

The whole affair had not occupied more than an hour and a half, and as they turned sharply in at the loch side to make for home, Isla Mackinnon, driving in the little cart with the shaggy sheltie between the shafts, passed them with a slight bow and smile.

There was something about her remote, inaccessible, distant as the stars. And both felt, though they had no knowledge of how it had come about, that, so far as the dear and intimate relations of life are concerned, she had passed wholly beyond their touch or ken.

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Drummond of Garrion, with the lover's light in his eye, rode over the steep ascent of Glenogle on a September afternoon.

The little lodge on the Moor of Silence was his goal, and it was Isla Mackinnon he had come to see. But the love-light was not for her, nor did she occupy much of his thought. An odd idea of chivalry—of something owing to the friend of his youth, to the woman who had first shown him the reality of life, had inspired the ride which was taking him to her side.

It was the week of the shooting, so far as Achree was concerned, and Neil had a fanciful idea that he would like to speak to Isla up there in the silence, where he had once bidden her so bitter a goodbye.

It was a day of autumn's heavenliest, most benignant mood. The glow had gone off the heather in places, though here and there a great purple patch would shine like an amethyst in the sun. The clear crispness of the air was as rare wine, and the beauty of the scenes in which his life had been passed struck with a fresh note of joyfulness upon Neil Drummond's soul. He, too, had had his dark days, but, so far as human vision could foresee, they were over, and happiness was within his grasp.

He made a gallant figure on horseback, and when Isla, busy tying up the spare rose tree which grew about the door, preparatory to leaving it for the winter, saw him