

she said. "Now!" And seating herself in the chair by the fire-escape window she began to weep. HIS
MOTHER

She had done it. She had quarreled with them. The girl would take Larry away from her. It was the end of everything!

III

Larry had first seen Miss McCarty in a downtown barber shop—and if he had not hung up his hat before he had seen her, he would have backed out of the place. As it was, he had taken his seat in the chair nearest her with an uncomfortable feeling that she had intruded upon his toilet. She was manicuring at a little table near the door.

"Hair cut," he said, in a husky undertone, and felt like a fool when the barber swathed him in striped calico and tucked it in around his neck. It was no position for a man to be seen in by any young woman. In the best of circumstances hair-cutting was to Larry an operation of personal beautification that was to be rushed through with a scornful lack of attention; he would scarcely look at himself in the glass until he could do it alone and unashamed (and curse the barber who had made the parting an inch too high on his head). And now, when his hair had been ruffled up unbecomingly, he kept darting irritated glances at her out of the corner of his eye, to see that she was not staring at him.

She was polishing the fingernails of a man who had his back to Larry, so that Larry could not see his face. It was enough for him to see hers. (Not that she was beautiful—or even an interesting ugliness. He thought her merely plain looking, with a nose too large.) What he saw in her face was the evidence that her customer was annoying her; and as Larry watched her, he added his irritated embarrassment about his own toilet to an accession