

Elizabeth Surrenders

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ALEC (glooming with her): He's gone to the grocery store for half-a-pint of cream.

KITTY: What a prosaic world we live in! Is there no romance in life? Wish I'd never been born! Then you'd all have been sorry!

ALEC: Kitty, my dear, the world is full of romance; life is teeming with romance. And the people who seem the least romantic—he glances toward the door where Elizabeth has made her exit—are sometimes possessed of hearts filled to the brim with loving, and with dreams of love. O, my dear, if only we were not all so shy of each other, that we fear to show the romance that makes us most human.

(Neville enters hastily. He is carrying a small, unwrapped bottle of cream, and some flowers, which he puts on the table as he speaks. He hasn't expected to find the happy lovers together, and wishes that he had come in, as he went out, by the back way. He'll be blown if he will congratulate the pair on their engagement. He stiffens perceptibly, and bows stiffly over the cream bottle.)

NEVILLE: How are you, sir! Hello, Kitty. Nice weather we're having though it looks as if it might blow up rain.

KITTY (saucily): Yes, Nev. I admit that it looks as if we might have a spell of weather before long!

NEVILLE: I sincerely hope not. So bad for rheumatism, and so on. Hope your gout hasn't been troubling you lately, sir. My late grandfather had the same trouble before HE died.

(He makes his escape when Elizabeth calls him.)

ELIZABETH (in the distance): Is that you, Nev, dear? I want you. How do these snapper fasteners work?

KITTY (calling): I'll help you.

ELIZABETH: I prefer Neville, thank you.

KITTY (chuckling): That was a nasty one about the gout, Guardy. He's a first-class pig! Now, supposing you just run along—you forgot to post a very important letter.

ALEC: Oh! Thanks for the information.

KITTY (coaxingly): Give me five minutes, and I'll see what I can do while Elizabeth is—huh!—dressing.

ALEC: Five minutes to talk to the—pig?

KITTY (dimpling at him): Yes, sir! (wistfully). He seems to be pretty miserable now, doesn't he?

(There are peals of laughter from the room beyond the kitchenette, where Elizabeth and Neville are struggling with the unaccustomed dome fasteners.)

ALEC (as he obligingly goes out): Of course, he's abject. Listen to him, the heart-broken young puppy!

(Kitty doesn't know just what to do with her precious five minutes. However, having no time to waste, she calls to Elizabeth.)

KITTY (sweetly—oh, very sweetly): Elizabeth, dear. Neville has brought you some flowers. Shall we put them in water?

ELIZABETH (in the distance): The dear man! Neville, darling, take in this pitcher of water and arrange them in the blue vase. And do tidy the place up, both of you—the studio looks like Bedlam.

NEVILLE (entering backwards, the pitcher of water in his hands, and speaking to Elizabeth): Anything you say, sweetheart, only don't be long. The hours I spend without thee, Dear Heart, are as a string of—of—of dried onions to me!

(Neville's effort at being lover-like and funny at one and the same time are rather disastrous, looking at it in one light, but the fact remains that Kitty is nearly bowled over by his unmistakably lover-like tone, and, of course, that is what he is doing it for—so that's quite satisfactory. He turns to Kitty to see just how convincing has been his histrionic effort; then speaks in an impersonal, but withal big-brotherly tone, that fills her with a wild desire to slap him.)

NEVILLE: O, Kitty, my dear child, just wait till you see her! For the first time within your memory and mine, the darling—“clothed and in her right mind!”—She's a walking fashion-plate, the love! (He eyes her appraisingly.) Oh, I tell you—it takes a brunoise to do justice to the beautiful clothes!

(He arranges the flowers in water, waving her away when she offers to help, with a don't-interfere gesture; then he tidies up the studio, darting hither and thither as he talks, stumbling over her, as if she were a kitten under his feet.)

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