

The Laying of the Monster

Theodosia Garrison

Table of Contents

<u>The Laying of the Monster</u>	1
<u>Theodosia Garrison</u>	1

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DOROTHEA reposed with her shoulders in the shade of the bulkhead and her bare feet burrowing in the sun-warmed sand. Beneath her shoulder blades was a bulky and disheveled volume — a bound year of Godey's Lady Book of the vintage of the early seventies. Having survived the handling of three generations, this seemed to take naturally to being drenched with rain and warped by sun, or, as at the present moment, serving its owner either as a sand-pillow or as a receptacle for divers scribbled verses on its fly-leaves and margins.

It was with a poem now that Dorothea was wrestling, as she wriggled her toes in the sand and gazed blankly oceanward. Under the scorching August sun, the Atlantic seemed to purr like a huge, amiable lion cub.

It was not the amiabilities of nature, however, in which Dorothea found inspiration. A harp of a single string, she sang as that minstrel might who was implored to make love alone his theme.

Given an imaginative young person of eleven, who, when not abandoning herself utterly to athletics, has secret and continual access to the brand of literature peculiar to the "Seaside Library," and the result is obvious. Dorothea's mother read recipes; her father was addicted to the daily papers. It was only in her grandmother that Dorothea found a literary taste she approved. On that cozy person's bookshelves one could always find what happened to Goldie or what the exquisite Irish heroine said to the earl before she eloped with the captain.

In this knowledge Dorothea's parents had no ambition that their daughter should excel. In fact, an uncompromising edict on the subject had been given forth more than once to a sullen and rebellious sinner. But how should the most suspicious parent, when his daughter sits in his presence apparently engrossed in a book entitled "The Girlhood of Famous Women," guess that carefully concealed in its interior is a smaller volume bearing the title "Muriel's Mistake, or, For Another's Sin?"

Having acquired knowledge, the true student seeks to demonstrate. Dorothea had promptly and intentionally fallen in love with the son of her next-door neighbor. Amiel — fresh from his first year in college — was a tall, broad-shouldered youth, with kindly brown eyes and a flash of white teeth when he smiled. In contrast to the small boys and the sober-going fathers of families in which the summer colony abounded, he shone, as Dorothea's favorite novelists would have expressed it, "like a Greek god."

It was this unsuspecting person whom Dorothea had, at first sight, elected to be the Hero of her Dreams. She trailed him, moreover, with a persistency that would have done credit to a detective. Did he go to the post-office, he was sure to meet Dorothea returning (Lady Ursula, strolling through her estate, comes upon her lover unawares). Dorothea, emulating her heroine's example by vaulting a fence and cutting across lots, could be found also strolling (if slightly breathless) as he approached.

She timed her day, as far as possible, with his. Would he swim, play tennis, or go crabbing — there was Dorothea. Would he repose in the summerhouse hammock and listen to entire pages declaimed from Tennyson and Longfellow, the while being violently swung — his slave was ready. She read no story in which she was not the heroine and Amiel the hero. At the same time, she was perfectly and painfully conscious in the back of her brain that Amiel regarded her only as a sun-browned, crop-headed tomboy, who had an extraordinary facility for

The Laying of the Monster

remembering all the poetry she had ever read, and who amused and interested him as his own small sister might. Outwardly she kept strictly to this rule — a purely natural one — while inwardly she soared dizzily from fantasy to fantasy, even while her physical body was plunging in the waves or leaping on the tennis court.

Could Amiel have had the slightest insight into the fancies seething in his small neighbor's mind, he would have been astounded to the verge of doubting her reason. Little did he know, as he stood now on the bulkhead and looked down at her, that at the moment Dorothea was finishing mentally a poem in which with "wild tears" and "clasping hands," he had bidden her an eternal farewell — by moonlight. She was, moreover, perturbed by the paucity of her native language. There appeared to be nothing to rhyme with "love" except "shove," "above," and "dove." Of these one was impossible and two were trite. Scowling fiercely at the ocean, she finally gave the bird to the hungry line and repeated the final couplet doubtfully:

"`Farewell,' he said. `Ah, love, my love,
My heart is breaking for thee, Dove.' "

"Look out!" said a voice above her. "I'm going to jump."

Dorothea sat up delightedly, with her bare, brown legs tucked beneath her, Turk-like, as she welcomed him. ("Ah! Beloved," said Lady Ursula with her hand on her fluttering heart.) "Hello," said Dorothea, with a wide grin.

