

*has* happened, I'll confess to you, too. I got afraid Mamma would really marry the Prince — oh, but that was n't the way it began! Just for fun, long ago, when we first started, I let him pump me — it was great fun *then* — and told him how rich Mamma was, and would be, even if she married again. I thought it would be such larks to watch his game, and so it was for a while, till I was in an awful stew for fear I'd gone too far and could n't stop things. I was ready then to do something desperate rather than find myself saddled with *that* Prince for my step-father. So I sacrificed you."

"I don't see —" Maida began; but Beechy cut her short.

"Why, when we went to that Sisterhood of yours, I overheard the Mother Superior, or whatever you call her, confiding to Mamma that you were a tremendous heiress, that you did n't quite know how rich you were yourself, and would n't be told till you were safely back from Europe. It was a secret, and I had n't any business to know. But I let it out to the Prince, when I was in such a state about him and Mamma, in Bellagio. He *went* for you at once, as I knew he would — but what's the matter, Mr. Barrymore? It is n't for you to be angry with me. It's for Maida."

"I'm not angry with you, but with myself," I said. And then for a minute I forgot Ralph and Beechy, and remembered only Maida. "Don't think I knew," I said. "If I had, I would n't —"

"Oh, don't say you would n't. I love to feel you *had* to," the Angel cried. "I hold you to your word, oh, with all my heart in my right to you. Beechy, your Chauffeur and I—are engaged."

"There!" the child exclaimed, with a look at Ralph I could n't fathom. "Did n't I tell you so?"

"Well, it does n't matter *now*, does it?" was his retort. "How shall I feel if you don't wish Miss Destrey your best wishes?"

"Oh, I do, I do," exclaimed the strange child. "And I congratulate the Chauffeur. But he must do some congratulating too. I'm going to put up my hair, come out in a long dress, and be engaged to Sir Ralph."