

Phyllis glanced at her husband.

"You're in a nice state," she observed.

"Yes," he said, after a little pause, "I meant to meet Mark at Knype." (Knype is the main-line station for all the Five Towns, and the radiating centre of the local lines.) "But I couldn't. So I jumped on this thing and tried to meet him at Bleakridge Station. I was too late for that too, and so I bicycled up here after him as quick as I could."

"I see," said Phyllis mysteriously.

They entered the house.

Phyllis shut the door, called the servant to wheel the bicycle out of the way, and told her briefly to lay another cover for supper. She then went into the drawing-room, humming an air, and Mark, after he had taken off his hat and coat, followed her. She sat down to the piano, perching herself sideways on the stool. Mark approached the window.

"Ye gods!" he exclaimed. "These sunsets alone are worth the rent you pay for this place."

Phyllis began to play.

"What's that you're playing?" he asked, going to the piano.

"Aren't you coming up to wash?" said Lawrence awkwardly, putting his head into the room.

Mark looked up from Phyllis's fingers.

"Not I!" he said. "You know I always wash in the express, between Sneyd and Knype. It saves