He flung himself down beside her and surveyed her with amusement. "Been digging holes with your head?" he asked affably. "Your hair and eyelashes look it. Been here all the afternoon?"

"Yes," she said. "I saw you go riding after lunch. I've been here ever since. I love to be on the beach when there isn't a lot of people bothering around. Then" — she made a wide gesture with her brown hand — "all of it seems to belong to me, not broken up in little bits for everybody." She shook her cropped head vigorously, and the sand pelted down her shoulders.

"Well," he said, watching this operation, "you came near taking your little bit to the house with you to keep, didn't you? How long have you worn your hair cropped like that, Dorothea? Was it when you decided to be captain of a ball team?"

He drew a box of chocolates from his pocket and tossed it over to her. She caught it neatly on her outstretched palm, as a boy would have done, and nibbled squirrel-like as she talked. She did not resent being teased by Amiel — she liked it, rather, as representing a perfect understanding between them. Also, once removed from the high hills of romance, she was not devoid of humor.

"It was cut in June — before you came. They didn't want me to, but I just begged them. It was such a nuisance bathing and then flopping about drying afterward, and being sent upstairs all day long to make it smooth."

"You funny kid," he said. "You don't care how you look, do you? You ought to have been a boy. What have you been doing down here all by yourself?"

"Reading — and — listening," said Dorothea vaguely. She folded Godey's Lady Book tightly to her chest. Lady Ursula or no Lady Ursula, she would have died — with black, bitter shame at the thought of any eye but her own falling upon the penciled lines therein. The horror of ridicule is the black shadow that hangs over youth. That strange, inner world of her own Dorothea shared with nothing more substantial than her dreams.

"Listening?" he inquired.

The Laying of the Monster

"To the ocean," explained Dorothea. "It was high tide when I came down, and the waves boom—boomed like that, as though it were saying big words down in its chest, you know."

"And what were the wild waves saying?"

"Oh, big words like — " she thought a moment, her small, sunburnt face serious and intent. "Oh, like

"Robert of Sicily, Brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine."

she intoned deeply. "You see?"

"Absolutely," he said enjoyingly. "And so you weren't lonesome?"

Dorothea, who had spent her afternoon in a region peopled with interesting and exquisite figures, shook her head.

"You don't get lonesome when you think," she said — "imagine" was the word she meant; she used the other as appealing to his understanding. Suddenly the vague, introspective look left her face; she turned to him with the expression of one imparting pleasing tidings. "My friend is coming to—morrow to stay a week," she said. "You remember I told you that mother had asked her. Well, she's coming down with father to—morrow. She has never been to the seashore before. You'll take us crabbing, won't you, Amiel? And if we have a bonfire you'll ask father to let us stay up, won't you?"

"Sure," he said good-naturedly. "What's her name?"

"Her name is Jennie Clark, and she lives next door to us in the city, and we're going to have fun — fun — fun," chanted Dorothea. "Come on." She sprang lightly to her feet and dug her shoes and stockings out of the sand. "We can have a game of tennis before dinner."

Clutching her book with her shoes and stockings, she raced with him to the steps that led to the bulkhead, and from that eminence — with the air of one performing an accustomed act — she clambered on the fence that separated the green lawns from beach to avenue. This, with a fine disregard for splinters, she proceeded to walk — her property tucked under her arm.

Amiel strode beside her on the lawn. She was as sure-footed as a goat; but when he clutched her elbow as she performed a daring pirouette, she offered no opposition, but proceeded sedately beneath his hold. Why not? She had ceased to be Dorothea on her way to a tennis game ("Lean heavily on me, dearest," whispered Reginald, "the chapel is in sight. Bear up a little longer"). With a weary sigh the Lady Ursula slid finally from the gate—post to the ground and proceeded to put on her stockings.

Jennie Clark arrived duly and was received, if not rapturously, at least hospitably. To be frank, Jennie Clark was not among those first suggested by Dorothea as a prospective visitor. Of her own private and particular friends some five had been rejected by a too censorious parent, mainly, it seemed, because of a lack of personal charm — Dorothea preferring a good sport from the gutter, as it were, to a dull fairy from a dancing school.

Jennie had been near, perilously near, the end of Dorothea's list. Her sole claims to Dorothea's friendship were that, living next door, she was available on rainy days when greater delights failed, and that Dorothea, by a dramatic relation of a ghost story, could hypnotize her into a terrified and wholly fascinated wreck.

