April sat on a corner of the rock that jetted out into the sea, her eyes looking across the trackless water, watching the wheeling, screaming, screeching gulls as they soared and swooped beyond her. The sun, with its golden rays, bathed the white boats at sea in a silvery looking light and made the water look shimmery-bright.
April sighed happily, closing her eyes and enjoying the sea-spray as the up-coming wind passed it from the crashing waves to where she sat. It was like a refreshing mist from heaven, she thought, raising long, slender fingers and running them over her sea-sprayed face in a gentle massaging motion. The sea was therapeutic, she had heard. Therapeutic and healing to body and mind. Well, she was not in need of either, she mused, with a hint of a smile upon her face. But it was a good place to meet one's special friend. Especially, out on the rock where the endless looking sea spread a panoramic view for the eye to see. Bart wanted to see her here, he had said.

She sat farther back on the rock, noticing the gathering clouds in the sky. They scuttled around the sun, then scudded in front of it and totally obliterated its late afternoon rays, changing the shimmering appearance of the sea and the sail boats completely. The sea became ominous looking; the boats extremely ordinary and dull.

She turned and looked shoreward. Bart had better come soon or there would be no meeting her here, she decided, as she watched the sun peek daringly out behind or around the fastly-gathering clouds. There seemed to be a sort of race going on above her, she thought -- the sun trying to give its steady light, dodging in, out of, through, and around the clouds, and the clouds pushing with the force to circumvent that light.

The wind was becoming stronger, she noted, and a bit chilly too. She was thankful for the sweater she had worn. It was light weight, but it added warmth to her blouse. It could get quite cool when a rainstorm came up, she knew. She wondered suddenly what Bart's "special reason" was for wanting the meeting.

A loud clap of thunder made her jump to her feet. It was going to rain. The sky was becoming increasingly darker now. The sun had lost its race with those black, ill-boding, racing, churning masses above her. At least for the present time. And if she were to beat the storm, she better make fast tracks toward home, she decided, turning her face shoreward.

"Hey, where are you going?" Bart's voice sliced into her thoughts, stopping her dead-still in her footsteps.

"Home, Bart. Can't you see there's a storm approaching?"
"All I can see is stars, April. Stars, stars, and more stars. Around you. Over you. Above you. In my eyes. In my heart . . ."

"Bart! What's wrong with you?"

"Stars, April. Why do you suppose I wanted to meet you here?"

"I . . . I . . . we'd better go, Bart."

"Not until I tell you that 'something special'. You can't go, April. You know I've liked you for a long time. You've been my 'special' and I've told you that I love you. It's real love. I love you! And I wanted to meet you here, alone so I could ask you to marry me. Will you marry me, April? You do love me, don't you?"

"Well, yes, I . . . I do . . ."

"Then let's get married."

"Oh Bart, have you prayed about this? We're . . . well . . . Have you lost your mind?" she asked suddenly. Seriously.

"We can pray after we're married. We'll pray together then. And most certainly, I have not lost my mind."

"That's too late to pray about a 'before' thing. The Bible says, 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.' And we're not even through high school. We won't graduate until June."

"But you . . . I mean, so what? What if we don't graduate till June? I'll get a job and take care of you. We can drop out of school, if that would suit you better. Bill and Cinda did that when they married two months ago and they're making it. He got a job before the wedding; she found one afterwards. Is that what you prefer?" He reached out to her. She stepped away.

"No. No, Bart, I don't 'prefer' that. I want to graduate, God willing. And I wouldn't think even, of doing anything so important and big, especially without seeking after the will of God."
"Okay. We'll get married. I'll get a job, quit school, make the living; you go on and finish school. Suit you better?"

"No Bart. What if we should go on to Bible school? I plan on this, with God's help. I want to contribute something to God's cause. And I feel we're entirely too young for marriage. I'm not quite seventeen yet and you're only eighteen. Why put an end to our carefree teen years when we can have a life-time together after we're in our twenties, if that is God's will?"

"You must be kidding! In our twenties, you say. I don't intend to wait that long."

