

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Of

Barbara Alice

Soft lips pressed against my mouth for an all too brief moment. I opened my eyes and Pamela smiled down at me.

"Hey, sleepy head. You've got a phone call."

We were on the side porch. I'd dozed off on the glider with my legs hanging over the end and Beth's open diary resting on my chest.

"Who is it?"

"Can't you guess? You've been dreading his call for days."

"Oh, God." I sat up quickly, catching the diary as it fell.

A few years after accepting the position of editor at Lanier Publishing, Gordon Felix had lost the remainder of his thinning gray hair. I've always hoped that I wasn't the only writer who contributed to his baldness.

"Tell him I'm busy – I'm working on a tough scene right now and I'll get back to him."

"Gordon knows you too well to believe that. You never write this late in the afternoon, and you panic every time he calls."

"This time I have good reason to – I'm behind schedule. You'll tell a little white lie for me, won't you?" I gave her my helpless puppy dog look. "Just this once?"

"Coward."

"Admittedly. But it's self-defense, the way I look at it."

"Yeah, except I have to do the defending."

She disappeared into the house.

I leaned back on the glider and stretched my legs out in front of me. Cliff and Eddie were still crisscrossing the south lawn on their riding mowers. The distant droning of the big red machines had helped lull me to sleep.

Pam returned a minute later.

"The deed is done. He wanted me to remind you that he'll be at our wedding, whether you like it or not."

"As if I could forget."

She sat next to me and inhaled deeply. "Mmm, that lilac bush smells divine."

"Oh, thanks for the fib."

"He wasn't fooled, but you still owe me another box of chocolates."

"I won't forget it either." I thumbed through the diary and found the place I had left off. "Beth was supposed to be married on the twentieth of June."

"Like us." Pam pushed the glider into motion. "That's an interesting coincidence. What else have you found out?"

"That you were right. It was a completely different world back then, and I'm seeing it all through Bethany's eyes."

"Well, hurry up and finish. I want to read it, too, you know. Maybe I'll notice some important detail you've overlooked."

She got up when Billy's loud tee-shirt announced his approach. He was headed for the rose garden, where his father allowed him to work every now and then.

"I think I'll go help," Pam said. "I'm not sure if Billy knows a shoot from a weed yet."

* * * * *

Monday, 2 April 1900

I went back to Miss Gloyer's shop today to pick out a dress pattern for my bridesmaids. The dresses will look fairly similar to mine, I think, but without as much lace. The silk I've chosen is a pale, icy pink. James' favorite color is emerald

green. (He adores my eyes.) However, the color is a touch too exuberant to use in a wedding. He is going to look quite dashing in his military uniform. All the other male members of the wedding party will need to wear fancy dress suits. Nathan always looks so splendid in his formal attire. (I've noticed that Stella Houston thinks so as well.) Papa told me yesterday that he has hired a real photographer to take pictures of the event. I want photographs of everything and everyone there so I won't be able to forget even the tiniest of details.

Saturday, 7 April 1900

In exactly one week I shall have my darling back again. He will be at home for only six days, but even a short visit is better than none at all. My heart beats so erratically when I think that in little more than two months, I will become Mrs. James Randolph Davenport, Jr. I will try to keep my days filled with as many activities as possible, so that the time left will pass by quickly.

Wednesday, 11 April 1900

I had Joyce and Veronica over for five o'clock tea this afternoon. (Surprisingly Sis joined us, wearing her Japanese tea gown.) My friends are almost as anxious to see their older brother as I am. But James wasn't the only topic of conversation. Veronica's coming out party has been scheduled for the second Saturday in May. She and her sister told us that yesterday morning, while shopping for the event with their mother in downtown Louisville, they came upon at least a hundred suffragettes who were marching down Main Street carrying signs. Verbal abuse was being thrown at the women from all sides. Despite this, Joyce, who has always been outgoing – and just as outspoken – wanted to join the march. But of course Mrs. D. would not allow it. "The Davenports do not make spectacles of themselves for any reason," she said, "not even for the right to vote."