Jennie was thirteen, a very young thirteen — pretty and mindless as a Persian kitten — but developing rapidly a coquettish instinct for the value of a red ribbon in her dark curls, and the set of a bracelet on her plump arm.

The Laying of the Monster

Beside her curves and curls and pretty frilled frocks, Dorothea, in her straight, blue flannel playing suit or stiff afternoon pique, with her cropped blonde head, suggested nothing so much as wire opposed to a sofa cushion.

She was in white pique this afternoon. To meet one's friend at the station was an event. Dorothea was honestly excited and happy, and she was not at all pained that Jennie Clark's first greeting was a comment on her short hair and her sunburn.

By what might have seemed to the unobserving a happy coincidence, Amiel, strolling from his house to the beach with his after-dinner pipe, was hailed by Dorothea from the summerhouse. She had run the unsuspecting Miss Clark very hard to arrive at the psychological moment. Joining them there, he was duly presented to Jennie Clark, and Dorothea, accepting the courteous fashion in which he acknowledged the introduction as an indirect compliment to herself, was elated. Jennie was certainly very pretty. She tossed back her long curls and talked to Amiel with an occasional droop of her long lashes, and Dorothea, beaming upon them both, had no notion that, hovering above her in the quiet twilight, the green-eyed Monster was even then scenting its victim and preparing to strike.

Presently Dorothea's father and mother and Amiel's stout and amiable parents joined their offspring in the summerhouse. One of the affable, if uninteresting, neighbors came as well and, promptly introducing a banjo as a reason for his being, lured the assembled company into song.

Dorothea, snuggled into her corner, blissfully conscious of Amiel's careless arm about her shoulder, gave herself up to happiness. The night was soft as velvet, sewn with the gold spangles of stars. The waves whispered secrets to each other as they waited for the moon to rise. Dorothea, rapturously using the atmosphere as a background for Lady Ursula, became suddenly aware that the singing of "Juanita" in six different keys had ceased, and that Jennie, having been discovered to be the possessor of a voice, was singing alone. She had an exquisite little pipe, and she sang the dominating sentimental song of the year with ease if not with temperament. Its close was greeted with instant and enthusiastic applause. Jennie became instantly the center of attraction.

It was Amiel who urged her to sing again, Amiel who seized upon the banjo and accompanied her triumphantly through a college song, turning his back squarely upon Dorothea the while.

Dorothea sat up straight, a sudden, bewildering anger at her heart as she watched them. In the midst of the song she announced casually that the moon was coming up. No one paid the slightest attention to her except the calling neighbor, who said "Hush!"

An instant later, the instant that saw Amiel lay a commending and fraternal hand on Jennie's curls, the Monster struck. Jealousy had no firmer grip of beak and talons on the Moor of Venice than on the crop-headed Dorothea. In absolute self-defense she did an unprecedented and wholly unexpected thing. Without warning she burst into song, even as Jennie was coyly preparing for an encore.

"O fair dove, O fond dove.
O dove with the white, white breast,"

shrilled Dorothea to her startled audience. This was the same song with which Lady Ursula invariably brought blinding, bitter tears to the eyes of those assembled at picnics and hunt balls. It had an opposite effect upon Dorothea's auditors. With apparently one accord they burst into hilarious mirth, comment, and expostulation.

"My child!" "Where did you get that absurd song?" "Dorothea, never try to sing again. I forbid it." This last from her father.

The Laying of the Monster

It was Amiel who commented admiringly on the fact that Dorothea with practice might go through an entire song without once touching upon the tune and time, and Jennie who giggled enjoyingly and said, "Oh, Dorothea, you're awfully funny."

Dorothea sat out the rest of the evening in stony silence, which nobody regarded. She refused to join in the various choruses — no one noticed the omission in the least. When at last she walked to the house with Amiel between herself and Jennie, and haughtily shrugged her shoulder away from his hand, he continued listening to Jennie's prattle without giving the slightest attention to her aloofness.

Long after Jennie was asleep, Dorothea, wide-eyed, communed with the Monster. This was not an imitation Lady Ursula jealousy at all. That was an interesting game at which one played when Amiel occasionally walked and talked with some stray damsel in the colony. She had no real jealousy of the young ladyhood that at times intruded. But this was different; here she was out-ranked in her own class. In that lay the sting. She reflected dismally that this was only Tuesday and that Jennie was to stay until the following Monday.

