Berry Vining, with her wealth of curly chestnut locks, framing a face so fresh and fair as the morning glories round the window—so lovely, with her big, wondering, brown eyes under long, shady lashes, her sea-shell tints, her perfect little nose, and rose-red lips, and dainty chin,

where dimples swarmed, entrancingly, whenever she smiled, that no one could look at her without admiration.

When all those eager eyes were leveled at her window the girl drew very hastily backward, but not until she had seen one hat lifted from a handsome head in her honor, as the man's eyes paid eager tribute to her charms.

It all passed in a moment, but not too quickly for that flashing glance to strike fire in a romantic maiden's heart.

The laughing, chattering riders passed on, the handsome men, the pretty women, and Berry hid her blushing face among the green, heart-shaped leaves of the morning glories, and whispered to the flowers:

"Oh, what a handsome young man! What beautiful eyes, what a loving smile! How grandly he rode on that fine bay horse—like a young prince, I fancy, although I never saw one—and how courteous to bow to me, though he had never seen me before! Even proud Miss Montague, who rode by his side, did not appear to notice me, little Berry Vining, that she has known all her life! Oh, how I envy her the joy of being with him, of hearing him speak, and looking into his beaming eyes! I would give the whole world for such a splendid lover!"

"Berry! Berry!" called an impatient voice from the foot of the stairs, but unheeding the summons, her thoughts ran on in melodious whispers to the soft, green leaves:

"Oh, I love him already, I cannot help it, for when his eyes met mine a great rapturous shudder thrilled me through my whole being and told me I had met my fate! Oh, shall we ever meet

again, I wonder! We must, we must, or my heart will break with love and longing! It was prophetic, that song I was singing as his eyes met mine!" and she began to hum again tenderly:

"What odds to me how dark the night if you loved me,
For in your eyes a beacon light of love I'd see!"

"Berry!—Ber-en-i-ce Vi-ning!" called the impatient voice downstairs again, and starting from her rosy dreams of love, the girl flew to reply:

"Well, mamma?"

The pale, faded little mother answered complainingly:

"Always too late! I called you to look at the riding party from Montague's—their summer guests—five grand couples of them, on horseback! But you missed everything coming down so slow!"

"Oh, no, dear mamma, for I was watching them from my window, and saw all. How fine they looked, indeed! I wish I could be like them!"

"If wishes were horses beggars would ride!" mocked the pale, tired mother sourly. "Come, now, and tidy up the kitchen, for I must be off to my day's work. There's no rest for the weary."

She snatched down a rusty black bonnet from the nail where it hung, and hurried from the house, hastening downtown to the shop, where she worked by the day for the pittance that supported herself and daughter. She was a tailoress by trade, and had been reared, wedded, and widowed in this little New Jersey town. Her eldest children had all married, and gone to

humble homes of their own; she lived alone in the tiny cottage with her youngest girl, Berenice, or Berry, as she was familiarly called. A boy, still younger, lived on a farm with a relative.

Berry, now almost nineteen, had many admirers, but none of them had ever touched her romantic young heart, much to the regret of her work-worn mother, who longed to see her pretty darling settled down to married life in a comfortable home, with a good husband.

But Berry had only laughed at her suitors, for in her girlish thoughtlessness she did not realize her mother's cares and anxieties. Unconsciously to herself, perhaps, she had secret ambitions, born, it may be, of her high sounding name Berenice, or the knowledge that she had the gift of beauty, so potent in its spell upon mankind.

Berry longed for higher things, and despised the humdrum lives of her sisters with the humble mates they had chosen. Like another Maud Muller, she longed for something better than she had known.

So as she tucked the blue gingham apron over her spotless print gown, and deftly tidied up the kitchen, her excited thoughts followed the gay cavalcade of riders with eager interest and longing.

