

As for Kenneth, he gave no sign, except it were a too pinching leanness and the way in which, at every moment when he was free from bodily labor, he plunged into the play of his work, and an unqualified demand for Ellis to play with him. Not that anybody denied him; it was wonderful, in fact, the way everybody at Palomitas conspired to give him Ellis to play with. You would have thought it was for that Anne paid her a salary.

All this on the theory that he was "keeping up"; that, genuine as his interest was in the play of his work, perhaps just because it was genuine, quite to himself he faced the dreadfulness of its being snatched from him, and his being found with no status but that of brother to his sister. It was a situation that neither his sister nor her friend could face for him. They were quite resolved there should some way be found of his not facing it.

And in the mean time the unexpected stampede of property to Rickart had not happened. There had been two or three transfers of titles, but all to strangers, or to persons so well known that the supposition that they were intermediaries of Rickart's was untenable. Rickart, it appeared, was n't interested in Tierra Longa property. And when the date of Kenneth's hearing arrived, Rickart secured a postponement. It was all very unsettling because it was so little what had been expected.

"He's meaner than I thought," Anne gave it as her opinion of the Old Man; "he's playing a waiting game. By September" — which was the new date for the appropriation claim — "Kenneth will be at the end of his capital and his patience; and the people of Tierra Longa will drop into Rickart's hand." But though she drummed