

DAVID KENDALL'S HOLIDAY

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He ignored her sarcasm. "Let's go back to the lake, will you?" "I was just going there to read," she affirmed, brushing some tangled locks away from her face. "But you may come too, if you like." "Thanks, awfully," said Kendall, "I do like."

And he led the way to the margin of the lake, where they sat down together on a huge boulder. Then for the first time he noticed the book his companion had been carrying.

It was a recent work of criticism on the early Italian masters. The young man's head almost swam. He began to have a faint suspicion that the dairymaid hypothesis was incorrect.

"Are you interested in painting?" he asked, examining the volume.

She nodded. "Especially the work of Giorgione."

"I prefer Del Sarto," he declared obstinately, more to elicit her comments on a subject of which he thought her ignorant, than for any other reason.

Thereupon they entered into a heated discussion on the relative merits of the Venetian and Florentine schools. When it was over, Kendall felt thoroughly convinced that the girl understood art, whatever else she might or might not know.

"See," she cried suddenly, "the sunset on the water! Doesn't it remind you of the Lady of the Lake? Wouldn't you like to see a huntsman in Lincoln green emerge from the woods, and wind his horn?"

"No," he replied gallantly, "I would rather see a certain lady in white with a bunch of daisies at her belt."

She glanced at the flowers as he spoke. "You're exceedingly fond of daisies, aren't you?" he asked, with a strange, serious look creeping into his eyes.

"Exceedingly. They're my name flowers."

He wanted to inquire what her name was, but good breeding forbade it, so he merely asked if she intended vanishing as she had before, seeing she was making ready to depart. She hesitated a moment.

"Yes." "Is there not some way by which I can be formally introduced to you?" he wanted to know. The girl shook her head.

"Good-bye," she said simply, and and walked slowly into the wood.

A week went by without any further incident of note. Then one evening at twilight as Kendall sat enjoying his after-dinner pipe on the front balcony, the stillness was broken by a whistle, clear and resonant. The tune was that "Boola" thing he had heard once before.

"Hang it all, that woman must be a witch!" he muttered, tossing aside his pipe, and crossing the garden in quest of the elusive whistler.

Nobody was to be seen, and as Kendall advanced the sound became fainter and further away, until finally he gave up the search, and returned to the inn. He did not resume his smoking that evening.

The next time he met the unknown girl he accosted her with:

"What is that lively little air you sing sometimes, Lady Circe? The words sounded like 'Boola, boola,' though I probably misunderstood them."

"No, you didn't," she rejoined. "It's—it's a college song some Americans taught me."

He wondered if she had nothing better to do than learn American college songs, but he wisely kept silent.

The atmosphere of the White Rabbit certainly agreed with the Londoner. He spent long hours in the fields under the blue sky and there he lost whatever of ennui was in him. As yet he had not untangled the mystery of the girl with the daisies. He only knew that she was not a dairymaid, that she lived in the neighborhood of the inn, that her speech testified she was a cultured Englishwoman. He was soon, however, to know more.

He had set out for the village one afternoon when, discovering he had forgotten an important letter to be posted, he returned unexpectedly to the inn.

There, on the threshold stood the daisy-girl, explaining to the landlady the intricacies of some new kind of salad!

Hearing his step in the hall, both women looked around. The younger laughed, trying to hide her blushes and appear quite unconcerned.

Kendall was delighted. His opportunity had come. He turned to the landlady with a look which said only one thing: "Introduce me." And she did, seeing there was no way out of it.

"Now, Miss Bradshaw," said Kendall, relieved, "surely you'll not deny me the pleasure of a little chat with you."

"A truly conventional chat?" she asked, remembering those former ones.

"Yes, in the garden summer-house." And thither he escorted her. When the girl had seated herself he began:

"I say, do you mind telling why you avoided me and didn't want me to know your name?"

She had the air of a child who had been naughty, but a mischievous gleam twinkled in her eyes.

"For the landlady's sake, Mr. Kendall, I avoided you."

"The landlady's! I don't understand."

"Well, you wrote, saying you hoped she had no feminine lodgers as you were tired of society and desired a complete change. She wanted your patronage, but I was here, booked for the season, and what could she do? When I saw the question spelled pounds to her—for the village is so quiet no one ever comes here—I arranged to take rooms at the opposite end of the inn, eat my meals at the rectory, and keep out of your way as much as possible. You were not to know of my existence but of course you had to come blundering along and spoil the play just when it was getting interesting. And," she continued, "had you known my name the villagers could have told you where I live. Then you would have gone away."

"To think," uttered Kendall, in amazement, "you have been living under the same roof with me for six weeks, and I all unconscious of it. Well," with vehemence, "I'm not going away, and the landlady will not lose her precious pounds!"

"Do you know," demanded Miss Bradshaw, leaning her chin in her palms, "do you know a bird told me you heartily detest women?"

"If I ever get hold of that bird," cried Kendall, "I'll—I'll wring his neck! He's the biggest prevaricator in the kingdom."

Both laughed, and from that moment a friendship was established which lasted the remainder of the summer.

In their conversations the man and woman often spoke of London, Liverpool, Oxford, Windsor, the Isle of Wight, with all of which Miss Bradshaw was thoroughly familiar. Sometimes, too, she spoke of Paris, Rome, New York, and Kendall soon learned that she had traveled even more extensively than he. One thing he noted, she never mentioned her home or her relatives.

"There!" she cried. "What a mess! I might have known I'd drop it."

They were sitting in the ingle-nook beside a blazing pile of logs one rainy evening in late August, and Miss Bradshaw was stitching away on a thing she called a "jabot," while Kendall read to her from Carlyle. The "it" referred to her sewing-basket she had just overturned.

Her companion knelt to gather up its contents. With the spools and ribbons scattered on the floor, he brought to light a heavy ring. It was of platinum, and had formerly contained some oval stone.

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl as he handed it to her, "that? I'd forgotten it was in my basket." She slipped it on her finger. "But it isn't much good without the stone."

Suddenly Kendall had an inspiration. "Excuse me," he cried, and dashed upstairs as though he had been shot from a cannon, leaving Miss Bradshaw in wide-eyed astonishment.

When he returned, several minutes later, he placed in her hand something which made her glow with pleasure. It was the long forgotten lapis lazuli. Of course she had to hear how he found it among the leaves, and he had to hear how she lost it soon after her arrival at the inn.

"Now," declared Kendall, possessing

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