

Stuart pleaded, leaping from his seat and seizing her hand. "I'm awfully glad to see you!"

"Then, don't call me that name again," she pouted.

"Why not?"

"Because it's undignified. All nicknames are."

"But isn't it beautiful?"

"It would be if my hair wasn't red and I didn't have freckles and was older," she protested, looking away to hide her emotion.

"But your hair isn't quite red. It's just the colour of the gold in honeycomb," he answered, gently touching her dishevelled locks — "besides, those few little freckles are becoming on your pink and white skin — and you are nearly fifteen."

"Well, my hair is red enough to make me think you're teasing when you call me Sunshine," she replied demurely.

"Then I won't call you that any more. I'll just say, little pal — how's that?"

"That's better!" she said with a smile and sigh.

"Oh, Jim, I've been so dreadfully lonely since you were away! Where did you go? And why did you stay so long? And why didn't you write me more than one little letter? And why didn't you answer the one I wrote in reply? — You know I'm almost an orphan anyhow. Papa spends nearly all his time at the factory, the drug store, the dispensary, and visiting his patients. I declare, Jim, I'll die if you go away again. I just can't stand it." She dropped at last into a chair exhausted.

Stuart smilingly took her hand:

"Lonely, Miss Chatterbox — when that big father of yours worships the very ground you walk on!"

"Yes, I know he does, Jim, and I love him, too, but you've no idea how dreadfully still the house is when