

he had had no part. All this he had told Beaudesart. But there was a great deal he had not told. For how could he have put into words the intensity of his longing, how could he have described the tremulous expectation with which he thought of their meeting, and the rapture of his spirit, as the memory of the sound of her voice was wafted nearer to his eagerly listening ears?

It was nothing to him now that she had burnt those notebooks, ignored him, looked past him, abandoned him, cast him off. He it was who had to ask forgiveness from her, not she from him. And he would ask it in true humility. He would tell her that he had learnt his lesson, that he understood at last, and that he could and would be different, if she would give him a chance. She would see that he was a different man from the tyrant who had held her in a bondage which had eventually driven her away—a different man from the devil who had schemed against his own best friend and compassed his end, and who had sunk so low, lost his way and all his bearings, and was unworthy to be loved or borne with—but with a new chance given by her, could yet “make good.”

Then the chance had come—the “resplendent minute”—and he was impelled by the demon within him to fling it aside.

For a long time that demon held him in a vice and stirred up all the evil in him. Yes, he would have his revenge—not a second time should Beaudesart get off so easily—he’d take care of that—and as for Joan herself, let her see to it that she kept her distance. Want her back? Never. When had he said he wanted her back? Never. It was a lie—one of their lies. A concerted plot. That’s what it was. Any fool could see that. She and Beaudesart had arrived together of course, Beaudesart first to take soundings, and she near at hand, primed with all that had taken place between Beaudesart