"The joy of the skies,
"Lies in her eyes—and lies—and lies

-and-Oh, "Well, maybe it only fibs," He chanted impudently.

Augusta was standing at the table fixing fruit for her mother. As Jimmie came up behind her she lifted up her face to be kissed. But as Jimmie stooped she quickly lifted the peeled peach she held in her hand and stuck it full into his mouth.

"Aawa—yab yab—yak!" Jimmie expostulated. Then, when he was ar-

ticulate:

"Peaches is peaches, I'll admit. But some peaches is witches, you'll admit. Anyhow, I won't be kissed now till I've had a bath," he wound up defiantly.

So the three eddies of life went quietly around, touching each other and lapping a little upon each other, but each one a world by itself. Spring each one a world by itself. Spring came and slipped well along into May, the street cries changed, the glistening pavements began to throw the heat back up into the house, and the threat of a blistering summer came upon the air. The three little worlds in the house went on so quietly, so unobtrusively, that it seemed that they might have been forgotten, that they might go on indefinitely, that they had been left out of any scheme of change.

But the change came, swift and disturbing the change came, swift and dist

turbing as though it had never been expected.

Wardwell heard the cry come up in the city of the company halow him.

the still night from the room below him. He had been sitting in the dark, think-ing of nothing, his mind at loose ends, but he knew Augusta's ery and recog-nized in it the trembling, very human fear of death.

As he was to the deep of Rose Wild-

As he came to the door of Rose Wilding's room he saw Augusta half kneeling on the bed holding fast to her mother's hands. To Wardwell it seemed that Rose Wilding was making a quivering, feeble struggle to rise. But Augusta evidently knew different. She was pleading in a desperate pitiful was pleading in a desperate, pitiful

whisper:

"Don't go! Please, darling mamma,
don't go till you've know. me, just for
one little minute! I won't try to keep
ton darling I know you want to go. you darling, I know you want to go. But just look at me once, so that I can see that you know your own Augusta, please darling. please darling.'

The hands that Augusta held stopped their quivering struggle and Rose Wilding lay quiet, as though listening. Then slowly, naturally, she opened her eyes with the sweet clear light of perfect reason lining gently in them. And she

with the sweet clear light of perfect reason 'ining gently in them. And she said in a tender, conf.ding whisper: ''Augusta, my own. Stay close to me. It's—it's lonely—going.'' With a sigh as of a tired child she closed her eyes and seemed to try to cuddle to the warmth of the young body that was close to her. Then she lay quite still.

After a little Wardwell gently lifted Augusta away. She did not resist, nor did she break out weeping as he had been all the would do. been almost hoping that she would do. Instead, she leaned against him, beg-

ging for full assurance:

"She did know me, didn't she, Jimmie!"

mie!''

''Of course, dear, of course she did.''

Then Augusta went slowly over to the little cot which had been her partner in the play of the weary pitiful months and began folding it away.

Through the two days that followed Wardwell did all the necessary things with a calculated care that showed how well he had schooled himself. He saw to everything, anticipated everything, exerting himself more than he had done for weeks, yet always carefully holding himself within the limits of his strength lest a sudden breakdown

strength lest a sudden breakdown should come to frighten Augusta.

It was only on the lonely ride back from the cemetery, through the sand pitted lots and broken streets of Greenpoint and across the ferry, that Jimmie began to go to pieces. He was tired, tired of the struggle to keep up, tired of the struggle to keep up, then of the silly pretense of being a normal, cheery, good hearted fellow. Besides, Augusta did not seem to have needed him. She had not broken down. She would, he thought, have done just as well without him. And he began to pity himself inordinately.

Now he was sure that Augusta was looking at him in a thoughtful, speculative sort of way. Although he knew well enough that Augusta was not aware of his condition, yet it took only a few minutes of this bent of thought to convince him fall of the was wonto convince him fully that she was wondering what in the world she could do with with a hopelessly sick husband on her hands.

