

CHAPTER LIV

ON THE WESTFALL LAKE

HURRYING clouds curtained the silver shield of a full moon and found themselves fringed gloriously with ragged light. It was a lake of white, whispering ghosts locking spectral branches in the wind, of slumbering lilies rustled by the drift of a boat; a lake of checkered lights and shadows fitfully mirroring stars at the mercy of the moon-flecked clouds. On the western shore of the wide, wind-ruffled sheet of water, on a wooded knoll, glimmered the lights of the village.

To Diane, stretched comfortably upon the cushions of the boat, which had drifted idly about since early twilight, the night's sounds were indescribably peaceful. The lap and purl of water, the rustle of birch, the call of an owl in the forest, the noise of frog and tree toad and innumerable crickets, they were all, paradoxically enough, the wildwood sounds of silence.

With a sigh the girl presently paddled in to shore. As she moored her boat, the moon swept majestically from the clouds and shone full upon a second boatman paddling briskly by the lily beds. The boat came on with a musical swirl of