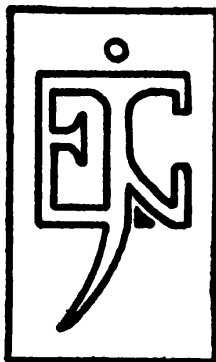


# DESTINY

*A NEW-THOUGHT NOVEL*

BY

JULIA SETON, M.D.



NEW YORK  
EDWARD J. CLODE

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## INTRODUCTORY



VERY BOOK THAT IS written has a meaning and a purpose; sometimes this meaning and purpose is plain; it reveals itself in every line, in every sentence; sometimes only God and the Author really understand it.

Any book that imparts wisdom on any subject is a good book; the book that imparts the most wisdom is the greater book, while the book that imparts wisdom in a way that it may be put to a great use is the most perfect book.

A book must tell us about the things which we know; and about the things we do not know; it is a good book only as it sets before us the methods for higher achievement; it must give us practical methods for attaining the knowledge it brings.

This is the hour when the risen race

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## INTRODUCTORY

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consciousness refuses to accept a whirl of statements. The race mind resents proclamations; a present book must have true situations between its covers which teach their own lessons. These situations may be false to our accepted standards, but they must be true to the level of their own wisdom.

No one cares for a book just because some one else says it is a good one; it must have its own ingrained power of speaking into every consciousness, or it will soon pass out of existence.

This book has its own purpose and its own meaning; it holds its own merits and these merits are built upon principles revealed through personalities. You are not asked to accept or reject these principles, you are only asked to read them and then think, say, and do what you please about them.

This book was born on the table lands of revealed human experiences; it is the consciousness of God in the human soul, worked out in true, natural, idealistic living; the  
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pathway to perfect unification is a winding one; the staggering human consciousness sometimes forgets its ultimate.

This is a story of the absolute and through it there drags the trail of the serpent; with the temptation of the soul to fail, resisted, and reconquered evermore.

JULIA SETON.



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**PART ONE**  
**AMBITION**

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**[ 1 ]**

## LIFE

**T**HERE is a game called life, which all men know;  
Some play it with wide open, dauntless eyes;  
And others risk their all, upon one throw,  
And throwing, lack the craft to load the dice.

Still others play the game with pomp and pride;  
The while they play hope dies within their heart;  
But turning from the world's hard face aside,  
They conquer only while they play the part.

Again, some hearts grow weary of the game;  
They've played it through in failure and despair;  
They find the answer always is the same,  
They've played it out. The game was never fair.

Some lives are led to slaughter hour by hour;  
Strive as they will, they may not miss the call;  
Caught close in some resistless, unknown power,  
They're ground to dust and ashes, all in all.

Oh, human hearts! high stakes are hard to win;  
The play called life is not a coward's best;  
He only wins, who plunges in and in  
And prays, the while he bares his naked breast.

# DESTINY

## A NEW THOUGHT NOVEL

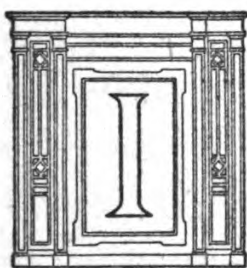
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### PART ONE

### AMBITION

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#### CHAPTER ONE



IT IS EARLY EVENING, just before the soft dimness of the gloaming; the sun is setting in a bank of flaming clouds; the breezes sing a drowsy lullaby to the flowers and trees; the night, like a patient mother, seems ready to fold all life in her embrace and croon it to sleep with the harmony of her myriad voices.

In all the rare beauty of the summer's night, Audrienne Lebaron walked slowly down the long shadowy lane; one solitary figure, unrelated to the beauty around her,

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she seemed to be the one inharmony in a world of harmonious peace and joy. She looked down at the soft grass beneath her feet and up at the crimson mass of floating clouds above her head, but none of their softness was pictured in her face: sullen, despondent, the weariness of her mind showed through the inert actions of her body.

She walked to an old farm gate which separated one field from a large green pasture, and looked with listless eyes at the long stretches of fading sunlight falling around her: she picked some nodding daisies from their bed and, leaning over the gate, began picking one to pieces. As she tore the flower cruelly into fragments, a low, clear whistle sounded upon the air and she turned quickly with open annoyance in her face, as a lithe form bounded over the low wall and stood before her.

The dusky light of the gloaming fell upon the face and figure of a young farmer; tall, supple, with an open, frank, boyish face and nut-brown hair: Harold Douglas stood



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before her, a perfect picture radiant in all the strength and joy of physical manhood.

"All hail the queen of the setting sun;" his voice was low and earnest; "All glory to the fairest goddess of the night;" with hat in hand, he bowed low before her.

She turned impatiently away toward the gate, showing her dislike of his intrusion. Harold came close beside her; taking her by the arm he turned her toward him and, noting the deep, petulant discontent on her face, said: "Now, Audrienne, you are moping again; when will you quit your foolish notions?" He put his hand under her chin and attempted to turn her face upward so that he might look into her eyes. She pushed him angrily away and, drawing herself up, said, "Don't touch me! I wish you would go away; I don't want you or any one; I want to be alone."

He did not stir, only said, firmly, "Audrienne, you make your own unhappiness; why do you continue to baby yourself in such foolish moods?"

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Audrienne turned resentfully, "Be still, Harold, you don't know what you are saying; I do not make my moods, they are myself; I shall always have them as long as I live here. I hate this life! Do you hear? I hate it! I hate you! I hate everything!"

She stood in the fading light, a beautiful picture of discordant temper. Harold did not answer; she flashed an angry glance and went on, "What a curse my life is; what a dead thing I am all the time. Isn't it enough to make me have moods when I have to live in a place I hate and among people who can never understand me? Isn't it a strange sort of life that never gives me a thing I want, but always keeps me filled up with what I detest. Bah! Harold, I hate everything so, I feel as if I could kill everybody; I wish I knew how to kill myself; I tell you, I can't stand this dead-alive treadmill of life much longer; I am sick, sick of it all; I could smash the faces of the foolish little flowers

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that I see coming up in the same old way, season after season. They are just like me; they lift their hopeless little faces up to the same old scenes. Harold, how can I be contented when I am all at war 'inside? Am I never to know anything but this?" Audrienne looked at him querulously.

He came a step closer so that he could look down into her peevish face and said, "The thing that wars in you, Audrienne, is just your own selfish little woman, who won't try and see life as it is, but you want to live it in a dream. What do you want that you cannot find here?" Audrienne interrupted him with a frown and said: "Harold, I have told you many times: I want life, excitement, something to do worth while." "Yes, dear," he answered; "but you are so foolish in your imaginings. Life to a woman can mean only one thing, and that is what you have always had offered to you here. Believe me, Audrienne, love is the only thing worth while, and I have always given you my fondest

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devotion; why will you not make that enough and live with me here in happiness and contentment? Why will you not be my wife?"

She turned impetuously and started toward the farmhouse in the distance. Harold followed and, stepping before her on the path, said earnestly, "Don't leave me, Audrienne; answer me."

Audrienne faced him defiantly. "Harold, you don't understand; you never will understand. What would I be as wife? Only a more discontented creature than I am now. I want to live my own life; I want love, not friendship, when I marry. I have told you I do not love you and never will. Can't you imagine the torment of such an existence? I should go mad if I were forced forever to live on a farm, among these uncongenial surroundings and common people. You don't know anything of life, Harold! You have no ambition beyond being a happy farmer. I feel I am destined for a great work of some kind; I want opportunity; my heart

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is full of desire to know, to experience, I know not what. Something calls to me. I seem like a sleeping tigress that any slight sound might awaken into readiness to spring upon her prey; I am half mad with repressed emotions. Harold, I am nearly twenty-five years old and my senses will not be drugged to sleep any longer. These dear foster-parents are kind; they have given me every possible advantage, more than they could afford, but I cannot repay them by dullness and obedience and I shall not try much longer. My moods, as you call them, are rampant. Look, Harold! I see a wide sea; on it a white ship lies proudly, all her sails tossed by the blowing winds; she sails on and on, straight to the harbor she is seeking. This is my soul vision, Harold; all the sails of my soul are unfurled and longing for the fierce breezes of life to push me out into the mighty ocean of experience and endeavor. Harold, can't you feel? Can't you get awake to the call of ambition? Where is your own genius, that

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it can bear the silence of this farm and these people?"

Harold did not answer. He looked long and earnestly into Audrienne's glowing face, made radiant even by the enthusiasm of the mental picture.

Then he said, "How will you reach your ambition? You are an unknown country girl: the ladder of fame must have something to rest upon."

Audrienne laughed exultantly: "I have a deep dream which I shall make come true. Your cousin Lolone Nash, of New York, is coming here to spend the summer and I shall ask Aunt Katherine to send me home with her in the fall. In New York City I can find something to do which will save me from madness; with Lolone I can live the life of the world and lose this stifling dullness.

Over Harold's face there crept a look of pain and dismay. He came more closely to Audrienne and attempted to take her hand. "Audrienne," he said, and his voice trembled, "look at me; try to understand

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the full meaning of my love for you. I love you! I would give my life to get you the things you want; I only live to make you happy; I long to save you from yourself. Don't you know that the pathway you are seeking is full of pitfalls? Why should you risk the loss of your pure womanhood in the stifling life of a big city? Why barter away the glory of a simple love, for the bauble of a world's praise? I don't know much of life, Audrienne, but enough to know that the world never pays for what it takes from a woman's soul, and that it never gives back to her anything in exchange for tarnished virtue. Stay with me, Audrienne, and I will make you happy."

The gloaming had come and gone; the silver moon now shone in white radiance upon them as they stood, each struggling for what seemed eternal freedom. He drew nearer to her. "Audrienne, be true to your higher womanhood! The real woman never sells her soul, never buys her ambition through selling her best qualities. Stay with me! Be my wife!"

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She struggled from his detaining grasp, pushed him from her, struck him in the face with her hands and, in a burst of angry tears, stamped her foot upon the ground: "Harold, your soft talk maddens me. You always try to put me to sleep with words; you think you can pet and smooth my fur as you do a pussy cat. I don't want anything you have to give; I don't want this life or the things which go with it; I fling them away as heartlessly as I do these faded, sickening, doll-eyed daisies. Take it all! Take everything! but get your foolish, simple ideas out of my way."

She flung the flowers at his feet: "You may stay forever, but as for me, I shall leave: I shall go where my soul calls me and seek and find the things I want, even if with them I lose everything you call truth and womanhood; nothing on earth shall stand between me and my burning desire. You may be a coward, Harold, but I am not;" and with a half-hysterical sob, she turned and ran wildly toward the farmhouse.



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Harold watched her until she passed from his sight; he stood, uncertain, half inclined to follow and force her to listen to what seemed to him her own salvation; but reason conquered and he sank down upon the grass, under the still light of the moon, and gave away to deep meditation.

Twenty-five years ago he had been a child of six. He remembered the day when his mother, Mary Douglas, had taken him with her to visit his Aunt Katherine, to see her adopted baby, whom he was told had been left an orphan, and whom Aunt Katherine's mother-heart had taken to her home. He went, looked at the little pink face and fists, and loved her.

From that day he had made himself the baby's champion. They grew up together. The farms of the two sisters joined. It had seemed natural that he and Audrienne should spend much of their time together.

Tonight, as he sat alone in the moonlight, he reviewed the long years in which they had grown into distinct self-consciousness.

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He had loved her as a child, he had loved her as a wayward, capricious girl, and again as the discontented girl-woman; first, with that pure childish ardor, which can never be repeated; then with the impulsiveness of youth, and then with the superb power and passion of a fuller manhood. He had never wavered in his steadfast devotion; yet through it all, he had found the wild, restless, half-tamed creature, who had burst upon him in all her fury tonight, but he had hoped against hope, that the years would take this unrest from her soul, for he knew little of the real depth of her nature. He was calm, serious, content with his lot, unable to fathom the chaos of a life like Audrienne's.

Tonight, she seemed to him further away than ever. She had poured out her discontent to him in the past; tonight she had avowed her determinations; he could not but tremble for her future.

The elder ones had always laughed at her moods and said, "Let her dream; she

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will get over it. It is the common part of a girl's sentimentality," but year after year she had grown more and more restless. She had so many things which she could use to feed her discontent: "She was an orphan and always dependent upon others;" "she wanted independence, more advantage than the foster-parents could give her;" "she wanted more life, excitement;" "she longed for study, effort, self-culture"—always the same old story of belief in some great future. Some deathless ambition held her in its grip and gnawed at her vitals; tonight it had culminated in an unusual outburst. What could he do? What could he do? At last, with an unhappiness of heart he could not shake off, he turned homeward.

It is well that there is an angel of destiny that guards our footsteps and gives each life the fruition of its hope, in its own way, or the mixed call of life to life would lead us forever over tangled pathways and on into jungles of human misunderstanding.

## CHAPTER TWO



THE MELLOW SUNLIGHT fell with yellow softness around the old farmhouse; the birds, from bush and tree, caroled sweet songs of joy; the morning glories opened their big eyes with a shy "good morning," drank their cup of dew, then, slowly closing again, sank back into the cool green leaves, until the brightness of another morning.

The butterflies, green and gold, flitted everywhere; resting now and then on some tall flower, then flitting away to some other field of brightness. The chickens gave merry cackles from the cosy hennery; the cat, on the sunny steps of the porch, purred with sleek satisfaction; old dog Ponto lay quietly blinking and basking in the sunshine; a sleepy content lay over everything — all

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save Audrienne, who moved in this tranquil setting.

She was busy with morning duties of a farm kitchen, but her uninspired face and sullen manner told clearly that in reality she had little part in what her hands were finding to do.

In vain the warm, bright rays of the morning sun, in vain the warbling birds' song; all life was blind to her. The butterflies hovered around unnoticed, and even old Ponto, as he wagged his tail and opened one eye in anticipation of a word of kindly favor, was disappointed when Audrienne passed him by.

Aunt Katherine came into the kitchen and, seeing Audrienne's far away and disinterested manner, said sternly, "There now, none of your mooning around this morning, Audrienne; hurry up and get through with your work; father will soon be here with Lolone; the train is overdue and it takes such a short time to get home from the depot. Lolone won't stand for anything out

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of order. Have you finished her room? Be sure it is pretty; take up some flowers and fill the room with them; hurry, Audrienne, then come and help me with the dinner."

Audrienne picked up the flower knife nonchalantly and went into the yard; she gathered an overflowing armful of flowers and, taking them to the room prepared for Lolone, arranged them prettily in the plain vases. When she had finished, she turned and looked at the room scornfully.

The picture which met her gaze would have been a pleasant sight to anyone who had lived through even mild experiences; but to this discontented, inexperienced girl it meant only the commonplace.

The bed was draped in snowy whiteness, the windows arranged prettily with soft white curtains, the floor shone resplendent with a rag carpet, brilliant in itself with every color dye could produce. A low rocker stood by the window, a small mirror hung upon the wall. It was a poor little mirror, just large enough to cover the out-

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lines of the face, the whole arrangement of the room gave it an atmosphere of cheer. It was intimate, chummy, and spoke of rest and quietness.

As Audrienne stood with disdain written over her face, Aunt Katherine came into the room, interested to take a last look for herself. Noting Audrienne's look, she said, "What's the matter, Audrienne, isn't it finished?"

With a toss of her head Audrienne replied, "Yes; but what will Lolone think of this hateful little room and these common flowers? She has everything, how will she stand this? I am sure these homely things will shock and offend her."

Aunt Katherine looked at the room and then at Audrienne. "It will be good for her; she has altogether too much indulgence; she is too selfish now; she ought to learn that there is some one else in the world besides herself; she always gets a good lesson when she is here. She would have been brought up differently if she had been my

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girl. Sister Jane always was a soft one, and then, with that high-flown foreign husband of hers, she had nothing to say about anything; he and Lolone always had their own way, but she always learns a thing or two when she comes here, I can tell you; there is no love between us, it's you she comes to see, not me or John."

Aunt Katherine left the room with her last words and Audrienne, flushed but silent, hurried down to the kitchen just as the farm carriage, drawn by a pair of strong, slow horses, drew up at the old farmhouse porch. All Audrienne's languor disappeared as she rushed out eagerly to meet the arrival.

It had been three years since she and Lolone had met. During their childhood Lolone had spent nearly every summer at the farm, but during the last few years, foreign travel and studies abroad had filled her time so that her return to Audrienne had been delayed until this summer. She was three years older than Audrienne and entirely different in consciousness and per-



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sonality. Lolone's life had been spent in New York City with many seasons abroad, under the finished instructors of foreign culture. Every avenue of information and self-expression had been open to her.

Her mother, Jane Nashe, was the sister of Katherine Howard and Mary Douglas, Harold's mother. Jane Nashe, warm with the mother-love for her own child, had warmly favored the adoption of Audrienne by her childless sister Katherine and had always looked to her to mother her own daughter when, tired with study, life, and travel, Lolone had returned each summer to the farm.

As Aunt Katherine had said, there was very little in common between her and Lolone, for Lolone represented a phase of life and womanhood with which Aunt Katherine was entirely unfamiliar. Lolone from her infancy had been lawless, inclined to follow her own will. She had always hated the word "Obey;" she disobeyed from choice; she had been incorrigible as a child and as

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a woman, deep and unfathomable. The only thing she ever seemed to love or reverence was Audrienne. Audrienne was her ideal of all that was good and beautiful, and Audrienne had naturally turned to her as the only outlet for her repressed ambitions. To Audrienne, Lolone seemed to be the strongest and most wonderful creature on earth, and through her she at last hoped to accomplish her own emancipation.

There could be no greater contrast than the two girls presented in appearance. Audrienne was tall, strong, vital, yet graceful, with a splendid free body which spoke of great powers of endurance; her face was fair and oval with full, pouting red lips, and her eyes were wide open and full of purple shadows, sometimes a blue, sometimes so dark a color that they seemed like blackness, but through all their changes, the ever scintillating light of purple hearts-ease.

Her face was framed with a wealth of strong, dark, glistening auburn hair; she

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carried herself with an air of strength and courage; she seemed born to command, to lead; the first look at her would inspire one with the thought that she could be trusted to accomplish big things.

As she stood with smiling lips, welcoming Lolone, with the hot summer sunshine falling upon her hair, touching it to a flaming fire, she seemed fair, strong, wonderful, and ideally certain.

The girl who came with outstretched hands to fling herself into Audrienne's eager embrace was totally different. She was small, slender, the softest type of a brunette in coloring. Her hair was black as midnight, soft, wavy, shadowy, in its darkness; tangled in a wonderful looseness. Some of it escaped, curling softly beneath the rim of the jaunty French hat which she wore.

Without this curling softness of her midnight hair, the face beneath would have been too severe, too sharply chiseled. There was coldness and separateness written in the bold brow, the curved lips, in the dark

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shadows of the deep-set eyes; a coldness which even the curling lashes could not hide.