She was perfectly and miserably fair in recounting Jennie's attractions as contrasted with her own. She, Dorothea, could, at demand, which was seldom, reel off pages of poetry; Jennie could sing — to appreciative audiences. Dorothea could swim and dive; Jennie had curly hair. Plainly, Jennie had all the best of it. It remained only for Dorothea not to forget the courtesy due a guest and, above all, oh, above everything, not to show the slightest trace of the jealousy that consumed her. Lady Ursula had several times been the life of the party when her heart was breaking. Her proud smile had never faltered in the presence of her rival. Well, neither would Dorothea's. She assumed it instantly in the darkness by way of immediate practice, and fell asleep with the result plastered upon her face.

In the morning the Monster, wearied perhaps by his session of the night before, seemed to lie dormant. Dorothea woke jubilant as the morn and, having roused her friend by the gentle method of half stifling her with a pillow, rushed her through her dressing and led her forth.

The ocean welcomed them with rapture; it caught the sun for them and threw it back in millions and millions of living, rainbowed diamonds. The world was all gold and blue and tremulous with clean salt winds. It seemed ridiculous that one could be unhappy on such a day. Dorothea danced pagan-like at the wave edge while Jennie watched demurely from the bulkhead.

However, it appeared that even on a day like this one could carry black envy at one's heart. It was during the bathing hour that the Monster again asserted himself — this time for no indefinite stay. As a rule, the bathing hour was one in which Dorothea reveled. Arrayed in her faded bathing suit, guiltless of skirt or sleeves, her prowess as an amphibious creature had been highly commended by that one for whose praise she would gladly have precipitated herself from the highest pier.

In vain to-day did she perform feats of daring and agility that would have done credit to a flying fish. No one had eyes for her except an agitated mother and grandmother, who finally ordered her summarily out of the water and into the bath house.

Amiel had occupied himself in coaxing Jennie into the water and giving her primary instructions in swimming. Jennie, in the daintiest red and white suit that could be imagined, skirted and stockinged, with her curls escaping from a coquettish red handkerchief, timorously advancing and drawing back from the wave rush with little, appealing cries, was as fascinating as a playful kitten.

Dorothea regarded her with the disgust of the seasoned veteran for the raw recruit. This, however, her erstwhile friend might have been pardoned for not suspecting, seeing that whenever she caught Dorothea's eye she was immediately the recipient of a wide and beaming smile that even one less vain might have accepted as a tribute to

The Laying of the Monster

her attractions. It never wavered even while Jennie shook down her long curls ostensibly to let the sun dry a single lock that in some unaccountable way had felt the touch of a wave. Beamingly Dorothea heard Amiel humorously contrast this brown glory with her own short crop. Beamingly she fell into the plans for the crabbing party that afternoon. However, it was this lightsome expedition that laid the last straw upon the Monster's back.

The gentle art of crabbing involves the carrying of a long-handled net and a huge basket, and a stop at the butcher's to purchase unsavory lumps of meat for bait.

Hitherto Dorothea had always proudly and vehemently insisted upon carrying the basket the long, hot mile to the bay. To-day, as Amiel dropped the bait in and handed it to her as a matter of course, she accepted it with the look of the proud spirit that will not cry out beneath indignities. She hung the basket over her blue flanneled arm and trudged valiantly before them.

The afternoon was one of long and unprecedented martyrdom. Dorothea reviewed it as she changed into her white pique for dinner, the while beamingly advising Jennie as to the selection of hair ribbons. She had vaulted fences; Jennie had been assisted. She had baited lines; Jennie's had been baited. The fact that a week before the offer of help in that delicate operation would have been regarded as an insult to her intelligence failed to occur to her to-day. She burned with humiliation as she remembered that after a half hour of seeing Jennie's line carefully prepared, she had handed her own to Amiel with the air of one doing only what was expected of her. Amiel, in return, had stared at her, and in the tone he might have used to a younger brother had said briefly, "Well, go on and bait it. What's the matter?" She had baited it. Also, she had carried home the net while Amiel had borne the spoils and protested courteously when Jennie offered an assisting hand. It was dreary consolation to realize that never for a moment had the proud smile wavered. She was beginning to feel as though an elastic band had been stretched for hours under her nose and behind her ears, and the sole comment her lofty amiability had drawn forth had been a reference to the famed animal of Cheshire.

