

Peace seemed to reign everywhere; a wonderful, perfect peace.

And after a while, a long, long while it seemed, the woman stirred in her husband's arms. Presently she looked up.

Her happy, wandering gaze had drifted to the window and beyond. There, in the darkening shadows of the skeleton woodlands, she beheld two figures strolling idly, hand in hand. The growing twilight left them clearly outlined against the blackened trees. The man's great figure towered over the slim woman by his side, who was still by no means dwarfed. Monica thrilled with delight as she beheld them. They were those whom she loved best in the world, next to this man at her side.

"Look, Alec," she cried. "Look there. They, too, have at last found perfect happiness. Soon—soon they will be launching their little craft upon the world's troubled waters. Soon they, too, will know the real meaning of life. We have learned together, dear, haven't we? And now—now we can sit by, and watch them, and help them launch their little boat. Beyond that we cannot go. Theirs it is to set their course and keep it. Theirs it is to put their hands to the tiller and weather every storm. And they are many—very, very, many, even for the most fortunate. God be with them."

The man was watching the idly wandering lovers with eyes of deep affection.

"He's a good boy," he said, in a tone that was full of paternal pride. "There's no bad streak in him, as there is in——" He sighed. "I'm glad of it. I want to wonder when I think what he's suffered at my hands. And after all these years he's come to me. It's good, Mon. It's good to think of."

"Yes," he went on, after a pause, "and what a girl for any man. I feel glad, so glad, I don't just know how to speak it. But I can do a lot. Say, when it comes to launching that boat, I don't guess they need to lay a hand to it. That's right up to me."

Monica gazed up into his strong face. Emotion was working behind that wonderful mask. She knew. But she would not let him know that she could read so deeply.