

words to poor little Anne which startled her very much. She managed to hide her feelings while in her father's presence, but Sally found her afterwards in a state almost bordering on hysterics, for the old doctor had given Mr. Erskine only a few days to live.

Tom Ross appeared on the scene as a matter of course, and was most helpful to the girls. He sat up night after night with the invalid, and did more for his comfort than any hired nurse could have done.

A certain morning came when the young fellow appeared with a blanched face, and asked for Sally.

"Your father wants you," he said to her. "He asked for you several times during the night, and now he will not be denied. I do not think he can live out the day, Sally; and—and—I could not help it, dear."

Tom's look was full of deprecation. Sally wondered what was the matter. What was it that he could not help?

She entered her father's room in her white summer dress, the bloom of early summer in her cheeks and lighting up her eyes. She could not realize that death was already on the threshold of the home. Everyone spoke of Mr. Erskine's danger, but Sally did not recognize it a bit. She felt sure that he must soon be well again. She entered the room now, hushed in her mood, but by no means despondent.

"Well, dear papa," she said, her voice set a little lower than its wont, but her tone cheerful. "You have sent for me, papa; I am so glad you want me," she continued. Then her eyes fell upon the grey and dying face on the pillow, and all further words were arrested. She dropped on her knees by the bedside and laid her blooming cheek against the dying man's cold hand.

"I want you to promise me something, Sally," he said, in a harsh and broken voice. "I have something to tell you, and I want you on your part to make me a promise."

"Of—of course, papa."

That evening Mr. Erskine died. There was mourning and weeping in the house; but, to the surprise of everyone, Sally scarcely shed a tear.

Old Dr. Barnes did not like her appearance. He said the blow had stunned her, and that in reality she was feeling her bereavement much more than her sister and brothers.

Something had certainly occurred which had taken all the May sunshine look out of her face. She made no confidences, however, and spent most of her time moping in her own room.

"I shall be quite glad when Sally goes away to Newnham," said Anne, speaking to Tom Ross. "I never did know that she was so much attached to papa. All the spring seems taken out of her life."

Tom made no reply. His own face looked haggard and worn. He was the best of brothers to Anne, but she noticed that he ceased to confide in her. His blue eyes looked full of trouble when she spoke of Sally.

Mr. Erskine was dead a fortnight, and Anne seemed slighter and thinner than ever in her deep mourning.

"By the way, Tom," she continued, looking up at him, "we know nothing yet about the—the affairs."

"What affairs, Anne?"

"The money. We don't know how we are left; Mr. Johnson, my father's man of business, promised to call to see us, but he has not yet done so. I know that Sally and I inherit a thousand pounds apiece from our mother, but—What is the matter, Tom? How white you look!"

"Hurrah, hurrah!" shouted a boyish voice. "Is that you Anne, coming away as usual? Oh, and Tom Ross is with you, of course. Why, Tom, you're looking pasty. George and I have had such a race over the moors. We met the postman, and he gave us a letter. It's for Sally; it's her scholarship, I expect. The *Minerva Magazine*

is written across the flap of the envelope. Lucky Sally, say I! Wouldn't George and I like to have a dip into that thirty pounds. What is it, Ross? what do you want?"

"Give me that letter," said Ross.

He took it out of the boy's unwilling hand, then taking him by the shoulders, pushed him gently out of the room.

"Now, Anne," said Ross, coming up to the young girl and speaking eagerly, "if you like, I'll give this letter to Sally. I expect Charlie is right, and that there is a cheque in it. If so, it will give me just the opportunity I want. Can't you send her down to me here; or, better still, send her into the garden, where I can meet her."

"How white you look, Tom! and your hand trembles."

"You know, Anne, what all this means to me. But can't speak of it even to you. Run, like a deer, and ask Sally to come to me."

Anne departed, and Tom went out into the garden.

A great excitement was over him; he was shaken out of his habitual calm.

The evening was lovely, and the last rays of a glorious sunset were fading from the sky, when Sally, dishevelled in appearance, red rims around her eyes, and her bright hair pushed untidily back from her forehead, came out into the garden.

She, too, was in black, but her mourning partook of the disordered state of her mind. It was not trim and neat like Anne's, but was put on carelessly. Her black dress did not become Sally. She needed light and soft draperies to set off her peculiar bright beauty.

The girl who advanced timidly now to meet Tom Ross looked something like a delicate flower broken at the roots. She held her garden hat on one arm; her steps were very slow.

"See what I've got for you, Sally," said Ross.

He came towards her, holding up the letter. She looked at it with listless indifference. He turned the envelope and showed the words *Minerva Magazine* written across the flap.

"It's the scholarship money, Sally," he whispered. "You'll want it, you know, dear, to help towards your expenses at Newnham."

"I'm not going," she said, suddenly turning white as death. "You know that, Tom, and it's very, very cruel of you to torture me."

"I thought you had some stupid idea of that sort in your mind," said Ross. "I am very glad you have come out here, so that we may fully talk over the whole matter. Give me your hand, Sally—how cold it is?—Why do you turn away from me? Why have you kept aloof from me during these miserable days?"

"Tom, you know the reason."

"Yes, my poor little love, I do know. Come, we'll walk up and down here where no one can see us. Sally, I did not want your father to say what he did to you, but I don't think he was quite responsible that morning, and the knowledge weighed on him. I'd have given half of all I possess to save you from the trouble I knew his words would bring."

"I promised him," said Sally, in a slow, listless voice. "He told me all about it, and I made my promise. I said I'd give Newnham up. It's not such a trial as you think, Tom," she continued, looking steadily at him, while tears blimmed into her eyes. "The heart has gone out of me, somehow, and I never could go in for a wranglership, or any of the nice things I used to talk about, when I felt fresh and springy and young. The dreadful thing about me, however, is this, Tom, that I can't thank you—you, who have been noble—yes, noble; but I can't thank you."

"It wasn't noble of me to do things for you. I'd give my life gladly for you, so you can understand that a little money means nothing."

"Father told me," continued Sally, "what you had done. He said he had spent the two thousand pounds which he had in trust for Anne and me, and that you had given