



**JENNIE'S
WITNESS**

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Jennie fingered the flowers as though she loved them. She was a country girl, and used to flowers, but it seemed to her that she had never loved them so much as since she came to the city to live, and found that people had to buy them.

“And pay lots of money for them,” she wrote to the little girl friend with whom she had often gathered field daisies. “You just ought to see what lots of money folks will pay just for daisies! If we had the old south meadow lot out here on Karnick Street, we could get rich.”

There was a great deal of work to be done this morning in the greenhouse. There was to be a Fourth of July celebration the next day, and a festival, and a wedding, and Jennie did not know what else; but she knew that flowers were to be arranged for all these, and that, new girl though she was, she had been called upon to help make up bouquets. This was an honor.

Heretofore her work had been to water certain plants, and run errands, and keep the shelves and tables tidy. She felt very happy, for Mr. Greenough, when he came through the greenhouse

workroom, had stopped to admire her bouquets, and told her she had shown good taste, and would be called upon again.

Mr. Greenough was the young Master of all the flowers, and Jennie knew she had been greatly honored. She was at work now on the last basket of what she called "left-overs," though they were as pretty as any of the gardens. These were for Grandmamma Greenough, who had a fresh basket sent to her every morning. Jennie was ahead of time, and could afford to loiter a little and pet the blossoms. Karl was there, leaning over her shoulder and laughing at the loving way in which she talked to them.

"Anybody would think they were a lot of live babies whom you were loving," he said.

Karl Shubert was Mr. Greenough's nephew; he was spending the summer with Grandmama Greenough while his father went West on business. Karl liked nothing better than to take off his coat, and roll up his sleeves, and push his queer little cap on the back of his head, and call himself a workman. Karl was also from the country, and thought it very strange that people were willing to pay money for "just weeds."

"There are flowers almost like those which grow wild in the woods back of our house," he said. "I've gathered 'em lots of times, just for fun. Nobody ever thought of buying them; I guess I should have thought they were crazy if they had."

"Folks would think here that you were crazy if you gave them away," answered Jennie. "These are not quite like the wild ones; but I guess they are cousins."

"I believe they are just like them. Give me a bunch of these, and I'll send them to Mattie Bennett and ask her if they aren't. She gathers them all the time. Give me that great big one, and the little

bits of ones next to it.”

Jennie opened her blue eyes very wide, and looked gravely at him. “You are just joking?” she said, inquiringly.

“No, I’m not joking. I think it would be great fun to send Mattie a bunch of these by mail, and tell her what the dunces here in the city pay for them. She will think I am joking, for sure. I wonder I never thought of it before. Give us a bunch.”

But Jennie’s face was graver than ever.

“Of course you know I can’t,” she said, quietly.

“Well I should like to know why not? Are you suddenly taken with rheumatism in your arms, or anything of that kind? What is to hinder your handing over that bunch of posies to me?”

“Why, Karl, you don’t need me to tell you that the flowers aren’t mine? I couldn’t give you the least little blossom, of course; and I know you are just trying to tease me.”

“Stuff and nonsense!” said Karl, getting into a fume. “I never heard of such a dunce. Do you pretend to say that you never take one of the silly little things for yourself?”

Jennie’s cheeks flamed a brilliant red, and her blue eyes flashed. “I don’t think that question is worth answering,” she said, with dignity. “Do you suppose I would steal a flower any sooner than I would steal anything else?”

“Oh, steal! Who is talking about stealing? What is just a few flowers? Anyhow you might give them to me. Don’t you know my grandmother will give me the whole basketful if I ask her? And every one of them belongs to my own uncle.”

“That doesn’t make a bit of difference,” said Jennie firmly. “Your grandmother has a right to give you the basketful, of course, if she wants to, and your uncle could give you the whole

greenhouse; but that would have nothing to do with me. Not one little flower is mine, and if you think I will take what belongs to other people and give it away, you are mistaken. I wouldn't do it any more than I would take one for myself."