From her window she presently saw Jennie, all rosy muslin and tossing curls, strolling beachward with Amiel. The sight nerved her to demonstrate an idea that had occurred to her inspiringly during the day. Once by simply placing a dewy rose in her golden torrent of hair, Lady Ursula had brought the ball room to her feet. In emulation, Dorothea extracted a hair ribbon from Jennie's stock and, failing other means, tied it bandage-wise about her head. The result was not coquettish. It suggested only accident or disease. She removed it wearily, and sat down on the edge of the bed to think. Plainly, she could not compete with Jennie on the grounds of beauty or accomplishments. Apparently the fact of being able to swim, vault, and leap from vast heights constituted none of these things. And yet, before Jennie arrived — and doubtless after Jennie departed — after these five interminable days that stretched before her — but why five?

The dinner bell rang insistently. Some one was calling her from the stairs. Dorothea sat still, with her arms folded on the bedpost and a new thought playing like summer lightning in her brain. The thought gradually resolved itself into a problem. It was well enough to decide that Jennie must go — the problem was how to make her go. A telegram or a letter summoning her home? A good idea if there were any one in the city to send it. That was obviously impossible.

Dorothea walked downstairs with her brows knitted in thought above the unchanging smile, and in her eyes the look of the rapt soul momentarily expecting inspiration.

The inspiration arrived during that hour when the denizens of the little colony sat ring-wise about the beach fire.

The neighbor with the banjo had done his worst, and desisted; Jennie had piped through her repertoire and was now graciously accepting the support of Amiel's arm. Dorothea and the Monster, somewhat withdrawn from the circle, watched a crooked moon lift itself above the horizon and lay a trail of opal glory on the waves. Still awaiting inspiration, she regarded it with as little interest as Lucretia Borgia might have given the sunset that

The Laying of the Monster

preceded one of her little poisoning dinners.

Presently, as befitted the atmosphere and hour, the talk of the little circle fell upon things ghostly and mysterious — strange happenings and prophetic dreams. Dorothea, who had a love of horrors, lent a suddenly attentive ear; but Jennie, though plainly fascinated, uttered a protesting plaint. "Oh, please stop! You don't know how you frighten me! Dorothea has had some awfully queer things happen to her, and it scares me almost to death when she tells about them."

Mirth followed the announcement of Dorothea's occult powers, which, needless to say, had come as a surprise to her immediate family.

Dorothea paid no attention whatever. Instead she rose to her feet and, flinging her arms wide, yawned elaborately. It was a delicate suggestion, which caused the men to look at their watches, and the party forthwith dispersed.

Dorothea, for all the sand in her shoes, seemed to walk to the house on air. The inspiration had arrived, fully accoutered, as it were, on the breath of Jennie's complaint.

The work in hand called for the dexterity of the true artist. With managerial instinct, Dorothea, repelling any attempt at conversation, waited only until Jennie was comfortably ensconced in bed, to turn the lamp down so that it glimmered in sickly fashion, before beginning proceedings. Then, seating herself beside the bed — an eerie figure in her straight, white gown — she shook her head dismally and indulged in a heartfelt sigh. Jennie, her nerves already on edge with the ghost stories of the hour before, turned startled eyes upon her.

"What is the matter? What is it?" she inquired anxiously.

"I — feel — strange," said Dorothea. She turned upon her victim a face full of uncanny suggestion. Divested of its perpetual smile, it seemed to Jennie as unfamiliar as a room from which an accustomed piece of furniture had been moved.

"I feel — strange. Something terrible is happening somewhere. — I can tell — I always can — I am going to have a vision — I can feel it — It always comes like this." With a quick hand she extinguished the lamp. "It will come in a dream," she muttered. "Let me sleep, oh, let me sleep!"

She made a sweeping pass with her out-stretched hands and, after a dramatic pause, fell heavily on her pillow, where she instantly proceeded to fall into a deep and trance-like slumber — a slumber that prevailed through the terrified questionings, whimperings, and agitated shakings by her friend.

It is an awesome thing to seek repose beside one wrapped in trance; it is worse to traverse unlighted halls and ghostly stairs in an effort to awake the gifted medium's family. Wrapped in terror as in an icy sheet, after divers Herculean efforts to rouse the log beside her, the responsive victim fell into a troubled slumber with her head well under the bedclothes.

The gray dawn was in the room when she was awakened by what seemed to be muffled sobs from — the figure beside her. In an instant wide awake and palpitating, she fell upon Dorothea. "What is it? Oh, what is it?" she cried.

"I have had it," said Dorothea in a sepulchral whisper. "The vision. Oh," she turned dramatically from the instant question, "I can't bear to tell you! — It was about you."

"Dorothea, you've got to tell me! I think you're horrid. I'm going right downstairs to tell your mother."

