

"I am not thirty yet. Then I have mother with me, so I am well cared for."

"I can testify that you will be well cared for when you have her with you. But all the same it seems to me you are hanging around too long. I am five years younger than you," answered Joker.

"The way in which you have reviewed the difficulties of getting married almost discourages me from ever making any move that way," said Arthur, smiling again. Besides, I was not so fortunate early in life as you were."

"That's it," said Joker. "Some men cannot see how fortunate they are. You would think their eyes were in their heels. I was fortunate, and I was sharp enough to see it. There is the difference. You can't see, or do not want to see, how fortunate you are."

"I do not understand you, Joker," said Arthur; "that is, in what you say about me."

"I see you don't," said Joker reproachfully. "I always thought you wore your hair too long. It prevents you from discovering nice points, and you have studied too much astronomy for your own good."

"Stop talking in a parabolic way, Joker, and say what you mean in plain English," said Arthur.

"It's more diabolic than parabolic, I think," said Joker, "when a man can't see that a woman worships the ground he walks on."

"Joker, you do not mean to say that any woman cares that much for me, except it be my mother," said Arthur, now interested.