Her form was lithe and graceful; she seemed at once beautiful and treacherous; filled with a subtle conscious power which might be used as the sudden rays of sunlight, or just as suddenly as a wild tornado. As she flung her arms around Audrienne's neck, all coldness vanished and with a merry laugh she said, "At last, Audrienne! At last the path has turned; fate is a mean old thing, but it can't always keep us apart. Can it?"

Audrienne held her away for a moment, looking at her with adoring eyes and said, "Oh, Lolone! I am afraid of you; it has been such a long time since you were here. How could you bear to come to us after all your triumph abroad; you are so wonderful, so beautiful."

Aunt Katherine appearing at the door cut short all further exclamations. "Come in, you foolish children; run right up to your

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room, Lolone, and be sure you hurry, for dinner is nearly ready." Laughing a happy greeting to her Aunt, Lolone followed Audrienne gaily up to the little room under the eaves, where later the girls were to work out the plot of their whole life's story.

Strange, is it not, how life, the mysterious master, never reveals much of his mysteries at one time. All experience, all wisdom, is the progress of slow, progressive changes. Perhaps it is well that it is so, for were it different, the untried life might not have the courage to combat it all at once.

There is a certain subtle charm in mystery. It dogs our footsteps, always whispering in a voice of prophecy, of something which shall crown our efforts farther on; which, with sealed eyes and joyful hearts, we go eagerly seeking.

## CHAPTER THREE



THE DAYS WENT ON and life glided silently by at the farm. The harvest had come and gone; the reapers had gathered from far and near their burden of golden grain. The earth had reached its fierce midsummer abandon; the birds no longer sang their thrill of love unrequited, but from every voice of nature there could be heard the whisper of a grand surrender. The fierce midsummer sun had reached its ultimate; it was time to stop and think, and drink in the greatness of nature.

There is a greatness which comes but once in all the seasons, for after these perfect days there begins a slow decay. The dull, hazy autumn months which follow, are glad with their beauty, but they do not

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satisfy; there is ever within them a lack of completeness, and always the heart is haunted with a sense of loss; subtle, but ever present, it speaks of something that has gone but which cannot be forgotten.

Audrienne and Lolone lived closely together in a hidden sort of comradeship. They both feared Aunt Katherine who never sympathized with them and had little patience with what she called their "dreams" and "nonsense," and had frequently commanded Lolone to "stop stuffing Audrienne's head with any more foolishness."

There is not much sympathy for poetry or romance in the dull routine and the laborious duties of a farm, but the girls had nightly vigils, long after Aunt Katherine supposed them to be in bed. They frequently left their room by way of the window, and climbing down a tall cherry tree, sought the sheltering arms of a rustic arbor, where they spent long hours in talking, living in the pleasure of life and beauty.

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One night when they had stolen out, to wander down the long lane where we first found Audrienne, Lolone said, "Isn't it strange, Audrienne, how things in this life get mixed up? There are many girls who would be glad to possess this home and who would spend their whole life in gratitude and devotion to aunt and uncle; yet they are denied the opportunity; while you, you ungrateful little wretch, are eating your heart out to get away from it."

"Yes," Audrienne answered, "it does seem strange, but somehow I feel that every one gets just about what she should have. I don't know just how I ever came to these people; I don't know who my father or mother were, but I feel that I had to come here to make myself strong enough to seek the things which are biggest and best for me. I have always known that I was meant for some other life than this and I know I must go where I can find a way to be something more than a humdrum country woman. I was born with a mad ambition; I some-



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times believe, Lolone, that I have lived before and it is something I have brought over. I want the life of the world; freedom to do something, I don't care what, but I want to be myself as you are. You will help me to get away, won't you, Lolone?" The moon shone on her eager face.

Lolone looked at her and said, slowly, "Audrienne, you are after all just like a silly child, crying for a new toy. You want something, yet you don't know what, and you don't know that if you get what you want, you will have to pay the price for it. There is nothing that life ever gives without a price; the world life, Audrienne, and its conquest, demands much for what it gives you; you will have to give something in exchange for its favors. Surely, it will give you ambition, action, work, self-expression, but I know, too, that just as often you will find dead hopes and despairing hearts and blackened souls. Life is a barren sea, Audrienne, bitter and deep, and if you row out as far as your ambition

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sends you, you will need a good compass by which you can steer back."

"Oh, nonsense, Lolone!" Audrienne interrupted; "there you go, talking just like Harold; I hate to listen to talk which only tries to scare me and never approves of the big impulses of my life. Don't preach, Lolone! I don't care! I am ready! I would rather go down with all my ambitions unfurled and flung out defiantly, than to stay here and rot in safety. Won't you help me, Lolone? Ask Aunt Katherine if I can return with you; do, please, dear!"

"Why, surely, Audrienne, I will if this is your wish; but you must listen to reason and not make your decision too suddenly. Think of what you will lose and ask yourself what you will gain. You are a beautiful something to-day. You will never be again this something, if you accomplish this desire."

"But why, Lolone? is all gain in one way, loss in another; can't one be true and great also?"

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“Hardly, Audrienne; not until she passes through great tests. You know nothing of the skeletons hidden along the path of satisfied ambitions.”

“But,” Audrienne answered, “look at yourself, you have satisfied your own ambitions.”

“Surely I have,” replied Lolone, but when I look at you in all your puritanical goodness and virtue, I feel as if I had lived a thousand years of life, most of them unworthy. You have never met the “touch” of the world, Audrienne; while I have lived within the very heart of its stifling embrace; without the heart of an angel one could not remain unspotted. There is a great difference between ignorance and innocence, between virtue and wisdom; you are virtuous and innocent; I have wisdom.”

The night had darkened as they walked on; the stars came out and peeped to see these two deluded humans, wasting their night of sleep in blind argument; and in the gathering gloom of the night, Audrienne’s

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face grew white and set, as she answered, "I am not afraid of wisdom, whatever that may mean. I have a deep hope that I shall find some great teacher who will teach me how to live life: there are such in books, why can't I find them in life? I often find them in my dreams and they tell me always to go, and follow my own convictions.

"When I am with you, Lolone, you can help me to find some school of occult science where I can learn all about myself and the things of the world; and then, I cannot only unfold myself, but be a great help as a teacher of others; there must be great schools of learning in New York City, are there not?"

Lolone laughed softly. "Yes, Audrienne, there are great schools of learning in New York City and in every great city, but it is not in these schools one learns the real lessons of life. These lessons come outside of all seeming law and order; they meet you in the most unexpected manner and when you most need a master, he seems to

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be silent, or has left you to yourself to answer your own problems. Life is the only real master; all other masters and teachers are only interpreters. You will learn your lessons all right, but not from the pages of a book, nor from one who thinks to teach you; mad ambition like yours, always attracts to itself the things which will give its own lessons. You will find what you want, Audrienne, but not in the way you are thinking."

Lolone laughed again, an unfathomable laugh, and Audrienne, with increased ardor, said, "Lolone, you can't scare me. Something tells me that anyone who truly longs for fame and gets it, never really regrets. It is only the weak, changing souls, who don't know what they want and are cry-babies from the start, who either whimper or turn back. A brave heart like mine, led by its own desire, will dare anything. Lolone, just give me the chance and I will show you."

Lolone looked at the strong, determined face and sighed audibly; she knew that words

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were futile; such natures as Audrienne's must learn their lessons through experience, so she only answered, "Look, Audrienne, the stars are fading; let's to bed or Aunt Katherine will question our sleepiness in the morning."

There must be hours in every human life when its guardian angel stands in hopeless inaction beside it, or perhaps weeps angelic tears over its waywardness. When some pure soul like Audrienne's longs for and strives to find the path which, all unconsciously, will lead into pain and life-long initiation, it is time for these immortal guardians of men to summon the angels of their spheres around them in solemn council.

## CHAPTER FOUR



THE WEEKS FLEW BY, and one morning Audrienne and Lolone were gayly happy with song and laughter as they busied themselves with the work of garden and kitchen, although they were both bursting with the desire to be alone and talk of their most precious subject—themselves; there was butter to be churned, bread, pies and cookies to be baked, and the dinner to prepare for the family and the farm laborers.

Although Lolone was a novice at such work, she loved Audrienne so much that she would do anything to be with her; so she peeled potatoes, fixed the apples for the pies, washed the dishes, and carried the water from the wonderful well in the doorway, while Audrienne made the pies and

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bread, churned the butter, and superintended the dinner.

Who does not like an old farm kitchen when cooking is in progress? The clean hot cookstove with its concealed bed of coals stands grimly waiting to receive whatever comes its way; the oven opens with a scorching breath to receive in its arms the snowy whiteness of the new-made pies; on its glowing lids the crocks of stewing fruits, the pots of boiling meats, the simmering preserves, all give out their inviting odor, making one long to linger around to watch and wait for dinner. There is conscious power in the cookstove as it stands so strong; it seems to say to the things which come to it: "I welcome you; I can boil you, bake you, stew you, or burn you according to my own sweet will."

Life will lead us far from these fond old memories, it may blot them out with new impulses and new demands, but sometimes in our tired round of living, the heart turns back in loving recollection while we dream



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again of these bygone hours with the homely comforts and their tender touch; memory, like a sentinel, calls the finer feelings back again to the old familiar scenes.

With the swift touch of youth and happiness, the work was soon finished, and later in the afternoon the girls wandered out into the old apple orchard to talk and plan the future which they were eager to begin.

When they were comfortably seated in the cool shadow of the spreading apple trees, Audrienne looked at Lolone with a wondering expectation and said, "Lolone, you are so wise and there is so much that I want to know; do tell me how you account for all this strange difference in people; why are we so different? Why can't every one be happy? Why is there so much trouble and discontent everywhere? Why, Lolone, we are both women and yet look at us; why were you born with such a peculiar, scornful, skeptical nature which hardly believes in anything or anybody, and I was born ready to take anything in faith?"

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Lolone stopped a moment in her sewing and said, "It's all a question of what you bring into life with you from your other existences; the East Indian calls it 'Karma,' I call it the picture of our disposition. We have all lived many lives and if we have lived in goodness and kindness in our past lives, we are born with a decent disposition in this life, but if we have indulged ourselves in hateful states of feeling, we have a crooked character in this life. I think you lived a better life in the last birth than I did and you like goodness better than I; I only seem to want experience and to do as I please in this life, and I suppose that I did the same in my other life, for you know great teachers say, 'as the tree falleth, so it lies.'"

Audrienne looked mystified. "Do you really think that we have lived before, Lolone? I often feel that I have. What makes you think so?"

Lolone measured a short distance upon her cloth, then said: "I don't think any-

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thing about it, I know; I remember several of my other lives, they were not all to my credit either; I know where I learned to distrust everything and everybody. It was when I was a queen in Egypt and the powers and principalities wanted my death; it was in my Egyptian births also that I learned to love power; and it was there that I misused it too, I guess. I am today just what I made myself in the past; so are you. We are the body of our own desires; we can only be born the picture of our past desires and thoughts; the desires of one life make the character of the next. No one gives anything to us but ourselves, no one takes anything away from us but ourselves; whatever we are or are not is just the measure of our consciousness."

Audrienne sat with her work in her lap; she had forgotten to sew in her surprise and interest. "Lolone, what an idea! that must be some old pagan belief which your curious mind likes to play with; no one in her right senses could believe that. How do

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you know, Lolone? You say you know; how do you know?"

"I know because I read my own soul, and every one has a spot in her soul where she can be told. I have seen myself back in the earlier civilizations and my mind has told me what I was and what I am. Life is only a big school, Audrienne, in which the soul of man is taking a term of lessons; the biggest life is the one which includes the most and the perfect life is the one who can give out to others the things which it has included. I have included a lot, both in births that have been and in this life; I know that every one is learning his own lesson in his own way and every one is good and right in his own place."

"Oh, Lolone! how foolish," Audrienne answered. "Think of the murderers and those who are wicked, who never do anything but plunder, lie, and kill." "No matter, Audrienne," Lolone answered; "you don't understand; there are no wicked; those men whom the world calls wicked

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are young souls. They don't know any better, for when they know better, they will do better. You and I do better because we are old souls and have learned how to live."

"But listen, Lolone," Audrienne interrupted, "then I am now what I made myself in some past life; I must have wanted to live on this old prosy farm and I have no one to blame but myself. Nonsense! if I ever had any intelligence in any world, I would have known better than to have chosen this. I had nothing to do with my being born a foundling did I? If I had had a choice, why wasn't I born like you were, to a lovely father and mother who would help me work out my desires?"

Lolone sewed on in silence for a moment and then said: "It would be hard to make you understand, Audrienne, and I am not going to try; but you will learn some day that life is a great big repository and that every one takes out of it, just the things he puts in; and he puts the things in with his de-

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sires; no matter if he forgets them, the law of his life does not forget and he finds them coming to him all along his pathway. You came into life just where you belonged and I came just where I belonged; we chose to be born and we chose our father and mother; we have to learn a lesson in each incarnation and we come to the parents who will place us where we can learn it. You came to learn to develop spiritual power through difficulties; I came to learn to keep holiness through unlimited personal freedom. I don't know which is the harder lesson, Audrienne, but I think you are learning yours better than I am mine." Audrienne's eyes glowed. "How do you know we are learning our lessons?" she asked.

"Oh, by the experiences we meet," replied Lolone, "and the way we take them. Life has only one purpose, and this is, for us to meet our desires, live with them until we outlive them, and learn to turn all life into happiness and joy; this is what the

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elder teacher meant when they said that in evolution 'man had to look upon the face of his own will;' when we can meet everything with happiness and tranquillity we have learned our lesson."

"Yes, Lolone, but what happens after we learn our lesson?" "Why, we are free then, until we go on into another level of life where we meet some more experiences and take some more lessons."

Audrienne looked very earnestly at Lolone's passive face, then said: "It is a good thing that you have such a satisfactory idea of life for yourself, Lolone, but it doesn't suit me; you can leave it to the old pagan mystics who taught it to you as far as I am concerned; I don't believe that I am the plaything of my own blind moods and that I make my own troubles and chose to take them on; I didn't have anything to do with my coming here. Some fate or something which I did not need to think about sent me here, and all that I have to do is to show that I know enough of God and God

will help me; and when I get out of this experience I need never have another, for the great God will take care of me. I know God now and as soon as one knows God, he need never have the things he doesn't want; and I am trusting God to take me out of this place."

Lolone sewed on and said, quietly, "Who is God, Audrienne?" "Why, Lolone, God is our creator; he gave us all life; he is all there is."

Lolone arose and began folding her sewing. "Come along, Audrienne," she said. "If you are going to talk that old orthodox nonsense to me, I want to quit; I don't want to hear about a personal God who sits on some throne and runs the world of people and things. That is too great a superstition for you to believe or for me to listen to; I left the churches long ago, because they would not give the world a God that was big enough to take in the whole human race."

"But, Lolone," Audrienne objected, "what



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is God to you?" "Well, surely not the God of the Christian; for if there was ever a God like him who made this world, and in conscious making, made all the misery, pain, and human suffering, I would have to believe that it must have some way slipped out of his control, and, like the poet says, 'Seeing his work, he long since went blind with tears.' No, Audrienne, God is a spirit; a great universal intelligence, in all and through all, he is everywhere and speaks to us from every avenue of life; there is nothing but God; wherever we look we see him, whatever we touch we touch him; God had only one thing out of which to make the world and that thing was himself. All life is God and we set all the earthly laws in motion ourselves."

"But, Lolone, that would lose God to us; to whom would we pray, and to whom would we go in our hours of need? Who would help us? I only expect to conquer by the help of God; upheld by my faith in him, I know that I shall never falter

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and I know he will lead me past all difficulties. With you to help me in the world and God in heaven to guide me, I shall rise above everything and live a wonderful life."

Lolone looked at Audrienne's rapt face and, putting her work under her arm, walked slowly to the path leading from the orchard; she felt the uselessness of words; confronted by such childish determination, it was well to be silent; she knew too well that no words could change the current of human life, if that life rowed on, caught in the fierce rapids of its own waters. Life was something which had to be discovered, and Lolone had met many hearts as brave as Audrienne's which had been wrecked along the shores of their own fixed believing.

She knew that it took more than a ship of faith to sail in before the finished product of a life could be accomplished; she had seen the working out of the law of life and knew how, far above the clinging hands of a blind faith, the unerring action of the law of desire led us face to face with our own.

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She knew that it would take more than her own guiding hand on earth and more than the simple faith in a far-off personal God, to pilot the craft of a life like Audrienne's into peaceful union with what it had built for itself and stamped on the universal mind; and she saw above all Audrienne's untrained life, the flaming letters of a higher truth which said, "I judge no man, but have committed all judgment unto the son."

## CHAPTER FIVE



AT THE CLOSE OF A long, active, sunny day, Audrienne and Lolone sat in the long piazza, waiting for Harold, with whom they expected to spend the evening.

Lolone seated herself in a low swinging chair and, looking at Audrienne with bored eyes and a long-drawn yawn, said, "Oh, dear! I wish Harold would hurry; I am so dull. I wish I were more like you, Audrienne; you never seem to feel the need of a man around; you are so full of yourself and so taken up with your dream of future greatness, that you never have time for romance or diversion. You make so little of Harold's devotion; if I were you, I would have him here half the time, for I just cannot exist without attention. If

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I had to stay long on this farm, I would have all the young farmers, far and near, visiting me. I would die without attention; just pine away; admiration is the breath of life to me."

"But, Lolone," Audrienne answered in a surprised tone, "I thought you were engaged to Arthur St. Elmo and were to be married to him this fall." Lolone tossed her head. "Why so I am, but that does not mean annihilation; one can be engaged, and even married, without being reduced to obscurity, can't she?"

Audrienne smiled. "I don't know what you mean by 'obscurity,' but I thought that to be engaged or married meant not to have eyes or ears for any one else."

Lolone looked at her pityingly. "Oh, Audrienne! what you think is nearly always worth a big laugh. You don't know men at all, much less Dr. St. Elmo. He is a 'freedom lover,' and he will be a freedom husband; he is a splendid fellow and knows quite too much about the world and life to

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ever expect to monopolize any woman, much less his sweetheart or wife."

"But," Audrienne queried, "as his wife, won't you expect to make him your whole world, and to give him your undivided, attention?"

Lolone laughed heartily. "As his wife I shall have accomplished my ambition and his; we will be together in full understanding. He is a gentleman, standing high in his profession as a doctor, a wonderful psychologist, and a seeker after what he calls the 'mysteries.' He has an enviable position among men. I love luxury, name, place, and power; as his wife I shall have all this; he loves beauty, he is mad about the laws of harmony, symmetry, and physical form; his home, his wife, must fulfill his artistic imaginings; when this is done he will be satisfied. I am beautiful and I am his ideal of beauty, art, and ideality; I shall adorn his home; he will be proud of me. He is not a man to ask his wife to keep his honor, he is too big; he will

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keep his own honor; so we are perfectly satisfied with each other, but as for the sentimental thing some call love, there is nothing like that between us. He will claim the right to live his life as he pleases and will accord the same right to me."

