

Japonette

mer day, had been almost hidden under a fragrant load of peonies.

Something behind her—and it was not a sound—made her turn. The white cat sat looking at her with no recognition in its solemn eyes; and when she moved forward, hand outstretched in wistful appeal, it calmly retreated into the demi light of the bedroom beyond.

The well of desolation was filling fast now; she sank into a wide chair by the tea table and, lifting her veil, touched her eyes with her handkerchief. Then, disciplined, controlled, she lay back looking into the bedroom where she and her sister had slept and awakened through those three magic days which even Fate allowed before foreclosing on her destiny forever.

Pink bars of sunlight slanted on the wall, warming the painted armor of a forgotten dead man—forgotten no more than some among the living. A great lady, painted in her jewels, seemed to flush and smile as a rosy bar crept across her cheek. Doubtless she, too, had loved before she died.

The girl extended her arm listlessly along the upholstered arm of her chair, and looked at her white-gloved hand.