



## The Hills of Desire

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bridge and left as comfortable as was possible, while the lieutenant called up to Wardwell:

"We'll have to depend on you for a lookout, Wardwell. They might try to rush the creek from above or below, though I don't think the outfit across there is anxious to rush anything this way. Stay where you are while you can. But if you think they've spotted you, make your rush for the creek bed. Don't stay if it should become—useless."

"Right, Sir," said Wardwell, smiling to himself among the leaves. He knew that the young officer had started to say: "Don't stay if it should become too hot for you."

NO, THERE was nothing left to chance, or to any number of chances. Everything that had happened, and that was happening and going to happen, moved into place as the result of something that had gone before, as inevitably as one pebble is moved by the pressure of another pebble.

In his ignorance—it is only in ignorance that the fatal things are done, malice is not cunning enough—he had committed the one unforgivable sin. He had taken money from one woman to give to another.

He had not known at the time that it was the unpardonable sin. He had not, as he remembered it now, thought of anything except that he could not stand Augusta's grief for the loss of her horse. To get her pet back for her at that time he would have taken money from anybody.

It was true enough that the other woman had owed him the money in an entirely business-like way. He had loaned her the money at a time when she needed it.

Afterwards she had married a wealthy man. Several times when they had met she had laughingly tried to pay him back his loan, but he had always talked her around the matter, and later he had dropped out of her sight into the seclusion of Rose Wilding's house to make his fight for his book and a reputation.

That morning when he had seen Augusta grieving in the empty stable, and after he had talked with Jethniah, he had gone down to the station and sent the telegram to the woman saying simply that he needed the money and asking for it.

He had had no misgiving that he was doing anything that would ever hurt Augusta. He had thought no more of the matter than if he had been asking any man for the return of a loan at need.

The trouble was that the woman was discontented in marriage—as she would have been discontented in singleness, or discontented in jail, or discontented in what was her idea of heaven. She was looking for diversion, and her discontent took the form of imagining herself to be sadly and irretrievably in love with Wardwell. (If she had been obliged to live two weeks in a cabin with him she would have come to the point of murdering him.)

Not long after he had sent the telegram and received his money Jimmie had begun to be troubled with a sharp premonition of something wrong. Something was brewing up for him somewhere. He was quick to understand that the one contact which he had established with the world without was probably the source of his worry. He mooned around for a day or so, waiting for something to drop, as he put it to himself. Then he went fearfully down to the station.

There were six letters waiting for him.

He read the last first. It seemed that the woman had somehow learned that Wardwell had gone away sick. From the last of the letters he gathered that she had pictured him to herself as lying penniless and alone, and at the point of death, somewhere in the woods, and that she was about to fly to him. She was capable of doing it, he knew.

With the choking, hopeless feeling of a man being drowned, he wondered if she had already started. In his panic he telegraphed:

"Do not come. Am leaving here."

No sooner was the wire gone than he repented the last words of it. Why had he lied? He should not have lied, for it would only lead to other lies. The woman was one to revel in mysteries, and his evading her now would merely determine her to come and

search him out. He was not going away from here, and he should not have lied to say so. Now he would have to write, at once, and take back the lie.

Then and there he borrowed paper and wrote. He told her, circumstantially, that he was in perfect health. He explained that he and his wife—the woman evidently had not thought of the possibility of his being married—were living away up here in the woods in order that they might be able to go on with their writing without interruptions. He apologized abjectly for having annoyed her. He hoped that she would remember that only a temporary and acute crisis had made him trouble her, and at the same time he hoped that she would forget the whole matter.

The letter was so unlike his usual clear handed methods that he felt sure the lady would either think him deranged or that she would disbelieve the whole of it. But he sent the letter. At any rate he must try to keep her from coming here.

Then he started home to Augusta, dragging with him a weight of hang-dog misery that increased at every step.