Audrienne had listened with wide-open eyes, aghast. She said, "Lolone, what a union! Who ever heard of such a marriage! I can't imagine a marriage based upon anything but a mad love; why should any couple want to live together if they are not madly in love with each other! Your marriage seems to me to be something like the way Uncle John trades horses; you get what you want for something you have to give, just a sort of even exchange; why, Lolone, how can you think of such a thing! marry a man you don't love!!"

Lolone smiled and answered: "Audrienne, after you have spent five years in the big world of experience, you will laugh at yourself for such questions. If you want to live a soft ideal, you had better throw away

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your dreams and stay here, marry Harold, and settle down. Your kind of love only lives in the country or alone in some lonesome human heart."

"But, Lolone," Audrienne queried, "how could you be happy with a 'freedom husband;' wouldn't you be jealous? What if he should find some one he really loved, what would become of your life and his home; can anything ever last, built upon such principles?"

Lolone stopped in her swinging and replied: "That is just where every one makes a mistake; it is just those husbands who think they love so much, who are always changing; for if they can love one woman, they can love a dozen; no one can ever make a mistake who marries for *comradeship* and mutual *purposes*; men like chums better than clinging wives; in such a union there is no bondage, no ownership. Men just naturally hate 'must;' they chafe as soon as there is anything they 'must do;' freedom in marriage is all that makes it per-



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manent; married chums never interfere with each other, for each reigns supreme in his own kingdom."

Audrienne again shook her head in a fixed denial. "I don't believe it, it sounds too calm, too businesslike to suit me; I couldn't love such a man as you picture Dr. St. Elmo to be, neither could I love Harold; he is too calm, too easy, too confident, too matter-of-fact. I have an idea of height and depth of feeling. The man whom I will adore and marry will be all fire and glow; he will be strong and pure as a woman; he will give all and ask all; when we meet there will be no partnership affair; our two hearts will meet like the clouds up there, floating toward each other, and will melt and mingle into one; then we will be inseparable for life."

Lolone laughed. "If you do, you will be a big exception. Don't you know that no one ever marries her real love?"

"Real love is always divine realization, never possession. It carries with it a divine

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passion; it means always regret; we are only human and must gather at the harvest what we sow; and to sow the seed of such love and passion gives the human life too great a harvest to gather, for it does not know how. It is better to sow and gather some lighter seed, like attraction, companionship, or admiration; love as a pastime is a thrilling amusement, as a possession it is dullness, and as 'divine revelation' it is death; 'the flower that once has bloomed, forever dies.'"

Audrienne stopped her with a turn of her lips. "I will never, never love any man who comes to me from another woman's breast; his life would seem to me like a burnt-out crater, all holy fires dead; looking into his face I should hate him; if he ever spoke of love to me, it would seem to be something hideous and evil."

Lolone looked at her glowing cheek and knew Audrienne was living in the presence of a phantom lover whom she had built out of the dream fabric of her own mind;

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and she answered quietly, "You are an infant, Audrienne; the sort of love you are thinking about is not made to order; it comes unsought, often unwelcomed. When you really meet your true lover, no matter who he is or where you find him, you will not remember anything except that he is your own. Standing before his scarred moral character, knowing all that has made him what he is, you will be blind to everything; blind to his past, blind to the future; love will only have one mission, and that will be to love; looking into his eyes and listening to his voice, you will love him no matter what he has been, no matter what he is.

Harold's lithe form bounded over the garden wall and his cheery voice called the girls' attention to himself.

Picking up a low stool, he sat down at Audrienne's feet. She, catching a twinkle in Lolone's eye, said, "Harold, we have been talking the most ridiculous things. Lolone has such queer ideas about marriage and love,

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you could not imagine what she thinks and says."

Harold raised his brown eyes to Lolone and, with an amused look, said, "Go on, great philosopher, and tell me some of your wise thinks."

Audrienne interrupted, "Yes, Lolone, tell us what your ideal man is like, and let Harold judge for himself."

"With pleasure," said Lolone. "First, my ideal man must have a strong, positive nature, yet be able to give a response to everybody and everything; he must be gallant, gracious; must have a silent handclasp that can tell more than words; be magnetic so that his memory lingers after him; a man who never makes awkward moments for himself or any one else; who would and could take you into his arms in such complete possession that it seemed to have no beginning and no end; who could give you the highest rapture of life and yet remain forever in the crystallized purity of loving.

"This is my ideal of a perfect man and

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the man whom all women will forever adore.” Audrienne laughed, and Harold looked hopelessly at Lolone as she continued.

“This quality of manhood is an unconscious possession; it is never acquired. There are many men who, like yourself, might try to imitate it, but you fail miserably; a woman always knows the difference between the real and the imitation. Strange as it may seem, these men are never the so-called constant type, yet all over the world women shower them with their favors, while good, honest men like yourself are left to live your lives alone.”

Harold moved uneasily. “Won’t you tell us why, Lolone?”

“Why, of course; the answer is easy. These men are interesting, never dull; they always have much to give to every one and a quick response to whatever any one has to give to them; they are not critics; they never condemn or attempt to reform anything or any one; their only law is to live and to have more and more life all the time;

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they take everything as they find it and only try to get out of it, that which they need for the hour or the day; when they have that, they pass on without regret or complaint; they make a big world for a woman to live in, for they never cramp her expression or demand what she cannot give."

Harold's face had grown strangely cold as she talked on; he feared the effect of her words upon the untrained mind of the girl he so madly loved.

"By your measure, then, I have no chance on earth. I am just becoming a man! I never had much respect for such men as you picture; they seem to me to be the worthless men of the world, and a woman who comes into their path has only one thing to do, and that is to be sorry for it all the rest of her life; most of them are scoundrels for whom shooting is too good."

Lolone's eyes flashed. She rose from her swing and came over to Audrienne's chair, toward which Harold was bending like a self-made protector.

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"There are a lot of men like you, Harold, and a lot of women like Audrienne, who think they know so much, but who in reality know nothing.

"You have both lived here all your lives and know only what has been told you by inexperienced minds and what you have taken from books. You think you love Audrienne and she thinks she does not love you, and neither one knows enough to know the truth about it.

"She has had no opportunity to know the difference in men, nor you in women. You think she is the dearest thing on earth, because you do not know any other type; she does not love you, because she has shut up in her heart a story-book lover whom she is expecting to meet some day.

"Harold, give it up! don't try to get her to marry you; let her go into life and see the real things, and you had better take a whirl through experience yourself; then see if you still want Audrienne."

Harold's face flushed with repressed anger.

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Lolone came a step nearer, the soft evening light falling on her face and hair, revealed all her dark, peculiar fascination; her eyes seemed wells of blackness. She had drawn herself up to her full height as she stood before him in all her deadly sort of charm; he and Audrienne looked at each other in bewildered silence; they both felt that they were no match for the hidden wisdom of this dangerously worldly woman.

Harold rose to his feet and, standing before her, he felt a momentary wave of hatred and fear pass through him; he felt unconsciously that in her hands she held his fate and that she stood a shadowy phantom of pain between himself and the woman beside him.

At last he said, in quiet decision, "May the power that directs us all save Audrienne from what you call 'world wisdom;' may she and I remain ignorant for all time, if we have to purchase understanding at the loss of our better ideals; I pray that Audrienne may never know any mystery of life



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and living but that which I can teach her through the depth of my true devotion; she is glorious enough as she is now, and may I always bring her a life as true and pure as her own."

Lolone laughed a low, taunting laugh and started toward the door, but on the threshold she turned back and smiled mockingly.

"You are true to your type, Harold; your class of men are all alike; you think you are the very best of your sex and that you are capable of being masters of a woman's development, instead of being what you are, novices, in fact. Some day you will learn the truth, that there are real masters, men who are the makers and builders of women's souls, and that millions of men like yourself are only the 'carriers' for such men; in other words, the women who fall to your lot are always only the books which other men have read, or will read at their leisure.

"You are not to blame; you do not know any better; it is not strange that you, like

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thousands of others, want to possess a jewel which you have no skill to polish; every soul in the world, Harold, is polished by experience; better get this lesson early; if it comes before marriage, it is well, for it will not bring you such bitter pain;" Lolone passed on into the house, closing the door behind her.

Harold looked after her with mingled emotions of scorn and hatred. "What a strange woman, Audrienne; she is not good for you; there is something about her that reminds me of poisoned flowers; beneath all her beauty and brilliancy, I seem to catch a hint of death.

"What will happen to you if you go to live with her, Audrienne, dear?" and his voice grew low with earnestness. "Don't go! she will destroy your ideals and take everything away from you that makes you the queen of women; why, Audrienne, a saint could not live in her world and keep from falling!"

Audrienne laughed gayly. "Don't worry,

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Harold; you take her too seriously; Lolone is bored and lonely; this life is not to her liking; I don't blame her, when it nearly drives me mad who am used to it; how can you blame Lolone? She will soon be going home and I shall go with her. We are trying to find a chance to tell Aunt Katherine."

Harold took her hands in his own. "Audrienne, is there nothing that I can say or do to turn you away from this notion; won't you forget it? won't you stay here?"

Audrienne drew her hands quickly away. "There now, Harold, don't begin preaching again; nothing on earth would change my mind. I am going!" "With or without your foster parents' consent or mine?" he asked.

"Yes, with or without the consent of any one or anything but my own soul," she answered. "I am ready to dare anything, and I only fear one thing on earth and that is, that I should ever be doomed to remain here another month, so there!"

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Harold came to her side; he turned her face up to his earnest eyes, looked long and deeply into the depth of her defiant soul. She did not flinch, but met his gaze with the same intensity. He dropped his hand hopelessly, then turned away. "Good-by Audrienne," he said, and passed into the shadows of the gathering night.

A quiet darkness had fallen over the earth; the long-drawn call of some lone night bird fell plaintively upon the heavy air; some soft, sweet flower which was born to cheer the darkness with its perfume wafted its breath to Harold across the dewy stillness. All around there lay a dreamy quietness; nature seemed to have hushed its turmoil to hear the anguished tumult of his own bursting heart.

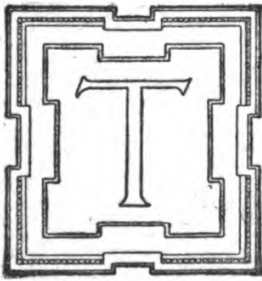
He walked on in silence, the questioning stars looked down in vain, the curious night birds held their own cry silent, the whispering night winds sighed past him begging for some spoken word to weave among the roses in the garden, but all in vain;

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no sound escaped to tell of the wild storm in Harold's innermost being, as he walked in the midst of all this wondering nature, a solitary, silent man, blind, deaf, and dumb with the pain of his own initiation.

## CHAPTER SIX



THE MONTHS FLEW ON and the season held October in its lap. When this month is perfect there is no other month in all the year half so beautiful in a quiet way; the sunshine seems to be soft and golden, purged from all dross of heat or wind; the air is one constant breath of perfume; all over the country there is the gleam of yellow, ripening fall.

Wafted on every wind, we catch the odor of falling fruit; the trees stand richly dressed, proud of their gaudy coloring, blushing with the first kisses of the hoary frost; through all nature there is a touch of melancholy; the rivers seem to have lost something of their glad summer heart; there is a subtle sadness in the stars, and the golden

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light of the day fades at night into the cold, pure whiteness of the moon, colder and whiter than any other month can ever be.

The month for Audrienne and Lolone was an eventful one.

They were busy planning how to approach Aunt Katherine with the long-desired question; it was nearly time for Lolone to return to the city, and both had decided that Audrienne should accompany her.

Lolone was to leave the farm about the middle of October, and one night, a few days before that date, they determined to make a break for what they called, "Audrienne's liberty."

Late that evening as they sat at the table, each busy with some useful knitting, Lolone nodded to Audrienne to make the approach.

Katherine Howard, or Aunt Katherine, as she was commonly called, was a peculiar woman whom very few could understand. As she sat quietly rocking backward and forward, intent upon the work in her hands,

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she had a strangely passive face, not really hard or cold, but simply indifferent; she showed no sign by which any one could have offered a guess as to what she had in her mind.

Her nature was in keeping with her looks; perhaps there might be some warm pulsing currents of emotion flowing through her breast, but they ran too low ever to bubble over the surface. She never showed any signs of feeling; she trod the even pathway of life with seemingly contented feet, never disturbing herself about the uneven ones. She was slow, calm, dispassionate. While she had been kindness itself to Audrienne, she had never given much attention in the way that Audrienne's discontented nature craved.

Impulsiveness to her was a fault rather than a virtue. Married early in her youth to a plodding farmer, John Howard, she had always taken what life brought to her with a calm, tempered gratitude, apparently not hoping for much, and contented with



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her lot. Her one and only distress had been their childlessness, and when she had taken Audrienne to her home and heart, even this seemed to be satisfied. From Audrienne's infancy she had striven to check every childish burst of enthusiasm; her impulsiveness was something to be overcome, and she had labored religiously to teach her self-control.

As the years wore on, Audrienne began a slow process of concealing from her the real conditions of her mind, until by the time she had grown to womanhood, there was very little exchange of sympathy between them.

The work of the house and the farm was their only thought in common. Now and then Aunt Katherine caught a glimpse of Audrienne's unrest, but she never mentioned it; it was easier to pass it by than to explain it.

Audrienne was half to blame for the situation which had gathered around them. Often Aunt Katherine would have com-

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forted her had she been able to do so, but the peculiarity of Audrienne's nature made it impossible. Had Audrienne been less haughty, less independent, more gentle and loving, had she gone in some clinging way, asking for love and sympathy, she might have awakened a response in Aunt Katherine's heart; but Audrienne, proud, self-dependent, would shut her own heart and go for weeks apparently indifferent, hungering for tenderness, but ready to starve rather than to sue for it.

For the last year Aunt Katherine had watched with silent concern the growing unrest. She had indorsed Harold's plea for Audrienne to marry him, thinking that in home and motherhood the restless woman's heart would be quieted; she had little concern in Audrienne's dreams of a future and some big work. As Audrienne grew more sullen, silent, and self-absorbed she felt that things had gone almost as far as they could without a change, and she was really not so surprised nor wholly un-

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prepared for the declaration as the girls imagined her to be.

Audrienne looked at her as she sat in the old rocking-chair, busily intent upon her endless knitting, and in fancy could see the cold look she would receive and the indifference she would have to penetrate, and hesitated to begin. A reassuring look from Lolone strengthened her and, drawing a low rocker to Aunt Katherine's side, she said, "Won't you put up your knitting for a while and listen? I have something to say to you."

Aunt Katherine laid her hands, knitting and all, in her lap, and, looking over the top of her glasses, said, "Some more of yours and Lolone's nonsense, I suppose."

"No, Aunt, it is not nonsense this time; it is something that is life and death to me." Aunt Katherine looked puzzled. "Go on," she said simply.

Audrienne gathered all her failing courage and plunged awkwardly into her explanation.

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“Well, Aunt, it is this: you and Uncle John have been burdened with me from my birth, and while you have always treated me as a daughter and tried not to let me know the difference, I have known it and have never been contented.

“I am really not ungrateful; I am only born of such a queer cast of mind that I can’t be happy here another day. You know what a restless child I was; I have never made you happy, and I am not only restless now, but unhappy myself. I have tried to keep quiet, but I cannot stand it any longer.”

Aunt Katherine disentangled her hands from the knitting, wiped her spectacles with the corner of her apron, looked long and steadily at Audrienne without a sign of any thought or feeling in her face, and said, finally, “Well, is that all?”

“Yes, Aunt, that is all, except that I have made up my mind to go back to New York with Lolone. She is to marry Dr. St. Elmo, you know, as soon as she returns, and she

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has offered me a home with her. I want to do something for myself; I want to satisfy something that won't let me rest. May I go, Aunt Katherine; will you and Uncle John give your consent?"

Aunt Katherine's face did not change. "But, Audrienne," she said, "what about Harold? I thought you were going to marry him; I am sure you never told me that you were not, and you know he would never consent to your leaving."

Audrienne flushed nervously. "Harold has nothing to say about my going; I certainly am not going to marry him; I don't want to be the wife of any man just yet; I would rather satisfy my ambition and do the thing that I want to do; I am seeking satisfaction for my soul, and Harold could not give me that; with Lolone I can find everything I want."

Aunt Katherine picked up her knitting and between the counting of the stitches she said: "It's just your same old history; always wanting the things you can't have

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and which are hard to get; never satisfied, never contented. When you were a child you cried for the plaything which you could not have, while some simple, safe toy you dashed from you and went into a paroxysm of tempestuous grief because you were denied your favorite. Now you are throwing away Harold's honest heart and home and reaching out for the imaginary bubble of fame and life in a big city. Such folly, Audrienne! won't you ever grow up? You'll see your mistake too late, like a lot of folks; your life here with Harold would be pleasant and right, if you would only try to be a contented, sensible woman and not a sullen, pouty child."

Audrienne did not answer; she only looked at Lolone, who shot her a glance of sympathy and courage.

Aunt Katherine continued, "Uncle John and I could never sanction such a life for you, so just get all the crochets out of your head and settle down like a sensible woman."

Audrienne's voice trembled slightly with

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suppressed emotion as she answered: "I can't do it, and, what's more, I am not going to try any longer. Aunt, you might just as well say yes, for if you do not, I shall go anyway. I am desperate; I am of age and can do as I please with my life. I won't stay here any longer, for if I stayed, I would starve into dullness all that I think is the best in myself. You and Uncle John have sent me to school and given me an education, and in school I learned that it is possible for one to accomplish big things if one has the will to do it. It would not make me a good woman to stay here; it would only bring to life in me a deadly, stubborn rebellion and hatred of all the world, and I would poison my own life with my bitterness."

Aunt Katherine smiled derisively. "No, you would not, Audrienne, if you worked half as hard to be cheerful as you do to be sullen and disagreeable." After a moment's silence she continued, "I have always given you the best I had; it wasn't

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enough; and when you get the best your city life can offer you, it will be the same. With your discontented disposition nothing will ever be enough."

Audrienne sat in silence, Aunt Katherine's shining needles clicked ominously on, Lolone waited impatiently, knowing that in this struggle for principles both were right; she saw the whole picture on the scroll, and her heart pitied them both.

After a while Audrienne arose and stood rather wearily; leaning against the table, she said, "Well, Aunt, words are useless; I cannot defend myself; I would much rather have your approval and consent, but if you cannot give it, I shall go without it; I too have done the best I can and have given all I know how; I am grateful for all you have done for me, but I know that you can't do anything more. Whatever I do from now on with my life, if I make it glorious or sink it in shame, will never be laid at your door, so just this once, Aunt, won't you let everything go and



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just be kind?" Audrienne crossed the room and knelt down beside her. "Aunt, be kind and patient with me just this once more; say some kind word and give your blessing on my future life, won't you?"

Aunt Katherine looked at her upturned face and pleading eyes, and in a voice that trembled just a little, said, "I have nothing more to say; you are free to do as you please; my consent and Uncle John's is not necessary; you are free to make your bed independent of me, but remember that as you make your bed you have to lie on it;" and she arose, laid down her knitting, and left the room.

