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Richard Harding Davis**

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Title: The Make-Believe Man

Author: Richard Harding Davis

Release date: July 1, 1999 [EBook #1823]

Most recently updated: January 27, 2021

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Don Lainson, and David Widger

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE MAKE-BELIEVE MAN ***

THE MAKE-BELIEVE MAN

By Richard Harding Davis

Contents

[I](#)

[II](#)

I

I had made up my mind that when my vacation came I would spend it seeking adventures. I have always wished for adventures, but, though I am old enough—I was twenty-five last October—and have always gone half-way to meet them, adventures avoid me. Kinney says it is my fault. He holds that if you want adventures you must go after them.

Kinney sits next to me at Joyce & Carboy's, the woollen manufacturers, where I am a stenographer, and Kinney is a clerk, and we both have rooms at Mrs. Shaw's boarding-house. Kinney is only a year older than myself, but he is always meeting with adventures. At night, when I have sat up late reading law, so that I may fit myself for court reporting, and in the hope that some day I may become a member of the bar, he will knock at my door and tell me some surprising thing that has just happened to him. Sometimes he has followed a fire-engine and helped people from a fire-escape, or he has pulled the shield off a policeman, or at the bar of the Hotel Knickerbocker has made friends with a stranger, who turns out to be no less than a nobleman or an actor. And women, especially beautiful women, are always pursuing Kinney in taxicabs and calling upon him for assistance. Just to look at Kinney, without knowing how clever he is at getting people out of their difficulties, he does not appear to be a man to whom you would turn in time of trouble. You would think women in distress would appeal to some one bigger and stronger; would sooner ask a policeman. But, on the contrary, it is to Kinney that women always run, especially, as I have said, beautiful women. Nothing of the sort ever happens to me. I suppose, as Kinney says, it is because he was born and brought up in New York

City and looks and acts like a New York man, while I, until a year ago, have always lived at Fairport. Fairport is a very pretty harbor, but it does not train one for adventures. We arranged to take our vacation at the same time, and together. At least Kinney so arranged it. I see a good deal of him, and in looking forward to my vacation, not the least pleasant feature of it was that everything connected with Joyce & Carboy and Mrs. Shaw's boarding-house would be left behind me. But when Kinney proposed we should go together, I could not see how, without being rude, I could refuse his company, and when he pointed out that for an expedition in search of adventure I could not select a better guide, I felt that he was right.

"Sometimes," he said, "I can see you don't believe that half the things I tell you have happened to me, really have happened. Now, isn't that so?"

To find the answer that would not hurt his feelings I hesitated, but he did not wait for my answer. He seldom does.

"Well, on this trip," he went on, "you will see Kinney on the job. You won't have to take my word for it. You will see adventures walk up and eat out of my hand."

Our vacation came on the first of September, but we began to plan for it in April, and up to the night before we left New York we never ceased planning. Our difficulty was that having been brought up at Fairport, which is on the Sound, north of New London, I was homesick for a smell of salt marshes and for the sight of water and ships. Though they were only schooners carrying cement, I wanted to sit in the sun on the string-piece of a wharf and watch them. I wanted to beat about the harbor in a catboat, and feel the tug and pull of the tiller. Kinney protested that that was no way to spend a vacation or to invite adventure. His face was set against Fairport. The conversation of clam-diggers, he said, did not appeal to him; and he complained that at Fairport our only chance of adventure would be my capsizing the catboat or robbing a lobster-pot. He insisted we should go to the mountains, where we would meet what he always calls "our best people." In September, he explained, everybody goes to the mountains to recuperate after the enervating atmosphere of the seashore. To this I objected that the little sea air we had inhaled at Mrs. Shaw's basement dining-room and in the subway need cause us no anxiety. And so, along these lines, throughout the sleepless, sultry nights of June, July, and August, we fought it out. There was not a summer resort within five hundred miles of New York City we did not consider. From the information bureaus and passenger agents of every railroad leaving New York, Kinney procured a library of timetables, maps, folders, and pamphlets, illustrated with the most attractive pictures of summer hotels, golf links, tennis courts, and boat-houses. For two months he carried on a correspondence with the proprietors of these hotels; and in comparing the different prices they asked him for suites of rooms and sun parlors derived constant satisfaction.

"The Outlook House," he would announce, "wants twenty-four dollars a day for bedroom, parlor, and private bath. While for the same accommodations the Carteret Arms asks only twenty. But the Carteret has no tennis court; and then again, the Outlook has no garage, nor are dogs allowed in the bedrooms."

As Kinney could not play lawn tennis, and as neither of us owned an automobile or a dog, or twenty-four dollars, these details to me seemed superfluous, but there was no health in pointing that out to Kinney. Because, as he himself says, he has so vivid an imagination that what he lacks he can "make believe" he has, and the pleasure of possession is his.

Kinney gives a great deal of thought to his clothes, and the question of what he should wear on his vacation was upon his mind. When I said I thought it was nothing to worry about, he snorted indignantly. "YOU wouldn't!" he said. "If I'd been brought up in a catboat, and had a tan like a red Indian, and hair like a Broadway blonde, I wouldn't worry either. Mrs. Shaw says you look exactly like a British peer in disguise." I had never seen a British peer, with or without his disguise, and I admit I was interested.

"Why are the girls in this house," demanded Kinney, "always running to your room to borrow matches? Because they admire your CLOTHES? If they're crazy about clothes, why don't they come to ME for matches?"

"You are always out at night," I said.

"You know that's not the answer," he protested. "Why do the type-writer girls at the office always go to YOU to sharpen their pencils and tell them how to spell the hard words? Why do the girls in the lunch-rooms serve you first? Because they're hypnotized by your clothes? Is THAT it?"

"Do they?" I asked; "I hadn't noticed."

Kinney snorted and tossed up his arms. "He hadn't noticed!" he kept repeating. "He hadn't noticed!" For his vacation Kinney bought a second-hand suit-case. It was covered with labels of hotels in France and Switzerland.

"Joe," I said, "if you carry that bag you will be a walking falsehood."

Kinney's name is Joseph Forbes Kinney; he dropped the Joseph because he said it did not appear often enough in the Social Register, and could be found only in the Old Testament, and he has asked me to call him Forbes. Having first known him as "Joe," I occasionally forget.

"My name is NOT Joe," he said sternly, "and I have as much right to carry a second-hand bag as a new one. The bag says IT has been to Europe. It does not say that I have been there."

