
THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER

In order to make a living for herself she gave music lessons to a small number of pupils. Her constant devotion to her infirm mother did not allow her much time. Her income was little enough, but by careful saving she managed year by year to make ends meet. She played the piano remarkably well, and deserved a hearing from the musical world. In the years back she had been a great friend of Signor Fastini, whose studio had stood just across the street from her mother's cottage. She had been a bright little girl and had shown decided talent, so the Signor took her in, and in time she developed into one of his best pianists. She was destined to carve a name for herself, but the ties of home bound her fast, and she sacrificed the concert platform in order to care for her poor old mother. In her heart she deemed it her duty to do so.

When Muriel reached the Rawlins cottage the sound of music floated into the desolate street. Quickly she tiptoed across the lawn and hid behind the large rosebush that stood in front of the half-open cottage window. A soothing Mendelssohn aria was just then stealing from the room. Muriel recognized it. The music recalled tender memories. She pressed closer to the window and gazed into the plain little cottage. Mazie Rawlins sat at the piano. Her fingers moved slowly over the keys, but her thoughts were elsewhere.