

daring creatures, who swear they love you—nay; *he* never swore that to me nor to any other woman that *I've* heard; and these things fly so quickly. I've been courted by every wooden-headed, painted lout in Bath. And the man, the only Man there is, pays me tribute in pretty worthless words, presses a cold-lipped cousinly kiss upon my fingers and presses my hand. Could he kiss with fervour, I wonder? Ugh, I dislike him, I dislike him, I wouldn't kiss him if—but, alas! there won't be any 'IF.' Oh, the ugly, smiling, careless beast! But why did he write to me, I wonder? It must be time to keep my tryst with him. Will I or will I not? Um—well, at least 'twill be an adventure to tell the girls."

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Sir Charles O'Hara ran lightly up to his private sitting-room in quest of his French silver snuff-box. The hour was half an hour after eleven, and Mistress Wynn had suddenly become very solicitous about seeing the peculiar engraving on that particular snuff-box that he always kept on his centre-table. Nothing would do but he must go for it himself. He lifted the little article and was about to leave the room when his eyes became fastened on a dainty white note bearing his name, and as curiosity is one of the qualities of the masculine sex, although rarely acknowledged, he opened it, read it, and then uttered a low whistle.

"A note from my pretty cousin Sheelah, praying me to meet her at the forked lilac tree, at a quarter before twelve. Um—m, this makes me uneasy, and they say that when a man's uneasy where a lady is the question he is surely in love. Ha—ha! Me in love? Me? Faith, women are such pretty dears fit to be caressed, kissed, and petted; but fit for no deeper passion. Ecod, if there was a deeper passion, then Mistress Sheelah is verily the one I'd bestow it upon. But women seem all the same.

However, a sweet, gay, modest damsel is my cousin. Why is the longing growing upon me to hear her voice again, to kiss her dainty hand—aye, and her mouth; to watch her bright eyes flash when suddenly they meet mine? But she's the last one I'd ever think of receiving love-notes from. Of course, I'm a relation, and that makes a difference. Bless me, I must be in love with her to go on in this mad fashion and to make excuses, but if this be love, then 'tis a mighty pleasant sensation. I—Charles O'Hara—am in love with and wish to wed—no, not that for surely. Well, and why not, indeed? I *will* wed Sheelah. By Jove, it does sound damn nice. I suppose being in love makes one nervous. But I'll go and see the lady and make myself agreeable."

Forgetting about Constance Wynn, he rushed out and away to the trysting tree, her note crushed in his hand. And that is how they both arrived at the same time.

\*

Sir Charles and Sheelah almost collided. He seized her hand and kissed it.

"Ah, Sir Charles," she said in a low voice. "You see I came—"

"So I see," he answered with a courtly bow. "And I also came."

She looked at him in quick surprise.

"May I inquire what you wanted of me?"

Her heart was beating faster and faster until in the silence she almost heard it. At that, he looked at her in astonishment.

"What I wanted of you? What I—I wanted?" (Men *are* stupid sometimes.)

Sheelah smiled.

"Yes, you see, I was rather surprised when I received your note, and, I vow, greatly pleased."

The man evidently needed encouragement.

"My note? You mean when I—