Saturday, 14 April, 1900

I traveled with the Davenports to the Louisville train station today to meet James. I know Sis wanted very much to come with us, but the Davenports didn't invite her. There was no proper reason for them to, but I still felt a little sorry for her as she watched us drive away. When James stepped off the train, I wanted to throw my arms around his neck and kiss his tired face a thousand times. Naturally, this unseemly behavior in public would have shocked everyone, Mrs. D. especially. But, to my relief, I was able to control this wild impulse. I behaved like a lady the whole way home. After I had dinner with the Davenports at Willowhaven, James drove me back to the Manor in one of his family's carriages. This one only had two seats, which made the ride seem even more romantic. The night was clear and cool – the stars looked close enough to touch. Before saying goodnight, James took both my hands in his and kissed me gently on the lips. There are no words that can adequately describe the effect he has on me.

Sunday, 15 April, 1900

Easter Sunday began at a hectic pace for everyone. We were all trying to look our very best. I chose to wear my pink muslin outfit and Sis put on her new lavender dress. She even wore a corset, a discomfort she hasn't allowed herself to endure for quite a long while. Aunt Tabitha almost made us late for church this morning. She couldn't find her favorite hat, the one that makes her seem taller. It is decorated with a half a dozen ostrich plumes. As it turned out, the hat had been placed in the wrong box, so Sis and I had to help her dig through a mountain of them before it was recovered. We arrived just in time for the service, with Papa fuming the whole way there. He believes it is utterly ridiculous, all the things we ladies worry over, our appearances especially. "Thank God my dear, late wife gave me a son," he says at least once a week. "I would hate to be the only man in a house full of obstreperous females." (Papa only uses long words when he's vexed.)

When we got to the church, I sat beside James in the Davenport's pew, and for once I didn't worry about how long Reverend Minot's sermon would last. Certainly everyone has noticed that his message is always brief on holidays. He knows he will be treated to a special dinner somewhere, and today it will be at our house. The good reverend, who likes to eat nearly as much as his own hogs, has never, as far as I can remember, preached against the sin of gluttony. Twelve-year-old Maggie Culbertson, who is an admirer of Emily Davison, the famous Louisville opera singer, was one of only a few children who volunteered to sing for the congregation today. She performed "The Lord's Prayer." Young Maggie has enormous confidence but, sadly, she also has very little talent. No one would ever think of discouraging her, though, for she is the sweetest, most charming child in the world. When she finished, we applauded as though it were Miss Davison herself who was curtsying before us. Then it was on to the Manor with our guests. There were twelve of us in all. Besides the Reverend, my fiancé and his family had accepted our invitation for an early dinner. Traditionally, people like to fix lamb on Easter Sunday, but Papa can't stomach it. This year Esther prepared duck a l'orange instead. The feast was impressive, even by our cook's standards, but when it came time for the dessert to be served, an unfortunate incident unfolded. Esther had also prepared two Baked Alaskas. Susan was carrying one of them when she tripped and fell forward against Esther, who was carrying the other. The desserts were splattered all over the pantry. Besides the crashing sound of silver platters hitting the wooden floor, we also heard Esther bellow out a string of vulgar words, one more shocking than the next. There was complete silence for a moment. Aunt Tabitha's face turned as white as the tablecloth. With a somewhat sickly smile, she excused herself and hurried into the pantry. Nathan nearly strangled himself after this when he tried to hide his laughter by drinking a glass of water. Sis was staring down at her plate, not looking at all well. (We would soon find out why.) Papa's ears were the color of ripe tomatoes. He cleared his throat and poured himself another glass of wine. Joshua and the Reverend acted as though they had heard nothing. The two of them divided up the last slice of duck. Mr. and Mrs. Davenport exchanged amused glances, and then stared at Joyce and Veronica, warning them to

stifle their giggles. I squeezed James' hand under the table, trying to control my own urge to laugh. Aunt Tabitha returned sooner than I expected with two butterscotch pies. She always tries to anticipate such little disasters and prepare for them ahead of time. (I learned later that a furious Esther left Beatrice and Susan to clean up the considerable mess.)