Audrienne turned to Lolone with streaming eyes. "See, Lolone, it's the same old story; even now she will not yield or show a sign of tenderness; she has turned me back on myself like this since my earliest recollections; there has always been this same cold way."

Lolone put her arms around Audrienne as she said: "Never mind, Audrienne, it is all

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over, and we have gained the day; forget it; she can't help her ways any more than we can our own; she hides her thought, but she feels your leaving deeply; she has known all along that it had to come, and it will be a relief to you both when it is all over. My heart aches for her, as she is the one to be pitied. Your ambitious, mad soul needs all the things it will find coming; you are racing with wide-open arms to embrace them, and only the future can teach you the lesson you are seeking to learn; so there, Audrienne, dry your tears and let's to bed, so that we can begin packing tomorrow."

While these two, so young, so sure of their pathway, fell asleep in the still darkness of their rooms, let us follow and look with more than idle curiosity into another room in the old farmhouse.

In a straight chair by the quaint, irregular window Aunt Katherine sits, looking into the half darkness of the night. She is slowly going over the years that lay between Audrienne's coming and this night when

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she is tearing herself willfully from the home.

She had come into this home a helpless babe with no past or promise of a future *save* that which Aunt Katherine should give. After all these years she was going out, going from choice, gladly, welcoming the wide unknown avenues of the world, putting them eagerly between herself and the foster-mother's heart which had cherished her. Aunt Katherine looked more deeply into the shadows of the night; what a strange ending! She had loved the tiny infant, she had loved the discontented girl-woman, but without avail; tonight the woman had avowed her fixed intention.

Aunt Katherine closed her eyes and leant with her head upon her hands. She had dreamed a fond dream that this girl, as Harold's wife, and with happy children, should be the joy of her closing years. Why had the plans all been changed? She had meant to be kind and had failed utterly; now, after all her efforts and cherishing

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care, Audrienne was eager to leave her, the home, Harold, everything, and go out into a stranger's home, into a world she had never seen.

At last the tears of heartbroken despair overflowed their banks, swept their way over the stern old face and trembling hands. How had she failed? What had she left undone? Slowly the tears trickled on,—“Rachel weeping for her babes which were not.”

There are many who have asked these questions, and out from their tangled skeins of the threads of life no answer ever came. There are many who have taken a stranger's child to heart and home, dreaming to make it happy with their own happiness, and have stood before the empty homes with the bitter question in their heart, “Is it retribution or reward?”

It is not strange that these faithful hearts will ache when they face the realities of life's laws; childless they were in the beginning, and no effort of theirs has taken away the lesson they seemed fated to learn.

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The cry of half the foster parents of the earth is "ingratitude;" and with this cry stifling in her bosom, Aunt Katherine sat on while the hours hurried by, bringing the coming dawn. Her heart ached with a dull weight of the years, and her tears fell fast while the serpent tooth of "ingratitude" sank deeper into her soul.

## CHAPTER SEVEN



THE DAYS DRAGGED themselves on to the end and the day of departure came at last. The autumn sun shone pure and golden, the winds were now loud, now low, the birds still sang in happy gladness, and there seemed a call for all of them to join their voices in one last wild song with which to close their grand autumnal chorus.

The cattle lowed in quiet content, the earth was wrapped in the beauty of the "mellow, mild St. Martin days, crowned with the calm of peace, yet sad with haze."

From afar the songs of the happy workmen rang out upon the air; the sound of hoofs and wheels came from the broad, dusty highway; Audrienne and Lolone stood together in the bright October sunlight and

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laughed with joy, for the day of deliverance was at hand.

Audrienne had tried to be kind to Aunt Katherine; there had been little said about her leaving; there was nothing to say; she was going, and this they both understood.

Aunt Katherine had been kindly interested in helping Audrienne arrange her wardrobe and pack her boxes, and Audrienne had been moved by her kindness when one day she had said, "Audrienne, don't fuss about your wardrobe until you get with Lolone; you know how fastidious she is; she can superintend your needs when you get to New York and send the account to Uncle John." After this the subject of her going was dropped.

Now the morning had come when it was all over. Audrienne went to her room for one last look at the little nest which had sheltered her for so long. She had put every old keepsake and toy of her childhood away in the cupboard, had arranged them and

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kissed them good-by. As she put them aside her heart prayed to heaven that she might put aside with them all the restless discontent which had always cursed her life.

Today she looked her last look at all the objects which she was leaving and which in the hour of parting grew strangely dear. In this little room she had lived and planned and, yes, sulked. She had dreamed her wild dreams of some life that would fill her empty soul with peace; here she had sown the seeds which had blossomed into a mad, discordant ambition, and from here the branches of her harvest were to lead her into hot harvest fields.

She had entered here a little helpless child and in a few moments would leave it, what? She asked herself the question, what? Really nothing except mighty things in the making; her soul told her that she had much to do and much to dare.

Audrienne went around the room and kissed every object; she felt that she should



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never see them again with the same eyes; she stood before them in a last farewell; she reached out her arms to the room in sudden sorrow. "Good-by, little room, bear witness that no matter what I shall bring back to you, should I ever come again, at least I have taken nothing from you but my unhappy, burdened self," and, closing the door softly, she went down to the kitchen, where Aunt Katherine, Uncle John, Harold, and Lolone were waiting; the carriage stood outside ready to take them to their train.

She took Uncle John's rough hands in her own and said kindly, "Good-by, dear Uncle John; you have always been a good, kind, patient father to me and my heart is full of gratitude to you; you have given me a chance to be what I want to be and you never gave me an unkind word in all your life. I shall never forget and I shall write to you, Uncle John, telling you what I find."

Uncle John kissed her upturned face. "See that you do, lass, and don't forget the old

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nest; you'll need it again, and when you do you will find it and Uncle John waiting. There, child, I'll not give you grief croaking, so you go along, and may the good God protect you."

Audrienne turned for her last word with Aunt Katherine and, putting her arms around her, said, "Think of me kindly, Aunt Katherine, and if I have hurt you, do forgive me. I had to do this, I did indeed."

Aunt Katherine kept back the gathering tears; she kissed Audrienne over and over; then, putting her away, said hurriedly, "You are all right, Audrienne; you are going to have your way, and if when you [have it and are tired of all the things you find in a big city life and have learned the value of a true love and peace and rest, then come back to the old home; it will be standing here to welcome you, and if I am not here, my spirit will come back and hang around awhile to greet you. Good-by, Audrienne, and may heaven defend you with its care."

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Harold picked up the girls' wraps and, taking Audrienne by the arm, led her to the carriage while Lolone spoke her good-bys to the old couple, who seemed to her to stand like two tall, rigorous oak trees alone upon the mountain sides of the trail of life. She just realized what all this meant to them, and her kiss was tender and her words were kind as she said good-by and thanked them with a full heart for their patience and kindness to her own life.

Audrienne turned for one last good-by and, waving her hand as the carriage rolled away, saw the old couple standing in the door of their empty home. She had left them there alone to go out into the whirlpool of life she was madly seeking; her heart ached for them in a dull way, but its ache was buried beneath the wild surge of delight which she felt in her own freedom; her life was all before her, so she drove on, leaving them all alone.

To the old pair standing there, the light

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of life had gone out. She had been their only inspiration; they had not made much stir about it, but their silent devotion through the past twenty years had told its own story; the joy and comfort she had been to them could not be cried from the housetops, not told in the blast or blare of bands; she had been the light of the home, and with her gone there was left only a deep blanket of darkness. Is it any wonder that they mingled their tears together there in the old farm kitchen which had known her for so long and which without her must seem forever bare and cold.

No one can give up, without bitter hours of pain, the thing which they have loved, cherished, and felt was all their own. The emptiness that comes from such separation will last for years; life may teach the human heart how to bear it by bringing new interests and new pleasures, but through all changing conditions which flow around us there will be always the half-hidden sob of a note gone wrong.

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The carriage with its strange burden of pain, freedom, and pleasure rolled on toward the train. They drove on for a while in silence, Harold busy with his feelings, which ever and anon threatened to storm out from his control. Lolone, looking at him, remembered Audrienne's complaint of him. "Harold is too calm, too cold, too self-possessed; he has no sudden emotions which are beyond his control;" and she wondered just what he would say if he followed recklessly what his heart prompted. She knew how he hated her and how he blamed her for it all; he feared her influence over Audrienne, and a smile of simple daring flitted across her lips as she resolved to play the part to the last and let him think what he pleased of her life and her thoughts; it might stir him to greater action.

Harold reached for Audrienne's hand and pressing it in both his own said, "Dear, dear Audrienne, I wish that I could be sure that you will find what you are going after; I wish that I could be sure that love

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would make you its very own; then I should not feel so deeply the pain of letting you go." Audrienne looked at him with the purple shadows growing deeper in her eyes; she did not answer; he held her hands to his lips in a long pressure.

Lolone laughed a quick, bright laugh and said: "Harold, what makes you want to be 'sure;' why don't you live in the joy of expectation like we do? There is nothing in life we can really be sure of, nothing that we can hold in our hand and say, 'I know;' there is certain game in uncertainty, something that makes one keep going on trying again and again; after all, one does not get anything but what he makes for himself, and Audrienne will only get out of life what she puts into it. Get her own? Why, of course, she will get her own, for her own is just what she builds for herself with her desire; she wants fame and she will get it because her thoughts will build it for her; she wants mad, gypsy love and she will find it. But the real joy of her

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life will be in the working for it and waiting till it comes, and, anyway, when one does get something to that point of possession that they feel sure of it, then they weary of it; the delight is not in the finished thing, but in the anticipation. Why, if you had Audrienne for a wife, she would soon cease to be as fascinating to you as she is now."

Harold answered quietly, "Perhaps there may be natures like that, but not mine; I can read my own heart better than you can, Lolone; I know just what I could give Audrienne and just how certain and sure my love would be and how I could make her happiness my first and last thought."

He looked very earnest in his convictions, and Lolone said: "I must not quarrel with you at this last moment, but I know that you are talking from the untried heart of a young love-sick man who has never had but one love story. Such lasting surety of affection, Harold, can only be given to a real affinity, and you and Audrienne are anything but affinities; there are really no

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two basic characters alike in your lives: she is fanciful, you are plodding, calm, dispassionate; she is passionate and willful, she loves life, longs for it; you love silence, quiet, nature; she is an artist, while you are the art. What stupidity to think that what you call your love could ever adjust to such differences of desires!

“Men are great fools, they never look beneath the shell of a woman; if she is beautiful and attracts them physically, they fling themselves on into the obsession of thinking that they have real love for her; as long as her beauty lasts, they last; when she grows old or gets ugly, they turn their attention to criticizing her or getting another and younger woman. You are only caught in the warm magnetism of Audrienne’s physical self, Harold; she is beautiful and she pleases your eyes, but what do you know about her soul? even now you are losing her because you cannot understand her, and you have had twenty-five years of life in which to find her out.”



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They were nearing the station now and Harold drew Audrienne's hand a little closer into his own. "You are a clever woman, Lolone, much too clever for a man like me, but you don't know it all; there are women whom men love just for their physical beauty; you are one of these, but after awhile, even though they remain beautiful, men come to hate them, for the beauty is only the covering of a tongue that stings them to madness.

"Let me tell you, Lolone, these women never get the best from a man's life because they only appeal to the surface man; but Audrienne is different; she holds while she charms; it is her type who redeem the race of men; they charm us by their loveliness until we bring the whole gift of the self to them, then they hold us forever with the beauty and the purity of their hearts; I had rather see Audrienne dead, rather lay her asleep among the grasses, knowing that I had looked for the last time on her dear face, than to send her to you; no feet that

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walk your pathway of life will ever find their way to peace.

“You will cover her warm, impulsive, loving mind with your cold, cynical, skeptical thoughts, and it will not be your fault if she does not in the end become, like yourself, a beautiful, shining, crystallized thing, full of a deadly, destructive light. It is only such natures as yours that are never sure of anything, because they have no certainty in their composition; they have indulged themselves too long to every passing whim. Lolone, we are a man and woman sitting face to face; this may be the last word I shall ever say to you; I dare to say what is in my heart: keep your deadly influence off of Audrienne’s life; she is under your guidance; let me remember, when I think of you, that her pure, guileless womanhood moved you to greatness where you could leave many of your own perverted opinions unsaid.”

Lolone’s eyes were flashing; her color came and went, but there was no time to

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answer him, for at his last words the carriage drew up at the depot.

Harold assisted them to the platform of the train. Audrienne looked up into his face and said pleadingly, "Don't be unhappy, Harold, it will make me happier to feel that you are not too sad." She laid her hands on his arm and her violet eyes met his in such an appealing look that his heart beat to suffocation and his hands trembled. His voice was husky as he answered: "My heart does not know how to meet it. I have always been such a stranger to pain that it seems that I cannot bear it. I pray that you may never regret your choice and that you may not find it was a fatal step."

Audrienne released herself from his clasping hands and said: "Let's believe that I shall find only happiness; send me out with a wish for my highest good. Good-by, it won't be forever; when we meet again, maybe you will understand me better." He only drew her back to him and imprinted

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her lips with a kiss which held his whole heart; then she entered the car with Lolone.

Harold stood while the train pulled out of the depot, carrying with it the woman he loved and the woman he hated. Returning to the carriage, he drove slowly home, thinking of Audrienne, thinking of Lolone, how he hated her, how he pitied himself, how he loved Audrienne!

There are many hearts in the world that can follow him and know all the mingled emotions that were surging through his breast. Few lives have missed the hour, in their own development, when they were madly jealous; there are those who cannot bear to think that the one that they love should find happiness or pleasure with another. Sisters have known this same feeling when a loved brother has turned from them and found his pleasure with a girl whom he has later made his wife; brothers have realized it when some sister has left them for the home of a "fellow" of whom they did not approve; mothers have felt it

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when the son they have lived with, cared for with slavish devotion, has turned from them and found solace in the company of some young, silly girl, leaving them alone in their old age while he worships at the shrine of his new-found goddess. It is a peculiar form of psychical displacement, which eats its way into the human heart, — a sort of living death against which the cold glass of a coffin lid above the same face would look cool and satisfying.

This was the jealousy that beat through Harold's heart. He could not possess Audrienne, she did not love him, this he knew; but his heart beat with a jealous rage against the woman who had taken his place as comrade of her life. Audrienne had gone from him with a smile on her lips and a light heart; there were hot tears on his lashes.

With the form of Audrienne flitting from him in the distance; with the face that was the fairest to him of any on earth turned from him; with the sweet voice drowned by the weary miles between them; with

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his heart filled with a pain of loss and the bitterness of jealous resistance surging on and on, he reached his home to pass the long night wretchedly, to lie awake until the stars hid at the break of morning, to think and think hopelessly, hating the thought of the coming days.

Only those who have lived through self-same hours can ever interpret them. There are millions out upon the human pathway who, like Harold, have stood silently by the grave of their dearest hope, have known that the solid ground of divine possession was slipping from them. They too have stood with white, enduring faces and silent lips, and with a despairing heart opened their slender fingers and let it go.

Some lives go down bravely, quietly, nobly breasting the mighty storm of their own emotions; others are tossed, broken to fragments, dashed hither and thither by the fierceness of the storm; the spray from their own billows dashes into their face, and, lashed to wild fury, they send them-

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selves upon the rocks and go down in the darkness.

These are the times in human life when all its lights are out; when hope, the brightest lamp of all, refuses to send forth the faintest gleam. The oils of human efforts and desires have run out and there is nothing to do but to live on through long hours of initiation in darkness; then it is that we lay down our book of experience and try again to trace the meaning of the story which seems to be written in riddles at our birth. Often, to the best, it remains unfathomed; we only see a slave adrift upon the tumultuous river of life, with massive chains upon his hands and feet, his dungeon door locked and barred, and this mystery of wretched human loving lying like a stone over his heart.





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**PART TWO**  
**ASPIRATION**

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[ 101 ]

## LOVE

**W**E have lived in a star in the solemn sky,  
Where the blue shut out the smiling earth;  
Don't you remember, dear? you and I,  
And we held the key to our soul's rebirth.

Up there your eyes have looked in mine,  
Up there you have spoken your souls' deep truth;  
Though you have forgotten that vow divine,  
It lives in the conscious Cosmic woof.

Today there are pathways all unknown,  
Which had their birth in these dear dead days;  
But here in the reaping we walk alone,  
And gather the harvest through winding ways.

There are ages between the past and now,  
There are mighty cycles to come and go;  
But between our souls stands that deathless vow,  
It calls to us and we hear and know.

We close our minds to the call of sense;  
We open our lives to the voice supreme;  
To feel, to recall, this is recompense,  
And our now is alive with a rapturous gleam.

Across the ages you call to me,  
From the heart of now I answer your cry;  
From the star-world lost to the one to be,  
Living, Loving, you and I.

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## PART TWO

### ASPIRATION

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#### CHAPTER ONE



HAT THERE ARE CHARMS in nature, we do not deny: the birds with their wild songs, the flowers with their variegated tints, the dark green of the grand old forests, the wonderful changing mysteries of the seasons; all these bring their sweet melodies and play upon the heartstrings while they drug our senses with their perfume and sweetness.

There is an inspiration in the clouds that gather and drift over our heads; there is a grandeur in the thunder's voice, in the lightning's flash and glow; there is solace for the heart in the soft murmuring of the wind-

## DESTINY

---

ing stream; the voice of all nature sings to us a sweet seductive song which rests our weary souls and claims our madly beating hearts, easing the fever from our throbbing brains, while it cools the fire of our rushing blood.

God, nature, life — this is the Trinity of existence; nature is truly the voice of the infinite calling its message into the heart of the world. For all her gifts we kneel in grateful reverence at her feet and bring her all the homage due a royal queen; we are her willing slaves, live to obey her commands, and yet there is no life like the mad, impetuous, daring life of the big city.

There the earnest heart, the imaginative brain of mankind, dares to think, dares to be, dares to pour out itself into the seething restless mass of earth, while it watches the ebb and flow of destiny around it; there the body can fling itself after the mind in a rare abandon, while the spirit of adventure and experience leads the whole being into unison with all that is worth while; side by

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side in the mad race for spiritual supremacy life can gather every hour some added fuel with which to feed the already raging flame of enthusiasm, ambition, and aspiration.

In the hothouse of human activity we unconsciously catch the fever of self-expression and cut loose from the olden bondage of tradition and superstition. For those possessed of a strong, inquisitive nature, there is no place on earth but the big whirlpool of activity; here they can find work, play; can sleep and wake, to work and play again; they can gain wealth; they can starve; they can meet success or failure; they can lose and gain; they can hope and pray or sink down into dull nothingness; and in all the mad roar of the passing show, nothing will pause long enough to comfort them in their troubles or rejoice with them in their joys. In the noise and strife of the dizzy world around them, they can sink a world or gain a kingdom as they pass on toward the possession of their hearts' desires.

