

her through the gates in a litter. None will think of questioning you."

"The wrath of Lady Flavia would be terrible," Sempronius said doubtfully.

"My mother would be furious at first," Julia said coldly; "but get her a new plaything, a monkey or a Nubian slave boy, and she will soon forget all about the matter."

"But how do you propose it should be done?" Sempronius asked.

"My slave shall withdraw all the bolts of the back entrance to the house," Julia said; "do you be there at two in the morning, when all will be sound asleep; bring with you a couple of barefooted slaves. My woman will be at the door and will guide you to the chamber where the girl sleeps; you have only to gag her and carry her quietly off."

Sempronius stood for a moment in doubt. The enterprise was certainly feasible. Wild adventures of this kind were not uncommon among the dissolute young Romans, and Sempronius saw at once that were he detected Julia's influence would prevent her mother taking the matter up hotly. Julia guessed his thoughts.

"If you are found out," she said, "I will take the blame upon myself, and tell my mother that you were acting solely at my request."

"I will do it, Julia," he agreed; "to-night at two o'clock I will be at the back-door with two slaves whom I can trust. I will have a place prepared to which I can take the girl till it is safe to carry her from the city."