

sea-color of your eyes, the bronze-gold of your hair, and the wave in it. It is a mystery, a queer, fatalistic thing—felt, but not understood, and so unmeaningly called 'magnetism.' One here and there is born with it. To some it is the gift of hell, to others—to you—a gift of the gods. Who knows why the pole star draws the needle? What explanation satisfies? Sooner or later you draw the secrets of those you meet from them. Always you will find people telling you of themselves, of their hidden ego. Not—heaven knows, because you desire that knowledge, but by reason of an impulse that drives them on to the comfort, the relief of just telling you. Perhaps it is that you possess a sympathy with all living things, or an intuition, a sweet insight, which makes you see clearly hidden motives, blurred truths, the causes of hideous mistakes and errors, and helps you to cover them with charity."

The low, rapidly spoken words stopped, and Wynn rose and stood by the fire.

Nance looked up at him, a look of soft surprise on her face. Her hands folded together, tightened.

"Oh, no," she said positively, "I am not like that. I am not ideal in any way. I make even more mistakes than most. I have no charm out of the common; you imagine it for some reason. People interest me; I know so very few, and I would rather be kind to those few than not. But they do not give me their confidence—always. Why," smiling a little, "I went so far as to ask you to tell me that story, and you have not."

"Not yet," he answered, "but I will. Now—if you still care to hear it. I have only been waiting for the chance. But, all last winter and the winter before I did not tell the old man, well as I knew him." There was a pause, filled in by the snapping and crackling of the fire. Then Wynn went on: "You wonder what has brought me up here to the boundaries when I am no trapper, surveyor, homesteader, or even waylaid gold-seeker making for the Yukon. You wonder why I live alone on Lone Lake—in the summer even, a man-forsaken place.

"I will tell you. I came here eighteen or more months ago to fight myself and save the remnant of my soul—and the rest of me—if I could.

"Do you remember, I told you yesterday—'yesterday,'" he repeated. "It seems a century ago—that I told you I had come out from England to take a Professorship in an American University?"

"I remember," she answered.

"I had no people at home," Wynn continued. "No near relatives except an uncle. My father and mother died when I was a half-grown boy at Eton. I was a good deal alone later. This uncle I spoke of is quite an old chap, and not a very amiable character—at least, I never found him so. He happens to be a Baronet, and distressingly rich. What they call 'criminally rich' in the States. My father was his younger brother and in the navy. He had nothing much but his pay, and died poor.

"When I came to America my uncle was unmarried, and therefore as I was his next of kin—his all of kin, in fact—as things stood, my future looked tolerably rosy to outsiders. I always thought he would marry, in spite of his years and the pessimistic opinions he expressed regarding matrimony. I never wanted to count on the title or the beastly money."

"No," said Nance, slowly, "I understand."

"There was a girl in England I—well, I was in love with—I had known her since she was in short frocks, and she was very pretty. We were engaged. It had been a sort of understood thing for years. That was why I came out to make more money.

"My uncle had owed my father a debt, though not a monied one, and he put me through Oxford by way of payment of it. He pleasantly informed me that that was all I might expect from him until he was with the other laid-by Wynns in the family vault.

"This girl I was engaged to said she would wait while I picked up gold off the American thoroughfares. Her

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