"I believe I am as pretty as any of those proud, rich girls," she murmured, glancing into the little cracked mirror over the mantel, and sighing: "Why should I have so different a fate? Why did my poor father have to drive an humble delivery wagon all his life and die of a malarial fever at last; and why

does poor mamma have to work as a tailoress, while Rosalind Montague has a millionaire for a father, and a fine lady mother flaunting in silks and diamonds? In only one thing has God made us equal, and that is beauty. I have rivaled her to-day with her splendid lover, and who knows but it may end in raising me to her height of wealth and pride! If he loves and marries me, how much I can do for poor mamma and the others! They should never have to work so hard again. Oh, I am so happy, hoping he loves me, for even if he were poor and humble as I am, I could love him just as well."

"Rat-a-tat, rat-a-tat!" went the knocker on the door, and her heart leaped wildly as she flew to open it.

There stood the red-headed lad from the florist's with a large bunch of splendid red roses, wet with morning dew, and exhaling the rarest spicy fragrance.

"American beauties, Berry Vining—for you!" he cried, thrusting them into her eager little hands, with a significant grin on his good-natured, freckled face.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROSY EMBLEM.

Berry cried out in delight as she pressed the flowers to her face:

“Oh, how sweet, how lovely! Who sent me the roses, Jimmy Dolan?”

“Gent from up ter de hall, sure, but I dunno his name. He was goin’ past our shop on horseback with Miss Montague, and when they turned the corner he rid back and bought these roses and guv me a dollar ter bring ’em ter you, Berry—leastwise he said, ‘that pretty girl in the morning-glory cottage down the street,’ so I knowed ’twas you, and then he said: ‘Tell her the roses came from an ardent admirer.’”

With that Jimmy darted away, and left Berry standing with the roses pressed to her face, lost in a dream of delight.

“He loves me, loves me! For love is the emblem of the sweet, red rose,” thought the romantic little maiden, trembling with pure joy.

To her young mind the gift of the roses was like an avowal of love from the handsome stranger, and she went happily about her simple tasks, hoping, praying that before another day they might meet again.

When Mrs. Vining came home that night to the simple tea Berry had prepared, she wondered a little that the girl wore

the pretty, ruffled, white gown that had been kept sacred to Sunday toilets before.

“Must be invited to a party—never saw your Sunday gown on before, in the middle of the week,” she observed tentatively.

Berry, blushing almost as red as the rose on her breast, answered carelessly:

“Oh, I just thought of standing at the gate to see the people going up to the lawn fête at the hall to-night, you know.”

“And wishing in your heart you could go, too, silly child; ain’t you, now? Well, you’re pretty enough to be there, if that was all, Berry, but it isn’t, more’s the pity for you, so don’t waste any regret on it, dearie, for remember the true saying: ‘Poor folks have to have poor ways.’”

“I don’t think it should be the way, mamma, for I’ve often heard it said that clothes don’t make the man—nor woman, either! For instance, now, Miss Rosalind Montague is no better, nor prettier, than I am, if she were stripped of her fine clothes and jewels!”

“Fie, fie! you vain little chick, I’m surprised at your talk. Let me hear no more of it. You must be contented in the sphere where Heaven has placed you, Berry. Or, if you wish to better your lot, you have a fine chance before you now.”

“What do you mean?” gasped Berry breathlessly.

“You have another proposal of marriage—one from a rich man!”

“Oh, mamma!” gasped Berry joyously, her eyes beaming, her cheeks aflame.

She could think of one—only one lover—at this moment.

How quickly he had found out her mother, how impetuous he was, her handsome lover—how impetuous, how adorable!

The future stretched before her eyes in a haze of bliss—the realization of all the golden gleams she had been weaving to-day on the airy foundation of a bow and smile, and the gift of a bunch of red roses!

Silly, happy little Berry! How quickly her dream was to be shattered!

Mrs. Vining, draining her teacup, and setting it back in its saucer, now continued blandly:

“To-day my employer—Widower Wilson, you know—was talking to me about this very lawn fête that the Montagues are giving up at the hall to-night, and he said it was to announce Miss Rosalind’s betrothal to Senator Bonair’s handsome son, the one that rode with her this morning, Berry. And he went on to say—what do you think, my dear?” triumphantly.

