

THE THREAD OF FLAME

entirely a white blankness, except for a single word in enormous letters:

PEACE!

My eyes lifted themselves to hers; fell to that one word again; lifted themselves to hers once more. She stood impassive, motionless, waiting.

"So—so they've signed it," was all I could find to stammer out.

"Yes; they've signed it. I—I thought you might like to know."

"Of course." Further than this superficial fact, I was too dazed to go; but I knew I must get rid of the boys. Turning to Patsy Bridget, I said, "Patsy, could you take the other boys home and see them safely to their doors?"

"Sure!" Patsy answered, with the confidence of fifteen.

"Aw, we don't want no one to take us home," the elder of the Finn's boys protested. "Me and me kid bruvver go all over N'York. Don't we, Broncho?"

Another lad spoke up.

"I come from me aunt's house in Harlem right down to East Thirty-fourth Street all by meself and me little sister."

It was Vio who arranged the matter to every one's satisfaction. With her right hand on one boy's shoulder and her left on another's she said, in a tone of quiet authority:

"You see, this is the way it is: The war is over at last. They've just signed the peace treaty, and I've come to tell Mr. Harrowby. But now