As Aunt Tabs served dessert, the conversation started to flow again. We talked about the unusually warm spring we were having, and the health of Mr. Davenport's young tobacco crop. We also talked about the wedding. It was while James was discussing our honeymoon plans that Sis, who was sitting beside me on the end, fell out of her chair in a dead faint. I was the first to reach her. Nathan and Papa were so surprised they didn't react to the situation for an entire minute. Aunt Tabitha ran to fetch the smelling salts. I dipped a napkin into a glass of iced water and bathed her forehead. She came to right afterwards, and motioned for me to lean down. It was the corset! The poor thing wasn't used to wearing one in the first place, and after the heavy meal it had become unbearably tight. I think Papa heard what she said. He made a rather unsympathetic noise and covered his mouth with a napkin. I told everyone she had been overcome by a headache brought on by the heat, and right away James volunteered to carry her to her room. He picked her up just as Aunt Tabitha arrived with the smelling salts. We followed them upstairs, and when James was gone, Aunt Tabs and I freed Sis from her whalebone prison. She stayed in her room the rest of the afternoon. Fortunately, things returned to normal after the dinner. While the gentlemen drank port and smoked their cigars, we women retired to the music room to discuss our own important matters. Eventually the men rejoined us, and I was asked to entertain everyone by playing the piano. Knowing how much Mrs. Davenport appreciates Bach, I ended my program with one of his most popular works. The Reverend was the first guest to depart. He had to prepare for the evening sermon. All in all, this Easter Sunday was one of the most interesting that I can remember.

Thursday, 19 April, 1900

I've decided not to accompany James to the train station tomorrow morning. The knowledge that we will be reunited in less than two months would not be enough to keep me from causing an embarrassing scene. Of this I am certain. James will stop by in the morning to say goodbye. I will try not to be too maudlin. This thought leads me to reflect upon Sis's strange behavior this week. She has been quiet and withdrawn, and more than a little accident prone. It simply isn't like her at all. On Monday, a group of us were riding our horses around the estate when we noticed Sis was no longer with us. We doubled back and found her in the lake! Joshua immediately jumped off our bridge and pulled her to safety. She didn't seem the least bit grateful, however, and I wondered why she needed rescuing. Sis is an excellent swimmer. She explained that Handsome Rogue had been galloping across the bridge and had stumbled, throwing her into the water. She was addled by the fall and suffered a sprained ankle. Papa fetched the carriage and took her home. Aunt Tabitha wanted to call Dr. Rutledge, but Sis wouldn't allow it. She didn't want

to bother him with such a trivial injury. She told all of us to stop fussing over her. The following day we were invited to Willowhaven, and as we were walking from the Green Parlor to the dining room, Sis's ankle gave way completely. James caught her before she could fall and helped her to the table. She apologized to everyone for being such a nuisance. I must admit I was taken aback by my twin's behavior. I'm not accustomed to seeing Barbara Alice in the role of a helpless and humble female.

Tuesday, 24 April, 1900

Sis has been keeping to herself lately. Her ankle is better now, and she has been staying outside for several hours at a time, either riding Handsome or taking long walks. Aunt Tabby has been worried about her because she skips lunch now and hardly eats a thing at dinner. Yesterday I saw her sitting in the garden. Walter was trimming the hedges, but she wasn't watching him, she was just staring straight ahead. I went out and sat down next to her. When I asked her what was wrong, she refused to answer. I told her that if she had a problem, no matter how bad, she could tell me and I would do my best to help her solve it. She laughed then. It was not a happy laugh. "Dear, sweet Beth," she said to me, "sometimes I wonder how we could possibly be twins."

Monday, 30 April, 1900

Everyone is talking about the train wreck that happened early this morning near Vaughan, Mississippi. Papa's cousin rang us from Canton to tell the story. Mr. Casey Jones (I believe his given name is John) died in the crash. Another train was stalled on the tracks, and seeing that it was too late to avoid disaster, Mr. Jones told his fireman to jump and save himself. No one else was killed in the wreck because Casey stayed with engine number 382 and slowed it down. Cousin Vance says Mr. Jones is a true hero.

Thursday, 3 May, 1900

Today I went with my entire family to Churchill Downs for the twenty-sixth running of the Kentucky Derby. It was the most agreeable outing we've had in weeks. Everyone was in good spirits. Even Sis seemed more like her old self. The skies were clear and sunny, and a cool breeze made the temperature just right. I thought the colorful crowd of people there was as interesting to look at as the horses! I've been told that one should always be seen wearing one's fanciest clothes on Derby Day, and I am so glad Sis and I dressed appropriately for the event. The race was exciting for all of us, partly because the winner was born on Papa's farm. I couldn't keep myself from jumping up and down, and Papa himself was in a joyous state of agitation. Mr. Boland was riding Lieutenant Gibson, and they took the lead after the first turn. Amazingly, Mr. Boland had to pull back on the Lieutenant near the end, he was running so fast. They roared across the finish line to victory, with Florizar coming in second. We soon learned that Lt. Gibson had broken all the old

speed records. Both the trainer and the owner (Mr. Hughes and Mr. Smith) were ecstatic, but no one was more proud about it than Papa.