"But, you probably will," I pointed out, "and then some one who has really visited those places—"

"Listen!" commanded Kinney. "If you want adventures you must be somebody of importance. No one will go shares in an adventure with Joe Kinney, a twenty-dollar-a-week clerk, the human adding machine, the hall-room boy. But Forbes Kinney, Esq., with a bag from Europe, and a Harvard ribbon round his hat—"

"Is that a Harvard ribbon round your hat?" I asked.

"It is!" declared Kinney; "and I have a Yale ribbon, and a Turf Club ribbon, too. They come on hooks, and you hook 'em on to match your clothes, or the company you keep. And, what's more," he continued, with some heat, "I've borrowed a tennis racket and a golf bag full of sticks, and you take care you don't give me away."

"I see," I returned, "that you are going to get us into a lot of trouble."

"I was thinking," said Kinney, looking at me rather doubtfully, "it might help a lot if for the first week you acted as my secretary, and during the second week I was your secretary."

Sometimes, when Mr. Joyce goes on a business trip, he takes me with him as his private stenographer, and the change from office work is very pleasant; but I could not see why I should spend one week of my holiday writing letters for Kinney.

"You wouldn't write any letters," he explained. "But if I could tell people you were my private secretary, it would naturally give me a certain importance."

"If it will make you any happier," I said, "you can tell people I am a British peer in disguise."

"There is no use in being nasty about it," protested Kinney. "I am only trying to show you a way that would lead to adventure."

"It surely would!" I assented. "It would lead us to jail."

The last week in August came, and, as to where we were to go we still were undecided, I suggested we leave it to chance.

"The first thing," I pointed out, "is to get away from this awful city. The second thing is to get away cheaply. Let us write down the names of the summer resorts to which we can travel by rail or by boat for two dollars and put them in a hat. The name of the place we draw will be the one for which we start Saturday afternoon. The idea," I urged, "is in itself full of adventure."

Kinney agreed, but reluctantly. What chiefly disturbed him was the thought that the places near New York to which one could travel for so little money were not likely to be fashionable.

"I have a terrible fear," he declared, "that, with this limit of yours, we will wake up in Asbury Park."

Friday night came and found us prepared for departure, and at midnight we held our lottery. In a pillow-case we placed twenty slips of paper, on each of which was written the name of a summer resort. Ten of these places were selected by Kinney, and ten by myself. Kinney dramatically rolled up his sleeve, and, plunging his bared arm into our grab-bag, drew out a slip of paper and read aloud: "New Bedford, via New Bedford Steamboat Line." The choice was one of mine.

"New Bedford!" shouted Kinney. His tone expressed the keenest disappointment. "It's a mill town!" he exclaimed. "It's full of cotton mills."

"That may be," I protested. "But it's also a most picturesque old seaport, one of the oldest in America. You can see whaling vessels at the wharfs there, and wooden figure-heads, and harpoons—"

"Is this an expedition to dig up buried cities," interrupted Kinney, "or a pleasure trip? I don't WANT to see harpoons! I wouldn't know a harpoon if you stuck one into me. I prefer to see hatpins."

The *Patience* did not sail until six o'clock, but we were so anxious to put New York behind us that at five we were on board. Our cabin was an outside one with two berths. After placing our suit-cases in it, we collected camp-chairs and settled ourselves in a cool place on the boat deck. Kinney had bought all the afternoon papers, and, as later I had reason to remember, was greatly interested over the fact that the young Earl of Ivy had at last arrived in this country. For some weeks the papers had been giving more space than seemed necessary to that young Irishman and to the young lady he was coming over to marry. There had been pictures of his different country houses, pictures of himself; in uniform, in the robes he wore at the coronation, on a polo pony, as Master of Fox-hounds. And there had been pictures of Miss Aldrich, and of HER country places at Newport and on the Hudson. From the afternoon papers Kinney learned that, having sailed under his family name of Meehan, the young man and Lady Moya, his sister, had that morning landed in New York, but before the reporters had discovered them, had escaped from the wharf and disappeared.

"Inquiries at the different hotels," read Kinney impressively, "failed to establish the whereabouts of his lordship and Lady Moya, and it is believed they at once left by train for Newport."

With awe Kinney pointed at the red funnels of the *Mauretania*.

"There is the boat that brought them to America," he said. "I see," he added, "that in this picture of him playing golf he wears one of those knit jackets the Eiselbaum has just marked down to three dollars and seventy-five cents. I wish—" he added regretfully.

"You can get one at New Bedford," I suggested.

"I wish," he continued, "we had gone to Newport. All of our BEST people will be there for the wedding. It is the most important social event of the season. You might almost call it an alliance."

I went forward to watch them take on the freight, and Kinney stationed himself at the rail above the passengers gangway where he could see the other passengers arrive. He had dressed himself with much care, and was wearing his Yale hat-band, but when a very smart-looking youth came up the gangplank wearing a Harvard ribbon, Kinney hastily retired to our cabin and returned with one like it. A few minutes later I found him and the young man seated in camp-chairs side by side engaged in a conversation in which Kinney seemed to bear the greater part. Indeed, to what Kinney was saying the young man paid not the slightest attention. Instead, his eyes were fastened on the gangplank below, and when a young man of his own age, accompanied by a girl in a dress of rough tweed, appeared upon it, he leaped from his seat. Then with a conscious look at Kinney, sank back.

The girl in the tweed suit was sufficiently beautiful to cause any man to rise and to remain standing. She was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. She had gray eyes and hair like golden-rod, worn in a fashion with which I was not familiar, and her face was so lovely that in my surprise at the sight of it, I felt a sudden catch at my throat, and my heart stopped with awe, and wonder, and gratitude.

After a brief moment the young man in the real Harvard hat-band rose restlessly and, with a nod to Kinney, went below. I also rose and followed him. I had an uncontrollable desire to again look at the girl with the golden-rod hair. I did not mean that she should see me. Never before had I done such a thing. But never before had I seen any one who had moved me so strangely. Seeking her, I walked the length of the main saloon and back again, but could not find her. The delay gave me time to see that my conduct was impertinent. The very fact that she was so lovely to look upon should have been her protection. It afforded me

no excuse to follow and spy upon her. With this thought, I hastily returned to the upper deck to bury myself in my book. If it did not serve to keep my mind from the young lady, at least I would prevent my eyes from causing her annoyance.

I was about to take the chair that the young man had left vacant when Kinney objected.