## DESTINY

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A year has passed since Audrienne left the farmhouse and the year was again in the haze of a glorious October sunshine.

Audrienne, after Lolone's marriage, had gone to live with her in Dr. St. Elmo's royal home; this home was in keeping with Lolone's nature; every conceivable luxury that love could buy smiled around her. The house, the grounds, were from end to end simply one long look of beauty, taste, and artistic wonder.

Lolone had given Audrienne a room all trimmed in white and gold; wherever she turned there was some marvelous device of charm and comfort, and often, as she stood in the center of all this loveliness, she had wondered how any one could ever live surrounded as she had been on the farm, with the crude simplicities of use and need. She marveled how she had endured it, when now she knew that every throb of her heart had beat for this beauty and luxury which her first strong strike for freedom had made her very own.

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Lolone had introduced her to her world; here Audrienne met much that surprised and at first shocked her, but her faith in Lolone, and her great love for her, made her strive hard to understand a life which Lolone explained was not to be compared with any of her old ideas. "There is no comparison in life, Audrienne," she had said. "Everything is right and beautiful and good in its place and is perfect for its type. There is no good or bad, better or worse, all things are simply different."

At Dr. St. Elmo's table wit clashed, brought here by his money and the charming hospitality of his wife. Here every phase of the seeker after knowledge could be found. They were never alone; Lolone dipped lightly into all sciences, philosophies, psychologies, and religions, but always seemed to emerge with a something of her own, and this something she gave to offset the wisdom of those who gathered around her. The Doctor, the lawyer, the Hindu, Persian, Jew, Moham-  
medan, Christian, and Buddhist jostled each

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other for the favors of her home; the password into her personal circle was "beauty and brains."

When Audrienne had become accustomed to her set and their ways and had drifted into her own natural place in the round of pleasure and gayety, Lolone called her into her boudoir one day and said, "Well, now, Miss Wisdom, it's time you decided just what line of greatness you are going to follow; what do you want to do most in the world? Does the idle round of fashionable life appeal to you, or do you still have your vision of something great waiting for you?"

Audrienne laughed and said, "Lolone, I still have my vision and I am ready to begin the study which will lead me to my career."

"What shall it be?" Lolone queried.

"I am afraid, Lolone, that you will not quite like my choice, for it is not what you would expect it to be. I do not want music; it's all right, but it demands much more of an emotional nature than I want to cultivate, I don't want art, for then I would have to



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work with *things*, and I like life and people better than things; so I have decided that I will be a great writer along the deeper subjects of life.

“In order to do this, I want to go to the new school of science and mysticism which you will remember we saw the other day. I have looked it up and it has every branch of learning in the world in it. It is not a university, it is directed by a woman, Madame Arnold; she is a great teacher and has wonderful assistants. I can study for three years, all sciences, psychologies, philosophies, and religions and at the end of that time she will make it possible for me to go to foreign lands, to the olden school of the mysteries of India, Egypt, and Persia. This I want, and I shall have found my heart's desire if I can qualify as one of her best instructors and writers and help her found the ‘Universal School of the Mysteries’ which is the dream of her life.”

Lolone looked up with wondering eyes.  
“The school of mysteries; then I shall have

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two cranks to live with, for when Dr. St. Elmo is not in his office or hospital, he is hidden in his laboratory experimenting with chemicals, lights, sounds, and every occult thing, trying, he says, to add some new discoveries to the 'great mysteries.' I am sure I don't care, only it is just like your queer nature to bury yourself in all that senseless study, just so that you can write a book to tell the present race something the next race will prove to be a lie. Knowledge is such a long way to go, Audrienne, and after all there is such a short cut to wisdom and so little any one needs to know; but go ahead, Audrienne, be a blue stocking; I will reserve your seat at the table and after a while you will be my prize freak."

So Audrienne carried out her plan and was duly installed as one of the prospective candidates for initiation in the school of the mysteries with Madame Arnold, her chosen instructress and guide.

The months had gone on pink-edged wings for Audrienne, and with each day

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filled to overflowing, she looked forward to the future with hope and joy. She saw her pathway lying all straight and sweet before her and her vision of being a wonderful writer whose message would redeem the world hung like a beacon star before her, ever leading her on.

On this night in October she sat in a bay window looking out into the gathering gloom of the night, watching the lights gleam with brilliant changing rays through the advancing gloom.

She was dressed in a simple, clinging, silken gown, her arms gleaming white through the folds of misty lace, which lay in graceful folds around her slender throat, caught carelessly together low on her bosom and held in place by a rose of the deepest yellow, which, scented heavy with its own perfume, rose and fell upon her bosom as if keeping time with her hurrying heart. With her hands clasped over her head, her eyes with their violet lights peering into the darkness, she sat like some fair angel of

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destiny thinking out her coming message to men.

A low rustle of silks, a breath of perfume, and Lolone entered. The year had only made her more beautiful; her eyes were more transcendent in their shadows, her form seemed to have gained in suppleness, suggestion, and grace; her hair seemed softer than ever and in its jetty, rippling beauty looked like a captive which the silver dagger comb kept under control. She was clad in a beautiful opera cloak and gown of palest mauve and in her hand she carried a cluster of passion flowers, her favorite bouquet.

As she stood still in all perfection of her physical beauty with the soft lights of the room falling about her, she was fascinating and voluptuous as a poet's song.

From her seat in the window, Audrienne watched her in silence; then she said, suddenly, "How beautiful you are, Lolone; I can see that you will disturb the peace of some mind tonight."

Lolone laughed her old familiar mocking

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laugh. "I hope I shall; it's good to be dangerous; men like a dangerous woman; it adds interest to the game." "What game?" Audrienne asked. "Why, the game of life, of course," Lolone replied. "We must be dangerous if we master them; it is real sportsmanship to see men play the game; it is only when we can beat them at their own methods, that they respect us."

"Why, Lolone, how heartless! Do you know, I am glad that I am not as beautiful as you are; it would grieve me to give any one pain; I could not play the game of life or love with any one; it would have to be a game where there was equal chance to win.

"You are so beautiful that no man could help loving you if you turned your whole battery of magnetism upon him; but how can you do it and make a plaything of hearts, Lolone? I hate to think of it."

"There, there, Audrienne, don't begin to preach; keep your fine philosophy for the school; it will get you a grade there; with me it will only get a laugh; you are so

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filled with your own ideas that you don't get any new ones; you ought to come with me oftener, there are things you can learn in my set that you cannot learn in your classes, any more than Dr. St. Elmo can drag them out with his mystery stunts."

"Yes, Lolone, but I don't care for the things of the people you enjoy; most of the men you meet are brilliant, but they are not true; they don't care for any one but themselves; they turn every woman a compliment which they don't mean. I had rather stay at study, talk to Dr. St. Elmo, or watch his experiments than to dance or flirt with twenty of your 'freedom' men. If I were you, I would never go out without the doctor, and if I did, I would at least make a study of the things that interested him."

Lolone shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, I don't neglect Arthur; he would be bored with me if I gave him too much attention; he is always absorbed in some new mystery of medicine or psychical research and then

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when he wishes to talk, he talks your kind of stuff, not mine. I go out because it is life for me and we must keep close to things which give us the most life. If I go to a ball, I gain an inspiration from the magnetism of the crowd; I take something that pleases me from every one that I meet; so can everybody, if she knows enough.

“My definition for the acme of physical bliss is bright lights, fine ball room, a powerful, yet subdued, orchestra, a shining, glassy floor, a pair of strong arms backed by a matchless partner whose every motion is poetry and who has eyes that can look love, to eyes that speak again and again. I go to all these things because from them I absorb all kinds of thoughts and ideas; one can get rusty; I like all thoughts, not just one or a few of the same kind; if we keep too close to the one line of thinking, we get freaky and tiresome. I love smart, intelligent men, and there are many beside Arthur St. Elmo; and I must have admiration, for admiration, Audrienne, is the best beau-

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tifier in the world. It softens the eyes, brightens the cheek; a woman who lives in a blaze of admiration is beautiful and young at sixty, while those who live without it are old and faded at thirty."

Audrienne looked at her in wondering surprise. "Lolone, it is hard to understand you, somehow I feel that some day you will meet some hard experience. What would you do if sometime you met a man who would best you at your own game? Have you no fear that under the temptation of a mind bigger than your own, you might make a mistake? Suppose you could really love some one, Lolone, how would you rescue yourself then?"

Lolone walked slowly to a long mirror and carelessly adjusted her wrap; after a moment she replied, "Rescue myself from what, Audrienne? My own pleasure? I don't see anything to dread in the thought that I might sometime find some one who could give me a point of intensified life outside of myself. Why, I would turn gladly



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to meet him, for that would surely be an hour the soul would be a coward not to take. There are so few lives in this world who are worth more than a passing notice, that to find one of these masters of life and love would mean to grapple him to your side with hooks of steel, and keep him as you would the breath of life. I think I would call such an experience a happy day and rejoice that I had touched that much of real living."

In Audrienne's eyes the purple shadows gathered yet more deeply. "You are a wonderful woman, Lolone, but I am glad that I am not like you. I would flee madly from any experience just for experience's sake, for I am sure that such things only bring life-long regrets."

Lolone drew on her gloves, went slowly to the door, and then turned and, seeing Audrienne's wistful eyes, smiled tenderly and said, "You don't know what you would do, Audrienne; you do not know your own soul as yet, but I know you as I know others,

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and I know that you are one whom duty's hand will lash. One who knows life could never look into the depth of your soul without reading there the shadow that your own consciousness will lay upon your heart. The birds of pain and passion have chosen their nest in your eyes; you might just as well come with me and whirl your way through experience, for seclusion and silence will never save you from the grasp of your own fate; 'you cannot rescue from passion's pyre the hearts that are fated to feed its fire.' "

Lolone left the room with her last words and Audrienne came from the window and, seating herself upon a low hassock before the flickering fire grate, looked long and thoughtfully into its glowing coals. "You cannot rescue from passion's pyre the hearts that are fated to feed its fire." Was this true? Lolone always knew so much; Audrienne was half convinced because she had said it, but did love bring unhappiness? She did not believe it; love meant joy, completeness; she would never love or marry

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until she had accomplished her ambition, and then she would meet her dream-lover and give him the love of her whole heart. Lolone was skeptical; she did not know everything.

In the light of the burning embers Audrienne dreamed on. She made a picture of simple beauty, lights and shadows strangely blended; she seemed prophetic of her coming hours; with steady gaze fixed in the depth of the fire she did not turn as Dr. St. Elmo entered the room and crossed to her side.

He stood a moment, noting the lights and shadows play over her face, then said, softly, "Dreaming, Audrienne? You look like some dainty fairy who has completed her work among men and has paused for a moment in deep reflection over mortal woe, before taking flight home to her fairy land."

Audrienne started up with a quick, glad smile. "Oh, Dr. Arthur, how glad I am that you have come; I have a lot of things to ask you; are you too tired to show me the experiment we talked of the other evening?"

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"No, Audrienne, I am not tired; this has been an easy day in the hospitals;" and drawing a chair up to the grate, he sat down beside her. "I shall be glad to go on with the experiment, for I would like to have your version and what you see and know to record for statistics; there are so few that have clairvoyant wisdom who can be depended upon."

Rising to his feet, he went to a cupboard and taking therefrom a small cut-glass bottle filled with a bluish-green liquid, he said, "Come into the laboratory, Audrienne; tonight we will make our assurance doubly sure; tonight we will seek what even the Almighty seems to have concealed."

There are moments when life becomes like a strange, dizzy precipice overhanging the glory of a valley filled with peace. Often we approach the edge with eager steps and lean far out in careless fashion, to catch just a glimpse of the far-off lights which are below; if we keep a cool head and a clear vision, we are safe to return again

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and again, but once the glamor of the valley fills our eyes, we stumble awkwardly against some slight stone and the fateful edge falls under us, plunging us headlong into darkness and sometimes to death.

## CHAPTER TWO



THE LABORATORY OF Dr. St. Elmo was a study of science and psychology. Every possible convenience for scientific research was in evidence: drugs in vials and bottles were arranged on shelf after shelf of glass; long tables with glass tops stood in recesses of the room; test tubes in silver frames were ready everywhere; a large X-ray machine with all modern scientific and mystical arrangements filled one corner of the room. In addition to the regular accompaniments of the machine, there were mysterious minglings of colored mirrors held by movable frames so as to lend themselves to immediate changes of reflections.

In the middle of the room, mounted upon a wonderful glass stand and swung

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from almost invisible threads of wire from above, there reposed a huge glass crystal upon which the rays of light from every corner of the room fell, converging upward toward the ceiling. All rays of the spectrum were in the room, reflected from invisible corners and from open electric lights fastened to the walls, the floor, and ceiling. Around the room were numerous musical instruments; in one corner, leading to a half-hidden window, stood a grand piano.

It was a wonderful room, wonderful enough with what it showed, yet hinting at still more mystery in the solid front of books which lined two sides of the wall, telling of opportunity for continued investigation and revelation.

As Dr. St. Elmo entered the room, he pressed a button and in the center of the ceiling above a soft green light burst out, falling in long, scintillating rays upon the crystal in the center of the floor. Motioning Audrienne to a high chair standing near the crystal, "Sit down, Audrienne,"

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he said, "until I get ready for our experiment."

He passed to the side of the room where the vials of medicine were in readiness and, taking a bottle from the shelf, he poured some of the liquid into a test tube; then, passing to another corner of the room, he turned on one of the blue-red lights and, standing under it, began to drop into the tube the contents of the vial which he had taken from the cupboard in the drawing-room.

As he stood there in the blaze of the red light, intermingling with the reflected rays of green from the crystal the light falling full on his face and on the vial in his hand he was a master man, the picture of complete manhood: medium in height, perfect in proportion, easy in his manner, self-possessed, poised, his face white with that strange pallor which is not disease but tells of genius. His hair was heavy and black, thrown back in careless abandon from the bold, white forehead; his eyes were large



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and deep blue-gray in color, the gray that one often takes for black, as under emotion they become inky with unfathomable feelings, but when calm, they seem to borrow from the blue skies and the whole light of the day. Tonight they were full of deep, transparent light; that light not of land or sea, but which always tells of states of mind and flights of consciousness which the world calls abnormal.

He was clean shaven and his half-oval face ended in a powerful look that would have been too hard had it not been for the half-womanish curl of his lips and the wonder of a smile that came and went like the fleeting gleam of sunrise. As one looked at him, he could not miss the suggestion of silent strength and power, nor fail to feel the hypnotic force of his smile and personality.

Audrienne, watching him, thought him the most wonderful being; she knew him as he was, in his home and among his friends; he was a most brilliant talker, a profound

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scholar, and in him she thought that the acme of intelligence had been reached. She revered his wisdom and his tenderness, for with all his scientific ability and all the burden of his daily life as a surgeon and physician, he was a profound nature-lover. A beautiful child caught his attention in a moment; he spent his hours with nature and art; to him harmony was all of life; a beautiful woman was simply a perfect painting; he had married Lolone because she charmed his physical senses and he rejoiced to have always near him some one who would not offend his artistic ideals; he knew that in her society he would never be jarred by the crude or unlovely things of life. He admired her strange, skeptical nature, for it was in keeping with his own disbelief in all accepted conventions, and he knew that no matter what she thought or said, her own inborn instinct of loyalty to herself would make it impossible for her ever to bring anxiety to either of them. She filled some part of his life and he felt no lack of

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anything in their association; with his home a pride and a comfort, everything else became satisfied through his love of knowledge and his insistent searching after higher wisdom.

That love had ever touched Dr. St. Elmo's life, none could say. All women loved him; he had a subtle quality of sympathy which charmed them; he had followed many fancies, but nothing had held long at a time. When he met Lolone, he was ready to believe that the world of women was like a hothouse of flowers, simply cultivated for the gathering, but that the best of them lost fragrance in the clasp of the warm hands.

Lolone satisfied his physical and emotional need; his profession satisfied his mental need; his psychological research satisfied his spiritual need. Lolone had said truly that he had his laboratory; and when he tired of this he [had found comfort in talking to Audrienne; he had taken upon himself some part of her higher instructions, and

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Audrienne had spent hours with him in his work.

Turning at last from the merging of the two liquids into one, he came nearer to the crystal and as he adjusted some slight arrangement, he said, "Tonight, Audrienne, we must make the conditions so we may plainly see the other bodies within this physical one. Our other experiments failed because the lights were not right; tonight, we must see through the veils and find that we can have communion with many planes of intelligence.

"Thousands of years men have tried to fathom the mysteries of the life here and hereafter and have more or less failed, but we are getting nearer the truth; we must find all there is to know of life on this side of the veil, then we can interpret it over there."

A flickering ray of soft green light played over Audrienne's face as she said, "Dr. Arthur, do you really think that we go on living after death and that the world over

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there and this one here are very close to each other? If you can see through the veils, why can't you teach me to see too? I long to know and would do anything."

Dr. St. Elmo went on arranging the lights as he said, "There is no doubt, Audrienne, that this life and the other one we call death are exactly the same; it's silly to talk of death, it is just a passing behind some sort of veil; we step out of this ether into one so much finer that it seems invisible to us here, but it is really only an extension of the earth life.

"I know that the soul of every one in the world must pass through different stages of development; some lessons are learned on earth, right here and now, and others are taken after we have finished this earth life; death only gives us a chance to take our place in a new cycle; and as we are masters of this earth plane, because we have lived here and contacted its experiences, what should interfere between us and our return at will? We are always working under the

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guidance of higher intelligence, both here and there, and we ought to be able to come back here and bring the higher truth to those who must still remain on earth.

“The world around us is filled with the spirits of the dead, only most people cannot see, because they are so hopelessly fixed in their own material senses and do not see the things which are just beside them; the veils are only ether veils, and if we study them and train ourselves to live in the states of mind that are natural to them, we can know all there is on both sides of the grave and need not die to find it out; we can become familiar with the after-death states of mind and conditions while we are yet alive in the body.

“It is not at all mysterious to see people who are dead to us; they are right about us, and we are only on the outside while they are on the inside; if we had the full vision which we were ordained to have, we should see the other spheres of life as plainly as we can see these, and if we had true hearing,

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we should hear and understand on the inner planes just as well as if we were speaking to friends in the flesh. We have only to cultivate the habit of introspection and inversion of our mind, then we will find the inner eye and ear."

"But, Doctor," Audrienne questioned, "death seems such a blind way, doesn't it? The grave seems to come in and stop all communion, and much of what one reads and hears about spirit communion has so little of comfort in it, that it never satisfies; it is all just statement which never seems to become facts."

"Maybe it seems so, Audrienne, to you and others, but when one knows the higher laws, he finds out all these things for himself; I know the higher law and I know that I can pass now into the state of mind and body one calls death, and that I can return from it to my normal human state, and plus my common knowledge by the wisdom I have gained while I have been out of my body; and knowing this, I also know

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that were I dead, I could manifest myself on this plane again in the consciousness and form of this plane just as easily as I can send myself on to the subjective plane while I am yet alive here."

