

sessions. She had far more things than her mother, but she was utterly callous in the way she helped herself to what she chose of her mother's things, and even impudently justified this course, with one of the pretty, naughty tosses of her head:

"Muzzie, what's yours is mine, and what's mine's my own," she would say mischievously, and receive either a kiss or a reproving shake of the head, for Mrs. Maitland had a passion for keeping her things neatly and in order, and it was distracting to find all her possessions tossed over and hidden about in this or that drawer or lost. And so with men, or for that matter, women. Elspeth would have squelched any friendship of her mother's. "Muzzie" belonged to her and to her solely, and she didn't propose to share her with any other living soul in the world. She wanted "muzzie" to "mourn" a life time for that father whom she had so rosily colored in her imagination.

"Quit! You! That's a preposterous idea!"
"Even me!"

She was slightly smiling, and he noted that her eyes looked very tired. It occurred to him that she was not sleeping nights and he said gruffly:

"You need a vacation. Don't wait till August. Take it now."

"I need a permanent vacation," she said slowly. "I don't want to work any more. I'm tired out."

"Can you afford to quit?"

He studied her keenly, and with some anxiety. He knew little about her financial status. Her salary was a good one, for work of that sort. He would have liked to make it much larger, but there were three other partners in the concern, and they had to be considered. Her home, he knew was a modest one. Rent on that side of the city was low he had heard, but even so, it must cost considerable to maintain the place, even in the slap dash way in which "that girl" ran things. Elspeth, by the way, was the housekeeper of their peculiar menage. Furthermore, Elspeth he felt sure, must cost her mother a pretty penny for clothes and the thousand and one things he suspected she demanded and got from her mother. How, then, had it been possible for Mrs. Maitland to save enough out of her salary on which to retire. She took her time about replying to his query, as if she weighed the question in her mind and hesitated to reveal the meagreness of her resources even to this man whom she knew so well.

"It's true I havn't much."

She gave him a small wry smile, that somehow touched him:

"One can't save much on a Fairbanks-Ross salary." That was the name of the firm.

"Still, I've managed to keep up an endowment policy, and now its about due. I can go along on that for awhile at least."

"I see. You know your own business. If you feel that you can carry on with the Insurance money. . ."

"Oh we could'nt live very high of course, but we'd manage somehow."

"Look here."

Her employer was leaning across the desk. He had grey curly hair and bushy eyebrows; otherwise his face was almost young, and he had a long lean body that stretched up like a young athlete's when he rose from his chair.

"Look here! Whats the matter with you and I. . ."

"I know what you are going to say, but you can stop right there. No. That's final."

"You don't know what I'm going to say."

"Yes, I do, because you've said it before."

"Hmph! So I have, doggone it."

She laughed suddenly, and the pink glowed in her cheeks. She stood up, and began pinning on her hat. He blurted out angrily:

"I know I'm a tough old nut, but I'm square, and you might do worse."

"I know I might, and you're not tough. If you say hard things about yourself, I'll be very cross with you. I—I—will say instead that its been fine to work for you, and in a way its been a compensation for other things—this—this fellowship and friendship. I don't want anything else. It wouldn't do."

She held out her hand, which was first sulkily ignored and then grasped in a rough, strong hold.

"Good-b. . ." she began.

"None of that goodbye business now," he growled. "You go on your holiday. I've a hunch you'll be back soon. Your job and I will be waiting for you, together or separately, just as you say."

"Thanks, thanks, very much."

She wished that the warm clasp of that strong hand over hers did not have such a strange effect upon her. It was ridiculous that her heart should be thumping like that. Whatever in the world was the matter with her? Why, she was almost as foolish as Elspeth. Elspeth! At the thought of her girl, she withdrew her hand, crimsoning under the strange look of the man beside her.

"Well, goodbye, then," she said.

"Not on your life, it's not goodbye."