"He was very much interested in our conversation," Kinney said, "and he may return."

I had not noticed any eagerness on the part of the young man to talk to Kinney or to listen to him, but I did not sit down.

"I should not be surprised a bit," said Kinney, "if that young man is no end of a swell. He is a Harvard man, and his manner was most polite. That," explained Kinney, "is one way you can always tell a real swell. They're not high and mighty with you. Their social position is so secure that they can do as they like. For instance, did you notice that he smoked a pipe?"

I said I had not noticed it.

For his holiday Kinney had purchased a box of cigars of a quality more expensive than those he can usually afford. He was smoking one of them at the moment, and, as it grew less, had been carefully moving the gold band with which it was encircled from the lighted end. But as he spoke he regarded it apparently with distaste, and then dropped it overboard.

"Keep my chair," he said, rising. "I am going to my cabin to get my pipe." I sat down and fastened my eyes upon my book; but neither did I understand what I was reading nor see the printed page. Instead, before my eyes, confusing and blinding me, was the lovely, radiant face of the beautiful lady. In perplexity I looked up, and found her standing not two feet from me. Something pulled me out of my chair. Something made me move it toward her. I lifted my hat and backed away. But the eyes of the lovely lady halted me.

To my perplexity, her face expressed both surprise and pleasure. It was as though either she thought she knew me, or that I reminded her of some man she did know. Were the latter the case, he must have been a friend, for the way in which she looked at me was kind. And there was, besides, the expression of surprise and as though something she saw pleased her. Maybe it was the quickness with which I had offered my chair. Still looking at me, she pointed to one of the sky-scrapers.

"Could you tell me," she asked, "the name of that building?" Had her question not proved it, her voice would have told me not only that she was a stranger, but that she was Irish. It was particularly soft, low, and vibrant. It made the commonplace question she asked sound as though she had sung it. I told her the name of the building, and that farther uptown, as she would see when we moved into midstream, there was another still taller. She listened, regarding me brightly, as though interested; but before her I was embarrassed, and, fearing I intruded, I again made a movement to go away. With another question she stopped me. I could see no reason for her doing so, but it was almost as though she had asked the question only to detain me.

"What is that odd boat," she said, "pumping water into the river?"

I explained that it was a fire-boat testing her hose-lines, and then as we moved into the channel I gained courage, and found myself pointing out the Statue of Liberty, Governors Island, and the Brooklyn Bridge. The fact that it was a stranger who was talking did not seem to disturb her. I cannot tell how she conveyed the idea, but I soon felt that she felt, no matter what unconventional thing she chose to do, people would not be rude, or misunderstand.

I considered telling her my name. At first it seemed that that would be more polite. Then I saw to do so would be forcing myself upon her, that she was interested in me only as a guide to New York Harbor.

When we passed the Brooklyn Navy Yard I talked so much and so eagerly of the battle-ships at anchor there that the lady must have thought I had followed the sea, for she asked: "Are you a sailorman?"

It was the first question that was in any way personal.

"I used to sail a catboat," I said.

My answer seemed to puzzle her, and she frowned. Then she laughed delightedly, like one having made a discovery.

"You don't say 'sailorman,'" she said. "What do you ask, over here, when you want to know if a man is in the navy?"

She spoke as though we were talking a different language.

"We ask if he is in the navy," I answered.

She laughed again at that, quite as though I had said something clever.

"And you are not?"

"No," I said, "I am in Joyce & Carboy's office. I am a stenographer."

Again my answer seemed both to puzzle and to surprise her. She regarded me doubtfully. I could see that she thought, for some reason, I was misleading her.

"In an office?" she repeated. Then, as though she had caught me, she said: "How do you keep so fit?" She asked the question directly, as a man would have asked it, and as she spoke I was conscious that her eyes were measuring me and my shoulders, as though she were wondering to what weight I could strip.

"It's only lately I've worked in an office," I said. "Before that I always worked out-of-doors; oystering and clamming and, in the fall, scalloping. And in the summer I played ball on a hotel nine."

I saw that to the beautiful lady my explanation carried no meaning whatsoever, but before I could explain, the young man with whom she had come on board walked toward us.

Neither did he appear to find in her talking to a stranger anything embarrassing. He halted and smiled. His smile was pleasant, but entirely vague. In the few minutes I was with him, I learned that it was no sign that he was secretly pleased. It was merely his expression. It was as though a photographer had said: "Smile, please," and he had smiled.

When he joined us, out of deference to the young lady I raised my hat, but the youth did not seem to think that outward show of respect was necessary, and kept his hands in his pockets. Neither did he cease

smoking. His first remark to the lovely lady somewhat startled me.

"Have you got a brass bed in your room?" he asked. The beautiful lady said she had.

"So've I," said the young man. "They do you rather well, don't they? And it's only three dollars. How much is that?"

"Four times three would be twelve," said the lady. "Twelve shillings."

The young man was smoking a cigarette in a long amber cigarette-holder. I never had seen one so long. He examined the end of his cigarette-holder, and, apparently surprised and relieved at finding a cigarette there, again smiled contentedly.

The lovely lady pointed at the marble shaft rising above Madison Square.

"That is the tallest sky-scraper," she said, "in New York." I had just informed her of that fact. The young man smiled as though he were being introduced to the building, but exhibited no interest.

"IS it?" he remarked. His tone seemed to show that had she said, "That is a rabbit," he would have been equally gratified.

"Some day," he stated, with the same startling abruptness with which he had made his first remark, "our war-ships will lift the roofs off those sky-scrappers."

The remark struck me in the wrong place. It was unnecessary. Already I resented the manner of the young man toward the lovely lady. It seemed to me lacking in courtesy. He knew her, and yet treated her with no deference, while I, a stranger, felt so grateful to her for being what I knew one with such a face must be, that I could have knelt at her feet. So I rather resented the remark.

"If the war-ships you send over here," I said doubtfully, "aren't more successful in lifting things than your yachts, you'd better keep them at home and save coal!"

Seldom have I made so long a speech or so rude a speech, and as soon as I had spoken, on account of the lovely lady, I was sorry.

But after a pause of half a second she laughed delightedly.

"I see," she cried, as though it were a sort of a game. "He means Lipton! We can't lift the cup, we can't lift the roofs. Don't you see, Stumps!" she urged. In spite of my rude remark, the young man she called Stumps had continued to smile happily. Now his expression changed to one of discomfort and utter gloom, and then broke out into a radiant smile.

