

Rather a fool I felt, and unable to look away until she released me. She had been wondrously quiet through it all. Not dazed in the least, as might have been looked for in one of her lowly station thus prodigiously elevated; and not feverishly gay, as might also have been anticipated. Simple and quiet she was, showing a complete but perfectly controlled awareness of her position.

For the first time then, I think, I did envision her as the Countess of Brinstead. She was going to carry it off. Perhaps quite as well as even I could have wished his lordship's chosen mate to do. I observed her look at his lordship with those strange lights in her eyes, as if only half realizing yet wholly believing all that he believed. And once at the height of the gayety I saw her reach out to touch his sleeve, furtively, swiftly, and so gently he never knew.

It occurred to me there were things about the woman we had taken too little trouble to know. I wondered what old memories might be coming to her now; what staring faces might obtrude, what old, far-off, perhaps hated, voices might be sounding to her; what of remembered hurts and heartaches might newly echo back to make her flinch and wonder if she dreamed. She touched the sleeve again, as it might have been in protection from them, her eyes narrowed, her gaze fixed. It queerly occurred to me that his lordship might find her as difficult to know as we had—and yet would keep always trying more than we had, to be sure. I mean to say, she was no gabbler.

The responses to the Senator's toasts increased in volume. His final flight, I recall, involved terms like "our blood-cousins of the British Isles," and introduced a figure of