

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## Rose-Colored Glasses.

(Anna Johnson, in the 'New York Observer'.)

'To-morrow is the great day. I would not miss it for the world, and yet I dread it. Monsieur LaGran will be exacting, and I will be stupid.'

The Vanes were assembled on the front porch. Off at the right the glow of the sunset was beginning to fade. Mrs. Vane sat in a rocker, and Violet, the flower-faced eldest daughter of the house, sat in another. Maurice and Margie, the sixteen-year-old twins, occupied a hammock, while Thomas lay on the floor. It was Maurice who had spoken.

The mother smiled over at her son. 'Of course you would not miss it. You have been a year earning the money for this term of violin lessons. You'll not mind if the good monsieur is a little stern.'

'Bolster your courage with the thought of the day when you will be a world-renowned violinist yourself,' was Margie's advice. 'For lessons on the piano from a teacher like monsieur, I'd eat humble pie, and do it gladly if not gracefully.'

Maurice looked wistfully into the bright, dark face, a softened and more feminine counterpart of his own. 'If you could have the lessons! That is the worst thing about money—it refuses to stretch enough to cover the real needs of the family.'

There was a moment's silence. The Vanes were far from being wealthy. Even the house and the great flouring mill where the husband and father spent his days still belonged to Uncle Luther, the rich but crabbed old bachelor, whose home was with them. They were to make him a home as long as he lived; at his death the house and the mill would be theirs.

In the meantime, the mill made them a comfortable living, but that was all. The father, Julian Vane, longed to make needed improvements, hoping thereby to make the property more productive. There was no money for these. Violet had graduated a year before; there was no money for her to go to college. The twins had still another year in school, but the musical training they longed for was beyond their reach. Even Thomas had his ambition. He was to be a lawyer, and he practiced his oratorical flights when alone in his own room.

It was Violet who recalled the family from their musings. Indeed it often was Violet who made the rough places smooth.

'Maurice, do not look for severity from Monsieur LeGran. He is a musician; he will recognize your musical hunger. I expect you to come home singing his praises.'

'Oh, that's too much to expect, Vi. Thank you for trying to hearten a fellow, but you always do look at things through rose-colored glasses.'

Thomas sat up. 'Rose-colored glasses? What are they? Your term may be poetical, my brother, it may even be musical, but it is not practical.'

'Why, everybody knows what that means,' Maurice cried.

His brother sprang up and disappeared at once within the house. A moment later he returned, carrying the large dictionary.

'We'll apply to your flowery language the test mother taught us when we were fourth-graders—see if it is in the dictionary. R. ro, rose. Here it is and a long list of compounds. Let me see.'

The boy had seated himself upon the upper step, the huge book resting on his knee.

Soft gray shadows were beginning to gather, and Thomas bent his head closer to the page before him.

'I've found it, I mean the noun, rose-colored. Its definition is, "The color of the rose. Hence, figuratively, a roseate or attractive appearance or aspect." And there's an adjective, rose-colored. Even allowing you to use figurative language, I don't see upon what you base the charge brought against our bonnie sister.'

'It is true,' Maurice replied with a laugh, 'even if beyond your intellectual power to grasp. Vi always does see the bright side.'

'Well, that's commendable.'

'But she sees it, whether it is there or not. Of course she thinks it's there,' smiling over at his eldest sister: 'Mother, help me out, you know what I mean.'

'You mean that Violet looks for and recognizes the good. It reminds me of St. Paul's beautiful "whatsoever" verse. You recollect how, in his letter to the Philippians, he urges them to think on the things that are pure, lovely and of good report.'

Thomas moved nearer his mother and laid his dark head in her lap. 'They are good glasses to look through.'

'Yes, dear boy. We will all wear them. Let us look for good deeds from our fellow man and a good motive in what he does. The rose-colored glasses see the good, and there is good in everything.'

'Even in privation, mother?' Maurice then asked.

'There is often a real good in privation. It encourages self-dependence and promotes a spirit of helpfulness. Viewed through rose-colored glasses, I see that poverty is better for my ambitious girls and boys than wealth, if this last-named should bring selfishness with it. Your father agrees with me.'

