

spent their days, and, in the beginning, there was hardly an hour when he did not refer to the girl for information or direction.

"She's remarkable; she ought to be in the city office," he told his uncle. "We'll have to do something about that trip to Europe!" But to Hilary he made no sign, except by his always ready, quiet smile of thanks, and his respectful and appreciative manner. They worked together, side by side, day after day, and Hilary noted that his attitude toward her never changed from the pleasant, friendly aspect he had shown her on the very first night of their acquaintance.

But on her side this was not the case. She was bewildered by the persistence with which her thoughts played with the entirely improbable role of her being his wife. Hilary was essentially practical, any

all sorts were his friends. He was at home in the most exclusive houses in the land; phrases about tennis, about books, about travel, as he uttered them, fascinated her.

Like many another pretty woman, Hilary grew actually beautiful in this time of hopes and dreams. She did not seriously analyze the situation herself; there was nothing to analyze. But Dora noted the change in her, the softness in her blue eyes, the glow of her cheeks, the looser beauty of the rich soft hair that Hilary had always kept so primly close and plain.

"Hilary, what's the matter with you?" Dora asked more than once.

"Matter?" Hilary would compose her dancing heart and dancing eyes into something like their old decorum.

"Yes. You didn't hear me! Did the tickets come?"

"The—? Oh, Kronski, of course. Yes, they came." But Hilary's smile still held behind it something that baffled Dora. It was as if the older sister were meditating upon some detachable secret.

She had her bad times. There were hours when the obvious chasm between her lot and Craig's caused her the keenest depression. What an idiot she was to let herself enjoy this purely accidental propinquity, she would reflect. He knew dozens of girls—hundreds—who could offer him all that she could, and a thousand times more! They haunted him, these fortunate, exquisite girls; they telephoned him from New York, included him in their plans. They bought glorious frocks at the Avenue shops, chattered about concerts and riding-lessons, they were little triumphs, of beauty and culture and sophistication and charm! When he went to New York, as he frequently did on Saturday afternoons, Hilary was actually unhappy and uneasy; and with all her old level-headed philosophy she could not laugh herself out of it.

Still, men did fall in love with girls, and marry them, she reasoned. And she was a gentlewoman, and her blood was as good as his own—

But what nonsense, what nonsense, what nonsense! Even had she had anything to build upon, any tender word of admiring glance from Craig, this would be rank treason to what all her life had been building and planning: Dora, and Dora's trip, must come first. She could not in-

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