Audrienne shivered and said, "How ghostly it all seems; I should be frightened to attempt such flights; what would you do if you should miss your way back, — get out and not be able to get into your own body again?" "There is no danger, Audrienne, if one is positive and does things as a master, and, after all, it is only as a master that one can do it, for Truth does not reveal, nor mystery explain, to the babes in wisdom."

"What are you going to do in the experiment tonight?" Audrienne asked, changing the subject.

Dr. St. Elmo went to the X-ray machine and turned on the current, adjusting the flashing sparks of electricity to a low, steady motion, as he answered: "I am going to show you the death body, while you know that I am alive in the flesh. You must



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keep a perfect report of what you see and what I do, so that I may have it as statistics for a lecture on mystical science which I am preparing for the society.

"I want you to see that there is a body of finer texture within this flesh body which I can project so that you can recognize it, and that within that body there is still a finer body and so on up to the ninth dimension. I shall show you as many bodies as I can while I hold the physical body in a trance or in suspension; I shall allow them all to manifest through my human brain at last in a spoken message to you which I wish you to report quickly on paper.

"I value your intelligence in this experiment; you are not given to delusions nor are you susceptible to suggestion, and you have that wonderful something which few women possess, courage; you will not be afraid to allow me the full time for the experiment and will wait in silence for the things I shall reveal."

Audrienne smiled a little faintly as she

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said, "I was some frightened the last time, but I will try to look at it all as a scientist should and do the things I ought to do to help you."

Dr. St. Elmo went around the room and arranged the numerous lights; then he drew a cabinet close to the corner of the piano, then, picking up some hidden wires, linked it to the electric machine and, going back, tilted the revolving mirrors so that all their lights fell in one spot on the very top of the crystal in the center of the room; he then arranged the two large mirrors which were hung directly across from each other in the room. One of the mirrors sent out a ray of violet light, the other rays of pure white light, these played over and across the crystal, crossing just in its center and were refracted into horizontal lines of blended color which reached to the ceiling, and extended over the top of the room. Then he turned a pure white light into the cabinet and over the piano; after all this was completed to his satisfaction he pressed another button

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and a wonderful light came on, just in the middle of the floor at the foot of the crystal. Soft and etherialized, as fine as feathery sprays of ocean foam, this mysterious green seemed to mingle with all the other lights in the room; it made a ghostly shimmering atmosphere into which all things seeking materialization might easily manifest. It was easy to see that in this mingling of vibratory rays, Dr. St. Elmo had made the atmospheric conditions for the projection of any state of consciousness he might desire to embody.

Audrienne, pencil and paper in hand, sat near the crystal, ready to take orders either from the *seen* or *unseen* source.

With everything in readiness, Dr. St. Elmo crossed the room, emptied slowly the liquid he had so carefully mixed over the crystal, which increased its brilliancy a thousand fold, then he returned and sat down at the piano; his fingers wandering idly over the keys.

For a little while he sat simply looking

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into space; then slowly he began to play. It was plain that he was improvising; at least he was not playing from memory.

Audrienne watched him with keen interest; his face grew a shade paler and his eyes more transcendently illumined; soft and sweet as the faintest sighing of the winds, the music floated through the room. Suddenly he ceased, stood upright, went slowly to the cabinet facing Audrienne and sat down in the chair within it. He sat with perfect ease, and to Audrienne there was no outward change, nothing but the usual appearance of a man in an ordinary conversational attitude.

As Audrienne watched him, the lights in the room began to change. She opened her eyes and looked around; was she dreaming? No, the lights were dimmer, the lights in the cabinet brighter; suddenly, as she held her breath in half wonder and fear, the soft strains of music began again to come from the piano.

She turned in astonishment; there was

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no presence there; only a moving, misty light seemed to be running over the keys; she listened with bated breath and with the last soft touch of the sound of the piano, the lights in the room suddenly flashed out, leaving darkness; then around the crystal came a wonderful light which glowed and glowed like a rising moon and expanded until it seemed to fill the center of the room. The crystal stood revealed in a radiant whiteness; she sat transfixed.

Suddenly, in the center of the crystal, there smiled at her the face of Dr. St. Elmo; natural, genial, with glowing eyes he looked at her; she started forward, then looked at the doctor himself in the cabinet; he sat motionless, his face was transfigured, his body and the inside of the cabinet shone with a resplendent brightness; as she looked he seemed to be speaking to her; she leaned forward.

“Audrienne, listen, I am leaving the body; watch for my other selves; I want to speak to you through them.” Audrienne was too

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paralyzed with fear to move and sat with her eyes riveted on his face. Suddenly all the lights in the laboratory resumed their original arrangement and into the currents of green, close to Dr. St. Elmo's physical body, there began to take shape another body, and Dr. St. Elmo stood outlined before her; finer, to be sure, shadowy as flimsy tissue, but revealed in a new, harmonious body with eyes and face that had not entirely lost their earthly identity.

As Audrienne looked, the physical form of Dr. St. Elmo seemed to vanish, slowly merging into this transparent, wonderful body, then the shadow became as the body in the chair; just as quickly there came forth from this another body, standing where the first materialized one had stood, but, strangely enough, the green light had now changed and the cabinet and room were flooded with a scintillating, yellow light; instantly the body in the chair faded and a newer, finer body held the floor of consciousness, finer in texture than the last,

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wonderful in a new harmony of outline, shining with a glory like the sun. Audrienne sat transfixed, breathless before this new materialization.

Before she could move the transfiguration went on; the lights in the room flickered and went out and flashed out again in wondrous violet, and the self in the cabinet chair was displaced by another body of such matchless beauty and harmony, that Audrienne could only gaze in awe-struck, breathless silence; just a moment of positive materialization and with a flash the room was again in darkness.

Then at the foot of the crystal there began to gather a hazy mist; brighter and brighter it grew, until it became a dazzling whiteness. Audrienne shaded her eyes, dimmed by the celestial glare; she dared not move; the silence of complete absorption held her.

The light grew larger and larger and again, as in the first light of the evening, there gathered into shape a human figure; it grew more and more distinct and at last

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it stood revealed in the dazzling glow of the blazing crystal and an etherealized Dr. St. Elmo stood before her, glorious as a picture of angelic hosts; transcendent as the idealized face of the Christ, invisible yet visible, separate, yet merged into clouds of vibrating ether he stood, while awe-stricken, breathless with fear and astonishment, Audrienne remained motionless.

Then quickly the violet of the room mingled with the whiteness; the body of the violet vibration was projected way out to the first body; instantly the yellow ray mingled with the violet and a shadow in fleecy yellow appeared. A flash from the green light at the center of the floor mingled with all the others and the body of the green vibration outlined them all; then inclosing all the other bodies, the first white body stood forth.

Audrienne turned quickly at a stir in the cabinet and Dr. St. Elmo was again in the flesh body. He arose, walked slowly to the crystal, and, standing close to the half-



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merged bodies, let his own physical flesh form become the last envelope for them all.

While Audrienne watched breathlessly, the bodies slowly merged themselves into his physical shell and St. Elmo stood before her, transfigured, with wide-open eyes which saw nothing and outstretched hands grasping nothing and said, in a voice she had never heard, "Daughter of earth, do you know now some of the mysteries of wisdom? Thy seeking soul shall find and thou shalt know. Life is not death; death is the open portal to infinite living." Audrienne sprang to her feet, her paper and pencil fell to the floor.

Dr. St. Elmo turned nearer to her chair and above his head there began to blaze a new light. He took a step toward Audrienne. "Art thou afraid of what is written for the wise?" Audrienne, with staring eyes fixed upon the light above his head, started backward.

Suddenly another face appeared just above Dr. St. Elmo's; Audrienne's eyes were held

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as by a mighty force. The face grew more distinct; it was old, old with the wisdom of the ages; its eyes glowed with the light of many stars. Audrienne gazed with her whole being filled with a mighty fear.

Dr. St. Elmo came nearer and with him, the gleaming face above his head; Audrienne's lips opened and shut, but no sound came from them; suddenly out of Dr. St. Elmo's hands there extended two long white hands. These came nearer, and while the light behind the glowing eyes and face grew more intensified, they reached across the distance between. The eyes looked into her own; she put up her hands in blind protection; they did not defend her; the long white hands grasped her arms, the face bent close to her own, while a soft whisper sounded in her ear, "Audrienne, Audrienne, don't you know me?" With a wild shriek she staggered against the crystal and fell unconscious in a heap upon the floor.

Lolone entered the drawing-room just as Audrienne's mad shriek pealed through

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the house; she ran to the laboratory and, opening the door, came face to face with the end of the experiment.

Dr. St. Elmo was standing over Audrienne with a half-dazed look on his face; the lights and shadows of the room made altogether an unfamiliar picture to Lolone, who looked on in wonder and amazement. "What is the matter?" she asked.

Dr. St. Elmo lifted Audrienne and carried her to a couch near the crystal. "Oh, not much, Lolone," he answered; "Audrienne and I have just gotten through an interesting experiment and I guess it was a little hard on her."

"Hard on her!" Lolone answered. "When will you stop this mystical research? What on earth do you get out of it? You and Audrienne both will go stark mad if you don't quit this foolish study and these horrid experiments."

Audrienne came back to consciousness just at this moment; opening her eyes she met Lolone's gaze at first in shuddering terror;

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then seeing Dr. St. Elmo standing in natural lights and in his natural body, she looked at him and, turning her face away again, said wearily, "Oh, Doctor! how foolish of me to get frightened and spoil the records."

## CHAPTER THREE



THE WINTER WITH ITS cold and snow passed away and the beauty of the spring smiled over the grand old earth; it was April again, with the soft spring showers; a time when the sky is blue and fair and treacherous, sending us forth with promises of a cloudless day and then, lo! the fickle showers fall over us in torrents.

There is no time when the earth is so infatuating as in the early springtime; like a capricious sweetheart it lures us on with whisperings of the future; all life stirs uneasily from its cold sleep; the birds chirp almost fearfully, for they know the forwardness of snow and cold; everything seems filled with longing rather than the joy of possession.

There is just now and then a day so ar-

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dent, that the grim old earth is stirred to her center, and it is then that she flings out the bursting buds and smiling flowers. Then it is that the trees awaken and feel the warm current flowing through them; the grasses take off their old brown dresses and begin to attire themselves in a fitting color; then over the bare bosom of the earth they go softly creeping; the trees, the grass, the flowers, the shrubs, the half-awakened birds, all pass slowly through this method of preparation.

We can stand in these days and watch nature's shy joy of anticipation. As the month goes on to the next step in its fulfillment, there are days so beautiful that they seem like a long-sweet breath of realization; there is a soft, warm languor over everything; the sunshine is just warm enough to be oppressive and one can only live and wonder how the silent, subtle work of the mighty universe goes on apparently with no direction save the bursting impulses of life itself.

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The days were days of beauty and joy to Audrienne; she was always living in the sunshine; there was not a cloud in her sky and no dark rumblings hinted of the gathering darkness; if there ever was to be a fall of torrents, the smiling April skies and swelling buds gave little hint of it and Audrienne's own heart was full of the glory song of life which kept ever bubbling to her lips like a welling spring of crystal water.

In the evening of one of these glorious days of beauty, Audrienne was returning from her day at Madam Arnold's school. Her heart was light; she had been making rapid progress in her studies and had been given some new test which had pleased her teacher.

As she reached the gates of the grounds, she met Dr. St. Elmo. "Oh! Dr. Arthur," she said eagerly, "I am so glad you are coming home; I want you to go with Lolone and me tonight; Madame Arnold is going to give one of her most important lectures telling us about our mind and the

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powers we have with it; her lecture will be upon 'psychometry' and you ought to hear her. Will you go, Doctor?"

Dr. St. Elmo looked at her bright face and shining eyes and answered, "Why, yes, Audrienne, if it will make you happy." He opened the gate and they passed into the house together.

Lolone had no particular engagement and so at the appointed hour they were in their seats at the lecture hall of the School of Mysteries.

Madame Arnold was a wonderful woman; tall, slender, intellectual, with a smile that had in it an eternal repose. She at once gave the listener a sense of rest and interest.

Her eyes were really the only peculiar part of her personality; they were the eyes of the occultist and mystic. It is an unwritten law that the eyes of those who give themselves to deep, occult studies, and live much in the subjective states of mind, gain for themselves a look which is different from that of all other eyes; they are deep in their



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gaze. They look at one, yet never seem to see; strange and unfathomable, they appear always to be looking into space, down the eternal ages of the future, and back over the forgotten mysteries of the past; they are beautiful in their own way and always clear and luminous with some unseen light.

Dr. St. Elmo was prepared to be bored to extinction by the lecture, for his own psychical research had carried him far beyond the primary stages of psychometry and he settled himself into a state of mental endurance. Lolone, bright, skeptical, and interested, saw in it only the talk of the babes of wisdom which would afford her another fling for her bright sarcasm and wit.

But Madame Arnold did not offend; she spoke in an easy, pleasant tone and, taking up one of the articles on the table which had been placed there by some one in the audience, she said, "There are only three things in the universe: intelligence, force, and substance, or mind, action, and form. This trinity is gathered together in a mighty

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expression known to humanity as mind. 'There is one mind in God and that mind is my mind now,' has been the message of the masters for ages, and when one realizes that all life is intelligence manifesting as mind, psychometry does not surprise or interpretation confuse. There are four great divisions of this mind with which we are all familiar; namely, the mineral, the vegetable, the animal, and the human.

"The mind of each kingdom is atomic, molecular, and mass; the mind of all this intelligence forms a plus mind; this plus mind is man's mind.

"Man is not a mineral, a vegetable, nor an animal, because his intelligence has evolved through all these lower kingdoms and has vibrated into at-one-ment with a higher form; in his transit he has lost the power to keep the door of consciousness open between himself and the kingdoms.

"Man is the highest expression of intelligence on this planet; it is for him to command, all other things in all kingdoms

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must obey; they must reveal to man's mind all their hidden mysteries; man has in his mind all the intelligence of the mineral, all the intelligence of the vegetable and of the animal; he is lord of these lower kingdoms and lord indeed of all the evolving intelligence beneath him, whether it be atom or lesser man. He can speak to the intelligence in the atomic mind of all substance; it must respond to his own centralized master-mind.

“Man's mind and the Universal mind are one and whatever is in the whole universe of mind will become revealed to those who have the key to the union of their own mind with the mind of the person, thing, or place they wish to reveal; ‘there is nothing hidden which shall not be revealed,’ the Master said, and ‘whatever is whispered in the closet will be cried from the housetops;’ when we have opened our mind into conscious union with the One Mind we can touch an object like this and its intelligence, linked with our own, will give us its true history.

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Mind speaks to Mind through sight, touch, hearing, and inner sense. 'Till one appears who hears, all nature silent is, silent for evermore; beating its waves of force on an unanswering shore, till one appears who hears.' "

Madame Arnold then took up article after article and told its owner its full history. The crowd was eager and impatient; every one had something about which they wished Madame Arnold to interpret.

Suddenly she held aloft a tiny pendant and said, "This pendant belongs to one who does not know herself, and yet she has a great power of spiritual discernment." She looked quietly over the audience and in a moment she pointed to Lolone and said, "This is your pendant; it was given you by one whom you loved and who loved you; it tells a wonderful heart-story; it says that it was a true ideal and that you will never, while you live, find another. Over it I felt a kind of changing current, discordant, fickle, pretentious, and I know that what-

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ever you might say with your lips, that this little pendant still tells me the true story. Around it is a love that will never die and a memory that all the years of life cannot darken."

She laid the pendant down and took up another article; and while Audrienne looked at Lolone in wonder the attendant passed Lolone the trinket. Dr. St. Elmo looked at it for a moment, then whispered, "Oh, I remember, Lolone; that is the trinket they took from the body of that young soldier who threw his life away in the fight on the frontier in India." Lolone did not answer.

Madame Arnold was talking on in her perfectly modulated voice. "As we close, it will be well to remember that around every object on earth, as well as around the individual, there is an aura; in this aura are stamped the actions of life; and around every object the same thing occurs, only modified by the difference between animate and inanimate life. The aura of the owner, the aura of the country, and the registrations

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of all actions are clearly defined around an object, and when we touch the object, these things communicate themselves to our central mind and can then be divided into thoughts and told in words.

“Every individual carries around with him in his aura the records of his whole life, and those who have clairvoyance or psychometric vision can see these things as plainly as if they were looking at a moving picture show on a screen. The mind of man is like a great revolving mirror and it reflects everything which is brought before it; this reflection falls in the idea centers and if these are trained in sequence of ideation, we become great psychometrists, and everything that is hidden is made plain.”

The meeting closed and Audrienne, smiling and happy, presented Dr. St. Elmo and Lolone to Madame Arnold; then the three returned home.

Lolone seated herself in an easy chair, Audrienne sought her favorite hassock, while Dr. St. Elmo took a chair near her and smil-

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ingly said, "The lecture was clear, Audrienne, but primary; all these things are just the most natural powers and it is not strange that a few can use them; but the wonder is, that we do not use them all the time."

Leaning her chin in her hands, Audrienne answered, "I think it is a wonderful thing to find that such powers are within us; these are the things I have always dreamed of finding out; why, after one knows how he can use his mind to find out everything, he can drag out even a secret; no one would be able to think anything but some one else would know how to get it."

Lolone laughed. "Most of the thoughts of people would not be worth while, Audrienne; they are not worth listening to when they tell them; what magic law would make them better before they were said? I should never cultivate the habit; I am bored enough now."

"But think what an advantage it would be, Lolone, in other ways," Audrienne persisted. "One would not need to read the

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books, but by just a trick of mind, he could get all their contents, and all knowledge could be gathered in this way; just think what a lot of time, experience, and energy would be saved."

Lolone rose as she said, "Don't you believe it, Audrienne; each person comes here to take his own lessons and all the books on the earth and all the wisdom of the sages gathered into one crevice of man's brain won't help him; life only becomes wisdom for us when we have included the things through which it comes. There is no such thing as 'vicarious at-one-ment' neither in this world nor the world to come, neither through books nor psychometry, and not even through the mysteries into which you and Dr. St. Elmo so continuously try for big escapes. The tree of knowledge is planted in everybody's garden and all must eat of it in their own way. Good-night, Audrienne, I am going to bed; don't argue all night with the Doctor about things which neither one knows."



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Dr. St. Elmo sat listening attentively, and when she had left the room he drew his chair toward Audrienne and said, "Yes, Audrienne, there is a reservoir of knowledge waiting to be touched by those who know how; each one of us has a line of communication with this well-spring of all life, and when we find this, we find continuous life, and, as Ouida says, 'The lips that kiss us here can kiss us again and love will last even unto death and out beyond into the dream to come.' Anyway, I am glad, Audrienne, that Madame Arnold is teaching you such high, fine truths of life; if she does not link you all at once with natural psychology, she will fit you for the great awakening which is sure to come later on."