Mr. Vane was coming up the walk. Violet slipped down on a cushion by the side of her brother Thomas, and her father took the chair she had occupied.

'What is it about rose-colored glasses? Mine are blurred to-night. If the drowth continues the corn crop will be ruined. Then how is my old friend, Hugh Thomas, to meet the note to which I was foolish enough to put my name?'

'I believe my glasses will fit you, father.' It was Violet who spoke, and she slipped one hand into the toil-hardened one of her father. 'Seed time and harvest, are promised, you know.'

Mr. Vane smiled, unconsciously straightening his form as he did so. 'You are right, my daughter. Why should we not look for good things—for the best? God is over all.'

'It's a comforting thought,' Maurice admitted. 'I am going to look at Monsieur LaGran and the world generally through rose-colored glasses.'

Through all this conversation Luther Vane was sitting just inside the open door. All knew he was there. They gave the matter little thought, for the old man resolutely refused to be interested in the merry conversation of the children.

Suddenly he rose and moved quietly to the door of his own room. When he was shut up by himself, he did not light a lamp, but sat down by an open window and looked up to where the stars were beginning to shine out in the unclouded sky.

'Rose-colored glasses! Humph! Julian and that serene-faced wife of his have looked at the world through them all these years. And sometimes I believe she sees me and all my

faults through them. But it is the children and their future upon which her gaze rests.'

He learned back in his chair, recalling how he had always disapproved of his niece's aspirations for her children. They had not been spoiled by these dreams. The head and heart of Maurice might be filled with music, yet he cheerily gave his leisure hours to working in the mill. Violet might dream of poetry and college life, but she dusted, and baked good bread.

'Rose-colored glasses,' the old man repeated. 'Mine have a golden tinge; I have thought of little but money for years, and soon I must die and leave it. There was no reason why I should not have put my name to Hugh Thomas' note. His father was my dearest friend. Julian was a fool to do it, for should he have the amount to pay, it would ruin him. There are so many things I might have done! Well, I am too old to don these new-fangled glasses, but I will see how they become the younger generation of Vanes.'

Maurice Vane took his violin lesson the next afternoon. He walked home through a gently falling rain. Remembering the acres of tall, dark green corn and what they meant to his father's friend the youth laughed aloud as the raindrops fell upon his face.

'It does not need rose-colored glasses to see good in this rain,' he said as he entered the dining-room where the family were assembled round the table. 'It may surprise you to learn that I did not need them in the case of Monsieur La Gran.'

He took his place at the table as he spoke. His mother and father served him. Uncle Luther went on eating, but the other members of the family laid down their forks and waited breathlessly for Maurice to proceed.

'Thank you, mother,' as he took the dish of sugared blackberries from her hand. 'Monsieur is fine. He has lived for music, and it has softened and perfected his nature. In a way he is severe; he told me that I had everything to learn, but he made me feel that to learn was a glorious privilege.'

Luther Vane shot a keen glance at the flushed, eager young face. The old man was recalling his own boyish love for music. He had let the greed for gold crowd out the very thing that Maurice said had softened and perfected another man's nature.

The days of summer and early autumn sped by. Violet was her mother's right hand. In the girl's leisure hours she read and studied. Maurice did not neglect his school work nor the tasks at the mill, but every spare moment was given to his violin. Margie practiced on the wheezy old piano and dreamed her own girlish dreams.

One evening the twins were seated on the back steps. Maurice was going over every detail of his lesson for the benefit of Margie.

'If you could only have lessons, too,' he said. 'I will some day. Don't think I envy you, Maurice. I remember how many skating parties you gave up to earn this money. Our day will come—Vi's and mine. Vi will teach a country school next year, and I—well, I must wait and trust.'

'Rose-colored glasses,' Maurice laughed, glad that the semi-darkness did not permit his sister to see how his lips quivered. 'If I only had Uncle Luther's money.'

Margie shook her head. 'I am afraid it would blur your vision as it does his. Poor Uncle Luther! He does not know how much happiness there is in looking through rose-colored glasses.'

Luther Vane overheard this conversation as