

That was the last stroke. He came back to her, and knelt beside her, murmuring inarticulate things. With a sigh of relief, Connie subsided upon his shoulder, conscious through all her emotion of the dear strangeness of the man's coat against her cheek. But presently, she drew herself away, and looked him in the eyes, while her own swam.

"I love you"—she said deliberately—"because—well, first because I love you!—that's the only good reason, isn't it; and then, because you're so sorry. And I'm sorry too. We've both got to make up—we're going to make up all we can." Her sweet face darkened. "Oh, Douglas, it'll take the two of us—and even then we can't do it! But we'll help each other."

And stooping she kissed him gently, lingeringly, on the brow. It was a kiss of consecration.

A few minutes more, and then, with the Eighth Prelude swaying and dancing round them, they went hand in hand down the long approach to the music-room.

The door was open, and they saw the persons inside. Otto and Sorell were walking up and down smoking cigarettes. The boy was radiant, transformed. All look of weakness had disappeared; he held himself erect; his shock of red-gold hair blazed in the firelight, and his eyes laughed, as he listened silently, playing with his cigarette. Sorell evidently was thinking only of him; but he too wore a look of quiet pleasure.

Only Mrs. Mulholland sat watchful, her face turned towards the open door. It wore an expression which was partly excitement, partly doubt. Her snow-white hair above her very black eyes, and her frowning,