

having any hope of success. So I humbly submitted to fate and determined to let things take their course.

Such, then, was my state of mind as I slowly strolled up Seventh avenue one Saturday evening, in response to a little, lavender-scented note which had come to me in my morning's mail.

"Yes, Miss Cranston is in," said the maid, who answered my ring. "She is expecting you."

While I was removing my top-coat and giving a final touch to my tie a light laugh floated through the curtains which screened the drawing-room. I smiled, for I knew it was Margery's. But just then a deeper, hoarser one sounded. I shut my lips and pressed my fingers into the palms of my hands. For I recognized the latter as belonging to Beyland. Who was Beyland? Why, my rival, of course.

As I parted the portieres and stepped into the cosy room, Margery rose from her chair and languidly offered me her hand. I held it but a moment, for Beyland was observing my every movement, and I felt ill at ease.

"I am extremely sorry to have interrupted your tete-a-tete," I said, as I seated myself.

"Oh, no," interrupted Beyland, quickly. "You are in the very nick of time. We were just wishing for another person to take a third hand in a game of euchre."

He was lying and I knew it. For at that moment he would rather have seen me at the bottom of the Dead Sea than in that room. However, his words did not disconcert me.

"Very well," I said, "I shall not disappoint you. I feel in quite the humor for a game of cut-throat to-night—even if it is but in euchre," I added, apologetically.

As I seated myself nearer the card-table and picked up the pack I noticed that all the heart suit was in one part of the deck. "So-so," thought I, "they've been playing 'hearts,' have they?" And I decided that the game was not yet ended.

The euchre game progressed with varying luck, interspersed with lively sallies from Margery, and still more witty ones from Beyland. As for me, though, I was beginning to feel terribly bored. Moreover, Beyland, by his uncontrollable spirits, had me at a disadvantage. For the life of me I could not say one sentence which would sound well. But finally came a turn of affairs.