Never had Augusta's sweetness and the dear simple beauty of her faith in him been so precious to him as in those minutes. He hated the other woman unreasonably, viciously; and yet more he hated himself, because, somehow, he seemed to have thrown a slur upon Augusta. That day, when her heart was high and sweet with its sacrifice for him, he had forced her, in some shameful way it seemed, to take something—money in fact—which he had taken from another woman.

He knew, even in that walk home, that he had done a fatal thing. And the anxieties and the nightmares of the winter that followed came upon him inexorably and without surprise.

In alternate letters, and often alternately in the same letter, the other woman upbraided him for having deceived her, in being married, and being well, and on the other hand vowed that she did not believe a word of what he told her but was sure that he was there sick and alone and that she must come to see.

THROUGH all the winter and into the spring he lived under the constant dread that the woman might come, and he was obliged to answer every letter, profusely and carefully, lest something which he omitted to answer might give her the impulse that would bring her flying to find him.

That the whole business was melodramatic, and entirely foolish, did not lighten the matter in the least. And at all times he was convinced with a miserable dull certainty that all he did was useless. Augusta would inevitably come to know, anyhow. He had never expected to be able to hide anything from her. He had sworn that he never would have anything to hide from her. He was certain that she would come to know of this, and in the most shameful and pitiless way. He had no hope that it would be otherwise.

Even now, as he watched the German gun being poked into its place above the line of the dirt on the far hillside, he shuddered at the humiliation and the ignominy of that winter. Augusta had known that there was something wrong. She had, of course, seen it in his eyes and sensed it in the air about him, from the very beginning. But he had never been able to tell her. He knew Augusta's peculiar jealousy. It was not the usual property-holding interest by which the average woman clings to her rights in a man, because she is afraid of the consequences of letting him slip away from her.

Augusta was in this, as in so many things, different from any woman whom Wardwell had ever known or imagined. Like all people that live a great deal within themselves, the things that were her own, even the little things had a sacred and a touching value to Augusta. If a thing was not entirely her own she did not care for it at all. She wanted nothing near her that she had to share in any way with another person. Wardwell remembered that she had once given away her best coat because another girl had put it on herself just for a moment to see how she would look in it. And as for the loaf of her love, so far from being able to think

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## "Nine in Ten Are Underfed"

Late statistics show that average food cost, since 1914, has risen 85 per cent.

A Chicago Board of Health authority is quoted as stating that, on this account, nine folks in ten are being underfed.

### That is Unnecessary

Study the facts below. Foods are commonly measured by energy units, by calories. A man must have 3,000 calories daily, else he is underfed.

In meat, eggs, fish, etc., those 3,000 calories cost about \$1.50. Most folks can't afford that. In Quaker Oats 3,000 calories cost 16½ cents.

Note these facts about some necessary foods, based on prices at this writing:

### Compare These Costs



**Quaker Oats**  
costs 1 cent per big dish, or 5½ cents per 1000 calories.



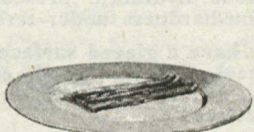
**Meats**  
1 cent per bite, or 45 cents per 1000 calories.



**Fish**  
1 cent per bite, or 50 cents per 1000 calories.



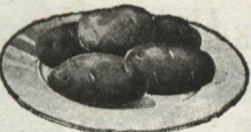
**Eggs**  
70c per 1000 calories



**Bacon**  
1 cent per slice



**Muffins**  
1 cent each



**Potatoes**  
1 cent each



**Custard**  
4 cents per serving



**Peas**  
54c per 1000 calories

Note that meats, eggs, fish, etc., average nine times Quaker Oats cost for the same calory value.

Yet the oat is the supreme food. It is almost a complete food. It costs but one cent for a big dish. And folks who eat it are not underfed.

We don't urge living on Quaker Oats alone, but make it your basic breakfast.

## Quaker Oats

World-Famous for Its Flavor

Quaker Oats has won a world-wide fame through its exquisite flavor. It is flaked from queen grains only—just the rich, plump, flavory oats. We get but ten pounds from a bushel. Yet it costs no extra price.

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