

neath the towering branches.

He was much attracted by Pat. Her voice pleased him, and so did her dark blue eyes, with that wonderful look of mystery and sadness which belong to Irish eyes all the world over. The girl's nature revealed itself in her face, joyous and full of fun on the surface; deep, tenacious, and melancholy below.

They entered the house by a postern door, and he led her down a gallery lined with pictures to the great hall. Then he showed her the view from the drawing-room windows, and a room where Charles the First had slept during the Civil Wars. Last of all, they went into the library, and waited for Mrs. Wentworth to join them.

"Do you see this spinet?" said Mr. Rivers. "It belonged to Lady Veronica Hope, whose picture hangs opposite. She was engaged to be married to one of my great-uncles, and died a week before the wedding day." "Veronica is my name," said Pat, in a startled voice. "These Italian books belonged to her, too. They have the monogram 'V. H.'" "You are tired," said Mr. Rivers. "I was thoughtless, and walked too fast. Let me draw a chair into one of the windows. My friends hoped that, after my fall, I should be cured of a bad habit; but you see I have a tendency to race, just as before."

Pat felt pleased to lean back in an easy chair. Through the window the green slopes of the Park, and herds of feeding deer were visible, and this library, with its atmosphere of creamy vellum, and mellow Russia leather, fascinated her.

All the time Mr. Rivers was asking himself who her parents were, and what sort of home she had come from; so simple, so refined, and graceful, with a history written on her face at an age when most girls have no history at all.

Mrs. Wentworth did not look at the books when she came in. She looked at Pat and Mr. Rivers, and her heart gave a frightened leap. They were bending over the spinet, talking very quietly about some music, just as if their acquaintance were of long standing. They seemed to have the same preferences, to share the same dislikes, to be able to grasp each other's meaning almost by a glance. Before the visit ended, the host produced a book containing his friends' names, and asked for a contribution.

Mrs. Wentworth inscribed her name in large, floating, undecided characters. Pat followed, and wrote "Mary Veronica" easily enough; but, after doing this, she paused and turned pale. There was an interval of at least half a minute before she added "Wentworth," in letters scarcely legible.

* * * * *

The next day a note came, inviting aunt and niece to join an excursion to Petworth, which Mr. Rivers had arranged.

"Can't we tell him I am not your niece?" said Pat. "Oh, I don't think the subject concerns him," said Mrs. Wentworth. "Our acquaintance is sure to be transitory."

The day after this excursion Lady Griselda Rivers called, a marvellous old woman of seventy-seven, with splendid rings. She was Mr. Rivers' grandmother, and very great on genealogies. When she heard that Mrs. Wentworth was connected with the Wentworths of Portisland, her manner visibly warmed. They both felt afraid of her, and were glad when she had gone. Mr. Rivers called three times during the next four days. Even Mrs. Wentworth, in spite of her careless words, felt thoroughly uncomfortable. After the last of these visits Pat said she wished to go to London, and see her mother.

"Pamela can go with you, and wait at the station," remarked Mrs. Wentworth. "You needn't take her to the house."

"I want to go quite alone," replied Pat.

The mews looked dingy and dark;

but Mrs. Newman welcomed her daughter with a cry of delight.

"Pat, my dearest," she said. "It's never you! Have you come back to look after your old mother? Give me just one kiss."

Pat gave her ten kisses at least, and then they sat down and talked. Mrs. Newman had changed greatly since their last meeting. She looked old and ill, and tired, and her eyes, which were dark blue, like Pat's, kept filling with tears as she related the family history.

"Our rooms must look shabby," she said. "If I had known to expect you, I would have put the best covers on the chairs, and hid that old horsehair sofa."

"Don't make a grand visitor of me!" cried Pat.

Then she threw her arms round her mother's neck, and held her tightly.

"Deary me, you mustn't cry," said Mrs. Newman. "Your lady's kind, isn't she? You are dressed beautiful and rings on your fingers and all."

"Oh, yes, she is very kind, and I love her. But I wish you had not let me go away. Oh, mammy, mammy!"

Mrs. Newman cried from sympathy. It was delicious to hear Pat call her mammy, and know she was not forgotten.

"You made our fortune with your sweet face," she said. "The girls 'prenticed to millinery (they've both got sweethearts now) and Ted taught a carpenter's trade. It all came from you, Pat, my blessing. Mrs. Wentworth did it for your sake."

"If you ever need me to nurse you," whispered Pat, "I know I could come."

"Don't offend her," said Mrs. Newman, "but if you could see your way to pay us a visit I should be pleased. Just ask her, some day when you have a chance. Say I am not so strong as I was, and the others are forced to be out."

When Pat returned in the evening she looked as white as paper. Her mother's worn face seemed to fill every corner of the room.

"She wants me to come to her," thought the poor child. I know she does. And all the time I am pretending to be someone I am not."

The last post brought a letter from Mr. Rivers, inviting Mrs. Wentworth and her niece to a tenants' garden party the next evening.

"We have no excuse to offer," said Mrs. Wentworth, helpless and undecided as usual.

"Let us go," said Pat. "I am like Jephthah's daughter. I want to dance and sing before I die to everything that makes a woman's life worth living."

"I hope you have not given your heart to this man," said Mrs. Wentworth, gravely. "You used to tell me you liked freedom too much to wish to marry."

"Love is worth more."

"Then she turned away, and ran upstairs."

Mr. Rivers had numbers of people to attend to at this party, but he found leisure to occupy himself with Pat. When supper was over, and his guests were so excited and busy they failed to miss him, he led her to the beech avenue, where they walked up and down.

"I shall soon leave Leland," said Pat.

She could feel the start he gave. Two or three minutes passed before he could speak, and then his voice sounded unusual.

"May I call on you tomorrow morning; I should like to have a talk by ourselves, if you will be at home and able to see me."

Instead of answering, Pat began to walk back to the lawn on which the others were dancing. The house was illuminated from the ground floor to the roof, but the sight did not please her. Those glittering lights seemed unfriendly, and she shivered as she looked at them.

"I am afraid you are tired," said Mr. Rivers. "The air is too cold."

"I am not cold," said Pat, "but I am unhappy. I want to ask your advice—about—about—about someone

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