

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS



By
OWEN
OLIVER.

Monologue.

SCENE: A drawing-room. A pretty girl is seated at a table arranging a pack of cards. She looks up suddenly.

WHO? (*With assumed indifference.*) Mr. Armstrong? Oh, yes! Ask him to come in. (*Glances hastily through pack.*) That will do, if only— (*Rises and holds out her hand.*) Fancy your coming to-night! Expect you? Well, I thought you *might* look in. (*Very quietly.*) Yes, your sister told me you were going. . . . Won't you sit down?

What am I doing? Nothing. At least (*takes up the cards*) only telling fortunes. You don't believe in it, of course? No?

Tell yours? Shall I? Don't blame me if it isn't a good one. It depends on yourself, you know. How? I will show you. (*Hastily.*) No, you need not cut them. I have already—that is-er-I shuffled them just now.

First, we must have a card for you. Let me see? (*Critically.*) You are dark; and

you are going abroad to make your fortune. (*Positively.*) You must be the king of spades. (*Searches for it.*) There! Now for your fortunes? (*Lays out the cards.*) How many fortunes? Four; but you can only have one of them. (*Finishes dealing.*)

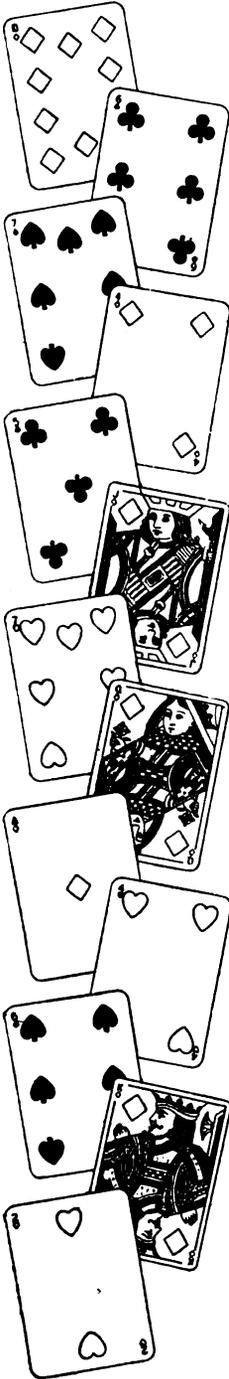
You see each line begins with a ten—diamonds, clubs, spades and hearts. Which will you have? (*Looks up with a finger on her cheek.*)

Oh! I can't tell you what they mean. It wouldn't be fair. At least . . . Oh, well, if I *must!*

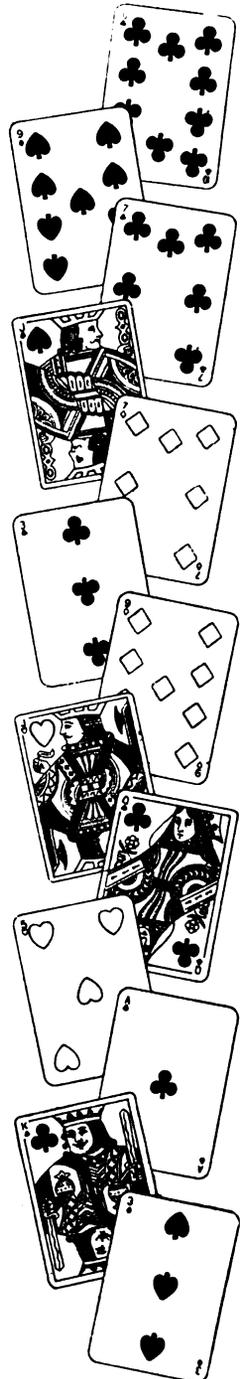
The ten of diamonds—you are sure to choose that—means that your great wish is to be rich. That is why you are

going abroad, is it not? (*Listens.*) Of course I am sorry. . . . Well, I *did* think perhaps you would come.

