

sense he would have seen the sweetness was for ends of her own. "Oh, how sweet of you and how cruel of me, Braggy." Her tone was very clear. If he had only looked down the past he might have remembered that whenever she had called him Braggy she had been planning to do him.

He sighed again, which shut his mouth the second time. Eloise, demurely, but inwardly nearly bursting, did likewise. "Well?" he asked, expectantly.

"Yes," said Eloise encouragingly.

"I mean — can't — I now?"

"There's never a better time than the present, Braggy, you remember the school books say." Then she reached down and, pretending earnestness, said:

"You've got a walk-over, it's plain. It's yours for the asking, Braggy. And so — well — it's big odds I'm giving you, Braggy," and she laughed like a wood thrush, "but if you win that race I'll be yours alone henceforth and forever, Braggy."

He paled, taking her hand, which fell sideways down past her saddle-tree, in his.

"Oh Eloise — dearest," — he started bookishly, but ended in his own way, which was mentally unlearned: "Gee — but I'll win or bust!"

"And if you don't," began Eloise, ever so indifferently. "Of course you will," she smiled; "but if you don't, Braggy, now dear, why you'll