Audrienne had risen to follow Lolone. "Yes, Doctor," she said, "I am so thankful for all the knowledge that I am gaining from Madame Arnold; I know my life is being directed by some mighty intelligence or I would not be rushing on so gloriously to my great wish. I can only learn so much

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at a time, but, step by step, I shall grow to accomplish great things; every action that I do is a part of the bigger things of tomorrow and my mind, kept inspired, is sure to be one with the biggest impulses in the whole world. It seems to me that I cannot do more than try to fit myself each day to catch the faintest hint from The Great Mind; I can only know such a little bit at a time. Oh! I want to hurry, but I remember what Madame Arnold says, 'Veil after veil will lift, but there will be veil upon veil behind.'"

Audrienne looked sweet and beautiful as she stood before him, her face illumined with a light of soul inspiration, and Dr. St. Elmo, looking at her, took in at a glance all the beauty and harmony of her radiant self. "Good-night, Doctor," she said, and gathering up some stray magazines and books she went to her room and to bed.

Dr. St. Elmo drew his chair closer to the grate in which a low fire smoldered; he looked with absorbed eyes into the embers, and after a while he stirred uneasily, turned

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on a brighter light, and, picking up a book, opened its pages and began to read; but again he remained in absorbed silence looking into the pages; it was not the call of the story that entranced him, but the moving picture of his own mind. Between the pages of the book, the radiant face of Audrienne smiled at him; the red, sweet lips seemed close to his hands; the softly modulated voice seemed talking on and on; he could not read; his mind wandered to the beautiful vision she had made as she stood before him; his eyes seemed to be suddenly unsealed; the pages lay open, claiming his vision, but his eyes saw only Audrienne's face, his ears heard only her voice, the bell-like music of her tones rang in his soul, over and over again like some old minster in the night, they seemed to gather around him, speaking their way into his innermost heart; they lay in shining letters on his book, while spirit voices seemed to whisper them over his head, "Veil after veil will lift, but there will be veil upon veil

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behind." While he sits, held by this new wonder of a force which he does not yet realize, let us look into Lolone's room and see there the closing scene of the night.

Seated in a soft chair before her dressing table, she sat leaning forward gazing at something in her hands; it was the golden trinket she had worn to the lecture in the evening. She wrapped the chain around and around her fingers in silent reverie; the gay lips, always so scornful, were drooping now in a curve that spoke of memories that were not all gay; alone with her heart and the subconscious voice of the bauble in her hands, life was repeating to her a story which was buried long ago in the hot sands. Just for the last time, the words of Madame Arnold had forced themselves into her mind, until she was forced, beyond her own will, to tell the truth to her own soul.

In the early hour of the coming day, this woman who held all life so lightly and who laughed so scornfully at love, looked tearfully at the tiny gold chain around her fin-

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gers and at the dainty pendant in the palm of her hand and saw there something that the world had never known. Again the clear sky of the tropics shone above her, again the brilliant eyes of beauty and adoration looked into her own; she was in India; the world was a world of her own making, and love and life and God were one; then a long stretch of gleaming sands, then loneliness, pride, and the smile that can so easily dupe the whole world; she bowed her head upon her white hands; heavy tears gathered but did not fall.

We all have these folded leaves; sometimes they are not unfolded until we die; there are hearts so strong that they carry them through life and give no sign; long, long ago, through blurred and burdened hours, they learned the art of pretension.

The world has many folded leaves; some leaf is folded down and the gleam of soft eyes, the touch of softer lips, the magic touch of arms that seem to have taken them in forever, are displaced by something which life commands into form.

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Natures like Lolone's stifle their senses and laugh it down with the enchanting wine of change and admiration. Lolone's besetting sin was pride and love of luxury; there was nothing she would not have sacrificed for these things. Had fate been kind and sent her a lover who had held both love and wealth in one hand, her womanhood might have been of a lighter color, but wealth and ease was her first god. She had made her choice and he, whose heart she had destroyed with her own, had flung himself to death; easier to face a world in which she was not than to live in a world where she was not his own.

One thing is often sacrificed that another may be gained, and we who look out over the edge of the world find that great gain on the outer plane often means emptiness in the inner crypts of life.

"Gold is powerful in this world of ours, there's  
magic in its gleam;

'Tis well there are things we cannot buy,  
or it had reigned supreme."

## CHAPTER FOUR



OW LITTLE OUR HUMAN minds can ever make really our own. Even after a lifetime spent in continued investigation, there is little that seems of real value. Our puny knowledge, matched against the great world full of ever-revealing wisdom, makes us feel small and insignificant indeed.

There are hours in which we feel that we are strong; that we do know something and know it past all doubting; we feel strong and great; but tomorrow comes and over our garnered genius there shines the pure light of higher criticism, and the crown of wisdom falls again from our heads and lies a shapeless mass at our feet.

As the years go by we learn this larger truth, that those who dwell on the mountain

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tops of revelation have gained them by a slow ascent; no matter how high the peaks on which they stand, there is ever around them the snows of disappointment and the many tragedies of the climb, unseen by the multitudes who dwell yet in the dim valleys of ignorance. What can the dwellers of the valley know of the storms that beset the path of the wanderer afar? What of the hopelessness he oftens finds in his journeyings? It is the unwritten law of life that to every soul which seeks for mystical unification, there will come hours of disappointment, utter weakness, often intellectual and spiritual poverty; sometimes the only words that the lips can frame are, "We know nothing, nothing, nothing!"

There are more mysteries in life than we can penetrate; life itself is the great mystery; if this life we live in was all there is to learn, we would long ago have solved most of its problems; but when we turn our thoughts to life forever more, we reach out into such infinite stretches of



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being that all peace is lost and the soul walks on into an almost unfathomable darkness, where life, death, and destiny become questions which our deepest researches do not reveal.

There were hours when Audrienne felt as if the accomplishment of a great desire was a big undertaking; even her ambition did not always sustain her.

In her work in the school, she could not help discovering that there were those whom one could not really help and whom it would be impossible to make understand the things which she felt were true. Now and then, the immensity of her undertaking frightened her; how would she ever include enough in her consciousness to be really useful? But she always came out of her depressions with a new courage, determined that she would never let anything turn her from her chosen aspiration.

She studied constantly with Dr. St. Elmo, trying to master the ideas of psychical phenomena as well as the deeper laws of inner

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relationship of spheres and consciousness. Madame Arnold was a true scientist and Dr. St. Elmo a true mystic, so between them she felt there was not much neglected in her education.

She had returned early on this day, and Dr. St. Elmo had requested her to accompany Lolone and himself to the Psychical Research Society where he was to give a public demonstration, and a test meeting.

After dinner, she and Lolone were seated in the music room, waiting for the Doctor. Lolone was idly cutting the pages of a book when Audrienne, who was leaning against the table, thinking deeply, said, "Lolone, do you think any one ever gets over loving? When the heart once loves, doesn't it love forever?"

Lolone stopped a moment with paper knife in hand. "Women never get over it, Audrienne; men always do. It is only women who never forget; men never suffer long at a time, they always find some healing balm for their bruises, and this balm is usually

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some other bright eyes and some other heart which they can fill with adoration for themselves."

Audrienne looked puzzled. "Lolone," she said, "why are you so unkind? Aren't all hearts alike? I am sure there are hearts, both men's and women's, who never forget; it seems as if this would be the natural way, and Madame Arnold always tells me to interpret life from what would seem to be the natural thing to do, or say, or be."

Lolone lifted her brows in feigned surprise. "What a wise little woman you are getting to be, Audrienne! it's really refreshing to find such a virgin-faith in men; most women owe them a debt they can never repay; women are always the losers, for men have the power of sex and they have the added advantage of having the favor of the world on their side. You have not studied men as much as you have metaphysics, Audrienne, and when you do, you will learn that men run after love with the same impulse of change as they do after their dinner; you

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will find that they never question the source of the stream when they are thirsty; hunger will eat dry bread rather than face the pangs of starvation."

Audrienne still looked with doubtful eyes. "Lolone, you make one miserable with your ideals; what is life worth to any one if that is so? There is no need of a few persons going out to battle for truth and love, if you are right. I don't want to believe you; there must be some constant loves and there must be some faithful hearts which, once having found what they want, are satisfied forever."

"Well, Audrienne," Lolone replied, "Women only learn the lessons men teach them; we always come to them from our cradles, full of love and trust and faith. If, as the years go by, they seek our side to find us cold, cynical, doubting, with our faith in them destroyed and our trust faltering, whose fault is it but their own? We have learned the lesson they taught us; the future of our faith, constancy, and love was in their hands."

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“But, Lolone, do you not know some men who have never made a woman’s heart ache? You say that we always find what we are looking for; then is it not possible that your own lack of faith and constancy have dragged these things out on your pathway?” Lolone laughed her usual satirical laugh.

“You talk well, Audrienne,” she said, “about keeping things out of your life, but the woman who tries the path of life alone meets men who sacrifice them upon the altar of self, and the gentle woman heart seems to be powerless to defend itself. I sometimes think that women like myself were born as avengers for the rest of the race. Every time I see a look of what men call love in a man’s eyes, the memory of all the women on his path whom he has made his helpless victims helps me to smile and lead him on until I can give him the same experience he has given to them. Love and men! Bah, Audrienne! It’s a sacrilege to couple them together. This thing

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which men offer women in the guise of love is a joke only to those who, like yourself, are still guileless and uninitiated." Lolone arose at these words and rang the bell. "Tell Dr. St. Elmo that we are waiting," she said to the servant in attendance.

Audrienne stood still, perplexed, thinking; perhaps Lolone was right; but she did not believe her; she had met few men and chief among them were Harold and Dr. St. Elmo; she rejoiced that she was ignorant of the ways of men and she hoped with all her heart that none would ever come to her but the dream-lover of her heart, who, she told herself, would never bring her anything but fidelity and purity.

It is a sweet thing to dwell in the thought that life is truer than it really is and that the world is better than we know it to be; it is a grand quality to find always the germ of goodness underlying all; to feel that there is no evil; to feel no one is wholly bad; to have faith that all the faults of women and men can be easily controlled and corrected;

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and to think that all the sin in the world comes from ignorance and not from inclination.

It is well for the higher forces of life that there are eyes that see nothing but light and are filled always with this higher radiance. It is beautiful to have a heart so full of faith that there is no place in it for doubt or dark forebodings; it is in these that faith has ever its true Olivet and love its abiding Galilee.

If all stood and looked at life with unsealed vision, the glamour and joy would die in many hearts, if they really knew that many in this life sin because to them sin is really sweet and they choose it, rejoicing in it; if they could look into the open eyes of real life and hear virtue's starving cry and vice's peals of laughter; if they could see the bloated face of greed and gain and the blank, despairing one of honesty and charity,—they would turn away with faint hearts and lose the courage to try to stem the tide of human fate and destiny.

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Some one has said that it is a blessing to the old that they grow deaf and dim of sight as years creep on, for in the fretfulness of their closing childhood, life's noises and inharmonies would worry them too much; so with those who have some great aim and endeavor to work out for themselves and mankind, they should be thankful that their eyes are sealed to many of the hopeless things and their ears deaf to the cry of labors lost.

It is better to look through glasses which reflect the rising, roseate rays of hope and faith and trust and none of the dark grayness of the dawning day, for one might stumble in the darkness and fall by the wayside with life's work unfinished.



## CHAPTER FIVE



R. ST. ELMO ENTERED the room in answer to Lollone's message and they soon found themselves in the lecture hall of the Psychical Research Society. The meeting was to be held in the hidden chambers of the Society and only those who were real students of the occult were invited.

The room was crowded and there were many superior types of the spiritual investigator present. Some had come to find, if possible, a clew to the hidden future; some had come hoping against hope to receive some tangible proof that their dead were not dead, while others had come just to see the phenomena and hear and meet the world-famed psychic, Dr. St. Elmo.

The doors and windows of the room were

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sealed with bits of paper, making exit or entrance impossible without exposure; every precaution had been taken to make the demonstration scientific and truthful. A rather large cabinet, composed of a framework of wood covered on all sides with dark-red curtains, stood in the middle of the room and the chairs were arranged around in the form of a double circle.

When everything was in readiness, Dr. St. Elmo came into the room. He had removed his coat and put on a long, flowing white robe; it covered him completely and there was left only his long, slim hands, which gleamed white as the robe itself. His face was perfectly colorless and his eyes were wide with their unnatural light.

He came to the side of the cabinet and, turning to the audience, said, "I greet you as co-workers in the field of psychical research. We must hold fast to a united atmosphere; there must not be a division of minds, and there must not be anxiety,

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curiosity, or fear; if you want the best, you must give the best; if we can touch for one little moment the absolute unity of the One Mind in all and through all, we will be able to project many states of consciousness in form; concentrated thought force is necessary to make a point of entrance into the atmosphere of the earth.

“There is nothing unusual about spirit return, it is a part of the natural plan of the universe; it has been lost sight of and fallen into disrepute because those who accomplished the linking of atmospheres in the past were fanatics and not scientists; they made the spirits who returned a religious fetish and worshiped them instead of the Life or Creator of the Universe.

“Those who return to us are only the dwellers on the threshold of the invisible world and they have only the consciousness of their own spheres of action, so that their advice is often worthless for us here, for the two earth planes are under different dispensations; they can come and comfort

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us by their presence and teach us the eternal truth that the dead are not dead, but when they have accomplished this, their work is done and we should not hold them to earth for our own selfish comfort. They should be displaced by the masters of the spheres, with whom, after we have really learned how to connect the atmospheric currents of the air and ether, we can put ourselves into at-one-ment at will.

“There is nothing but intelligence in the Universe and this is expressed in form; all life is one and indivisible; we can speak to those behind the veil just as easily as we can to those on this side, if we make the right connection.

“When I am in the cabinet, I am the intensified point of power through which the dwellers on the other side can open the atmospheres. This point must always be made by some one who is vibrating in intense states of mind and feeling. Not every one can be used in this psychical construction work, but only those who have the power

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to suspend their physical senses without conscious harm to themselves.

“The masters of the other side will operate the currents of my physical body as a fulcrum for the open doorway and other less powerful spirits will enter; if the atmospheres are not disturbed by your discordant thoughts, there may be many materializations and even many etherializations. Let us all be united in a common purpose to know and understand all of life, and not one little part of it, to constitute ourselves the Elder Brothers of the race, through whom the master minds above us can find a spiritual fulcrum with which they can pull up the whole evolving multitude.”

Dr. St. Elmo took his seat in the cabinet and the attendants reduced the room to utter darkness. Dr. St. Elmo then drew the curtains together, completely shutting himself from view, and the audience sat with bated breath for the next step in demonstration.

After a few moments a low murmur was

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heard, like a soft sighing of the wind. Immediately a soft, white, hazy light began to appear at the front of the cabinet; this grew whiter and whiter and suddenly a form emerged, standing directly in front of the curtain. It was not Dr. St. Elmo, but a woman dressed in a long, white, flowing robe; she looked white and fair, with long loose dark hair, she stood on the threshold looking with a far-away sight into the darkness of the room. No one spoke, no one recognized her, and after a few moments she faded away and a cool rushing air was felt by all in the room.

Again there was a soft sighing as of many winds, and a great number of hands seemed to be eagerly thrust from the cabinet, each apparently striving to push or grasp the hands of some one in the audience.

Suddenly a white ball of light floated out from the top of the cabinet and in it a face, clearly defined, looked with smiling eyes into the faces of the silent group. Like a soft, transparent ball, it floated along the upper ethers

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of the room, paused over Audrienne's head, and came slowly down until it was even with her own face, where it remained smiling radiantly into Audrienne's wondering eyes. Immediately, the soft, sweet incense as of a million flowers filled the room, and the face slowly faded with a beautiful look of farewell filling its eyes. The room was again in darkness, but in Audrienne's lap was a wonderful snow-white rose, redolent with the incense that floated everywhere.

Stillness reigned for a while and then from all sides of the cabinet forms began to emerge; some came halfway and went back, not able to keep form outside of a certain radius of power; others came far out into the room, and among these was a venerable old patriarch, whom a lady present recognized as her father. The seance was nearing its close, for Dr. St. Elmo never remained entranced longer than an hour.

In a corner, silent, watchful, Lolone sat, wondering at the strange sort of consciousness that could make the man whom she

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called her husband lend himself to these impossible investigations. She did not understand them; she felt they were not for any persons save the priest and the abnormal people whom one so often meets. She was half afraid of anything that she could not reduce to a certainty, and had resolutely refused, up to this time, to take part in any way in Dr. St. Elmo's psychical ideas; she had always said, "Oh, go on, Doctor! I will dance while you seek; I don't want to know about spooks; I have enough to do to understand myself now." And tonight she sat motionless, waiting for the seance to close and hoping each moment would be the last.

Suddenly at her feet a white mist began to form; she moved uneasily while she watched it gather and grow larger and larger.

At last it seemed to build itself up into a column; then through the wavy, misty substance a form began to manifest. It came out stronger and stronger and there stood



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before her the form of a beautiful young man.

His face and figure were not of the same density as had been the other manifested forms, but was white, etherialized, wonderful, transparent, and shimmering in its delicate elusive mold; this shining face was scintillating with light; his eyes shone like worlds of misty silences. Lolone sat as one entranced.

Brighter and brighter grew the light, and nearer and nearer it came; suddenly she reached out her arms in wild gesture. "Ione!" she said, with a bated whisper. "Ione, have you come at last?" She rose to her feet looking into the eyes bent upon her own. The etherialized figure retreated, Lolone followed like one in a trance.

Her outstretched hands caught the edge of the cabinet and with a whirling sound of rushing waters the figure was gone. Lolone, starting back against the cabinet, tore aside one of the curtains; an attendant seized her quickly, saving her fall, and another instantly turned on the lights.

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The curtain torn aside by Lolone's falling grasp revealed the interior of the cabinet. In the chair sat Dr. St. Elmo, cold, white as death, unconscious to anything that was going on around him. He looked as if he had fallen into a profound sleep, and the unbeliever could not have said that he had impersonated any of the forms which had been seen.

After a few moments, amid the confusion of the room, Dr. St. Elmo regained normal consciousness, and the Society was dismissed, some of the audience happy with the new hope of eternal life, some glad with satisfied curiosity, and a few praising that truth had again revealed to those who seek with all their hearts.

On their way home Dr. St. Elmo was very interested in what Audrienne called, "Lolone's strange experience;" but Lolone herself was very silent; she only said, "Why, Doctor, in an atmosphere like that and under those conditions, the sanest mind could lose itself and get twisted. Such a circle is a

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hotbed for superstition and I am not sure that it is not all self-hypnosis; one's mind can play the strangest pranks."

"But, Lolone," Audrienne asked, "how did I receive my rose if it was not true materialization?" Lolone looked doubtful, but said, "Easy enough, Audrienne; the room was dark and there were plenty of attendants."

Dr. St. Elmo remained silent. He had never asked Lolone to be interested in his mystery-seeking, nor had he any care whether she believed it or not. He knew that Truth is not a thing of belief and that one is not to blame whether he believes or disbelieves; because it is a point of his own intelligence and what one thinks or believes cuts no figure with the eternal ultimate of All.

