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Elsie's Matchmaking

By E. M. G., Winnipeg

"It is too hot to do anything but be lazy," Carry Willis had declared, when her dearest girl friend had suggested a stroll by the river: and lazy she certainly looked, stretched on a luxurious lounge, in the cool drawing room. True, she had an open book in her hand, but any adventurous youth might easily have stepped up and stolen a kiss from those tempting red lips—for she was in *S'umterland*.

Voices on the balcony, wafted in by the summer breeze, at length aroused her, and she stretched and sighed. Fragments of the conversation floated in and her lip curled as she heard Miss Belinda and Minnie Jackson discussing the love affairs of the various young ladies of their acquaintance.

Suddenly she started up and leaned forward as if to catch every word, while an angry flush rose to her cheek.

"Here comes Dick Warren and Elsie Gordon; been for a lover's stroll, I guess. I wonder where Carrie is?"

"I am surprised she is not there, too; really it is disgraceful the way she tries to monopolize him, forcing herself on him; but she will have to play her cards well if she means to win him, for anyone can see he thinks a lot of Elsie, and she of him."

"Oh, yes, I shall not be the least surprised—"

But Carry heard no more. Springing up, she rushed from the room, down the hall, out a side door, nor stopped till she reached her favorite hiding place, a shady nook, securely hidden by tall trees, from two of which temptingly hung a hammock.

But the hammock had no charms for

her now. Throwing herself on the grass she gave way to her anger and wounded feelings in a passionate burst of tears.

"How dare they! how dare they!" she cried; "but, oh, it is not true; it can't be; it has always been Richie and I ever since I can remember: and to say that I force myself on him—it isn't fair; surely he does not think that!"

She lay still for a while, thinking it all over, and wondering what she should do.

"After all," she mused, "he never said he loved me; perhaps he does care for her; I always tell her she is so much nicer and better than I—well, if he does not want me, I guess I can spare him to my darling Elsie."

This was a heroic resolve, which proved easier said than done.

Meanwhile the sky had grown dark, and a slight sprinkle of rain gave warning of an approaching shower, so Carry picked herself up and started for the house. In the distance she saw Dick Warren hastening towards the gates. "So he is not going to stay for dinner," she thought. "I don't care; I am glad. Thank goodness, those Jacksons go tomorrow; I hate them, if they are our guests."

While dressing for dinner, she carefully made her plans. She would watch for herself for awhile and see if it was so; and if those "hateful" Jacksons were right, she would run away and pay a long promised visit to her cousins in the States. Anyway, she would not give Dick any more chances to think she was angling for him.

Just then Elsie danced into the room. "Where have you been? Richie and I were looking for you everywhere. He brought some news."

"What is it?" answered Carry, carelessly.

"Why, you have heard me speak of Arthur Morton, a chum of his I met last summer; he is coming to stay with him in a few days, and of course we shall see lots of him."

"Oh! what fun!" exclaimed Carry. "I was just wishing for someone fresh to amuse me. It is so long since we had a new boy to play with," she added, laughingly.

Elsie's eyes opened wide. "Now, now, Carry, you need not pretend Richie is not enough for you always, without anyone new."

"Oh, well, Elsie, I am sure you enjoy his company just as much as I do; you need not pretend you don't."

The next week was certainly the most miserable Carry ever spent. True to her resolve, she carefully watched and weighed each action and word that passed between Dick and Elsie, imagining they were but the veil of deeper feelings, till she almost believed the surmise she had heard was true.

To Elsie she was just as loving; in fact, she seemed to cling to her more than ever, but towards Dick she allowed a slight coolness mixed with a careless indifference to take the place of the former familiar intercourse to which they were accustomed.

At first he was inclined to think it a joke, but as day after day went on in the same manner he grew more and more perplexed.

It was very monotonous to both of them, though indeed, neither let the other know he or she thought so; however, Carry's spirits rose (to all appearances) on the arrival of Arthur Morton, and if her aim was to make Richie jealous by the way she treated his friend, she certainly succeeded, for

he began to think she really preferred the latter's company to his.

One lovely afternoon the four friends were enjoying themselves in a lazy fashion, under the shade of the tall trees, which made the lawn so beautiful. Dick, who was studying to be a lawyer, was revelling in a three weeks' holiday, and needless to say, he and his friend spent most of their time in the company of the two girls, where they were always welcome. He had hoped to carry back to his work with him a certain promise from Carry, to help him along, but somehow he began to fear that it was hopeless.

During a pause in the merry chit-chat, Arthur glanced up at Elsie, to find her eyes fixed on him with a scrutinizing air.

"What are you thinking of, Miss Gordon?" he asked; "I am sure it is about me."

"You may be sorry you wanted to know," said Carry; "Elsie is noted for her candor."

"I am not afraid; do tell," he pleaded.

Elsie colored slightly. "I was just thinking of the difference between you and Richie."

"How interesting! You have but whetted our curiosity; you must go on to explain it now."

"Why, except that you are both tall, you are as different as possible: still Mr. Morton is much slighter than you; then Richie has brown eyes that make you feel as if you must laugh, while you have big brown serious ones; and you have lots of dark curly hair, and are clean shaven, and I think you would look funny with a moustache, but Richie has an ordinary quantity of straight fair hair, and since he has grown that golden moustache, it is whispered among the girls that he is 'getting quite good looking.' Richie is always a great tease, and generally very merry, but you at present, any-

way, always see oh! I can't tell By this time laughing heartily mischievously.

"The best description, Elsie, which is the fellows."

Elsie crimsoned came to her rescue.

"You need not you; you know I could write things she says seeing that it is go into the house."

Elsie was so cool her face, Arthur hurried and Carry to follow.

There was a Richie exclaimed "Four o'clock to meet a fellow excuse me, Carry."

For a moment she was playing "Oh, Richie."

"I am sorry stay," he answered at the fair face promised, and know."

"Oh! it does I thought you

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She danced in despair heart heavy

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