

PHRYNETTE MARRIED

her and feel no more. He stopped quite close, but he did not touch me. I determined not to say a word, not to move, but to let things happen to me, to let the will of man be done and accept it. I had no hope, I had no fear, I had no wish—I was only very tired, and liked the sun on my back. I was one of those scorched leaves among which I lay.

He came one step nearer. I felt him towering over me. I remembered he was wearing a greenish-brownish suit that should go well with the wood and with the hour, but I did not look up. The leaves swished around his feet, and then, Médor, he said a very charming thing. I had dreaded dully his next words, and, as the leaves swished, he said softly, as one speaks of something precious and fragile, "It is like the swish of your skirts on the stairs!"

Médor, the wood had truly inspired him. I smiled up at him through my dishevelled hair full of leaves, of earth, and of grass. But, Médor; he was not smiling, he was standing with his back against a tree, looking not at me but at the past, at some terribly sweet things that had happened to the sound of silken swish when we were man and wife—and slow tears were rolling down his strong face. Don't you think, Médor, that my husband is very handsome? Crying, he was immense and beautiful. I wriggled nearer to him, embraced both the man and the tree, and kissed his feet. I think it shocked him that I should kiss his feet. He picked me up and kissed me and pressed me against him, and put back carefully my hair behind my ears, making me look a fright.