

(Enter Meryll, L.)

Fairfax: Well, Sergeant Meryll, and how fares thy pretty charge, Elsie Maynard?

Meryll: Well enough, sir. She is quite strong again, and leaves us tonight.

Fairfax: Thanks to Dame Carruthers' kind nursing, eh?

Meryll: Aye, deuce take the old witch! Ah, 'twas but a sorry trick you played me, sir, to bring the fainting girl to me. It gave the old lady an excuse for taking up her quarters in my house, and for the last two years I've shunned her like the plague. Another day of it and she would have married me! *(Enter Dame Carruthers and Kate, L.)* Good Lord, here she is again! I'll e'en go. *(going)*

Dame Carruthers: Nay, Sergeant Meryll, don't go. I have something of grave import to say to thee.

Meryll: *(aside)* It's coming.

Fairfax: *(laughing)* I'faith, I think I'm not wanted here.

Dame Carruthers: Nay, Master Leonard, I've naught to say to thy father that his son may not hear.

Fairfax: *(aside)* True. I'm one of the family; I had forgotten! *(He comes between them.)*

Dame Carruthers: 'Tis about this Elsie Maynard. A pretty girl, Master Leonard.

Fairfax: Aye, fair as a peach blossom — what then?

Dame Carruthers: She hath a liking for thee, or I mistake not.

Fairfax: With all my heart. She's as dainty a little maid as you'll find in a mid-summer day's march.

Dame Carruthers: Then be warned in time, and give not thy heart to her. Oh, I know what it is to give my heart to one who will have none of it!

Meryll: *(aside)* Aye, she knows all about that. *(aloud)* And why is my boy to take heed of her? She's a good girl, Dame Carruthers.

Dame Carruthers: Good enough, for aught I know. But she's no girl. She's a married woman.

Meryll: A married woman! Tush, old lady — she's promised to Jack Point, the Lieutenant's new jester.

Dame Carruthers: Tush in thy teeth, old man! As my niece Kate sat by her bedside today, this Elsie slept, and as she slept she moaned and groaned, and turned this way and that way — and, "How shall I marry one I have never seen?" quoth she — then, "An hundred crowns!" quoth she — then, "Is it certain he will die in an hour?" quoth she — then, "I love him not, and yet I am his wife," quoth she! Is it not so, Kate?

Kate: Aye, aunt, 'tis even so.

Fairfax: Art thou sure of all this?

Kate: Aye, sir, for I wrote it all down on my tablets.

Dame Carruthers: Now, mark my words: it was of this Fairfax she spake, and he is her husband, or I'll swallow my kirtle!

Meryll: *(aside)* Is it true, sir?

Fairfax: *(aside to Meryll)* True? Why, the girl was raving! *(aloud)* Why should she marry a man who had but an hour to live?

Dame Carruthers: Marry? There be those who would marry but for a minute, rather than die old maids.

Meryll: *(aside)* Aye, I know one of them!

No. 17. Strange adventure!

Quartet

Kate, Dame Carruthers, Fairfax, and Sergeant Meryll

Allegretto, tempo di Gavotta $\text{♩} = 76$

Allegretto, tempo di Gavotta $\text{♩} = 76$

A Kate *f*

1. Strange ad - ven - ture! Maid - en wed - ded To a groom she'd nev - er
2. Strange ad - ven - ture that we're troll - ing: Mod - est maid and gal - lant

D. Carruthers *f*

1. Strange ad - ven - ture! Maid - en wed - ded To a groom she'd nev - er
2. Strange ad - ven - ture that we're troll - ing: Mod - est maid and gal - lant

Fairfax *f*

1. Strange ad - ven - ture! Maid - en wed - ded To a groom she'd nev - er
2. Strange ad - ven - ture that we're troll - ing: Mod - est maid and gal - lant

Sgt. Meryll *f*

1. Strange ad - ven - ture! Maid - en wed - ded To a groom she'd nev - er
2. Strange ad - ven - ture that we're troll - ing: Mod - est maid and gal - lant

A

dim. *f*

seen! _____ Groom a - bout to be be -
groom! _____ While the fun - 'ral bell is

p *f*

seen! Nev - er, nev - er, nev - er seen! Groom a - bout to be be -
groom! Gal - lant, gal - lant, gal - lant groom! While the fun - 'ral bell is

p *f*

seen! Nev - er, nev - er, nev - er seen! Groom a - bout to be be -
groom! Gal - lant, gal - lant, gal - lant groom! While the fun - 'ral bell is

dim. *f*

seen! _____ Groom a - bout to be be -
groom! _____ While the fun - 'ral bell is

dim.

head - ed, In an hour on Tow - er Green! _____
toll - ing, Toll - ing, toll - ing, Bim - a - boom! _____

p

head - ed, In an hour on Tow - er Green! Tow - er, Tow - er, Tow - er
toll - ing, Toll - ing, toll - ing, Bim - a - boom! Bim - a, Bim - a, Bim - a -

p

head - ed, In an hour on Tow - er Green! Tow - er, Tow - er, Tow - er
toll - ing, Toll - ing, toll - ing, Bim - a - boom! Bim - a, Bim - a, Bim - a -

dim.

head - ed, In an hour on Tow - er Green! _____
toll - ing, Toll - ing, toll - ing, Bim - a - boom! _____

B

p *cresc.*

— Groom in drear-y dun-geon ly-ing,—Groom as good as dead, or
 — Mod-est maid-en will not tar-ry; Though but six-teen year she

p *cresc.*

Green! Groom in drear-y dun-geon ly-ing,—Groom as good as dead, or
 boom! Mod-est maid-en will not tar-ry; Though but six-teen year she

p *cresc.*

Green! Groom in drear-y dun-geon ly-ing,—Groom as good as dead, or
 boom! Mod-est maid-en will not tar-ry;—Though but six-teen year she

p *cresc.*

— Groom in drear-y dun-geon ly-ing,—Groom as good as dead, or
 — Mod-est maid-en will not tar-ry; Though but six-teen year she

