



THE BUTTERFLY MAN

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Occasionally he took her to the play or to the vaudeville. In return she had him to lunch at the Italian restaurant in Bothwerk Street or took him to church of a Sunday morning.

One night, just a week before the wedding, she timidly — for she was still in some awe of his past prowess — broached a subject that had long been in her mind to discuss with him, plainly and decisively. They had just returned to her home after having witnessed a comedy in one of the theatres. It was the first time in more than a year that he had been inside this playhouse, where on innumerable occasions he had sat with gay box parties as one of the fortunate few at whom all people stared. This night he sat beside pretty Kate O'Brien, head of the dressmaking department, in a seat not far removed from the stage, his face set and his eyes glued to the drop curtain or the open stage, as the changes came. Around about them sat dozens of people whom he knew. He was afraid to look at them. Kate observed this; it was the thing that she was bringing herself to discuss with him.

"Look here, Sedge, were you ashamed to be seen with me to-night?" she found the courage to demand at last. She was taking her hat off in the parlour.

He came out of his reverie. "Ashamed? What do you mean, Kate?"

"All of your fine friends were there. They did n't seem to see you, and I noticed that you were n't rubbing very much in their direction. That's why I asked