

Captain Macklin

She could not see me, she had forgotten that I was even in the room, and I was at liberty to gaze at her and dream of her undisturbed. I felt that, without that slight, white figure always at my side, the life I was to begin on the morrow, or any other life, would be intolerable. Without the thought of Beatrice to carry me through the day I could not bear it. Except for her, what promise was there before me of reward or honor? I was no longer "an officer and a gentleman," I was a copying clerk, "a model letter-writer." I could foresee the end. I would become a nervous, knowing, smug-faced civilian. Instead of clean liquors, I would poison myself with cocktails and "quick-order" luncheons. I would carry a commuter's ticket. In time I might rise to the importance of calling the local conductors by their familiar names. "Bill, what was the matter with the 8.13 this morning?" From tomorrow forward I would be "our" Mr. Macklin, "Yours of even date received. Our Mr. Macklin will submit samples of goods desired." "Mr." Macklin! "Our" Mr. Macklin! Ye Gods! Schwartz & Carboy's Mr. Macklin!

I set my teeth and fixed my eyes on Beatrice. For her sake, but only for her sake could it be endured. If she could ever care for me, as I longed and hoped she might, I would submit to