Friday, 4 May, 1900

We heard more news about the great tragedy that happened Tuesday in Utah. Two hundred souls were lost when some blasting powder exploded in a coal mine. Beatrice was much moved by the disaster. Her own father was killed in a mining accident in Pennsylvania when she was a young woman. The doorbell rang as we were talking together in the kitchen. Susan came and told us that there was an unusually large man waiting in the foyer. She said he was fair-haired and looked like a lumberjack, except for the fancy dress suit he was wearing. I knew right away who our visitor was. Roger Phelps moved to California three years ago to seek his fortune, but he vowed to return one day and win my sister's hand in marriage. He first became struck on Sis when she was fifteen years old, but she has always refused to take his romantic feelings seriously. To her, Roger is nothing more than a friend. When he arrived, Sis had just returned from riding and had gone up to her room to change for lunch. Aunt Tabitha was delighted to see him. In the past, she and Papa had hoped that Sis would marry him. Of course he was invited to eat with us. He must have remembered how fond my aunt is of candy, for he presented her with an enormous box of chocolates. We sat in the parlor and waited for Sis to make her appearance. Roger said he was back to stay. He had made several lucrative land deals out west and now he had been called upon to take over the running of his father's bank in Louisville. I could tell how anxious he was to see Sis again. As he was talking, he kept sending hopeful glances into the hallway. When she finally came into the room, Roger stood up so quickly he nearly knocked over a lamp. I lost count of the compliments he bestowed on her for the remainder of his visit. But it was plain to see that their time apart had not changed anything. Sis was polite and friendly with Roger, but at the same time she seemed indifferent. Even if he noticed her attitude, I don't believe he was discouraged by it.

Wednesday, 9 May, 1900

I was fitted for my wedding dress today, and the beauty of it exceeded my wildest expectations. I was equally pleased with the bridesmaid dresses, which are coming along nicely. Miss Gloyer has to be the greatest seamstress in all the world.

Sunday, 13 May, 1900

Aunt Tabs accompanied Sis and I to Veronica's coming out party last night at Willowhaven. Her official debut took place last weekend at the Galt House. She looked so pretty coming down the stairs in her yellow ball gown, with her glossy black hair in ringlets. Mr. and Mrs. Davenport were beaming with pride. There were many games played throughout the evening, and just as much dancing. After supper a tall white cake was brought out for everyone to share. Tokens had been baked into the upper tier, and all those who were unmarried and unattached were

asked to partake of it. The most prized token, a ring, was found in my sister's piece of cake. Everyone teased her about it, saying she would soon be married, perhaps to Roger Phelps! She did not seem to like this prediction one bit. Today we saw Roger at church. Papa invited him to supper this evening, and Sis was none too pleased by his obvious attempt at matchmaking.

Saturday, 19 May, 1900

Sis locked herself in her room earlier today after having a heated discussion with Papa. Apparently he had set up an outing for her this afternoon with Mr. Phelps. She was to give him an extensive tour of the horse farm, and afterwards they would enjoy a picnic lunch together with Nathan and some of the workers. When Papa told Sis about the plans he had made, she refused to go with him to meet Roger. She told him he had no right to force her into the arms of a man she didn't love. He accused her of being melodramatic, but Sis would not back down. Papa ended up leaving the house by himself, quite furious. Two hours later I went upstairs to talk to Sis. I had just received a letter from James and I thought it might cheer her up if I offered to let her read it. When she opened her bedroom door, I noticed right away that her eyes were red from crying so long. She took the letter from me with a mumbled thank you. Later, when she didn't come down to supper, I returned to check on her. I could hear her crying again through the closed door, and this time I left without knocking. Something told me that it was the kindest thing to do.

Monday, 21 May, 1900

My wedding invitations were delivered today. They are white, and made of heavy paper with scalloped edges. The scrolled print is quite attractive. I plan to address each envelope myself, so I will have to begin the work right away. The invitations must be posted no later than two weeks from now, and we are expecting nearly three hundred guests! The Manor will be filled with relatives who must spend the night. I think Papa and Aunt Tabitha are actually looking forward to having so much company.

