

## *The Troubling of the Waters*

"How many years?" asked James Courthope, bending towards her with a smile.

"Five or six," said Hannah. "Something like that; she is just twenty-one."

"Ah, I thought it couldn't be eight," purred the man. "Yet your mother told me eight."

"Mother did . . . ? Mother has far too much to say, if you ask me! But that's neither here nor there. I only meant that I *am* Marjorie's sister, and don't want to go against her, though she'd put mischief into a saint with her airs and graces. I'm not a bad sort. I call anybody to witness that I was glad to see her when she arrived, though I hadn't seen her for so long that I could hardly be expected to have quite a sister's feelings; but I was prepared to make the best of my fine lady, till I found out that the Greyhound Hotel isn't good enough for her. And her sister isn't good enough, her father and mother, and even Aunt Margaret, who's done all for her, are no equals of hers. Look here! — but I won't say any more."

"You will presently," said Courthope, with his soft voice and irritating smile. "That is one of the reasons why I admire you, Hannah, because you *do* say things."

"Admire me, is it?" was the retort. "That is what you tell me, but people are saying now that it isn't only the other two who are crazy in love with Marjorie, but you as well. It is all the talk in the village that on Wednesday, when she went out for her early morning walk, you followed her half a mile down Hewersfield Lane and over the moor, for Mike Malcolm saw you, and kept an eye on you, and now everybody is saying —"

"You are not to believe any such nonsense, Hannah,"