

measured bitterness twisted her lips again. "You told me once that my hair was blacker than a night unshot by a single star. And you used to talk about when your mother died."

"My mother is dead?" he asked, dazed. He was letting each idea that she gave him play with all its possible force on his mentality.

"And about the perfume of the roses—the red roses."

Whether she had winced it or not, she was governed by a desire to help him. The suffering that drew him up to his tiptoes and held him trembling before her was irresistible.

"You were dotty about flowers. You used to tell us about a field you loved. You said you loved it in the spring. You said in the spring it was nothing but green velvet crusted with dandelion gold. You said that the morning you left us in Charlie's place. You said you wanted to go back and walk barefooted through the powdered gold. You said you had done that when you were a barefooted boy."

"Ah!" The agitator made the exclamation a note of anguish that was terrible to hear.

They—the Leslie woman and the others—watched him. He crouched farther forward, his eyes closed. His right arm shot out from his side at right angles to his body, the palm of his hand out and the fingers open as if he tried to lean on something. His left