"I say!" he cried. "That's awfully good: 'If your war-ships aren't any better at lifting things—' Oh, I say, really," he protested, "that's awfully good." He seemed to be afraid I would not appreciate the rare excellence of my speech. "You know, really," he pleaded, "it is AWFULLY good!"

We were interrupted by the sudden appearance, in opposite directions, of Kinney and the young man with the real hat-band. Both were excited and disturbed. At the sight of the young man, Stumps turned appealingly to the golden-rod girl. He groaned aloud, and his expression was that of a boy who had been caught playing truant.

"Oh, Lord!" he exclaimed, "what's he huffy about now? He TOLD me I could come on deck as soon as we started."

The girl turned upon me a sweet and lovely smile and nodded. Then, with Stumps at her side, she moved to meet the young man. When he saw them coming he halted, and, when they joined him, began talking earnestly, almost angrily. As he did so, much to my bewilderment, he glared at me. At the same moment Kinney grabbed me by the arm.

"Come below!" he commanded. His tone was hoarse and thrilling with excitement.

"Our adventures," he whispered, "have begun!"

II

I felt, for me, adventures had already begun, for my meeting with the beautiful lady was the event of my life, and though Kinney and I had agreed to share our adventures, of this one I knew I could not even speak to him. I wanted to be alone, where I could delight in it, where I could go over what she had said; what I had said. I would share it with no one. It was too wonderful, too sacred. But Kinney would not be denied. He led me to our cabin and locked the door.

"I am sorry," he began, "but this adventure is one I cannot share with you." The remark was so in keeping with my own thoughts that with sudden unhappy doubt I wondered if Kinney, too, had felt the charm of the beautiful lady. But he quickly undeceived me.

"I have been doing a little detective work," he said. His voice was low and sepulchral. "And I have come upon a real adventure. There are reasons why I cannot share it with you, but as it develops you can follow it. About half an hour ago," he explained, "I came here to get my pipe. The window was open. The lattice was only partly closed. Outside was that young man from Harvard who tried to make my acquaintance, and the young Englishman who came on board with that blonde." Kinney suddenly interrupted himself. "You were talking to her just now," he said. I hated to hear him speak of the Irish lady as "that blonde." I hated to hear him speak of her at all. So, to shut him off, I answered briefly: "She asked me about the Singer Building."

"I see," said Kinney. "Well, these two men were just outside my window, and, while I was searching for my pipe, I heard the American speaking. He was very excited and angry. 'I tell you,' he said, 'every boat and railroad station is watched. You won't be safe till we get away from New York. You must go to your cabin, and STAY there.' And the other one answered: 'I am sick of hiding and dodging.'"

Kinney paused dramatically and frowned.

"Well," I asked, "what of it?"

"What of it?" he cried. He exclaimed aloud with pity and impatience.

"No wonder," he cried, "you never have adventures. Why, it's plain as print. They are criminals escaping. The Englishman certainly is escaping."

I was concerned only for the lovely lady, but I asked: "You mean the Irishman called Stumps?"

"Stumps!" exclaimed Kinney. "What a strange name. Too strange to be true. It's an alias!" I was incensed that Kinney should charge the friends of the lovely lady with being criminals. Had it been any one else I would have at once resented it, but to be angry with Kinney is difficult. I could not help but remember that he is the slave of his own imagination. It plays tricks and runs away with him. And if it leads him to believe innocent people are criminals, it also leads him to believe that every woman in the Subway to whom he gives his seat is a great lady, a leader of society on her way to work in the slums.

"Joe!" I protested. "Those men aren't criminals. I talked to that Irishman, and he hasn't sense enough to be a criminal."

"The railroads are watched," repeated Kinney. "Do HONEST men care a darn whether the railroad is watched or not? Do you care? Do I care? And did you notice how angry the American got when he found Stumps talking with you?"

I had noticed it; and I also recalled the fact that Stumps had said to the lovely lady: "He told me I could come on deck as soon as we started."

The words seemed to bear out what Kinney claimed he had overheard. But not wishing to encourage him, of what I had heard I said nothing.

"He may be dodging a summons," I suggested. "He is wanted, probably, only as a witness. It might be a civil suit, or his chauffeur may have hit somebody."

Kinney shook his head sadly.

"Excuse me," he said, "but I fear you lack imagination. Those men are rascals, dangerous rascals, and the woman is their accomplice. What they have done I don't know, but I have already learned enough to arrest them as suspicious characters. Listen! Each of them has a separate state-room forward. The window of the American's room was open, and his suit-case was on the bed. On it were the initials H. P. A. The stateroom is number twenty-four, but when I examined the purser's list, pretending I wished to find out if a friend of mine was on board, I found that the man in twenty-four had given his name as James Preston. Now," he demanded, "why should one of them hide under an alias and the other be afraid to show himself until we leave the wharf?" He did not wait for my answer. "I have been talking to Mr. H. P. A., ALIAS Preston," he continued. "I pretended I was a person of some importance. I hinted I was rich. My object," Kinney added hastily, "was to encourage him to try some of his tricks on ME; to try to rob ME; so that I could obtain evidence. I also," he went on, with some embarrassment, "told him that you, too, were wealthy and of some importance."

I thought of the lovely lady, and I felt myself blushing indignantly.

"You did very wrong," I cried; "you had no right! You may involve us both most unpleasantly."

"You are not involved in any way," protested Kinney. "As soon as we reach New Bedford you can slip on shore and wait for me at the hotel. When I've finished with these gentlemen, I'll join you."

"Finished with them!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean to do to them?"

"Arrest them!" cried Kinney sternly, "as soon as they step upon the wharf!"

"You can't do it!" I gasped.

"I HAVE done it!" answered Kinney. "It's good as done. I have notified the chief of police at New Bedford," he declared proudly, "to meet me at the wharf. I used the wireless. Here is my message."

From his pocket he produced a paper and, with great importance, read aloud: "Meet me at wharf on arrival steamer Patience. Two well-known criminals on board escaping New York police. Will personally lay charges against them.—Forbes Kinney."

As soon as I could recover from my surprise, I made violent protest. I pointed out to Kinney that his conduct was outrageous, that in making such serious charges, on such evidence, he would lay himself open to punishment.

He was not in the least dismayed.

"I take it then," he said importantly, "that you do not wish to appear against them?"

