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\* THE VICTORIOUS DEFEAT \*  
\* By Katherine Howe \*  
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"I've got to play ragtime in a cheap cabaret—or starve."

Philip Hutchins looked at the girl before him with an odd mixture of humor and despair.

"Oh, Phil! That's awful! It's heart-breaking—disgraceful!"

"Not as disgraceful as borrowing money till people get on the other side of the street; or—or being carted off to the morgue." He tried to speak lightly, not wanting her to know how much it cost him. In Germany he had been the great master's best pupil. At his first concert he had made the piano speak the poetry of Chopin and Liszt until the critics had cried "Bravo!" But the war had come, and also the end of his income, and he had returned to New York to try to make a living with his art, with this result.

"But you, little girl! If I could only make them give you your chance. It wouldn't be long before Ruth Lambert, the violinist, would be blazoned in big letters on the billboards."

"I'm afraid that will never come." The tears gathered in her eyes and her voice was so near the breaking point she could not trust herself to go on.

"Don't say 'never,'" he cried, with an attempt at being courageous. "I tell you, Ruth, I've heard great artists in Berlin, and you—you have it in you."

"But no one will pay me for playing. I can play before these clubs and at afternoon teas until the end of time and it never occurs to them I have to pay room rent and have at least two meals a day. I don't know how to get rich people interested in me—somehow I can't do it, and I've haunted the bureaus and agencies until the very thought of one makes me sick. It's just about as pleasant a prospect to think of going home—a failure—as—as what you said."

"But you're not a failure!" he asserted. "I know fine playing when I hear it! You are bound to make your mark! Go home for a little while. Call it a needed rest, a short vacation, and maybe before long I shall be making enough for both of us. Then you shall have your concert and we shall be together all the time."

For answer she put her hand in his and he drew her to him. It had



**"You Can Have a Place as Cashier  
in One of His Stores."**

been understood now for several months that "some day" they should be "always together." It began with their first meeting at Bursleson's studio reception, when her accompanist failed to appear and he offered to be a substitute. How wonderfully