The Queen of Hearts

Monologue.

By

Owen Oliver.

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, 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...
choose diamonds, the second card is a club. That is your journey. Then comes the seven of spades, because you will have to work hard for seven years. A long time? (Forces a laugh). You won't notice it. Friends? Yes, no doubt you will miss them at first, but you can't have everything. You chose diamonds... (Holds up a finger). Wait till you hear the fortune.

The four of diamonds means that you begin to make money; and the club is another journey. No, not home. The knave of diamonds is someone very rich. He befriends you, and introduces you to the fair lady whom you will marry. The seven of hearts means marriage, you know. The fair lady? Here she is. (Holds up card). The queen of diamonds!

How fair will she be? Well—er—not very. Like me? Oh, dear no! Not at all. Quite old and sedate; but she will have lots of money. Here is the ace of diamonds next to her. Fond of one another? (Turns away). How do I know? Besides that doesn't matter—if you choose money.

Anyhow you marry her, this heart says; and you go on working—the spade—and you become very wealthy—the king of diamonds. (Claps her hands). Isn't that a splendid fortune?

The two of hearts at the end? So there is! What does it mean? Well (considers), if you wanted affection—diamonds would be the wrong line to take, you see. (Pause).

The next line is clubs. They mean reputation;

The third fortune.

The nine of spades means that you try very hard. (Earnestly). I am sure you will do that. The next cards are nothing very much; journeys and work and gradual success; till you meet the queen of clubs—a brave, ambitious woman. She has a lover, the knave of hearts. She is attached to him; but she prefers to marry you, because you have a future... People say you have.

Dark or fair? I cannot tell. Like me? Not in the least. She would be very clever. (Listens). You know I am not. Fond of you? She would be fond of your success, and work for it. That would be the important point, of course, if you chose clubs. With her help you would succeed. Here is the ace of clubs; and the king, showing that you become a great man.

This little spade? (Touches card and shrugs her shoulders). It means that you would not be quite satisfied; but no one ever is. (Critically). You would do very well in clubs.

Now we come to spades. They mean such a lot of things. (Puts her finger to her forehead). They're just the common lot of ordinary people, like me. (Smiles and shakes her head). Oh, but I am!

In this line there is something of everything. Plenty of work, a little
THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.

The queen of hearts? Ye-es. You marry her. Dark or fair? Whichever 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 forgotten. 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 everything, 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.