

"The material is very fine," she said; "and this rich, old-fashioned fur will cut into nice strips for trimming. I can make a handsome jacket out of it; and I think," she added, softly, "granddad would like me to have it if he knew."

"Granddad, indeed!" echoed Mrs. Grayson, "I should think you'd have but little respect for his memory, after the manner he treated you. Never leaving you a penny, after you nursed him and stayed for him as you did!"

"I think he intended to leave me something," said Kathie. "I know he did, but he died so suddenly, and there was some mistake."

"Oh, nonsense! I wouldn't give a fig for good intentions. He had lots of money; everybody knows that. It has all gone to that scapegrace, Dugald, and you haven't a penny for your wedding dowry."

"Charlie won't mind that," said Kathie, her cheeks glowing like a rose.

"Won't he? Don't tell me, child! Everyone thought you would be old Tom Rowland's heiress, when you first met him. Ten to one he would never have given you a second thought but for that. Now that he's disappointed, he's too much of a man to back out, of course; but he feels it all the same. Don't tell me!"

Kathie uttered no word in answer. She took the old coat and, crossing to the window, sat down to unpick it. Her wedding-day was drawing near; there was no time to lose.

Mrs. Grayson settled herself on the lounge for a nap; the big Maltese cat purred on the rug, the canary chirped lazily in his cage, and without above the waving line of tree-tops, the December sunset glowed.

Kathie began to unpick the closely-stitched seams, her pretty face looking sad and downcast. Aunt Grayson's worldly-wise talk had put her out of heart.

All her life she had been such a brave little soul. Left an orphan early, she had lived with her grandfather and made his last days bright.

"You're a dear child, Kathie. By and-bye, when you think of being a bride, I'll give you a marriage dowry."

He had said so dozens of times; yet after his sudden death, one mid-winter night, there was no mention of Kathie found in his will, and everything went to Dugald, the son of a second marriage.

Kathie did not complain, but it cut her to the heart to think granddad had forgotten her. She tried not to believe it—that there was some mistake.

And when Dugald sold the old homestead and went abroad, she gathered up all the old souvenirs and took care of them. The old fur-trimmed overcoat was one.

Then, lodging at her aunt's, she taught the village children and saved up her earnings for her marriage-day. For Charles Montague loved her and had asked her to be his wife.

The wedding-day was appointed, and Kathie was beginning, with a fluttering heart, to think about making her purchases, when her brother George fell ill; and worse, fell into trouble. He was rather a shiftless man, and had been unfortunate; his little home was mortgaged, and, unless the debt could be cleared, the house would be sold over his head. Kathie heard and did not hesitate an instant. Her hoarded earnings went to pay the debt.

She did not regret her generosity, sitting there in the glow of the waning sunset; she would have done the same thing again. She did not doubt her handsome, high-born lover's loyal truth; yet her girl's heart ached, and tears dimmed her clear, bright eyes.

It was had to be so cramped for a little money, and one's wedding-day so near. Her wardrobe was limited. She needed a nice, seal-brown cashmere dreadfully, and a light silk or two for evening wear. Aunt Grayson told the truth; she would look shabby at Oaklands in the midst of Charlie's stately sisters.

The tears came faster, and presently the little pearl-handled knife, with which she was unpicking the seams, slipped suddenly, and cut a great gash right across the breast of the coat.

Kathie gave a little shriek of dismay. "There now, I've spoiled the best of the cloth, and I can't cut my jacket out of it; what shall I do?"

Down went the bright young head, and, with her face buried in granddad's old coat, Kathie cried as if her heart would break.

Mrs. Grayson snored on the lounge, the Maltese cat purred before the hearth, the canary twittered, and out above the wintry hills the sunset fires still burned.

Her cry over, Kathie raised her head, dried her eyes, and went on with her unpicking. Something rustled under her hands.

"Why, what's this? Some of poor grandpapa's papers!"

She tore the lining loose, and there, beneath the wadding, was a paper packet tied with red tape.

Kathie drew it forth. One side was marked:—

"This packet belongs to my grand-daughter, Kathie."

"Why, what can it be?" cried Kathie, her fingers fluttering, as she tugged at the tape.

At last the knot yielded, and she unfolded the package. Folded coupon bonds—a round dozen at least, and a thick layer of crisp bank notes. On the top was a little note. She read it.

"My dear little grand daughter, here is your marriage dowry—two thousand pounds. One day some fine fellow will claim you for his wife. You are a treasure in yourself, but take this from old granddad."

"Oh, granddad, you did not forget me!" sobbed Kathie.

A ring at the door startled her. She looked out and saw her lover. Gathering her treasures into the lap of her apron, she rushed out to meet him.

"Oh, Charlie, come in—come in! I've such wonderful news to tell you!"

The young man followed her into the drawing room, wondering what had happened.

"Oh, Charlie!" she cried, breathlessly, holding up her apron, her eyes shining, her cheeks aglow, look here, I am rich! I've found my marriage dowry! A minute ago I was crying because I was so poor. I had to give George all my money, and I've only one silk dress; and I had to trim up my old hat, and auntie laughed at me so, and said you would feel ashamed. I was cutting up granddad's old overcoat to make a jacket, and I found this. Only see—two thousand pounds! Oh, Charlie! I'm so glad for your sake!"

The young man bent down and kissed the sweet, tremulous mouth.

"My darling!" he said, his voice thrilling with tenderness, "I am glad of all this, because you are glad. For my own part, I would rather have taken these little hands without a penny in them. You need no dowry, Kathie; you are crowned with beauty, and purity and goodness. In my eyes you are always fresh, and fair, and lovely, no matter what you wear. I love you for your sweet self, my darling!"

Kathie let the folded coupons and bank notes slip from her apron and fall to the floor in a rustling shower.

"Oh, Charlie!" she whispered, leaning her head against his shoulder, "I am so glad!"

"Glad of what, Kathie? Granddad's dowry?"

"No; glad you love me for myself!"

He clasped her close, and at their feet granddad's marriage dowry lay unheeded.

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