

THE ENEMY LISTENS

"Nobody we know will ever come to see us, if they think we read books," said Siward.

"Isn't it delightful!" sighed Sylvia. "We're going to become frumps! I mustn't forget the blue stockings for my trousseau, and you mustn't forget the California claret for the cellar, dear. We will need it when we read Henry James to each other."

Siward, resting his weight on one hand, laughed, and looked out at the surf drenching the reefs with silver.

"To think," he said, "that I could ever have been enough afraid of the sea to hate it! After all, at low tide the reef is always there in the same place and none the worse for the drenching. All that surf only shows how strong a rock can be."

He smiled, and turned to look at Sylvia; and she lay there, silent, blue eyes looking back into his. Suddenly they glimmered with tears, and she stretched out both arms, drawing his head down to hers convulsively, her quivering mouth crushed against his lips. Then she rose to her knees, to her feet, dazed, brushing the tears from her eyes.

"To think—to think," she stammered, "that I must have let you face the world alone! Dearest, dearest, we must fight a good fight. The sea is always there—always, always there!"

He looked straight into her eyes, fearlessly, tenderly, and she looked back with the divine, untroubled gaze of a child, laying her slender, sun-tanned hands in his.

And, deep in his body, as he stood there, he heard the low challenge of his soul on guard; and he knew that the Enemy listened.

THE END

(6)