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RESCUED.

"Lionel, Lionel, are you there?"

It was evening; a soft purplish haze was creeping from the river over the land, rendering yet more obscure a narrow lane which ran along the garden wall, topped by trees and high bushes, of a small villa on the river's bank.

The voice was a girl's, low and musical, with the vibration of nervousness in it. But where did it come from? The clouds?

A young fellow who for the last ten minutes had been standing in the shadow of the wall, within sight of the green door let into it, knew it was not from there. Much to his happiness it was an earthly voice, but where it came from he could not for a moment tell.

He looked up and down the lane, then on each side; after that it occurred to him it would be best to answer.

"Yes, dear; but where are you?"

"Up here, Leo, in the elder-tree, and the insects do tickle so."

Lionel, lifting his eyes to where the elder, with its wealth of beautiful blossoms, fell a cataract over the wall, perceived in the midst of the dark greenery a pretty face, coroneted by a golden mass of curly hair. Two little hands held the boughs apart while the bright eyes gazed down at him.

"Why, Nelly, what are you doing there?" he exclaimed, laughing. "Love in a bush indeed. Why don't you come to the door?"

"Because I can't; and it's very cruel of you to laugh, Leo. I shall go. Good-bye, sir."

"No, no, Nelly!" he exclaimed, quickly. "Dear Nelly, forgive me, but why can't you come to the door?"

"Pray don't talk so loud, Leo. We shall be heard. Janet's always spying about somewhere, and I never know anybody's ears so sharp. I believe it is she who's taken the key of the door. Yes, that's it, Leo, the door's locked—I can't get out and you can't get in."

"What shall we do, Nelly?"

"Oh, dear, pray whisper. Do you think, Leo, you could climb on the wall? I've the ladder on this side."

"Think! I'll try, Nelly. It'll all depend on the strength of the boughs."

Taking a run and a spring, Lionel Morris clutched a mass of branches. They bent with him; but before they entirely yielded he had grasped the coping, and with Nelly Wentworth's aid, dragged himself on to the wall by her side.

"Love laughs at locksmiths, darling," he said, as he took her in his arms and kissed her. "Why it's quite jolly here."

"And safe; no one can see us, only the insects."

"Never mind them, Nelly, Now, dear, what is it all about?"

"Why, Leo, it's—it's all settled!"

"What is settled?"

"I'm to marry Captain Brooke."

"You! Come, Nelly, it's you laughing now."

"No, Leo, it's right-down positive. Since mamma refused you when you proposed for me, and forbade your coming to the house, or seeing, or writing to me, the captain has been here every day."

"Confound him!"

"Yes, Leo, it's very hard, isn't it, that one can be loved against their will!"

"Nelly, pet, my only wonder is that every one doesn't love you. I can't see how they can help it"—a kiss—"only I don't see why you should marry anyone but the one you like—and you must not, Nelly—for my sake, you must not!"

"But I must, Leo. Captain Brooke is coming to-morrow, mamma says, on purpose, she is sure, to propose, and I must accept him."

"But you mustn't, Nell. You must run away with me first."

"No, Leo," and the girl drew back, "I'll never wed without mamma's consent. She is the best, kindest of mothers, but for this—and—Leo—I believe it's Janet that's doing it all!"

"Janet! Why, Nell, she always seemed my friend."

"Yours, Leo, not mine. She now says to marry anyone with only two hundred and fifty a year is—what does she call it?—moral suicide; but I think, Leo, if you were to ask her she'd commit it!"

"Nelly!"

"I do, Leo—it's jealousy. Oh, hark! there she is!"

A feminize voice was heard, calling:

"Nelly, Nelly."

To prevent their leafy place of rendezvous being discovered, the lovers took a hasty farewell, Leo protesting that, if Nelly wedded other than himself, she destroyed his happiness forever. Then the young girl, creeping through the bushes, regained the house undetected.

Mrs. Wentworth was the widow of Major Wentworth, who, on his death, had left her no more than her pension to live on, that would not have enabled her to keep up the style she did but for her late father's nice little fortune, which society affirmed had been bequeathed to Mrs. Wentworth's children—Gertie, aged thirty, Janet, who called herself twenty-six, and Nelly eighteen, and as the widow never denied the statement, there was no reason why it should not be true.

Mrs. Wentworth held that the sole aim and end of a girl's existence was a lucrative marriage.

Gertie already had become Mrs. Archibald Craven, with a dowry of four thousand pounds, her grandfather's money. Janet had had suitors, to whom, however, either she did not incline, or who were not considered eligible. Nelly's first was Lionel, simply a bankor's clerk, with a salary of not three hundred a-year.

He was a bright, handsome, open-hearted young fellow, to whom every-

body's heart warmed. The Wentworths smiled on him, and relied upon