B

f *dim.*

dy-ing, For a pret-ty maid-en sigh-ing—Pret-ty maid of sev-en-
 car-ry, She must mar-ry, she must mar-ry,—Though the al-tar be a

f *dim.*

dy-ing, For a pret-ty maid-en sigh-ing—Pret-ty maid of sev-en-
 car-ry, She must mar-ry, she must mar-ry,—Though the al-tar be a

f *dim.*

dy-ing,—For a pret-ty maid-en sigh-ing—Pret-ty maid of sev-en-
 car-ry,—She must mar-ry, she must mar-ry,—Though the al-tar be a

f *dim.*

dy-ing, For a pret-ty maid-en sigh-ing—Pret-ty maid of sev-en-
 car-ry, She must mar-ry, she must mar-ry,—Though the al-tar be a

teen! Sev-en- sev-en- sev-en- teen!
tomb- Tow-er, Tow-er, Tow-er tomb!

teen! Sev-en- sev-en- sev-en- teen!
tomb- Tow-er, Tow-er, Tow-er tomb!

teen! Sev-en- sev-en- sev-en- teen!
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teen! Sev-en- sev-en- sev-en- teen!
tomb- Tow-er, Tow-er, Tow-er tomb!

Tow-er tomb! Tow-er tomb! Though the

Tow-er tomb! Tow-er tomb! Though the

Tow-er tomb! Tow-er tomb! Though the

Tow-er tomb! Tow-er tomb! Though the

al - tar be a tomb! Tow - er, Tow - er, — Tow - er tomb!

al - tar be a tomb! Tow - er, Tow - er, Tow - er tomb!

al - tar be a tomb! Tow - er, Tow - er, — Tow - er tomb!

al - tar be a tomb! Tow - er, Tow - er, Tow - er tomb!

(*Exeunt Dame and Kate, L., Meryll up L. through archway.*)

Fairfax: So my mysterious bride is no other than this winsome Elsie! By my hand, 'tis no such ill plunge in Fortune's lucky bag! I might have fared worse with my eyes open! But she comes. Now to test her principles. 'Tis not every husband who has a chance of wooing his own wife! (*going up C.*)

(*Enter Elsie, L. She is crossing to R.*)

Fairfax: (*Comes down C.*) Mistress Elsie!

Elsie: Master Leonard!

Fairfax: So thou leavest us tonight?

Elsie: Yes, Master Leonard I have been kindly tended, and I almost fear I am loth to go.

Fairfax: And this Fairfax. Wast thou glad when he escaped?

Elsie: Why, truly, Master Leonard, it is a sad thing that a young and gallant gentleman should die in the very fullness of his life.

Fairfax: Then when thou didst faint in my arms, it was for joy at his safety?

Elsie: It may be so. I was highly wrought, Master Leonard, and I am but a girl, and so, when I am highly wrought, I faint.

Fairfax: Now, dost thou know, I am consumed with a parlous jealousy?

Elsie: Thou? And of whom?

Fairfax: Why, of this Fairfax, surely!

Elsie: Of Colonel Fairfax?

Wilfred: How do I know this? Has he "brother" writ large on his brow? I mistrust thy brothers! Thou art but a false jade!

(Exit Leonard, laughing.)

Phoebe: Now, Wilfred, be just. Truly I did deceive thee before – but it was to save a precious life – and to save it, not for me, but for another. They are to be wed this very day. Is not this enough for thee? Come – I am thy Phoebe – thy very own – and we will be wed in a year – or two – or three, at the most. Is not that enough for thee?

(Enter Meryll, excitedly, L., followed by Dame Carruthers, who listens, unobserved.)

Meryll: Phoebe, hast thou heard the brave news?

Phoebe: *(still in Wilfred's arms)* Aye, father.

Meryll: I'm nigh mad with joy! *(seeing Wilfred)* Why, what's all this?

Phoebe: Oh, father, he discovered our secret through my folly, and the price of his silence is –

Wilfred: Phoebe's heart.

Phoebe: Oh, dear, no – Phoebe's hand.

Wilfred: It's the same thing!

Phoebe: Is it? *(Exit Wilfred and Phoebe, L.)*

Meryll: *(looking after them)* 'Tis pity, but the Colonel had to be saved at any cost, and as thy folly revealed our secret, thy folly must e'en suffer for it! *(Dame Carruthers comes down.)* Dame Carruthers!

Dame Carruthers: So this is a plot to shield this arch-fiend, and I have detected it. A word from me, and three heads besides his would roll from their shoulders!

Meryll: Nay, Colonel Fairfax is reprieved. *(aside)* Yet, if my complicity in his escape were known! Plague on the old meddler! There's nothing for it *(aloud)* – Hush, pretty one! Such bloodthirsty words ill become those cherry lips! *(aside)* Ugh!

Dame Carruthers: *(bashfully)* Sergeant Meryll!

Meryll: Why, look ye, chuck – for many a month I've – I've thought to myself – "There's snug love saving up in that middle-aged bosom for some one, and why not for thee – that's me – so take heart and tell her – that's thee – that thou – that's me – lovest her – thee – and – and – well, I'm a miserable old man, and I've done it – and that's me!" But not a word about Fairfax! The price of thy silence is –

Dame Carruthers: Meryll's heart?

Meryll: No, Meryll's *hand*.

Dame Carruthers: It's the same thing!

Meryll: *Is it?*