"True love can and does wait, my parents have always told me. And it never is hasty, so Mother says. I'll take her advice, Bart. She's a God-fearing, godly mother. She has never steered me wrongly. The devil always wants one to rush into a thing. God? Never! Besides, I don't believe a real Christian would or should do a thing like this."

Bart's face grew red with a flush of sudden anger. "So! The inference being that I am not a Christian."

April felt tears spring to her eyes. "I am a Christian, Bart. I can't do this. Something within me tells me it's the wrong thing to do -- to marry you . . . or anybody . . . now. As young as I am. That is what I was trying to say. I'm sorry if you feel offended. I haven't meant to do that. But I must do what I know God requires of me."

"Everybody's doing it, April. Look at all our friends." Anger flashed in his blue eyes, reddening his cheeks even more.

"'Everybody' isn't getting married this young, Bart; you know that. And I'm afraid I'm seeing a part of you which has remained hidden until now. I could never think of living the rest of my life with a husband whose temper flares up at the slightest provocation and whose life-important decisions were mere 'snap,' instantaneous decisions. God has something that will rid you of that temper. Please run to Him for cleansing of heart. For deliverance."

"You can't love me, April", he accused. "But I warn you, I'll not wait till I'm an old, twentyish man to marry you." And turning, he hurried away.
April stood, staring after him. Then another loud clap of thunder caused her to realize that the storm was almost upon her. She'd never be able to get home before the rain began to fall, she knew. There was no way she could. Those clouds were ready to turn loose of the moisture they were holding.

She looked around her and saw a crevice in the rock. She darted into its safety just as the downpour, cloudburst began emptying itself. Huddling against the durable but chilly granite wall, April had time to think. She thought of a former classmate-friend of hers and how she had dropped out of school to get married. More than once, Kelley Sue had cried on her shoulder... literally... and told her how very unhappy she was with her hastily-married husband. And more than once, she had confided how sorry she was that she hadn't finished her schooling. "I'm tied down, April," she had said sorrowfully one day when they met in a department store. "I have two little babies and I'm not even twenty. And Kurt stays out till all hours of the night then yells at our children if they get too noisy when he wants to sleep. Oh, if only I could go back a few years. Believe me, I'd do all of that chapter over again."

Poor Kelley Sue, April thought, praying for the disillusioned, disappointed young friend turned wife and mother. The stars seemed to have left her eyes and the usually smiling face seldom looked happy anymore.

April thought of Bart then. Her heart felt a surge of fear at the remembrance of his expressed anger. It had come up so suddenly. The outcropping of his real inner self, she knew, the expression of carnality. And God had been so kind and good to her to allow her to know now, before she graduated and had time to even think about getting serious.

His words, so sharp and cutting, came back to her. . . . "But I warn you, I'll not wait till I'm an old, twentyish man to marry you."

Was Bart trying to frighten her into thinking seriously about what he had said -- to make her fear that she would lose him to another?

Again her mother's words echoed inside her memory chamber, "True love can always wait, honey. It is never hasty . . . ."

That was the answer to Bart's statement about not waiting till he was "twentyish." Since true love could always wait, and he wasn't willing to wait, well, it added up as simply as 2X2=4. According to her mother's axiom, Bart's
love was not true love. That, in turn, added up to the grand tally of a despicable infatuation. And April couldn't tolerate that. "Foolish passion," one dictionary had defined it aptly. It would amount to a "cheap," low type of love, if, indeed, it could be called love at all.

She would miss the many friendly chats they had shared and the many good times together, she knew. For a time at least. But young hearts were noted for their ability to recover rapidly. Hers would. Yes, by God's grace, her heart would recover. And she would be the better for having taken her stand. And the stronger, too.

A warm feeling overwhelmed her. She knew the break would be final. She rejoiced. In God's time, at His pace, in his marvelous leading, He would bring out His choice for her and it would be right. Yes, so very all right. And she would thank Him that she had waited and had not had a hasty heart and thwarted His perfect plan for her life.

"Thank you, my gracious Lord . . . my own God . . . for my wonderful mother, and her wise counsel. Thank you."

Already the balm of healing had begun as the approval of the Divine enfolded her in His love.