

His love for Flossie was the awakening of a slumbering boyish passion, which his more mature judgment told him was purest and best. The warm heart beneath her sweet disposition, the soul which through her eyes he seemed to feel, gave to him his conception of the most perfect accompaniment and the requisite of ideal existence; and as the old line, "Hearts were made to love and adore, and I shall follow mine," came to him, there came also a resolution.

The shadows of the evening were deepening. "Flossie," said he, after a pause, "I have never told you how sorry I am that I acted as I did about that high-school honor. I was only a silly boy then. I hope you have not minded it much?"

"Yes, I have," replied Flossie, "but I tried to forget."

"For four years we have been as strangers on account of that," continued Harold. "For four years each of us has lived as if the other didn't exist."

Those thoughtless words expressed far more than he wished. Had Flossie lived as if *he* didn't exist? In the silence which followed, her mind went back to her first year in college, to the girlish cries she had had because she thought Harold displeased with her, and for a moment she thought bitterly of the heartlessness of men.

His first words gave her a thrill of joy, and then came a feeling of pain. Her girlish love for him, true and noble as it was, had grown with the years, and, though she met many men while in college and during her travel, her heart had always remained true. Already he was leaning forward with an eagerness perceptible even in the shadows, murmuring words about atonement for the past, when she interrupted him. Tender-hearted Flossie! Never would she let a man say those tender words until she could give him a welcome answer.

Flossie knew her own heart; yet her knowledge of the ways of men led her to suspect that she didn't know Harold's as she wished, for her experience and her womanly instinct told her that there was something hidden; but what she said next was a surprise even to herself.

"Harold, you have confided in me many things, but the most important you have omitted. You have never told me to whom you are engaged."

A thunderbolt from the clear, starlit sky would not have had a more stunning effect upon Harold Brown than these words, and