

pink. She felt indeed, for all her involuntary joy, decidedly at a disadvantage. Since her way with David was to be the cool and sensible way of friendship it was certainly unfortunate to be caught with a handkerchief drying on the clover.

"What's the matter?" asked David. His eye had fallen on the telltale handkerchief at once.

"Nothing at all," said Rosme. "Infant, run away and play."

"Yes, do, Infant," said David warmly.

Yet when that obedient but interested child had retreated behind the nearest currant bush neither of them seemed to have anything to say.

Rosme, out of her unsought embarrassment was beginning to feel a little angry. It was hardly fair of David to come like this. It was hardly playing the game. She stole a look at him under her long eyelashes and the anger grew. Why did he look so—so satisfied? Almost happy! He hadn't looked like that when she had seen him last. Was it possible that her saintly wish had come true and that Clara was really—oh, wouldn't it be dreadful if she were!

"Is there any fresh news?" asked Rosme, trying hard to make her tone one of casual interest.

"News?" David's gaze was distracted and it was plain that her question had conveyed no meaning.

"European news," prompted Rosme.

"Oh! No—that is, yes. I mean—Rosme, you don't seem very glad to see me."

They were looking at each other now and neither seemed able to look away.

"I am glad to see you," said Rosme. She said it gravely. All at once and certainly she saw that evasion and pretence were useless and undignified. Her dream of a future which would include David—as a friend—

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