

sea-fog soon destroy the wood, and it crumbles down and lies in fragments on the graves where the rank grass grows over and hides it.

It had a melancholy and depressing effect, that deserted graveyard, hence it was not a favorite spot of Else's, but this day by some chance her steps strayed there.

She was wandering among the mounds when she suddenly became aware of a figure seated on the rank grass with its arms leaning on one of the coffin shaped blocks, and with its head bowed upon them.

Curiosity made Else draw near that drooping figure, its attitude was so dejected. "Someone who has lost a husband or child," she thought, as she approached.

At the sound of her footsteps the figure raised its head. "Joanna!" she exclaimed, in surprise, as she saw the pale, drawn face lifted to meet her gaze.

"Yes, it is I," she answered quietly.

"What do you here? are you going to be married, too, that you can afford to sit idle?"

A faint flush mounted to Joanna's pale face at the implied taunt, but she said, in a calm unruffled voice: "I often come here when I am tired, I fancy *she* can hear me," and she pointed to the grave from which she had just risen.

"What sentiment," sneered Else. "As if your mother, or any of the dead that lie here can hear you, no matter how loudly you call to them."

"I like to think that I am near her, the world is so lonely for me," and a tear glittered in Joanna's eye as she remembered that in all the universe there was no one with whom she could claim kin.

"You can soon remedy that," Else remarked coolly.

"How?" and the soft eyes were raised to hers in surprise.

"Easily enough, get a lover."

If Joanna had blushed before she was doubly red now, cheek, throat and brow were dyed crimson.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Else, maliciously, "I see how it is, the little prude has already done so, my advice was needless."

"You mistake," said Joanna, as the flush receded, leaving her paler by the contrast.

"Oh! indeed," incredulously.

But the calm voice went on, "I have no lover and never shall have."

"But that is no reason why *you* should not love. Come, confess: which among the hardy fishers is honoured by the fair Joanna's preference?"

Once again the crimson mounted to Joanna's brow, but she managed to say quietly, "I have told you the truth. I have no lover and am never likely to have one."

"Nonsense. Are not Jens and Martin and Glob all ready to become your betrothed if you would only permit them?"

"I shall never marry," affirmed Joanna.

"It's my belief you are in love now. Who can it be with? Not Jens or Niels; you shake your head. Is it Karl? You might do worse. No. Ha! ha! What fun it would be if you were in love with Ole."

At this home-thrust Joanna rose suddenly, and confronted Else with her eyes flashing, and her chest heaving.

"How can you say such things?" she cried, passionately. "Ole loves you better than anything, even than life itself, he has no thought for any other woman."

"I did not say that he cared for *you*," with supreme contempt. "Not likely when he is in love with me. I assure you I am not in the slightest degree jealous. I know he would never look at you or any one else."

A sudden resolution came to Joanna.

It was true. She did love Ole Bertel with a pure disinterested affection such as Else Preben could have no conception of, but hers was an unselfish love which could put itself aside for the good of the beloved object.

"Else," she cried, impulsively clasping her hands, and coming a step nearer to her unconscious rival, "Ole loves you with his whole heart and soul. Surely such love as his merits some better return than you are making?"

"What do you mean?" Else demanded, haughtily.

"I—I saw you, Else, that day among the sand-hills."

"What day?"

"Oh! Else, you must know."

"I do not," frowning heavily, as if by that means she would daunt the girl before her from saying any more.

But Joanna could be brave enough in Ole's behalf.

"I saw you," she said, "and you were lying in Karl Malen's arms, you were allowing him to rain kisses on your lips."

"That was before I was engaged to Ole."

"No, Else," firmly, "it was since, and—and it was not the only time."

"And if it was, I do not care to have *you* sitting in judgement on my conduct," Else said fiercely. "Who are you that you should dictate to me?"

"I have no wish to dictate; but Else, think, there will be nothing but misery before you if you go on in this way. What would Ole say if he knew?"

"You are not going to tell him?" hurriedly, in some alarm.

"You need not fear me, but what I saw others may see and then——"

"Then, I can let that take care of itself."

"You will not meet Karl Malen any more?"

"You take a very great interest in my affairs."

"Else, for Ole's sake."

"Humph! all your solicitude is for Ole; well, I will tell you this: not for you, nor for Ole, nor for anybody else will I change my mode of proceeding."

(To be Continued.)

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