

! She flashed up angrily. "Did you seriously believe, then, that I would be willing to sell myself?" she cried. "Why, never—never, sir. I have always resolved that. If I do play a parasite's part at least my heart is clean. When I marry, if any man of my own nation is willing to take me, soiled as I am, he shall. But this—"

Her anger was so genuine that the man did not know how to reply.

"But I will ask you one question," she continued. "A woman's curiosity, you know. Why did you select me out of all the girls upon the list that the man Smith gave you?"

"Why?" he repeated stupidly.

"Yes. Rich as we are, I know several families that are richer and have eligible daughters."

"Why, because I fell in love with you," he retorted.

"What!" she cried incredulously. "After telling me that?"

"But I have never said I did not love you. In fact I have loved you since I first saw you."

"Is this part of the game, too?" she demanded; but he saw that her lips were quivering.

And suddenly some interior emotion surged up in him and banished the last touch of cynicism. He fell upon his knees before her and clasped her hands.

"Miss Vining, Elsie, I love you with all my heart," he cried. "Can you—do you think that if I prove my love I can win you?"

She had broken down under the passion of her heart. The anger which had held her evaporated, leaving only a very miserable and very helpless girl.

He rose to his feet. "I am going back to France," he said. "I cannot expect you to believe in me. And yet, it was my love for you that prompted me to say what I have said. I could not win you with a lie. So I told you, as you asked me. But before I go, will you tell me that there may be a hope for me at some distant time? Let the money go, the title go; just

look upon me as one who loves you and desires you."

Elsie Vining lifted her tear-stained face to his.

"I don't think—there is any need for you to go back to France," she said softly.

Ten minutes later Bobby Brooks nudged Charley Twiss.

"Here comes the bridal pair—bride pair, perhaps would be a better term," he said. "My! Don't they look pleased with themselves!"

"They ought to, seeing what each has gotten out of it," answered Charley.

"Say, I shouldn't be surprised if there was a romance in it after all," suggested his friend.

"Well, if money and a title aren't romantic, what is?" replied the other. "But still, you never can tell."

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"Jones takes his wife on a trip west to her mother tomorrow."

"Ah! And why is that?"

"He received a telegram that her mother has started east to visit them."