Thursday, 24 May, 1900

Sis was fitted for her bridesmaid dress this morning, along with Joyce and Veronica. (I stayed behind to address envelopes.) When she arrived home she seemed more depressed than ever, but I had something to give her that I thought would make her feel better. Roger came by the house while she and Aunt Tabs were gone, and we had a long talk together. He asked me why Sis had not come on the outing last weekend. I told him, and he was distressed by the fact that Sis had Papa had quarreled. He then wanted to know if I thought there was a chance he could win her heart one day. I hated to disappoint him, but I thought he deserved to hear the truth. Before he left, he asked me if he could leave a note for Sis. He wanted to apologize for any pain and trouble his affection for her had caused, and assure her that she could always consider him a friend.

Tuesday, 29 May, 1900

Tomorrow is Decoration Day, and Papa left this afternoon on his annual pilgrimage to Perryville. He always goes alone to visit the battlefield near there and the grave of his older brother. The two of them were Union soldiers, and in October of 1862 they fought bravely together at the Battle of Perryville. Uncle Nathan died in Papa's arms on the banks of the Chaplin River. Papa himself was gravely injured and maimed for life. Once I heard him telling Mr. Davenport about that horrible day. It gave me chills to hear him describe the suffering he witnessed on both sides.

Wednesday, 30 May, 1900

Our twentieth birthday today! Papa returned from Perryville in time for our birthday celebration. It was such a pleasant day we decided to dine alfresco. After our cold luncheon, Esther brought out a magnificent heart-shaped cake. And then it was time to open our gifts. I gave Sis a new stereoscope with a set of five hundred slides, and she presented me with a popular book by Sarah Orne Jewett, "The Country of the Pointed Firs." Mrs. D. gave us two of the most beautiful flowered silk hats I've ever seen. Aunt Tabitha was most envious. Dearest James sent me an oriental music box to add to my collection. I don't recognize the tune it plays, but it is quite cheerful. He sent Sis a pair of white lace gloves. We received gold crosses on delicate gold chains from Aunt Tabs, and a subscription to Godey's Lady's Book from Joyce and Veronica. Young Joshua impressed us both with the hand-carved wooden horses he had made. One was painted to resemble my chestnut filly, Sweet Shiloh, and the other looked like Handsome Rogue. He offered them to us so shyly, as if he was afraid we weren't going to like them. We thanked him so profusely that he stumbled out into the yard away from us, blushing. As for our own brother, we knew exactly what to expect from him. He always buys us the same perfume every year: Rosewater for me and oil of lavender for Sis. Papa prefers to be the last person to give us our presents. He surprised Sis with a Kodak Brownie camera, which Nathan took possession of almost at once. He made several pictures of Sis and I standing side by side on the verandah steps. Josh was walking back and forth behind Nathan, making the most ridiculous faces at us so we would laugh. Right after this, Papa took me aside and led me into the garden. I think his leg must be bothering him more than usual. He had to use his cane again today.

We sat down on a bench together and he pulled a little black box out of his coat pocket and handed it to me. "This was the engagement gift I gave to your mother," he said, his voice hushed. "Before she left this world she told me to give it to the daughter who was to marry first. It's yours to cherish now, Beth." Inside the velvet box was a white shell cameo with a rose carved on the front. The brooch was attached to a long golden chain. It had been my mother's most valued possession. My eyes filled with tears at the thought. Papa took my hand and squeezed it gently. I believe his own eyes were misty. He told me he hoped I would one day have a special daughter of my own to pass it on to. I was so overcome with emotion I couldn't even say thank you. I kissed him on the cheek instead. He helped me put

the necklace on before we rejoined the others. Joyce and Veronica had started a game of croquet on the back lawn. When I asked them where Sis had gone, they told me they had last seen her near the edge of the garden. They thought she had looked upset, so I decided to search for her. Several minutes later I found her in the library. She was sitting at Papa's desk drinking a glass of his best brandy. She wouldn't admit that anything was wrong, so I showed her mother's cameo, and explained why Papa had given it to me. She said it was good that I had been the one to inherit the heirloom, for she most likely would have ended up losing it. Despite what she said, I sensed the hurt she was feeling. I could hear it in her voice. Before I left the library, I let her know that she could borrow the cameo whenever she liked.

