

"Your majesty must choose a consort," said Mary Percy, taking her stand beside her as maid of honor.

She blushed, and then laughed, and, raising her wand, touched Randal on the shoulder. In an instant he was seated by her side, his stately head bent, whispering some gallant speech in her willing ear.

The music now struck up, and every one arose to their feet for the dance. Partners were quickly selected, and Etoile and Randal took their places at the head of the first quadrille.

"Where's Kath, Gypsy?" said Mary Percy's brother, approaching me.

I glanced round, and for the first time perceived that she was gone. Hurriedly turning away, I passed through the crowd, and ran up to her room. She sat at the open window, through which the cold winter air came blowing, lifting the damp braids of her black hair off her high, broad brow, and playing hide and seek amid her Christmas wreath.

"Kathleen, dear Kathleen!" I said, throwing my arms around her neck, and kissing her cold, pale forehead.

She pushed me away almost rudely.

"What do you want here?" she said, impatiently.

"May I not stay with you, Kathleen? I love you so much!" said I, pleadingly.

"No, no, leave me. Go join in the dance, Gypsy."

"I had rather stay with you, cousin."

"Methinks you should find it pleasanter staying with that pretty baby Etoile," she said, with a curl of her proud lip.

"I shall *hate* her, Kath!" I said fiercely; "she had no business coming here to make you unhappy!"

The dreary look I had seen on entering came again over her face.

"It must have come sooner or later," she said, steadily; "she only hastened it a little. It is well that I have awakened from the one dream of my life at once. You know my secret, Gypsy?"

"That you love Randal—yes," said I, gently.

"And he will love this pretty doll. I see it all," said Kathleen, calmly; "and I——"

She paused.

"And you will be miserable all your life," I broke in, passion