

bring any young woman to see her unless he had **HIS**
been already committed, in his own mind, to matrimony. The prospect of his death itself would **MOTHER**
hardly have been less welcome to her; and yet the
hardening of her face and a little trembling of her
hands as she took up the dishes were the only signs
she showed of her emotion. (He was going to
marry! She would have to share Larry with a
strange woman—if he did not desert her altogether.)

She continued her work, all the joy of it gone
from her, miserable, but bearing her misery dumbly.
She did not even ask him who the girl was. (What
did it matter who it was?) She tidied up her
kitchen determinedly. "She'll not find the place
dirty when she comes," she promised herself—
reserving an opinion of what it would be like before
the girl had been long in charge of it. And when
Larry had dressed and gone out, she attacked the
little front room with the same thought—arranging
the folds in her lace curtains to conceal patching,
and covering the delinquencies of her "crimson
plush" with a cushion here and a tidy there, and
dusting the paper fans and the framed photograph
in its red-velvet mat, and assuring herself that the
block of wood was safely supporting the back leg of
the easy chair that had lost a caster. "They'll be
gettin' new," she prophesied. She herself had clung
to the old, even when Larry had wished to be rid
of them. ("There's nothin' so comfort'ble to set in
as an ol' chair," she would say, "unless 'tis an ol'
boot.") She was old herself. Well, he would soon
learn whether the new was better! She shook her
head prophetically. He would soon learn whether
the new was better.

