

Madge glanced at his face and hands. "Haven't you been to work?" she asked.

"Nope."

"Why, Dol?"

"Fired," said Speckles laconically.

"Oh, Dol, again!" she cried reproachfully. "What for?"

"'Tain't only the third time, and 'twasn't for nothin'," said Speckles, a bit sullenly. "I was only restin'."

"Dolivar Babson," she accused, "you were loafing. Oh, Dol, you'll never get to firing, and—and—" She hesitated and stopped, her cheeks a little red with the hint of boy-and-girl castle-building that would have increased her father's ire against the luckless Speckles had he seen it.

Speckles, somewhat shamefaced, and having no excuse to offer, trudged on in silence.

"Did you ask Mr. Healy to take you back?" she inquired, after a moment.

"He won't," said Speckles.

"What are you going to do, Dol?"

"I dunno."

"Well," said Madge, hopefully, "perhaps you could get a job in one of the stores. I'll ask Mr. Timmons, the grocer, if you like. I know him pretty well."

Speckles came to an abrupt and sudden halt, cast in Madge's face one look that carried with it a world of unutterable reproach, handed over her books in silence—and fled.