The Laying of the Monster

"Of course I'm going to tell you," said the sybil crossly. She resumed her chest tones hurriedly. "I must tell you. It was sent to me to tell you. I wanted to prepare you."

"Prepare? Oh, Dorothea, what was it?"

Dorothea stood upright on the bed, and her eyes assumed the expression of those that see inward — Jennie stared at her, hypnotized, breathless.

"I saw a room," chanted the inspired one, "a room in a large city. I can see it now. It is a bedroom. There are blue rugs on the floor, and the furniture is oak. It has two windows. There is a canary bird in one, and the other has a seat with blue cushions."

"Why, that is my mother's room, Dorothea! You know it is."

"In the bed a woman is lying. She is sick. She is turning from one side to the other — she says, 'Oh, where is my daughter? I want my daughter! Why doesn't she come back to me?'"

"Oh, Dorothea!" Jennie, tearful and excited, began to draw on her clothes. "That was my mother! It must have been! Oh, Dorothea!"

The sybil drove in the fine point again. "'Why doesn't she come back to me?'" she reiterated.

The program that had proceeded so smoothly now received an unexpected hitch. Jennie paused suddenly in her garmenting, relief growing in her face.

"After all," she observed, "I don't believe mother had anything more than one of her sick-headaches. She has them all the time. I wouldn't go home just for that. I do believe that is it, Dorothea."

It was time for rapid thought. Another moment and the fine dramatic work of the morning would have gone for naught. For a moment Dorothea staggered, but for a moment only. "I didn't tell you everything," she said mysteriously. "Your mother is not alone in the bed. She is holding something in her arms. She is saying — " she paused to give her climax its full effect — "'Oh, why doesn't Jennie come home to see her little sister?'"

"Her little — ? — Dorothea!"

It behooves the villain to be without conscience. No slightest shame visited the brazen one's heart at the sight of Jennie's instant joy and excitement. Modestly she accepted the tribute to her uncanny power; obligingly she assisted her friend to pack; martyr-like she acquiesced in Jennie's decision that the first train after breakfast would be none too early to bear her to that long-coveted delight — a baby sister. Moreover, she cannily advised her friend as to the mode of proceeding. "If you tell them downstairs why you are going, they may not let you. They don't know about visions. Just tell them that you're going home and nothing else."

This advice, followed to the letter, produced no little agitation at the breakfast table. Jennie simply announced her intention of immediate departure; all questions as to her health, happiness, and possible reasons were met only with a parrot-like repetition of the fact. Upon closer pressing she gave way to hysterical tears, Dorothea the while assisting the scene with round, innocent eyes and the bewildered air of one suddenly made aware of an impending event.

The solution was presently found by a sympathetic and consoling circle — the child was homesick; she wanted her mother. Assuredly that explained everything. The lure of sails and picnics having failed, Dorothea's mother came to a decision with sympathetic tears in her eyes and a glance toward her own innocent. "She shall take the

The Laying of the Monster

first train home if she wants to. The child sha'n't be miserable. No, don't urge her, Bob. I was homesick myself once, and I understand perfectly."

Dorothea reposed in the shade of the bulkhead, sand on her person and a great peace in her heart, upon which the Monster, departing, had left no scar. Under her head was the Godey's Lady's Book, in which, over the picture of a brocaded pelisse, she had recently finished a poem in which "lover" rhymed — with "forever." Amiel, cross-legged on the sand beside her, was whistling gently as he industriously whittled at a bit of driftwood, little suspecting that at the moment he was taking tea in a bower with Lady Ursula.

Presently he drew a letter from his pocket and flipped it over to Dorothea. "Your mother asked me to give you this," he said. "She thought it might be from that pretty little friend of yours."

Dorothea opened the letter with some trepidation. Presently a bland smile over-spread her countenance. The day of reckoning that she expected to dawn upon her next meeting with her victim melted cloud-like as she read:

Dear Dorothea:

I arrived home safely. It's just as well I did, because my aunt was waiting to take me to Lake George, but you made a mistake in the vision. It wasn't my mother. It was Mrs. Gray across the street and hers is a boy, but I think that was very near.

I think the vision was perfectly wonderful, but I am glad I don't have them. My mother says I can come again later if your mother wants me. I didn't tell her why I came home, because she doesn't believe in them either.

She presented her love to several people and added in a postscript, "Let me know at Lake George if you have another."

Dorothea tore the letter into minute scraps and gave them over to the sea breeze.

"Well," queried Amiel idly, "what does she say?"

"She says she arrived safely," said Dorothea.