

When Lawrence Ridware had telephoned to Pirehill for a nurse, he had been informed that he could have one and that Nurse Fearn's would be sent.

And now they sat together in his parlour in the blackening dusk of a Five Towns autumn. With her pale, tight-bound hair, and her clear blue costume and spotless cap, and large apron with the chatelaine jingling against its whiteness, she looked a comely and desirable creature, wistful, fragile, and yet very stern. Something stirred in Lawrence, an impulse that had not stirred in him for years. His mind went back — to what should it go back but to the sudden interruption of the trial and to the feel of her thin body in his arms? He had held her in his arms. And he could recall the sensation precisely. Yes, something stirred in him. He remembered his divorced wife's vicious: "Supposing I were to ask you about Annunciata Fearn's?" How amazing was the penetration of women! He was nearly twenty years older than Annunciata. And time was marking him. He did not belie his age as he sat there, nervously stroking his fine chin with his heavy reddish hand. But he recognized candidly that for years past Annunciata had had a strange attraction for him. And his wife, with devilish insight, had discovered that! He saw Annunciata in the roseate glow of an unmistakable sentiment. He vaguely wanted her. And for a moment a