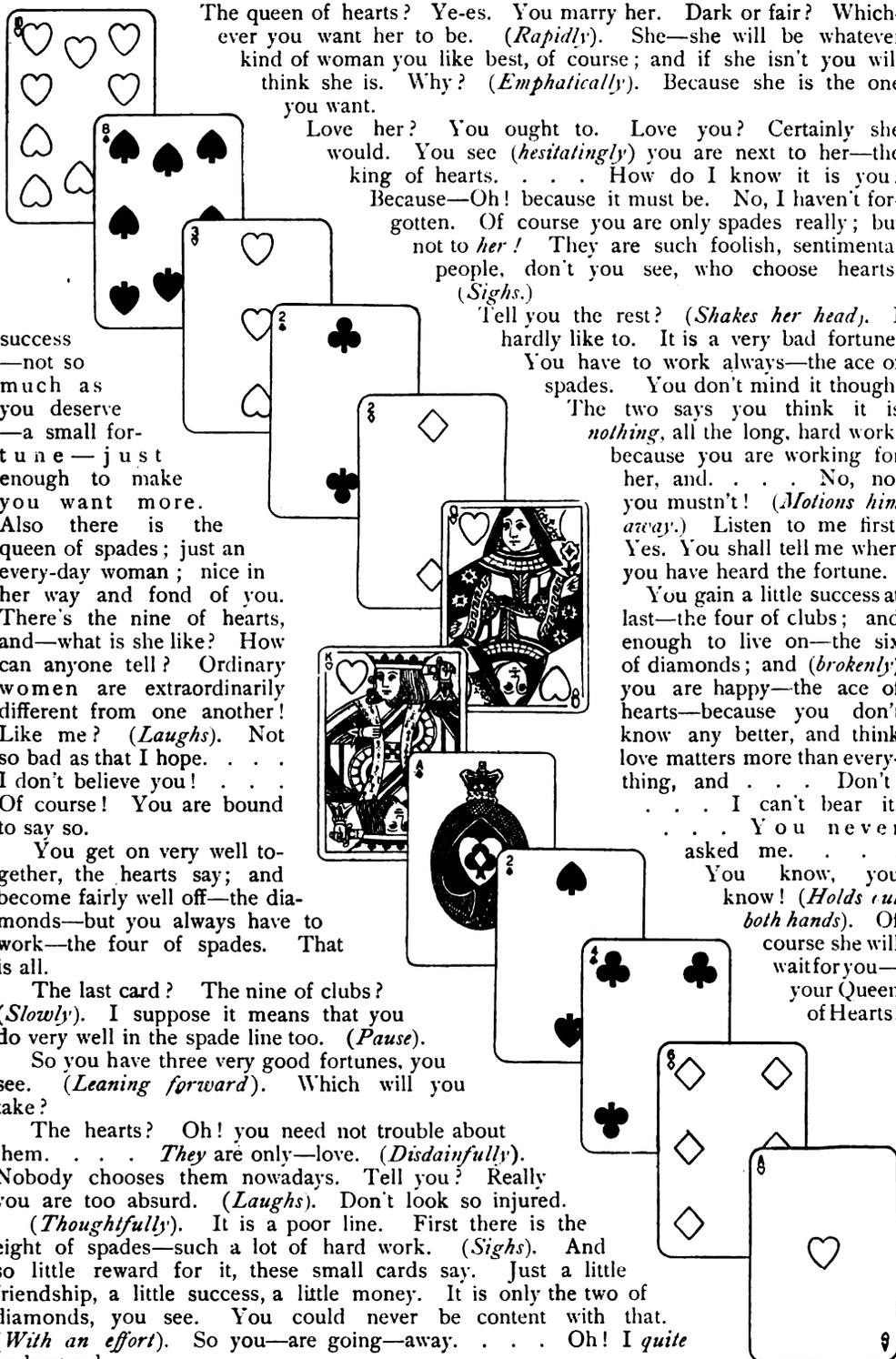
If you



The first fortune.



The second fortune.



success
—not so
much as
you deserve
—a small for-
tune—just
enough to make
you want more.
Also there is the
queen of spades; just an
every-day woman; nice in
her way and fond of you.
There's the nine of hearts,
and—what is she like? How
can anyone tell? Ordinary
women are extraordinarily
different from one another!
Like me? (*Laughs*). Not
so bad as that I hope. . . .
I don't believe you! . . .
Of course! You are bound
to say so.

You get on very well to-
gether, the hearts say; and
become fairly well off—the dia-
monds—but you always have to
work—the four of spades. That
is all.

The last card? The nine of clubs?
(*Slowly*). I suppose it means that you
do very well in the spade line too. (*Pause*).

So you have three very good fortunes, you
see. (*Leaning forward*). Which will you
take?

The hearts? Oh! you need not trouble about
them. . . . *They* are only—love. (*Disdainfully*).
Nobody chooses them nowadays. Tell you? Really
you are too absurd. (*Laughs*). Don't look so injured.

(*Thoughtfully*). It is a poor line. First there is the
eight of spades—such a lot of hard work. (*Sighs*). And
so little reward for it, these small cards say. Just a little
friendship, a little success, a little money. It is only the two of
diamonds, you see. You could never be content with that.
(*With an effort*). So you—are going—away. . . . Oh! I *quite*
understand.

The queen of hearts? Ye-es. You marry her. Dark or fair? Which-
ever you want her to be. (*Rapidly*). She—she will be whatever
kind of woman you like best, of course; and if she isn't you will
think she is. Why? (*Emphatically*). Because she is the one
you want.

Love her? You ought to. Love you? Certainly she
would. You see (*hesitatingly*) you are next to her—the
king of hearts. . . . How do I know it is you?
Because—Oh! because it must be. No, I haven't for-
gotten. Of course you are only spades really; but
not to *her*! They are such foolish, sentimental
people, don't you see, who choose hearts.
(*Sighs*).

Tell you the rest? (*Shakes her head*). I
hardly like to. It is a very bad fortune.
You have to work always—the ace of
spades. You don't mind it though.

The two says you think it is
nothing, all the long, hard work,
because you are working for
her, and. . . . No, no,
you mustn't! (*Motions him
away*). Listen to me first.
Yes. You shall tell me when
you have heard the fortune.

You gain a little success at
last—the four of clubs; and
enough to live on—the six
of diamonds; and (*brokenly*)
you are happy—the ace of
hearts—because you don't
know any better, and think
love matters more than every-
thing, and. . . . Don't!

. . . . I can't bear it.
. . . . You never
asked me. . . .

You know, you
know! (*Holds out
both hands*). Of
course she will
wait for you—
your Queen
of Hearts!

The fourth fortune.