

THE CRICKET

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I didn't want her any more than you did, and we were fools to have her. That may be abnormal, unnatural, and all the rest of it, but it's the truth, and there are lots of other women just like me. You can't lump us, any more than you can lump men. We don't all of us have the maternal instinct, not by a long shot."

"Don't talk like that, Max; it's not nice."

"There you go. It's all right for you not to want a child, but it's indecent in me. That's a man-made idea, and it won't work any more. Lots of us don't find motherhood either satisfying or interesting, and we're getting courage enough to say so."

"The less you say about it, the better," counselled Wally.

"To get back to Isabelle, she's here, and she's just as much your responsibility as she is mine."

"Being here isn't her fault, poor kid. Seems as if somebody ought to—well—love her," he finished in embarrassment.

"Go ahead. I've no objection."

Mrs. Bryce returned to her book.

"By Jove, Max, you're hard as rocks."

"Oh, get out, Wally. I'm not interested in your conversation. Go liven up the party."

"Why don't you try a younger governess, for a change?" he went on, undeterred. "Wilder is so old and sort of set."

Mrs. Bryce closed her book with irritated finality.

"Wally, I will give you a chance at running our darling child for the rest of this summer. I declare a strike! You get her governesses, you donate your society to her.