

## 2 THE WHITE MORNING

When she was fourteen and her sisters Lili and Elsa sixteen and eighteen they had met in the attic of their home in Berlin one afternoon when their father was automatically at his club and their mother taking her prescribed hour of rest, and solemnly pledged one another never to marry. The causes of this vital conclave were both cumulative and immediate. Their father, the Herr Graf, a fine looking junker of sixty odd, with a roving eye and a martial air despite a corpulence which annoyed him excessively, had transferred his lost authority over his regiment to his household. The boys were in their own regiments and rid of parental discipline, but the countess and the girls received the full benefit of his military, and Prussian, relish for despotism.

In his essence a kind man and fond of his women, he balked their every individual wish and allowed them practically no liberty. They never left the house unattended, like the American girls and those fortunate beings of the student class. Lili had a charming voice