

MR. WHITE (*shrinking from the paw*). I daren't touch it!

MRS. WHITE (*thrusting it in his hand*). Here! Here! Wish!

MR. WHITE (*trembling*). Jenny!

MRS. WHITE (*fiercely*). WISH. (*She goes on frantically whispering "Wish."*)

MR. WHITE (*shuddering, but overcome by her insistence*). I—I—wish—my—son—alive—again.

(*He drops it with a cry. The candle goes out. There is utter darkness. He sinks into a chair. MRS. WHITE hurries to the window and draws the blind back. She stands in the moonlight. A pause.*)

MRS. WHITE (*drearily*). Nothing.

MR. WHITE. Thank God! Thank God!

MRS. WHITE. Nothing at all. Along the whole length of the road not a living thing. (*She closes the blind.*) And nothing, nothing, nothing left in our lives, John.

MR. WHITE. Except each other, Jenny—and memories.

MRS. WHITE (*coming back slowly to the fireplace*). We're too old. We were only alive in him. We can't begin again. We can't feel anything now, John, but emptiness and darkness. (*She sinks into an armchair.*)

MR. WHITE. 'Tisn't for long, Jenny. There's that to look forward to.

MRS. WHITE. Every minute's long, now.

MR. WHITE (*rising*). I can't bear the darkness!

MRS. WHITE. It's dreary—dreary.

MR. WHITE (*crosses to the dresser*). Where's the candle? (*He finds it and brings it to the table.*) And the matches? Where are the matches? We mustn't sit in the dark. 'Tisn't wholesome. (*He lights a match; the other candlestick is close to him.*) There. (*Turning with the lighted match towards MRS. WHITE, who is rocking and moaning.*) Don't take on so, Mother.

MRS. WHITE. I'm a mother no longer.