

"I wonder why this house is so much nicer than our's?" Isabel Matheson queried.

She stood and looked about her gratefully. "It smells so sweetly," she said.

"I am going to write some letters: entertain one another please," remarked Mrs. Cheston, as she went across the room and sat at her writing-table.

"Come and sit here, Belle," commanded the young man.

He tossed away some cushions from the couch, and as she obeyed him and sat at the other corner the colour deepened in the girl's cheeks. It was very silly of her to feel shy and even nervous with Jack Cheston who had been her chum and playfellow ever since she could remember, Jack whom she knew so well and even better than she did her own big brothers: nevertheless tonight she was very shy, and she flushed uncomfortably as she felt he was looking at her steadily.

"I was surprised to hear we were to see you to-day," she said. "I didn't know that you would be getting leave again so soon."

"I came to see you, Belle."

"Thanks, dear, it is awfully sweet of you. Did you come straight from York?"

He shook his head.

"No: I had to go to town. Don't tell mother but Angus and I are having one of our usual rows. I suppose he hasn't been here?"

There was a sharp note in John Cheston's voice.

"Not to my knowledge," the girl answered; "but of course he may have been: if he did come your mother hasn't spoken to me about it."