The foolish, overweaning egotism of a sick mind in a sick body took sway

over him, making him forget everything but his own morbid line of thoughts. Augusta did not need him. He was of Augusta and not need nim. He was of no use to her, or to anybody. He never would, in fact, be of any use. It would be better to let it end now. He had never really been Augusta's husband. He had served her as well as he could. He had served her as well as he could. But that was over now. She did not need him now. He pressed his self inflicted hurt home and took a sort of miserable pleasure from the pain. She at least could be happy. Why should he drag her down the long dark path with himself. He might live on and on for a deuce of a while—people did, you know. No, he was not going to let the poor girl in for anything like that.

know. No, he was not going to let the poor girl in for anything like that.

The heady, self-centred resolution took shape rapidly, and he began to fill it in with all sorts of reasonable and thoughtful advantages.

He would drop out now today while

He would drop out now, to-day, while things were still in their present state. If he waited at all, Augusta would at once find out his condition and she would—he knew her—immediately break up her house and pack off with break up her nouse and pack of with him to wherever the doctors told her to take him. And he would be unable to resist once she took hold. Then, in the resist once she took hold. Then, in the inevitable end, she would have spent on him whatever money she had—he had never thought to wonder whether it was much or little, or any—her home and her way of living would be gone. He would be gone. And she would be alone, among strangers, with no way of making a living, probably broken down from nursing him—He drew the whole picture and elaborated upon it.

Yes he must drop out to-day, quietly, without a word, and just drift—drift on over towards oblivion. Augusta would miss him, but she would not really need him. It would be all very simple. A short time, maybe only a

really need him. It would be all very simple. A short time, maybe only a few days, of knocking around and he would be completely down sick. Then some hospital or other would pick him up, under any name he happened to be up, under any name he happened to be able to think of, and—and everything would settle itself without fuss. He particularly did not want any fuss. He was tired and he had found a way to

He turned smiling cheerily to Augusta. He found her looking at him, studying him with a grave, and, somehow, a different, interest.

Augusta had found herself face to

face with a problem of her own.

She had known for a long time that there was something pressing on Jimmie's mind. She knew, of course, that he was not altogether well. But, with her own wonderful health and soundness, she could not think of mere illness as the cause of his trouble. She was sure that the trouble was in his heart. He had not been the same since they had known definitely that her mother must so go.

Was that his trouble? He was, in a way, free now.

He had been kind and dear. He had done all that she had asked him—Yes, she remembered now with confusion, she had literally asked him. And he had done everything that she had needed and more than he had promised.

Did he want to go now?

If he did, she must make him go. She had known for a long time that

ed and more than he had promised.

Did he want to go now?

If he did, she must make him go.

For she knew well enough, she thought, that Jimmie would never let her know that he wanted to go. He would just stay on and be kind and say nothing. But she must not let him do that.

Yet, with all her reasoning and

Yet, with all her reasoning and searching, Augusta was first a woman. There was just one question, and she knew it. With the simple, terrible directness of a child she put it to herself.

Did he love her? She had never known, really. He was so kind, and so good an actor.

They were alone now, for the first time. There was now no one, nothing that they had to think of but them-

Fearless and direct as she was, Augusta quivered with the dread of parting, for she had come to love the very thought of Jimmie's nearness. But she knew that they were now facing the elementary facts of life. Childlike, she had not anticipated this hour. She saw nad not anticipated this nour. She saw now with a startling and vivid reality that, for the sake of both their lives, she must know, before another day, whether Jimmie loved her as a man

whether Jimmie loved her as a man must loye a woman.

A folgotten and unbidden memory came to her in that instant, and although she did not imagine that it had any bearing upon her problem she grasped it and brought it out into the light, never thinking where the consequences might lead.

"Jimmie," she said, turning quickly, "maybe you won't remember, but one day last September I saw you in the Square talking to a lady. She had been

Square talking to a lady. She had been

(Continued on page 54)



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