Thursday, 31 May, 1900

This day, the anniversary of my mother's death, is always a sad one for the family. We went to the cemetery this morning to visit her grave, as we do every year. Papa always covers her with long-stemmed roses. It hurts to think she died giving life to me and my sister. I shall never forget the conversation I overheard this time last year at one of our dinner parties. Doctor Rutledge remarked to Aunt Tabitha that Mother probably would have lived if she had only given birth to me. Having her second daughter had weakened her so much that she could not recover. I never told Sis what Doctor Rutledge said. She feels enough guilt already, just as I do.

Wednesday, 6 June, 1900

I've been floating on a cloud all week. We posted the wedding invitations on Monday, and yesterday my wedding dress was delivered by Miss Gloyer herself, along with the dresses for my bridesmaids. Best of all, James graduated from West Point at noon today, and after taking his military oath he began the journey home. We shall be reunited once more on Friday, this time forever.

Friday, 8 June, 1900

The day began so happily. James arrived home at four o'clock this afternoon and, except for Sis, my whole family went to Willowhaven to help celebrate. Sis claimed she was ill, but I was still surprised that she refused to come with us. She was so looking forward to James' return. After supper, we ladies made our way to the Green Parlor. I mentioned to Joyce and Veronica that I was worried about Sis's strange behavior, which seemed worse of late. It was then that they told me what I had failed to realize all these months, for I had been blinded by my own happiness. Sis was hurting because she was in love with James. She was in love with the man her sister was going to marry. How could I not have seen the truth? I sat there numb with shock, listening to what my friends had to say. They had first begun to suspect the way Sis felt back in April, during James' Easter visit. She had tried to win his sympathy, and they believed the riding accident had probably been a ruse to get his attention. When she was younger, Sis was always at Nathan's heels, and

Nathan was usually with James. She might have been in love with my fiancé for years. I made Joyce and Veronica promise me that they would not tell James.

Saturday, 9 June, 1900

I haven't told Sis yet that I know her secret. I have almost made up my mind not to. I'm afraid it would make our situation even more complicated and painful. That's why I don't intend to discuss it with James. There is nothing we can do to help her. We can't stop loving each other for my sister's sake.

Thursday, 14 June, 1900

I have left Sis alone since James' return. I don't question her anymore about her mood or behavior, but Nathan and Aunt Tabby do almost continually. I feel sorry for her, and guilty that I can be so happy when my sister is suffering. I can only imagine how I would feel if our roles were reversed.

Friday, 15 June, 1900

Five more days until the wedding. I am nervous, happy and sad all at the same time. I began work on a gift for James last night. The lyrics came to me first, and so easily that I finished them in barely half an hour. I arose at dawn this morning to work on the music, for I haven't much time left to finish it. I plan to surprise everyone and sing the song to my new husband at our reception. Sometimes I wonder if James could possibly realize how deep my love is for him.

"My Heart Sings"

Darling, when I was a little girl, I watched you from afar, And each night before I went to sleep I'd wish upon a star: Oh, heavenly star, shining bright above, will you help me win his love? He's the reason why my heart sings.

Oh, and once you kissed me on a dare, to see if anyone would stare, well, they must have heard my heart sing. Yes, we were children when we met, and when you left I could not forget, the way you made my heart sing.

Dearest when I'm without you I'm in pain, but when I hear you call my name, you know it makes my heart sing. At night I pray to God above, I thank him that I have your love, for no one else could make my heart sing. Sweetheart through the years we'll grow old and gray, but our love will never, ever fade away. You'll always make my heart sing.

Sunday, 17 June, 1900

Tomorrow is Mr. and Mrs. Davenport's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Most of the county has been invited to the party, and much to Nathan's delight, Stella

Houston and her father will be attending. James plans to take me and some of the other guests for a drive in his father's new motorcar. I think everyone will want a ride before the day is over. This evening I was left by myself. Sis had gone off on an evening horseback ride. I have hardly seen her all week. Both of us feigned a headache and stayed home from the evening church service. I opened the doors to the garden and played some of my favorite songs on the Regina music box. The air was filled with the scent of June roses. I was singing along to "Beautiful Dreamer" when James suddenly appeared in the garden. He had slipped out of church for a visit. I had been so busy today making plans for our rehearsal dinner that he had not been able to see enough of me to satisfy him. He swept me out onto the terrace and we danced in the moonlight for a heavenly hour. I could see my future shining brightly in his warm, dark eyes, and what beautiful dreams there were to behold. Finally, the time came for him to leave. Tenderly, he kissed me good night, and when he left me alone in the romantic garden, I was not sad. Soon, very soon, I will become his wife. And that is all I have ever wanted.

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