

soil. The plants were short yet, and the garden itself far from beautiful; but the twigs had thrown up shoots, and on the shoots had opened, or were opening, roses that drew even his inexperienced eye to admire them.

"I'm afraid there's no doubt of it," said Mrs Bosenna. "I love the old H.P.'s: but you must grow the Teas and Hybrid Teas nowadays, if you want to exhibit. Yet I love the old H.P.'s, and I've planted a few, to hold their own and just show as they won't be shamed. See this one now—there's a proper Jubilee rose, and named *Her Majesty*! Brought out, they tell me, in 'eighty-five: but the Yankees bought up all the stock, and it didn't get back into this country until 'eighty-seven, the last Jubilee year. See the thorns on her, *and* the stiff pride o' stem, *and* the pride o' colour—fit for any queen! She's not the best, though. . . . She'll do for last Jubilee—not for this. Wait till you've seen the best of all!"

She led them to a plant—stunted by the secateurs, yet vigorous—which showed, with three or four buds as yet closed and green, one solitary bloom, pure white and of incomparable shape.

"There!" said she proudly. "That's a tea, and the finest yet grown, to *my* mind. That's the rose for this Diamond Jubilee, and white as a diamond. A proper royal Widow's rose!"

"Is that its name?" asked Cai.

Mrs Bosenna laughed and plucked the bloom.

"On the contrary," said she with a mischievous twitch of the mouth, "'tis called *The Bride*! There's only one bloom, you see, and I can't offer to part it. Now which of you two 'd like it for a buttonhole?"

She held out the rose, challenging them.