

For Boys and Girls

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were taking their part in the service of love.

When the dawn-light had melted into blue, June re-crossed the little valley to the birch grove on the other side. Here beneath the lacy green canopy she found her flowers still asleep.

"O violets, open your pretty blue eyes," she cried, "and my darling little Mayflowers, lift up your pinky-white faces and smile again. The dew-drops have washed you, and the breezes have brushed your hair, and you are sweet enough to be kissed."

She was kneeling by a bank of her favourite flowers, and as she spoke she bent down and touched the tiny closed blossoms with her lips. "I wonder if you know I'm kissing you, little flowers," she said, "I wonder if you love me."

At that moment a shadow fell across the dewy bank. She looked up quick-

ly and saw Robin standing beside her. He was in blue jean overalls, and his feet were bare, as usual. He smiled down at her with an amused look in his hazel eyes.

"Good morning, Robin," June said, standing up and flushing slightly.

"Hallo, June!" was his response, "I thought you was in bed."

"Oh," she replied, "I woke up early, and it was so lovely I couldn't stay in bed a minute longer. I mean to get up early every day after this. It is just splendid to be up before the sun rises."

Robin stooped and picked a flower. "You're a queer kid, June," he said smiling. "Do you think them flowers know what you say to them?"

"I suppose not really," she replied, returning the smile, "but I like to make believe they do. And I'm not so sure anyway that they don't."

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I think every plant has a sort of a spirit of its own—they're *alive*, you know—and I think they feel the sunshine and the dew, and are *happy*. There's something inside me that tells me they like to be loved, and I kind of know that when we get to Heaven we'll understand the language of flowers, and they'll be able to talk to us in their own way."

"What funny thoughts you have!" laughed Robin, "But I think they're nice thoughts, and maybe they're true."

"Where are you going with that pail?" June asked presently.

"Over to Mr. Harper's to get some milk. Don't you want to come, too?"

"O Robin, I'd just love to."

"All right, then. Come along."

"Hadn't I better go and ask Aunt Hilda, Robin?"

"No, there isn't time. Come on."

What a delight it was to be skimming over the sunny ripples, and drifting amid the violet shadows of the hills! Robin appeared to be in no hurry. As he dipped the paddle right and left with slow rhythmic strokes, he seemed to have fallen into a dream.

"Robin," June asked at length with an eager little tremor in her voice, "did you ever see two birds kiss each other?"

Robin awoke out of his reverie and laughed. "No, I never. Did you?"

Then June described the little tableau she had witnessed that morning. "He was such a handsome bird," she concluded. "His head and neck were black, and the upper part of him black and white. His breast was the colour of a rose just opened, and when he flew I could see the rose colour on the under side of his wings. Do you know what bird it was?"

"I've seen them lots of times," Robin answered, "and they're about as pretty a bird as there is; but I don't know the name of them. There's a lot of birds I don't know."

"Wouldn't you like to know them all, Robin?"

"I just bet I would! But I don't see how we could find out."

"Books tell a lot. If we only had the right ones, we could learn most of them."

"Do they put things like that in books?" Robin asked in a little surprise.

"Of course they do," June replied emphatically. "There's nearly every sort of thing in books. I know, because when Daddy first told me he was going away off to British Columbia and would have to leave Brownie and me in Ontario, I felt just awful, and cried and cried. But Daddy told me maybe it wouldn't be very long before he would come and fetch us. He said it was a beautiful country there, with great high mountains and sunny valleys, and lots of lakes and rivers; and lovely woods full of all kinds of flowers and birds. He said he'd get us some books that told us all about them, and we could learn the names of nearly every one. That's what we mean to do when we get there. But O Robin, there's so many, many birds and flowers here that I don't know, and I'm just aching to find out all about them. You don't know, and Aunt Hilda doesn't know. If only we had some books."

Robin looked serious. "You're pretty fond of flowers and birds and wild things, ain't you, June?" he asked.

"Oh, I just love them, love them! I sometimes almost wish I was an Indian, so I could live in the woods all day and all night." As June spoke, her face kindled rosy, and she opened her arms as if to take the whole world in.

In that moment Robin felt drawn toward his young cousin as never before. His own deep love of the wild he had never breathed to anyone; but now, gazing into those rapt, eager eyes, he felt that he might open his heart freely, sure of understanding and



sympathy. "I love the wild things just the same," he said. Then, with an eager little flush on his own face, he launched forth into a detailed account of the wonder he had witnessed that day on the violet bank.

June's interest was so keen that he went even further and told her what had immediately followed.

"O Robin, I'm so sorry!" she cried.

At the sound of the little tremor in her voice, Robin looked up quickly, and his own heart smote him when he

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