

willows in a storm, and yet amid this almost intolerable movement Stella sat still as a figure of eternal stone. A faint smile curved more sharply her lips; the black bows in her hair trembled against her white dress; her wonderful hands went galloping away to right and left of her straight back. Plangent as music itself, serene as sculpture, with smiling lips magically crimson, adorably human, she finished her first concerto. And while she bowed to the audience and to the orchestra and the great shaggy conductor, Michael saw ridiculous teardrops bedewing his sleeve, not because he had been moved by the music, but because he was unable to shake by the hand every single person in King's Hall who was now applauding his sister.

It was not until Beethoven's somber knock at the opening of the Fifth Symphony that Michael began to dream upon the deeps of great music, that his thoughts liberated from anxiety went straying into time. Stella, when for a little while he had reveled in her success, was forgotten, and the people in this hall, listening, listening, began to move him with their unimaginable variety. Near him were lovers who in this symphony were fast imparadised; their hands were interlaced; visibly they swayed nearer to each other on the waves of melody. Old men were near him, solitary old men listening, listening . . . old men who at the summons of these ringing notes were traversing their past that otherwise might have stayed forever unvoyageable.

Michael sometimes craved for Lily's company, wished that he could clasp her to him and swoon away upon these blinding chords. But she was banished from this world of music, she who had betrayed the beauty of love. There was something more noble in this music than the memory of a slim and lovely girl and of her flower-soft kisses. The world itself surely seemed to travel the faster for this urgent symphony. Michael was spinning face to face with the spinning stars.