"I don't wish to appear in it at all!" I cried. "You've no right to annoy that young lady. You must wire the police you are mistaken."

"I have no desire to arrest the woman," said Kinney stiffly. "In my message I did not mention HER. If you want an adventure of your own, you might help her to escape while I arrest her accomplices."

"I object," I cried, "to your applying the word 'accomplice' to that young lady. And suppose they ARE criminals," I demanded, "how will arresting them help you?"

Kinney's eyes flashed with excitement.

"Think of the newspapers," he cried; "they'll be full of it!" Already in imagination he saw the headlines. "'A Clever Haul!'" he quoted. "'Noted band of crooks elude New York police, but are captured by Forbes Kinney.'" He sighed contentedly. "And they'll probably print my picture, too," he added.

I knew I should be angry with him, but instead I could only feel sorry. I have known Kinney for a year, and I have learned that his "make-believe" is always innocent. I suppose that he is what is called a snob, but with him snobbishness is not an unpleasant weakness. In his case it takes the form of thinking that people who have certain things he does not possess are better than himself; and that, therefore, they must be worth knowing, and he tries to make their acquaintance. But he does not think that he himself is better than any one. His life is very bare and narrow. In consequence, on many things he places false values. As, for example, his desire to see his name in the newspapers even as an amateur detective. So, while I was indignant I also was sorry.

"Joe," I said, "you're going to get yourself into an awful lot of trouble, and though I am not in this adventure, you know if I can help you I will."

He thanked me and we went to the dining-saloon. There, at a table near ours, we saw the lovely lady and Stumps and the American. She again smiled at me, but this time, so it seemed, a little doubtfully.

In the mind of the American, on the contrary, there was no doubt. He glared both at Kinney and myself, as though he would like to boil us in oil.

After dinner, in spite of my protests, Kinney set forth to interview him and, as he described it, to "lead him on" to commit himself. I feared Kinney was much more likely to commit himself than the other, and when I saw them seated together I watched from a distance with much anxiety.

An hour later, while I was alone, a steward told me the purser would like to see me. I went to his office, and found gathered there Stumps, his American friend, the night watchman of the boat, and the purser. As though inviting him to speak, the purser nodded to the American. That gentleman addressed me in an excited and belligerent manner.

"My name is Aldrich," he said; "I want to know what YOUR name is?"

I did not quite like his tone, nor did I like being summoned to the purser's office to be questioned by a stranger.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because," said Aldrich, "it seems you have SEVERAL names. As one of them belongs to THIS gentleman"—he pointed at Stumps—"he wants to know why you are using it."

I looked at Stumps and he greeted me with the vague and genial smile that was habitual to him, but on being caught in the act by Aldrich he hurriedly frowned.

"I have never used any name but my own," I said; "and," I added pleasantly, "if I were choosing a name I wouldn't choose 'Stumps.'"

Aldrich fairly gasped.

"His name is not Stumps!" he cried indignantly. "He is the Earl of Ivy!"

He evidently expected me to be surprised at this, and I WAS surprised. I stared at the much-advertised young Irishman with interest.

Aldrich misunderstood my silence, and in a triumphant tone, which was far from pleasant, continued: "So you see," he sneered, "when you chose to pass yourself off as Ivy you should have picked out another boat."

The thing was too absurd for me to be angry, and I demanded with patience: "But why should I pass myself off as Lord Ivy?"

"That's what we intend to find out," snapped Aldrich. "Anyway, we've stopped your game for to-night, and to-morrow you can explain to the police! Your pal," he taunted, "has told every one on this boat that you are Lord Ivy, and he's told me lies enough about HIMSELF to prove HE'S an impostor, too!"

I saw what had happened, and that if I were to protect poor Kinney I must not, as I felt inclined, use my fists, but my head. I laughed with apparent unconcern, and turned to the purser.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" I cried. "I might have known it was Kinney; he's always playing practical jokes on me." I turned to Aldrich. "My friend has been playing a joke on you, too," I said. "He didn't know who you were, but he saw you were an Anglomaniac, and he's been having fun with you!"

"Has he?" roared Aldrich. He reached down into his pocket and pulled out a piece of paper. "This," he cried, shaking it at me, "is a copy of a wireless that I've just sent to the chief of police at New Bedford."

With great satisfaction he read it in a loud and threatening voice: "Two impostors on this boat representing themselves to be Lord Ivy, my future brother-in-law, and his secretary. Lord Ivy himself on board. Send police to meet boat. We will make charges.—Henry Philip Aldrich."

It occurred to me that after receiving two such sensational telegrams, and getting out of bed to meet the boat at six in the morning, the chief of police would be in a state of mind to arrest almost anybody, and that his choice would certainly fall on Kinney and myself. It was ridiculous, but it also was likely to prove extremely humiliating. So I said, speaking to Lord Ivy: "There's been a mistake all around; send for Mr. Kinney and I will explain it to you." Lord Ivy, who was looking extremely bored, smiled and nodded, but young Aldrich laughed ironically.

"Mr. Kinney is in his state-room," he said, "with a steward guarding the door and window. You can explain to-morrow to the police."

I rounded indignantly upon the purser.

"Are you keeping Mr. Kinney a prisoner in his state-room?" I demanded. "If you are—"

"He doesn't have to stay there," protested the purser sulkily. "When he found the stewards were following him he went to his cabin."

"I will see him at once," I said. "And if I catch any of your stewards following ME, I'll drop them overboard."

No one tried to stop me—indeed, knowing I could not escape, they seemed pleased at my departure, and I went to my cabin.

Kinney, seated on the edge of the berth, greeted me with a hollow groan. His expression was one of utter misery. As though begging me not to be angry, he threw out his arms appealingly.

"How the devil!" he began, "was I to know that a little red-headed shrimp like that was the Earl of Ivy? And that that tall blonde girl," he added indignantly, "that I thought was an accomplice, is Lady Moya, his sister?"

"What happened?" I asked.

Kinney was wearing his hat. He took it off and hurled it to the floor.

"It was that damned hat!" he cried. "It's a Harvard ribbon, all right, but only men on the crew can wear it! How was I to know THAT? I saw Aldrich looking at it in a puzzled way, and when he said, 'I see you are on the crew,' I guessed what it meant, and said I was on last year's crew. Unfortunately HE was on last year's crew!"

