

He covered the hand with his own and laughed carelessly. "But I care for no 'un but you, Sweet Nell, in all the world."

She smiled with a flurry of blood at her cheeks and a pretense of withdrawing from his grasp.

"You're a liar like all the rest of them, I raickon," she said, "but I guess a girl was made to be lied to, an' I rather like your style o' doin' it. Hev a care on though, an' let me loose, or you may get hurt. It's leery here."

The deviltry in Careless' eyes grew suddenly tender. "Are you a-s-c-a-r-e-d, little girl, a-s-c-a-r-e-d?" he queried.

"N-o-b-u-t what about that?"

The spluttering enmity of the party behind had suddenly concentrated itself in a harsh, challenging voice, calling out to the waitress an order in drinks.

As she half rose, and attempted to free herself to comply however, Careless drew her back and coolly ordered the boy to attend instead.

"Are you a-s-c-a-r-e-d, little girl,—a-s-c-a-r-e-d?" he queried again.

She resigned herself with eyes askance at the red-faced vexation of one of the strangers, and laughed softly at the luxury of the situation.

"You're a divil," she said, "if thar ever wus one — an' sich a kid. Why you're no more'n a kid, are you?"

He met the doting of her look with one as melting, and leaned so close that their breaths mingled—that in the beating passion which encompassed them the menacing stir of feet and growl of voices behind past unattended.

"Nell," he said, "you've never kissed me in yer life. Will you do it now — here — just once? Are you game, girly, are you game?"

"Game!" She drew back a fraction and met the full career of his glance, then

laughed again with a sudden break to it. "Oh, you kiddie," she sighed, "you little kid!" Then dropped her chin forward on her hands again,



"CARELESS"