

Calla and Lily

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once that they were very pretty. As often as they dared, they darted little glances at their new acquaintance. He appeared to be a muscular lad, well hardened by physical labor; a little under the average height but quite big enough and dangerous enough to the twins. At the present moment he had an air nothing less than ferocious; but at Hilgenreiner's that is a well known cover for bashfulness. Young men were assorted by the twins into three great classes: "swell," "steady," and "fresh." This one was undoubtedly of the middle kind. They telegraphed their thankfulness across the table that he was not of the third division, while secretly reserving a little sigh that he did not come under the first head.

Presently, with a preliminary moan, the band overhead slipped into one of the slow waltzes beloved of Hilgenreiners. Each twin felt a tightness in her breast and looked steadily at her glass. What would he do next? For some precious moments he did nothing—but squirm uneasily on his chair. Finally he blurted out.

"Well, here's a fix! Who'm I going to dance with?"

"Calla," said Lily, instantly.

"Lily," said Calla, just as quickly.

"I don't care to dance," added Lily.

"I'd rather watch," said Calla.

"It'll be over before we decide," said he. "We'll have to toss for it! Heads I dance with Calla, tails with Lily!"

his dancing the next dance with Calla. Fortunately it was not necessary, for when the music stopped he accompanied her as a matter of course. They had more lemonade in spite of a protest from the twins, and when the band struck up again the young man and Calla were among the first couples on the floor. As she watched them appearing and disappearing in the shifting throng, Lily lived it all over again; and when they compared notes on the way home the twins found that, allowing for the difference between two-step and waltz time, Calla's sensations during her first dance with a young man were exactly the same as her sister's. They learned his name on parting—Burton Shevlin. He was a shipper at Mandel and Cohn's big department store. He pronounced his name "Bryton," just as the twins said "certainly" when he asked them if they would be at Hilgenreiner's the following Saturday.

The twins had little sleep that night; time after time as they were about to drop off, one or the other would remember something and turn over in bed with eyes shining in the dark.

"You know I always said red was our color, Lily."

"So you did. Isn't it good we hadn't bought our new dress goods before this happened?"

"He paid me a compliment about it when we were dancing, says he, 'Your dress is just the color of your cheeks.'"

"He said that to me, too. We had a good color to-night."



"Shake hands with my friend, Mr. William Dolan."

He produced a quarter from his pocket and flipped it onto the table.

"Tails it is!" he cried. "Come on Lily!"

She got up slowly, as she had seen the popular girls do, and giving her skirts a shake, walked languidly to the dancing floor with a hand to her back hair. He grasped her firmly, she laid her face comfortably against his shoulder and they swept out into the throng.

How different it was from her uncomfortable self-conscious circlings with Calla. Far from being put out if people stared, now she hoped they were staring. For the first time there was no need for her to trouble herself about their course through the crowd; with a strong arm to support her and a pilot at the helm she could close her eyes and give herself up to it. Lily was glad it was a waltz. As she told Calla afterwards, she floated away on its slow notes like a speck of dust in a sunbeam. It seemed to her as if the ugly common things of every day were made over and made right; Hilgenreiner's became a palace of the stage with her for leading lady and her partner for the hero.

As they approached the end of the dance it again became an agitating question what he would do next. If he evinced a disposition to leave her, Lily was prepared to hang on to him and insist, in the interest of fair play, on

"All our own, too; not like some I could mention down there!"

"But he isn't the kind to be caught by anything like that."

"We wouldn't have him if he was, would we?" And so on through the whole story for the dozenth time!

On the following Saturday night the twins appeared at Hilgenreiner's early, but there was no sign of Burton on the floor, and as the evening sped by without his reappearance their disappointment was heavy. Just as they were thinking of starting for home he turned up with a shamefaced air and flags were raised in the twins' cheeks again. He danced once with each. The Saturday after that he stayed longer with them and gradually in the course of weeks he came to constitute himself their escort for the whole evening. He lost his whipped air in their company and was on the alert for any covert smiles behind the twins' backs. One night he arose suddenly from beside them and, crossing energetically, had high words with a young gentleman whom he repeatedly invited to come outside. The young gentleman declined to do so and an exchange of blows was averted. Burton maintained a watchful, war-like air during the rest of the evening, which secretly delighted the twins, though they scolded him. He refused to explain the cause of the quarrel.

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