"Poh!" said Karl, who thought this was utter nonsense. "What a fuss you can make about nothing. Suppose I reach over and take the whole bunch and leave? How will you help yourself?"

"You won't do that," said Jennie confidently, and a pleasant look came into her blue eyes. "I'm not the least bit afraid of it, because that would be mean, and I know you will never be mean."

"Poh!" said Karl again; but he couldn't help feeling that she had the best of the argument. On the whole he was vexed with her, and went away in a huff. "Such a ridiculous idea!" he said, kicking the dust with his bare toes as he walked. "Who would have supposed she could be so stupid as to suppose my uncle would care about her giving me some flowers?"

In half an hour he had forgotten all about it. He never thought of it again until a week afterward.

His uncle opened his room door one morning and spoke hurriedly, "Karl, my boy, did you see anything of a silver dollar that I left lying on the shelf of the lower greenhouse yesterday?"

"No, sir," said Karl, turning over in bed and looking wonderingly at his uncle's grave face. "I wasn't in the greenhouse yesterday. Don't you remember I had a cold, and Grandma would not let me go there, or anywhere?"

"Is that so?" and the face of the uncle grew graver. "Then I am afraid she has taken it, and I would not have lost my faith in the girl for ten times that amount."

"Who, uncle?"

"I'm afraid, Karl, that Jennie has slipped the dollar into her pocket. There are little circumstances connected with it which make me quite sure I left it there; and Jennie is the only new help we have, you know. I would as soon suspect myself or dishonesty as any of the others. I have turned everything upside down in the greenhouse, and made more fuss than forty dollars are worth, just to get rid of the suspicion; but I'm afraid I can't. David suggested that you might have seen it; but if you were not out of the house yesterday, of course that won't do. I questioned Jennie, and she says she saw nothing of it. If there were any cracks for it to slip into I should be glad; but there are not. I'm afraid I shall have to tell her she cannot be trusted."

"Oh, my!" said Karl, and he buried his head in the pillow and laughed. "Uncle Robert, that is too funny," he said, when he had had his laugh out. "Jennie wouldn't take a dollar that didn't belong to her, not if she was starving, and could eat it. Why, she wouldn't even take a poor little flower which looks just like the wild ones that I used to gather by the bushel up home. Uncle Robert, she is just awfully honest."

"Is that so?" asked Uncle Robert, his eyes looking less troubled. "How do you know, my boy?" and he sat down on the side of the bed and heard the story of the Fourth of July flowers, and the bunch that Karl wanted, and did not get.

"Well," said Mr. Greenough, after he had questioned until he understood all about it, "that is pretty good proof: she is an excellent witness for herself. It was quite natural for you to think as you did, Karl, and it was splendid in her to refuse you. I don't believe she knows anything about the dollar. What can have become of it is more than I can imagine; but I shall say nothing

more to her, for the present, at least. Don't mention it, Karl; I would not like to have her think I suspected her."

"I guess not!" said Karl, with emphasis. "I wouldn't tell her for a farm."

It was nearly two weeks afterward that Jennie came across the lawn toward Mr. Greenough with a flower pot in her hand and a puzzled look on her face.

"What is it, Jennie?" he asked, turning back to answer her look.

"If you please, Mr. Greenough, I did not know they ever planted money; but isn't that a piece of money peeping up through the earth?"

Mr. Greenough looked, and dived in his hand, and drew out a silver dollar.

"It is money, without doubt," he said, smiling. "Has that plant had fresh earth put around it lately?"

"Yes, sir; more than a week ago Dennis turned a whole tubful on the table, and filled up the plants in that long row at the left; but I didn't think—" and then Jennie stopped.

"You didn't think they ever mixed silver dollars with the earth, eh?" Mr. Greenough said, laughing. "It seems Dennis does sometimes; and I must say I am very glad to know it. It explains a mystery."

Karl's eyes twinkled, but he kept his own counsel. Jennie was right; he wouldn't be mean.



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Isabella wrote over one-hundred books in her lifetime, as well as short stories and newspaper articles—all for the purpose of winning souls for Christ.

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