

The Intriguer

beneath its white glaze with blood. Her pose was imperious, dominant, exulting.

She spoke to Randolph Mason, ignoring the rest of us as though we were interminably distant.

"You, even you," she said, "could not defeat him. He got what he wanted in spite of you."

Mason regarded her with a leisurely, ironic interest.

"Thomas B. Wood," he replied, "has got nothing."

"Nothing!" she repeated. "Do you call a control of my father's railroads nothing? a control of millions nothing? a seat in the United States Senate nothing? And what have you taken from him for it? indeed, what have you taken! A paltry federal office!"

"I have taken," replied Randolph Mason, "the little that he had, and I have given nothing." Then he added as though likewise in explanation to the rest of us, "In the removal of this man from his office it was not my intention that he should obtain any benefit from John A. Garnett."

"Then," she cried, "you have failed."

"I have not failed," replied Randolph Mason, speaking with cold precision. "This assignment of stock was delivered to Thomas B. Wood in consideration of the resignation of his office. Such contracts are void as against public policy. The Consolidated Fuel Railroads will refuse to recognize the validity of this assignment, and it cannot be enforced in the courts. It cannot avail this man that the paper is in