

It was Margery's turn to deal. I watched her as she daintily shuffled the cards and deftly dealt them out, making a mental note of her shapely hand. Then I turned to my cards. I noticed that the King of Hearts was turned for trumps. As Margery picked up her cards one fell face upward on the table. It was the Knave of Hearts. I looked at Beyland. He, too, had seen it and a queer smile hovered on his lips.

"I would I were that King," said he, feeling certain that Margery, holding the Jack, would take it up. And he glanced admiringly at her. I clenched my teeth and glared at him, for I saw that he had scored another point against me. Margery smiled as she divined the meaning of his words and blushed charmingly. At that I felt all hope forsake me.

"I pass," said Beyland. "I dare not order it up." And again I saw that exchange of looks.

"Pass," said I, shortly, with my eyes on my cards, so as to avoid the supercilious glance of my rival. Then I noticed that I held the Queen of Hearts. But, though I smiled grimly, the fact brought no consolation. I raised my eyes to see what Margery would do. She sat still, studying her cards. Beyland, sure of his ground, smiled dreamily and studied her face. I stared before me and tremblingly awaited the inevitable.

Slowly, very slowly, Margery stretched forth her hand and poised it for an instant over the pack, as though undecided. Another moment of awful suspense, in which she glanced once more at her cards, and then, very gently, yet very firmly, she turned it down.

And then it was that hope returned.