
CHILD OF DESTINY

bench not many yards away. The old woman had her back turned. Slowly and noiselessly she tiptoed up behind her, then threw her arms about her neck and kissed her tenderly.

Mrs. Hawkins had been so wrapped up in her book that she had not heard Muriel's footsteps.

"Goodness gracious, child! You frightened me," shrieked the woman.

"Never mind, auntie," the girl interposed.

"The situation was really too tempting."

Muriel could not restrain her laughter, and in a moment the dear old aunt joined in with her.

"But come, let's be friends again," whispered the girl as she put her arms about her a second time.

"Where do all the pretty roses come from, Muriel?" Mrs. Hawkins asked.

"From the garden, to be sure. You see, I did not forget that this is your birthday, so Matt gave me permission to pluck the prettiest ones for you. May many more birthdays gladden your heart," the girl said with feeling as she handed her the fragrant flowers.

"Thank you, child! It is all very thoughtful of you and I appreciate your kind words. But alas! I am afraid I have seen most of my birthdays. The summer of life has passed over me, the autumn is now here, and soon it will be winter. Yes, darling, soon it will—."