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NO MORE GOOD-BYES

By Margaret Mair

CHAPTER XVII

Susan fingered the letters in her lap and glanced across the room now at Martin. She wanted to tell him about her news from home, but she was not sure that he would be interested.

"Martin, I've heard from my stepmother. They're leaving Broadhurst." She went on impulsively. "Everything's changing. Broadhurst will never be my home again; they're leaving the forest."

Martin seemed mildly surprised at her agitation. He drained his glass and looked at her across the room. "Broadhurst was a pretty boring sort of hole, anyway, wasn't it?" he said shortly.

"No." She shook her head. "You don't understand."

He laughed at her. "Well, you used to think so yourself!"

"Yes I did." She thought over this. Strange that it should be true. She did not pursue the argument. "Nancy Bennett and Terence Blackburne are going to be married."

"Never heard of either of them."

"Mummy's letter is full of that American Dwight Sanderson. Do you suppose that anything will come of it, Martin?"

"How should I know?" He leaned back in his chair, propping his hands behind his head. He looked tired and there were black smudges under his eyes. "Surely, darling one, your mother doesn't propose to marry again at her age."

"Why not?" said Susan shrewdly. "She's not very old. Besides, I don't blame anybody for getting married at any age. Why shouldn't one try and get the most out of life?"

"Oh, I don't know," Martin got up restlessly. He never sat still

for long nowadays. He went over to the mantelpiece and filled his case from a shagreened cigarette-box. She watched the back of his smooth fair head. "He's going to say something to hurt me," she thought. Absurd to mind, to be vulnerable.

Sure enough he turned round. "Marriage is a tricky business," he said. "Not such an open sesame to happiness as so many people imagine. Look at all the marriages which fail."

She flared up. "And all the marriages that are happy."

He ignored her. "Look at Fenella and Roy."

"Oh!" she said. She quietened down a little. "Why Fenella and Roy particularly?"

"Good example," said Martin ironically. "of the cat-and-dog life if ever there was one. Roy, about as thick-skinned and blind as you make 'em, married to an unusually vivid girl like Fenella and making such a complete and utter mess of it. No more understanding."

She interrupted him. "Don't put all the blame on Roy. Like Roy. He may be a philistine, but he has his good points."

"Really?" Martin threw back his head and sniggered. "I should be interested to hear some of Roy's good points."

"Well," said Susan, "he's good-natured and he is, at least, kind. He is fond of Leslie. He doesn't understand him in the least, of course, but he is interested in him. Whereas Fenella—"

She broke off, fumbling for adequate words. "Leslie is Fenella's own son, but she's odious to him—odious!"

"I don't agree with you, Martin said."

"You don't know anything about it," Susan retorted quickly. Fenella was clever; too clever to show that side of herself to Martin. But Susan knew.

"Leslie's spoilt," Martin said.

"He's not spoilt," Susan said indignantly. "He's sensitive and clever. He has the makings of a good artist in his, everybody says so. And Fenella's so selfish, she does nothing to encourage him. All she thinks of is self, self. Can't you see? How blind you must be, Roy or not."

Martin took an angry step forward. His face was very red. She found herself analysing him coldly, wondering why his looks had ever bound her to such a spell of passion. He leaned slightly towards her, his eyes fixed on her. "You're jealous of Fenella. You've never been fair to her, never. Right from the first."

"Right from the first?" Her face went white. "I remember. The day you went to the dinner party without me. The day you promised to come back and instead you went home with Fenella and she told you she didn't like her husband any more. No, I haven't forgotten that."

He raised his voice. "Well, what was wrong with that... She stared at him wonderingly. "Fenella doesn't like Roy, why doesn't she leave him? Tell me that, Martin. Why doesn't she leave him? Why does she stay on with Roy, making his life wretched, talking about him behind his back, chasing after other men, making a fool of him—"

Martin interrupted her. "You're childish. You can't see straight."

"Oh," she said, "what way don't I see straight?"

"Saying that Fenella chases after other men," she said. "It's simply not true."

Martin was very angry. She could see the anger in his face, making his eyes black and his lips white. He was determined not to acknowledge anything about Fenella that he didn't want to believe. It was no use her talking. She might as well save her breath.

She felt scraggy, too, defeated. Martin went out of the room and slammed the door behind him. She sat very still on the sofa for a few more minutes and then, going over to the piano and setting herself on the battered piano-stool, she began to play to herself very softly.

TROUBLES ENOUGH

The weeks passed. Life on the Rock was full of amusement and interest. There were picnics crew in spin every weekend, bathing at the Yacht Club, parties on board the battleships in the harbour, tennis and riding if you wanted it, endless social functions.

Susan, who had always loved parties and people, found occasionally her energy flagging. It would have been different, she thought, if she could have had a proper home life. It was no use pretending that her relationship with Martin was satisfactory. She envied the other mothers with their babies. So many of the people out here had young children. She thought of her own baby at home, growing up away from her, probably so changed now as to be unrecognizable, and her heart ached.

At last, she decided to talk it over with Martin.

"Martin," she said, "I've been thinking things over. Eleanor says that Gillian is quite well and strong again now. Don't you think we ought to have her out here with us?"

(To be continued)

NORTH WILTSHIRE W.M.S.

The Easter meeting of the North Wiltshire Women's Missionary Society was held in the church with the President presiding. The service with the theme "Ye shall be My Witnesses" was led by Mrs. MacFae and opened with verse one of hymn "Jesus Stand Among Us", followed by the General Thanksgiving in unison. Scripture passages were read by three members and this part of the service "Go Tell" was closed with hymn "The Blessing That Once was Crowned with Thorns". The program "Evangelism in the Early Church" was led by Mrs. Mitchell with Mrs. Rutherford, Mrs. Bowman and Mrs. B. MacDonald as readers who read of the work of the early Christians. The hymn "Jesus with Thy Church Abide" was then sung. Evangelism in the Crusade for Christ and His Kingdom. This program was led by Mrs. Clark with readings by Mrs. Deacon, Mrs. MacNeil and Mrs. Bowman. Prayers were offered by members. Joe



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