That's what made him suspect me, and after dinner he put me through a third degree. I must have given the wrong answers, for suddenly he jumped up and called me a swindler and an impostor. I got back by telling him he was a crook and that I was a detective, and that I had sent a wireless to have him arrested at New Bedford. He challenged me to prove I was a detective, and, of course, I couldn't, and he called up two stewards and told them to watch me while he went after the purser. I didn't fancy being watched, so I came here."

"When did you tell him I was the Earl of Ivy?"

Kinney ran his fingers through his hair and groaned dismally.

"That was before the boat started," he said; "it was only a joke. He didn't seem to be interested in my conversation, so I thought I'd liven it up a bit by saying I was a friend of Lord Ivy's. And you happened to pass, and I happened to remember Mrs. Shaw saying you looked like a British peer, so I said: 'That is my friend Lord Ivy.' I said I was your secretary, and he seemed greatly interested, and—" Kinney added dismally, "I talked too much. I am SO sorry," he begged. "It's going to be awful for you!" His eyes suddenly lit with hope. "Unless," he whispered, "we can escape!"

The same thought was in my mind, but the idea was absurd, and impracticable. I knew there was no escape. I knew we were sentenced at sunrise to a most humiliating and disgraceful experience. The newspapers would regard anything that concerned Lord Ivy as news. In my turn I also saw the hideous headlines. What would my father and mother at Fairport think; what would my old friends there think; and, what was of even greater importance, how would Joyce & Carboy act? What chance was there left me, after I had been arrested as an impostor, to become a stenographer in the law courts—in time, a member of the bar? But I found that what, for the moment, distressed me most was that the lovely lady would consider me a knave or a fool. The thought made me exclaim with exasperation. Had it been possible to abandon Kinney, I would have dropped overboard and made for shore. The night was warm and foggy, and the short journey to land, to one who had been brought up like a duck, meant nothing more than a wetting. But I did not see how I could desert Kinney.

"Can you swim?" I asked

"Of course not!" he answered gloomily; "and, besides," he added, "our names are on our suitcases. We couldn't take them with us, and they'd find out who we are. If we could only steal a boat!" he exclaimed eagerly—"one of those on the davits," he urged—"we could put our suitcases in it and then, after every one is asleep, we could lower it into the water."

The smallest boat on board was certified to hold twenty-five persons, and without waking the entire ship's company we could as easily have moved the chart-room. This I pointed out.

"Don't make objections!" Kinney cried petulantly. He was rapidly recovering his spirits. The imminence of danger seemed to inspire him.

"Think!" he commanded. "Think of some way by which we can get off this boat before she reaches New Bedford. We MUST! We must not be arrested! It would be too awful!" He interrupted himself with an excited exclamation.

"I have it!" he whispered hoarsely: "I will ring in the fire-alarm! The crew will run to quarters. The boats will be lowered. We will cut one of them adrift. In the confusion—"

What was to happen in the confusion that his imagination had conjured up, I was not to know. For what actually happened was so confused that of nothing am I quite certain. First, from the water of the Sound, that was lapping pleasantly against the side, I heard the voice of a man raised in terror. Then came a rush of feet, oaths, and yells; then a shock that threw us to our knees, and a crunching, ripping, and tearing roar like that made by the roof of a burning building when it plunges to the cellar.

And the next instant a large bowsprit entered our cabin window. There was left me just space enough to wrench the door open, and grabbing Kinney, who was still on his knees, I dragged him into the alleyway. He scrambled upright and clasped his hands to his head.

"Where's my hat?" he cried.

I could hear the water pouring into the lower deck and sweeping the freight and trunks before it. A horse in a box stall was squealing like a human being, and many human beings were screaming and shrieking like animals. My first intelligent thought was of the lovely lady. I shook Kinney by the arm. The uproar was so great that to make him hear I was forced to shout. "Where is Lord Ivy's cabin?" I cried. "You said it's next to his sister's. Take me there!"

Kinney nodded, and ran down the corridor and into an alleyway on which opened three cabins. The doors were ajar, and as I looked into each I saw that the beds had not been touched, and that the cabins were empty. I knew then that she was still on deck. I felt that I must find her. We ran toward the companionway.

"Women and children first!" Kinney was yelling. "Women and children first!" As we raced down the slanting floor of the saloon he kept repeating this mechanically. At that moment the electric lights went out, and, except for the oil lamps, the ship was in darkness. Many of the passengers had already gone to bed. These now burst from the state-rooms in strange garments, carrying life-preservers, hand-bags, their arms full of clothing. One man in one hand clutched a sponge, in the other an umbrella. With this he beat at those who blocked his flight. He hit a woman over the head, and I hit him and he went down. Finding himself on his knees, he began to pray volubly.

When we reached the upper deck we pushed out of the crush at the gangway and, to keep our footing, for there was a strong list to port, clung to the big flag-staff at the stern. At each rail the crew were swinging the boats over the side, and around each boat was a crazy, fighting mob. Above our starboard rail towered the foremast of a schooner. She had rammed us fair amidships, and in her bows was a hole through which you could have rowed a boat. Into this the water was rushing and sucking her down. She was already settling at the stern. By the light of a swinging lantern I saw three of her crew lift a yawl from her deck and lower it into the water. Into it they hurled oars and a sail, and one of them had already started to slide down the painter when the schooner lurched drunkenly; and in a panic all three of the men ran forward and leaped to our

lower deck. The yawl, abandoned, swung idly between the *Patience* and the schooner. Kinney, seeing what I saw, grabbed me by the arm.

"There!" he whispered, pointing; "there's our chance!" I saw that, with safety, the yawl could hold a third person, and as to who the third passenger would be I had already made up my mind.

"Wait here!" I said.

On the *Patience* there were many immigrants, only that afternoon released from Ellis Island. They had swarmed into the life-boats even before they were swung clear, and when the ship's officers drove them off, the poor souls, not being able to understand, believed they were being sacrificed for the safety of the other passengers. So each was fighting, as he thought, for his life and for the lives of his wife and children. At the edge of the scrimmage I dragged out two women who had been knocked off their feet and who were in danger of being trampled. But neither was the woman I sought. In the half-darkness I saw one of the immigrants, a girl with a kerchief on her head, struggling with her life-belt. A stoker, as he raced past, seized it and made for the rail. In my turn I took it from him, and he fought for it, shouting:

"It's every man for himself now!"

"All right," I said, for I was excited and angry, "look out for YOURSELF then!" I hit him on the chin, and he let go of the life-belt and dropped.

