

Maud's heart beat heavily. No, this music must not be allowed to foreshadow her child's future. She ought not to allow herself to give rein to such fancies. She felt now she would like to interpose herself between Edith and this depressing music, and protect her from it, and she strove to direct her own thoughts elsewhere.

The music now came to her aid, for it broke out into notes which created in her a feeling of vague, indefinable yearning, that approached ecstasy and banished thought. She was all ears once more. The swelling tones seemed to sweep her off her feet and to carry her along like a leaf in a whirlwind. Suddenly the wild emotional passage seemed to encounter a check like a wave broken by a rock, and the thunder of sound was shattered. To Maud it seemed as though she were compelled to sit still and think out some mysterious, unknown, unfathomable problem. The stillness following the storm was so intense that for the moment every one in the hall sat motionless, not a fan waving.

Presently the voices broke out again, hesitatingly, falteringly (the fans were waving again now), and the uncertain restrained tones slowly and painfully making their way back to melody, induced in Maud a new mood of sadness. She was not happy, although Mac adored her and she idolized him; no, no, there was something wanting.

At this very moment Mac touched her on the shoulder and whispered into her ear. "Excuse me, Maud—we are off to Europe on Wednesday. I have a lot of preparations to make in Buffalo. If we leave now we shall catch the night train. What do you say?"

Maud made no reply. She sat silent and motionless. The blood rushed to her cheeks. Her eyes filled slowly with tears. Several minutes passed. She felt bitterly hurt with Mac. It seemed to her barbarous on his part to drag her away from the concert just on account of business pressure.

Allan saw that her cheeks were flushed and that her breath came with difficulty. He still had his hand on her shoulder. He caressed her tenderly and whispered, "All right, darling, let's stay on. It was only a suggestion. We can go by the early morning train just as well."