

Several hours later his rooms were in a sorry condition. Stools, chairs and tables were moved from their places and drawers and closets were emptied in the search for things to pacify the excited and restless children. Stöger sacrificed everything to keep them quiet. He played lion and bear with them, and so horribly did he roar that the children began crying.

However, the evening gradually advanced and the children became tired. The little heads grew heavy, nodding first forward and then falling stiffly backward, and in a short while they were fast asleep.

"They have gone to sleep," said Johnnie, somewhat scornfully, but even he was soon fast asleep as Stöger found when he attempted to pick up the smaller ones. So he remained sitting in his place and glanced earnestly at the three children. He was experiencing a peculiar sensation. A rap at the door and Rosa entered.

"O, Mr. Stöger, she is sleeping," she said, joyfully. "The doctor says it was a total collapse of the nervous system, but that she will soon recover. All that she needs is rest and attention. O, mercy! the children," as she spied the group. "How they must have plagued you. But I'll soon have them away to bed."

"They'll disturb the invalid," returned Stöger.

"O, no; they're asleep now," said Rosa.

"Well, bring them to me early to-morrow," said Stöger, heartily. "They didn't bother me, the change will do me good. And now be kind enough to take this heavy youngster. My arm is quite stiff."

As Rosa bent over to take up Walt she touched Stöger's hand, and before he could remonstrate she had touched it to her lips.

"A question, Miss Rosa; what is your sister's name?"

"Anna Konig," she replied, wonderingly. "Didn't you know it?"

"Anna? Her name Anna! And what was her maiden name?"

"Naturally the same as mine—Reichelt."

"Are you real sisters?"

"As good and true sisters as could be."

Stöger questioned no further, but sighed and stroked his forehead as though he were alone.

"A dream," he said softly to himself. "What could it be but a dream?"

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