

bet you — ” It was irony again and Sheila stirred nervously. That changed his tone. He moved abruptly and came and sat down near her, locking his hands and bending his head to study them in the old way. “He found out who I was and he told me about you, Sheila, and, because he was too much hurt to travel or even to write, he asked me to go out and carry a message for him. Nothing would have kept me from going, anyway,” Dickie added quaintly. “When I learned what had been happening and how you were left and no letters coming from Rusty to answer his — well, sir, I could hardly sit still to hear about all that, Sheila. But, anyway — ” Dickie moved his hands. They sought the arms of his chair and the fingers tightened. He looked past Sheila. “He told me then how it was with you and him. That you were planning to be married. And I promised to find you and tell you what he said.”

“What did he say?”

Dickie spoke carefully, using his strange gift. With every word his face grew a trifle whiter, but that had no effect upon his eloquence. He painted a vivid and touching picture of the shattered and wistful youth. He repeated the shaken words of remorse and love. “I want her to come East and marry me. I love her. Tell her I love her. Tell her I can give her everything she wants in all the world. Tell her to come — ” And far more skillfully than ever Hilliard himself could have done, Dickie pleaded the intoxication of that