I heard at my elbow a low, excited laugh, and a voice said: "Well bowled! You never learned that in an office." I turned and saw the lovely lady. I tossed the immigrant girl her life-belt, and as though I had known Lady Moya all my life I took her by the hand and dragged her after me down the deck.

"You come with me!" I commanded. I found that I was trembling and that a weight of anxiety of which I had not been conscious had been lifted. I found I was still holding her hand and pressing it in my own. "Thank God!" I said. "I thought I had lost you!"

"Lost me!" repeated Lady Moya. But she made no comment. "I must find my brother," she said.

"You must come with me!" I ordered. "Go with Mr. Kinney to the lower deck. I will bring that rowboat under the stern. You will jump into it.

"I cannot leave my brother!" said Lady Moya.

Upon the word, as though shot from a cannon, the human whirlpool that was sweeping the deck amidships cast out Stumps and hurled him toward us. His sister gave a little cry of relief. Stumps recovered his balance and shook himself like a dog that has been in the water.

"Thought I'd never get out of it alive!" he remarked complacently. In the darkness I could not see his face, but I was sure he was still vaguely smiling. "Worse than a foot-ball night!" he exclaimed; "worse than Mafeking night!"

His sister pointed to the yawl.

"This gentleman is going to bring that boat here and take us away in it," she told him. "We had better go when we can!"

"Right ho!" assented Stumps cheerfully. "How about Phil? He's just behind me."

As he spoke, only a few yards from us a peevish voice pierced the tumult.

"I tell you," it cried, "you must find Lord Ivy! If Lord Ivy—"

A voice with a strong and brutal American accent yelled in answer: "To hell with Lord Ivy!"

Lady Moya chuckled.

"Get to the lower deck!" I commanded. "I am going for the yawl."

As I slipped my leg over the rail I heard Lord Ivy say: "I'll find Phil and meet you."

I dropped and caught the rail of the deck below, and, hanging from it, shoved with my knees and fell into the water. Two strokes brought me to the yawl, and, scrambling into her and casting her off, I paddled back to the steamer. As I lay under the stern I heard from the lower deck the voice of Kinney raised importantly.

"Ladies first!" he cried. "Her ladyship first, I mean," he corrected. Even on leaving what he believed to be a sinking ship, Kinney could not forget his manners. But Mr. Aldrich had evidently forgotten his. I heard him shout indignantly: "I'll be damned if I do!"

The voice of Lady Moya laughed.

"You'll be drowned if you don't!" she answered. I saw a black shadow poised upon the rail. "Steady below there!" her voice called, and the next moment, as lightly as a squirrel, she dropped to the thwart and stumbled into my arms.

The voice of Aldrich was again raised in anger. "I'd rather drown!" he cried.

Lord Ivy responded with unexpected spirit.

"Well, then, drown! The water is warm and it's a pleasing death."

At that, with a bump, he fell in a heap at my feet.

"Easy, Kinney!" I shouted. "Don't swamp us!"

"I'll be careful!" he called, and the next instant hit my shoulders and I shook him off on top of Lord Ivy.

"Get off my head!" shouted his lordship.

Kinney apologized to every one profusely. Lady Moya raised her voice.

"For the last time, Phil," she called, "are you coming or are you not?"

"Not with those swindlers, I'm not!" he shouted. "I think you two are mad! I prefer to drown!"

There was an uncomfortable silence. My position was a difficult one, and, not knowing what to say, I said nothing.

"If one must drown!" exclaimed Lady Moya briskly, "I can't see it matters who one drowns with."

In his strangely explosive manner Lord Ivy shouted suddenly: "Phil, you're a silly ass."

"Push off!" commanded Lady Moya.

I think, from her tone, the order was given more for the benefit of Aldrich than for myself. Certainly it was effective, for on the instant there was a heavy splash. Lord Ivy sniffed scornfully and manifested no interest.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "he prefers to drown!"

Sputtering and gasping, Aldrich rose out of the water, and, while we balanced the boat, climbed over the side.

"Understand!" he cried even while he was still gasping, "I am here under protest. I am here to protect you and Stumps. I am under obligation to no one. I'm—"

"Can you row?" I asked.

"Why don't you ask your pal?" he demanded savagely; "he rowed on last year's crew."

"Phil!" cried Lady Moya. Her voice suggested a temper I had not suspected. "You will row or you can get out and walk! Take the oars," she commanded, "and be civil!" Lady Moya, with the tiller in her hand, sat in the stern; Stumps, with Kinney huddled at his knees, was stowed away forward. I took the stroke and Aldrich the bow oars.

"We will make for the Connecticut shore," I said, and pulled from under the stern of the *Patience*.

In a few minutes we had lost all sight and, except for her whistle, all sound of her; and we ourselves were lost in the fog. There was another eloquent and embarrassing silence. Unless, in the panic, they trampled upon each other, I had no real fear for the safety of those on board the steamer. Before we had abandoned her I had heard the wireless frantically sputtering the "standby" call, and I was certain that already the big boats of the Fall River, Providence, and Joy lines, and launches from every wireless station between Bridgeport and Newport, were making toward her. But the margin of safety, which to my thinking was broad enough for all the other passengers, for the lovely lady was in no way sufficient. That mob-swept deck was no place for her. I was happy that, on her account, I had not waited for a possible rescue. In the yawl she was safe. The water was smooth, and the Connecticut shore was, I judged, not more than three miles distant. In an hour, unless the fog confused us, I felt sure the lovely lady would again walk safely upon dry land. Selfishly, on Kinney's account and my own, I was delighted to find myself free of the steamer, and from any chance of her landing us where police waited with open arms. The avenging angel in the person of Aldrich was still near us, so near that I could hear the water dripping from his clothes, but his power to harm was gone. I was congratulating myself on this when suddenly he undeceived me. Apparently he had been considering his position toward Kinney and myself, and, having arrived at a conclusion, was anxious to announce it.

"I wish to repeat," he exclaimed suddenly, "that I'm under obligations to nobody. Just because my friends," he went on defiantly, "choose to trust themselves with persons who ought to be in jail, I can't desert them. It's all the more reason why I SHOULD'N'T desert them. That's why I'm here! And I want it understood as soon as I get on shore I'm going to a police station and have those persons arrested."