“I don’t know, I’m sure,” Berry answered, with a sudden paling cheek, while she said to herself, in dismay:

“Oh, no, no, no, he is not engaged to her—he cannot be! He loves me—me only!—and he will surely come and tell me so!”

“He said, my dear, that he was hoping to have a lawn fête, too, very soon, to announce his engagement to the sweetest and

prettiest girl in New Market, if she would have him, and he wanted her mother to ask her to-night if she would. Now can you guess?" smiling broadly.

"N-no, mamma!" faltered Berry.

"Why, then, you are very stupid, indeed, to-night, and I never found you so before! Well, then, it's you, child, you, poor little Berry Vining, he wants to marry, when he might aspire almost to the highest. What a match for you, dearie! Aren't you proud and glad?"

Berry, stamping her little foot, cried out petulantly:

"Mamma, you must surely be going crazy! The idea of marrying old Wilson, indeed! Older than my own father, for he began as errand boy in Wilson's shop, and then old Wilson must have been white-headed!"

"He was not, you pert minx, he was only a young married man, not more than ten years over your father's age! But what does that matter, when he's a widower now, worth a hundred thousand dollars, and willing to stoop to marry a poor girl whose father drove his delivery wagon, and whose mother works by the day in the shop to take care of you!"

"I wouldn't marry the old blear-eyed miser if every hair of his head were gold and strung with diamonds, but you may take him yourself, mamma, if you want him so badly in the family!" cried Berry, with mocking laughter.

"I only wish he would give me the chance, since you are such a fool!" angrily replied the disappointed mother, who craved the

ease and comfort for her old age that Mr. Wilson's money would give to herself and pretty, thoughtless Berenice.

She flung herself down on the kitchen lounge for her usual evening nap after tea, and her daughter, still laughing at the ridiculous suit of her aged wooer, hastened outdoors to the front gate to watch every passer-by with a throbbing heart, in the eager hope of his coming—his, her lover, for she would call him that in spite of a hundred Rosalinds! It was false what they said of his betrothal to the proud, rich beauty, with her flax-gold hair and bluebell eyes. She could never believe it, never, after all that had passed to-day—the bow, the flashing glance of love, the gift of the roses. Presently he would be coming to tell her that he loved her, and her alone.

It was one of those moonlight nights in early September, that seem like June. The full moon shone in a cloudless sky, sown thick with stars; the air was warm and fragrant, and seemed to pulsate with love. Every girl remembers how on such a night she has hung over the front gate, gowned in white, with a rose in her hair, waiting and watching for a lover dearer to her heart than all the world beside!

Berenice did not watch long in vain, for it was a true presentiment that told her the idol of her heart was coming.

Men and women passed and repassed for almost an hour, but at last her heart leaped with subtle ecstasy, for one paused and stood in front of her, gazing down with a smile into her starry eyes.

“Ah, Miss Vining, good evening!” cried a musical voice. “You see, I have found out your name. Mine is Charley Bonair. Do you remember me?”

CHAPTER III.

SWEETHEARTS.

Remember him? ah!

Berry could have laughed aloud at the tender question.

She knew that she could never forget his glance and smile of this morning her whole life long.

Yet, with her pretty head poised, coquettishly, on one side, and her eyes half veiled under their shady lashes, she faltered demurely:

“I—I—believe you are the same gentleman that passed with Miss Montague this morning, and bowed to me.”

“Yes, you are right,” he answered, with a soft laugh, as he leaned his elbows on the gate with his face very close to her, while he continued tenderly:

“And from the first moment I saw your lovely face I could not get you out of my mind. I asked Miss Montague who was that pretty young girl, and she frowned at me, and said: ‘There’s not a pretty face that can escape you, Charley; but that is only little Berry Vining, the daughter of a poor tailoress, not in our set at all, so don’t ask for an introduction.’”

Berry’s cheeks grew hot, and her heart thumped with anger as she said to herself:

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