

"Been cryin'?" I asks.

"A little," says Vee. "Silly thing to do when one's packing."

"See here, Vee," says I; "I ought to be doing something about this."

"But you can't," says she. "No one can. I must trot along with Auntie, just as I always have, and stay until—until she's ready to come back."

"Then it'll be a case of movin' on somewhere for the summer, I expect—Nova Scotia or Iceland?" says I.

Vee nods and lets out a sigh.

"If we was a pair of wild ducks, now," says I.

At which she snickers kind of hysterical and—well, it's the first time I ever knew her to do the sob act. Also I'd never been quite sure before that I was much more to her than sort of an amusin' pal. But when she grips me around the neck that way, and snuggles her head of straw-colored hair down on my necktie, and just naturally cuts loose for a good cry—say, then I knew.

I knew it was to be me and Vee from then on. I ain't givin' it any fancy name. We ain't either of us the mushy kind, I hope. But I felt that she needed me to stand by, that I could be of some use. That was thrillin' and wonder-