Rising out of the fog that had rendered each of us invisible to the other, his words sounded fantastic and unreal. In the dripping silence, broken only by hoarse warnings that came from no direction, and within the mind of each the conviction that we were lost, police stations did not immediately concern us. So no one spoke, and in the fog the words died away and were drowned. But I was glad he had spoken. At least I was forewarned. I now knew that I had not escaped, that Kinney and I were still in danger. I determined that so far as it lay with me, our yawl would be beached at that point on the coast of Connecticut farthest removed, not only from police stations, but from all human habitation.

As soon as we were out of hearing of the *Patience* and her whistle, we completely lost our bearings. It may be that Lady Moya was not a skilled coxswain, or it may be that Aldrich understands a racing scull better than a yawl, and pulled too heavily on his right, but whatever the cause we soon were hopelessly lost. In this predicament we were not alone. The night was filled with fog-horns, whistles, bells, and the throb of engines, but we never were near enough to hail the vessels from which the sounds came, and when we rowed toward them they invariably sank into silence. After two hours Stumps and Kinney insisted on taking a turn at the oars, and Lady Moya moved to the bow. We gave her our coats, and, making cushions of these, she announced that she was going to sleep. Whether she slept or not, I do not know, but she remained silent. For three more dreary hours we took turns at the oars or dozed at the bottom of the boat while we continued aimlessly to drift upon the face of the waters. It was now five o'clock, and the fog had so far lightened that we could see each other and a stretch of open water. At intervals the fog-horns of vessels passing us, but hidden from us, tormented Aldrich to a state of extreme exasperation. He hailed them with frantic shrieks and shouts, and Stumps and the Lady Moya shouted with him. I fear Kinney and myself did not contribute any great volume of sound to the general chorus. To be "rescued" was the last thing we desired. The yacht or tug that would receive us on board would also put us on shore, where the vindictive Aldrich would have us at his mercy. We preferred the freedom of our yawl and the shelter of the fog. Our silence was not lost upon Aldrich. For some time he had been crouching in the bow, whispering indignantly to Lady Moya; now he exclaimed aloud:

"What did I tell you?" he cried contemptuously; "they got away in this boat because they were afraid of ME, not because they were afraid of being drowned. If they've nothing to be afraid of, why are they so anxious to keep us drifting around all night in this fog? Why don't they help us stop one of those tugs?"

Lord Ivy exploded suddenly.

"Rot!" he exclaimed. "If they're afraid of you, why did they ask you to go with them?"

"They didn't!" cried Aldrich, truthfully and triumphantly. "They kidnapped you and Moya because they thought they could square themselves with YOU. But they didn't want ME!" The issue had been fairly stated, and no longer with self-respect could I remain silent.

"We don't want you now!" I said. "Can't you understand," I went on with as much self-restraint as I could muster, "we are willing and anxious to explain ourselves to Lord Ivy, or even to you, but we don't want to explain to the police? My friend thought you and Lord Ivy were crooks, escaping. You think WE are crooks,

escaping. You both—”

Aldrich snorted contemptuously.

“That’s a likely story!” he cried. “No wonder you don’t want to tell THAT to the police!”

From the bow came an exclamation, and Lady Moya rose to her feet.

“Phil!” she said, “you bore me!” She picked her way across the thwart to where Kinney sat at the stroke oar.

“My brother and I often row together,” she said; “I will take your place.”

When she had seated herself we were so near that her eyes looked directly into mine. Drawing in the oars, she leaned upon them and smiled.

“Now, then,” she commanded, “tell us all about it.”

Before I could speak there came from behind her a sudden radiance, and as though a curtain had been snatched aside, the fog flew apart, and the sun, dripping, crimson, and gorgeous, sprang from the waters. From the others there was a cry of wonder and delight, and from Lord Ivy a shriek of incredulous laughter.

Lady Moya clapped her hands joyfully and pointed past me. I turned and looked. Directly behind me, not fifty feet from us, was a shelving beach and a stone wharf, and above it a vine-covered cottage, from the chimney of which smoke curled cheerily. Had the yawl, while Lady Moya was taking the oars, NOT swung in a circle, and had the sun NOT risen, in three minutes more we would have bumped ourselves into the State of Connecticut. The cottage stood on one horn of a tiny harbor. Beyond it, weather-beaten shingled houses, sail-lofts, and wharfs stretched cosily in a half-circle. Back of them rose splendid elms and the delicate spire of a church, and from the unruffled surface of the harbor the masts of many fishing-boats. Across the water, on a grass-grown point, a whitewashed light-house blushed in the crimson glory of the sun. Except for an oysterman in his boat at the end of the wharf, and the smoke from the chimney of his cottage, the little village slept, the harbor slept. It was a picture of perfect content, confidence, and peace. “Oh!” cried the Lady Moya, “how pretty, how pretty!”

Lord Ivy swung the bow about and raced toward the wharf. The others stood up and cheered hysterically.

At the sound and at the sight of us emerging so mysteriously from the fog, the man in the fishing-boat raised himself to his full height and stared as incredulously as though he beheld a mermaid. He was an old man, but straight and tall, and the oysterman’s boots stretching to his hips made him appear even taller than he was. He had a bristling white beard and his face was tanned to a fierce copper color, but his eyes were blue and young and gentle. They lit suddenly with excitement and sympathy.

“Are you from the Patience?” he shouted. In chorus we answered that we were, and Ivy pulled the yawl alongside the fisherman’s boat.

But already the old man had turned and, making a megaphone of his hands, was shouting to the cottage.

“Mother!” he cried, “mother, here are folks from the wreck. Get coffee and blankets and—and bacon—and eggs!”

“May the Lord bless him!” exclaimed the Lady Moya devoutly.

But Aldrich, excited and eager, pulled out a roll of bills and shook them at the man.

“Do you want to earn ten dollars?” he demanded; “then chase yourself to the village and bring the constable.”

Lady Moya exclaimed bitterly, Lord Ivy swore, Kinney in despair uttered a dismal howl and dropped his head in his hands.

“It’s no use, Mr. Aldrich,” I said. Seated in the stern, the others had hidden me from the fisherman. Now I stood up and he saw me. I laid one hand on his, and pointed to the tin badge on his suspender.

“He is the village constable himself,” I explained. I turned to the lovely lady. “Lady Moya,” I said, “I want to introduce you to my father!” I pointed to the vine-covered cottage. “That’s my home,” I said. I pointed to the sleeping town. “That,” I told her, “is the village of Fairport. Most of it belongs to father. You are all very welcome.”

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE MAKE-BELIEVE MAN ***

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