When they reached the house, Lolone pleaded fatigue and went directly to her room, but Audrienne, bursting with suppressed emotions of curiosity and the desire to know more and more, followed Dr. St. Elmo into the library, where they sat down for a review of the things of the evening.

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Audrienne, pushing an easy chair to the side of the table, said, "Come here, Doctor Arthur, and sit in this easy chair and let me sit beside you while you rest; this night must have been a big nervous strain to you, but you can let go now, for I only want to ask you a few things, and if you are too tired, I will put them off."

Dr. St. Elmo sank into the chair. "No, Audrienne, I am not exhausted, but I shall enjoy the restfulness of your presence, for after one has had to mix with such a conglomerated mass of magnetism, it is comforting to find some one who soothes and gives peace. Sit beside me and let us be quiet for a while." She sat down quietly, folding her hands in her lap; St. Elmo reached out and taking one of her hands in his own, clasped it closely. He knew that she was wildly excited and that the night had been a bigger strain upon her than upon himself, so he held her hand and sat watching her face.

There are some natures which have a strong

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magnetic force; we feel it as soon as we come near them. Dr. St. Elmo possessed such a nature and he had developed this force to its uttermost. His business as a physician and instructor of higher psychology in the medical college had left him no chance to be anything but positive in all his magnetic and hypnotic forces; he often gave clinics in hypnotic suggestion.

He knew that all Audrienne needed was restoration of the normal balance of her mind and body; so he sat in silence, treating her into peace with the hidden suggestion of his mind.

At last, a great calm seemed to steal over her; her eager thinking ceased and a delicious languor enveloped her and she said, "I don't know why, Doctor, but I am always happy when I am with you; what a glorious friend you are; you always seem to know just what I want to know and somehow I get my answers without talking to you; my questions seem to answer themselves. No one in all the world is half as great as

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you; even Madame Arnold cannot give me so much." She looked fair and innocent; her eyes were raised to his own; her face had an earnest look; her red lips drooped sweetly.

Arthur St. Elmo did not answer; he dared not. He was standing face to face with his own soul. He only laid his hand caressingly on her hair and held her hand more closely in his grasp. Thus they sat dreamily.

To Audrienne, the occasion seemed only an hour in which she needed rest and in which she could help St. Elmo regain all his poise after the strain of the evening. With her it was a wonderful moment filled with a joy only dimly revealed; but what of St. Elmo? what of him?

As he sat in the silence with her hand in his own, filled yet with the essence of the wisdom of that other world behind the veil where he had spent the evening entranced, with all the knowledge that science and mysticism gave him, his heart beat with a

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suppressed note of pain. A greater wisdom than he had ever known stood unveiled before him, and a knowledge which he would have given incarnations never to have known.

His soul was unsealed at last in its highest initiation; he knew that this woman sitting here in all her guileless innocence and trust was bitterly, sinfully sweet to him; knew that around her had suddenly swung all his human hope; knew that he, the idler in life's fields of love, had come at last to a flower that would hold him with its star-like face; but it grew on a precipice.

He spoke to his innermost soul; he asked of the guides who had always been his last authority, could he ever hope to gather this blossom, would he always be forced to stand as he did tonight, catching a breath of its sweet perfume, but forever separated from it by impossible deeps?

Within himself he carried on this mad questioning, but he never spoke, for he was too much the man of the world not to know

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that to awaken her to the truth would only be to lose her. He would not show by word or look what she had become to him; a spoken word would cast him out of his Eden. He would not crush his feelings, but he would bend them to his will, although had he done what his mad heart prompted him to do, he would have gathered her in his arms and told her the newest revelation and mystery of his soul.

As he sat there in the sweet silence of the room, with her hand in his, this troublesome secret struggled with him to be told; a passionate longing came over him to be more than a friend to this beautiful woman who was waiting for the touch of a master hand upon her woman's life, but his reason conquered; his silent battle was fought out even while the lights fell full on Audrienne's face, tempting him across the higher mandates of his own soul. After a little while, Audrienne arose and said good-night, and he released her hand with a quiet clasp.

Truly he had fought, in that moment, a



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great battle and won; he had always said that he did not believe in fate; the true law of life to him meant destiny, and destiny was marked by joy, happiness, possession, and fulfillment. He had always trusted his guides to direct him into the paths that were the highest for him to follow and had found in the past nothing of complaint, no touch of renunciation.

Tonight, something had gone wrong; where was the law? Why had fate with her pain and denial come out on his pathway? Here he had sat with his heart on fire with the touch and presence of a woman who could never be anything to him by the destiny path, and over whose head hung a flaming sword in the hand of fate while it spoke in terms of stern command, "Thou shalt not."

He thought on and in his dreaming fought against the restraining hand; why should he not? His life was his own; was he not a master of his own law? Surely he could hold fast to the divine law of choice. Why could they not live in a world of their own

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making? They might be something, if not all.

His thought turned to Lolone; she would never know; she had never been more than a part of his life, a lovely part, and this she would always remain. He felt that his life was big enough to carry the lives of two women in perfect safety. Lolone should reign as queen in her own domain. He had always lived the life of perfected, personal, and universal expression; would he pause now and lose the rarest treasure life had ever brought? At last, his inner self answered him, no! no! He would have and hold the mighty desire of his life; he could wait; but sometime, somewhere those purple eyes would look into his own with their softest, sweetest tenderness, those rose-leaf lips should be turned to him with ready kisses and should whisper over and over again the words he wanted to hear; clasped in his arms she should be his completely, body, mind, and soul.

As he sat there alone with his heart he

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recalled the memory of her every word; her every gesture, the music of her voice, the rich ripe beauty of her mind, the nobility and purity of her womanhood, and filled with a deep, passionate love for her, he vowed that she would some day be something to him; that he would be something to her.

Oh, life! Oh, love! Oh, God! What is our journey with you but one long round of misery and grief! How little, after all, does higher intelligence teach us when, with all our knowledge, with all our deeper insight, we cannot escape the mistakes of love and a choice which in their eternal change bring only blinding pain.

We dream, we plan, we hope, we seek, we build up around us a fairy kingdom of greatness, but in some unexpected hour the fierce winds of life sweep it all to fragments and dash it back into our faces. Across all our learning, over all the revealed wisdom of our seeking selves, we learn that love, and love alone, gives us the hidden mysteries of life and the grave.

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Earth's greatest sins, its deepest sorrows, all its maddest joys, come from loving overmuch.

Alas, alas, for the hearts that walk blindly on, drinking long draughts from love's overflowing cup, for after these long drinks their eyes are sealed; the sunbeams still dance merrily upon the waters, the green leaves still rustle in the summer wind, the earth is still fascinating in its great renewals, the sky is still fair and smiling; but they who have loved and lost and learned the great surrender see it not; they have followed the fateful voice in their heart, tempting them to the edge of their own desire, and there is often nothing left to them but darkness, nothing but wretchedness, nothing but tears.

## CHAPTER SIX



THE DAYS FLEW BY ON rapid wings. June came with its world of love and roses. Lolone lived in the white heat of her life of gayety and approval. Dr. St. Elmo's hours were all given to his patients, the hospital, and his psychological research.

Audrienne lived in a world of dreams which grew more and more beautiful from day to day. To her, the weeks were like the murmuring prelude of a flowing stream; she was walking with her head in the clouds of ideality; her world was a glorious dream-world made beautiful by the creations of her mind.

Dreams, — dreams, — dreams; who is there who has no ship of dreams to sail in? Everywhere on life's ocean, we see these stately

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ships; they pass and repass in the great wide way; we see them, we smile and bid them hail and Godspeed, even while we know that in some not too distant day they will be strained to their center beneath the ragings of life's tempestuous gale. Those floating in them always think they are careful pilots and of our cautioning seldom take heed. The soft white spray of their own waves splashes in their faces, blinding them; how can they see the reefs in their channel? There is for them a glorified comfort to be gained from their magical convictions.

Trust, hope, faith—these together make us nearly happy; as long as we can cling to these great anchors, we dream on and on, turning our sightless eyes away from fear and fate which stand, for the moment, handcuffed behind us.

These three wonders of the human heart—Trust, Faith, and Hope—have kept millions from the depth of despair; they have led the wandering feet of half the world out of

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darkness and called them on up the slopes of high endeavor; they have gilded the barren cottage; they have made the humble board smile with comfort; they have left the smile of unutterable conquest on the face of the dead; and they have made many hearts strong enough to wait for that tomorrow where they find the fruition of their dreaming. Trust, Faith, and Hope, these have been the manna of the world since angels first sung His immortal symphony.

Who would say that there is not something wonderful and great in the self-sacrifice of those, who, with dream-filled eyes, go forth to scatter broadcast among the children of men the words of happiness and the deeds of power? Even though their words may be only an inspired guess, culled from the tablelands of illumined consciousness, is not the world happier for the vision? Held before the eyes of pain and suffering by strong enduring hands, it gives all life a brightness which helps it to shine on.

One morning at the breakfast table, Lo-

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lone sat intent upon a long list of something which she held in her hand.

She said, "I shall be obliged to ask you two to help me with this. You know, Doctor, that it is time to give our closing reception and ball; we will be leaving for the seashore next month; I want this affair to eclipse anything which we have yet done, and I shall press your wits and Audrienne's into the effort. I think a change of thought will help you both; you can let your mysteries rest a few days."

Audrienne and Dr. St. Elmo smiled, while Audrienne said, "Why, of course, Lolone; command me; I shall be glad."

Dr. St. Elmo looked at the two women and said, "After I have given my attention to the invitation list, I can see where my usefulness will end. I will only be in the way in any other department; a preparation for a reception and ball is enough to drive even an extraordinary woman off her head. I will say farewell to both of you, for there are some mysteries which even I



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do not seek to know, and one of these is the inner working of these big balls."

Lolone nodded. "Yes, when we have arranged the invitation list you will have mysteries galore, for it is a pure psychology to mix the right persons at a reception—" "And an energy that is wasted," responded Dr. St. Elmo, "for no one ever gets any real good from it; folks do not stay together long enough to get their lessons from each other."

Audrienne buttered her toast and said, "Wouldn't it be fine to have a reception and when everybody was assembled give them a good lecture about themselves and their duty to others?"

Dr. St. Elmo laughed. "You couldn't get them to stay, Audrienne; they would all be starting for the door before you had talked five minutes."

Lolone picked over a few slips of paper as she said, "Yes, they would that, if they had to listen to the things you and Audrienne would tell them; but every one in his heart

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is always ready to hear something which is worth while and which will help him to live. If I were to talk at a reception, I would keep the public there by telling them something that would do them all good; it could be done by the right person and the right kind of talk."

Audrienne looked at her in delight. "What would you call the right kind of talk, Lolone?"

"Surely not the kind of half-explained talks you and Dr. St. Elmo would give," Lolone replied. "But a real life-giving talk, full of vital things which people want to hear, something that they can live by and something that will fit their own conditions and problems." "Well," laughed Audrienne, "tell us some of these things; what are the vital things to talk about?"

Lolone stirred her coffee thoughtfully and said: "The really vital things, which every one wants to know, are God, Life, Love, and the Self. Tell any one about God and he will listen, if you don't preach to him; most

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folks hate preachers, but adore teachers. The God talk is the biggest talk there is, and with the real idea of God, one has a great story, as fascinating as a continued novel; men don't want to hear the old things; they have not outgrown God, but they have outgrown the old-fashioned idea of God and want a story which will fit their developed intelligence and spirituality. I am sure that any one who has any personality at all, could tell any class of society-people about God, as a great Universal principle manifesting in all things seen and unseen and that the one life of God was in all and through all, and they would ask him to come again and tell them more.

“Then, again, the old idea of life does not interest the higher minds, but the true idea of life does. Just as men like to find a God who is big enough to let them take all of themselves in worship to him, they rejoice to find an idea of life which gives them an opportunity to use all of their consciousness as they choose and yet still find in the

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end an ultimate good. When you would tell a crowd that life is a means to an end and that end God consciousness or consciousness of the whole, and that our human life is for the purpose of creation, experience, expressions, and inclusion, and that the greatest lives are those which include the most and the really perfect lives, those who help others to live and grow and become perfect; that we are individualized gods and not poor, sinful worms of the dust, why, almost any one would listen. But I don't blame the world for turning a deaf ear to the tradition and superstition which some of the modern speakers try to give us."

Dr. St. Elmo looked admiringly at Lolone. "Then you think, Lolone, that even a reception could be turned into a school of higher philosophy if we had enough brains to do it?"

Lolone stopped eating and, leaning over her plate, said earnestly: "I know it; I know that wherever we go, we find minds starving for a word of instruction about them-

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selves; life seems to so many only a blind game; and a little word rightly spoken would be appreciated even over a cocktail or an after-dinner liquor. We can even dance with a partner and enjoy the dance, yet find that the interest can all be centered around a simple word we let drop as we dance.

“There are so many who are sick in body and mind, it would be a Godsend to them to be taught how to heal their flesh and how to drop the anguish of mind; if they could only be told in a sensible way how to do it, they would crowd to the drawing-room just as eagerly for this as they do for cards. Health, Wealth, and Love — this is what the world is seeking, and no matter how things look on the outside, there are few who have this trinity in a way that satisfies them; I know that no one can ever get it until he knows the true idea of God, of Man, and of himself.

“If I were to study like you and Audrienne, I would teach the race a profound idea of

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a free Godhood, a free selfhood, and the power of man's mind over all things in the world. I would teach him how to heal his body through the use of his mind." "But," Audrienne interrupted, "there are so many who have no mind in evidence, or, at least, have minds which are not filled by any serious thoughts. I don't see how you could hope to get people to think when they only want to be entertained."

Lolone looked interested. "I would get them to know that their own minds made everything for them; I would let them see that even an idle thought came back to them and that if they thought weak, foolish things, they would find that they were meeting people and conditions to fit these things. I can tell you both, that what the whole world needs to know, is where to put the blame for experiences and that the place to put the blame for anything is on the self."

Audrienne and Dr. St. Elmo laughed and the Doctor said, "They would certainly enjoy hearing that, Lolone; every one is so

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ready to take the blame." "No, they are not," replied Lolone, "but life teaches us that this is the only truth; if you watch people and conditions, you can't help knowing, after a while, that life is really a repository and that every one is taking out of it just the things which he puts in and that what is put in from day to day cannot help being taken out."

Audrienne had finished her breakfast and pushing back her chair she turned eagerly to Lolone and said, "Oh, Lolone! just think of the things one meets in life of which he never has the slightest idea." Lolone answered: "Audrienne, when you have studied more, you will find that nothing will come to us but the reaction of our own thought energy; whatever we think about, we attract, even if we forget that we have set the thought energy in action; the Universal Mind keeps the record and it brings back to us just those things which we have built for ourselves; our thoughts are our creators; they create for us just what we conclude

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that they shall create, and everything that comes to us is a picture of their work; they would just as soon bring to us health, wealth, and love as disease, poverty, and unhappiness. When we can get folks to understand this, don't you think they will begin to be careful what they think, say, and do?"

Audrienne laughed. "Yes, Lolone," she said; the whole scheme of life will then be swallowed up in what not to think; one will have to be in constant terror that some little stray thought does not get away and do mischief. Wouldn't it be queer to look for everything one finds as something he had built for himself with his thoughts; some people would likely be shocked with their own unskillful fashionings, don't you think so?"

Lolone still looked animated as she replied: "Yes, they would be, but, nevertheless, whatever we find around us in form is just what we have fashioned for ourselves in thought; a hovel, a hunchback, are both pictures of thinking, and our own physical bodies are



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a symbol of just what we have thought of God.

“We are the supreme directors of our own thoughts and they must create for us; it is not their fault if, after they have finished, we do not like the pictures of our own creation; it is just as easy to direct them to build health, beauty, wealth, and freedom as it is to set them at work on the negative pictures. When we can get people to understand, we can teach them to build their body and its environment with their thoughts; beautiful thoughts linked with a perfect vision of harmony and wholeness will heal disease and take away poverty; a mind full of the thoughts of peace and joy won't long attract the things of unhappiness and woe.”

Dr. St. Elmo finished his breakfast as he said, “You surely would give the race-man a big idea of himself.” “Yes,” Lolone answered, “I would give him such a wonderful idea of God, Life and of the Self, that he would come again and again to hear it; I

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know what ought to be said. I don't hear either you or Audrienne saying it. Your studies seem to me to be simply frills which only a few can use; I know that use is the test of everything and that whatever can have a big usefulness in the world will become immortalized.

"You and Audrienne are simply pioneering a new psychological truth; only a few can use what you bring from it; it is wonderful because it is true, and those who understand will thank you for it; but the great human heart of the world, which must live and live right now and here, demands more than profound principles. The heart of the world is weak; it needs very close personal help, much closer than it can get from those on the other side of the veil, or that it can absorb from glittering generalities. You and Audrienne can idealize until the whole world stands still in curiosity to listen, but this won't help anybody. The foolish ones will just turn around and follow their own blind course and do things in hours of ig-

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norance which will darken their whole lifetime."

Dr. St. Elmo rose as he said, "You are always right, Lolone; it's only life itself that answers life, and only reality can hold the real. I know it; but come, let philosophy rest; wouldn't it be a thing of really vital importance for us to go along and psychologize your invitation list?" Laughing merrily, they all went into the library.

After a few hours of service to Lolone, Audrienne put on her hat and went to finish her day's studies at the school.

She ran out into the green coolness of the St. Elmo grounds with a heart full of joy and delight. She stood in all the beauty of nature and drank from its fullness, as one drinks from a bowl which overflows on the lips.

The St. Elmo park was in keeping with the mansion, for as Lolone excelled in the perfect arrangement of her home, so Dr. St. Elmo was the peer of all in the planning of his grounds. His workmen brought forth

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his slightest wish, and his eye caught the slightest irregularity of form or coloring.

The white gravel walks stretched far and near, the long white drive lay like a glistening stream of white sand far back through the luxuriant green trees; the flowers smiled from the most unexpected places, and here and there large rustic chairs sat invitingly in cool shadows.

There were large, cool, vine-covered arbors filled with long, low, rustic benches, where one could lie and read or dream the hours away; through rows of tall green cedars, one could catch a glimpse of a quiet lake in the distance, bearing on its bosom stately swans, floating lazily; white boats nestled close up to the lake's green sides. Near Audrienne a fountain flung its spray into the summer air and the drops fell back again with a low whisper into the depths of its own bosom.

As Audrienne stood in all this summer gladness, she thought that St. Elmo was a fairy kingdom, and she wondered how she

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lived before she came here; she stood in the shade of a tall tree and paused a moment, giving herself up to the mad joy of just being alive.

Never, never, had she been so happy; these were dear, dear days through which she was living, drinking in each one with a deep delight; as she stood there in the glory of this perfect daytime, she felt that she had lost all the traces of the old, impatient, discontented Audrienne; she felt as if the old, dissatisfied, wretched Audrienne had really been left on the farm and a new, radiant creature had been born from her memory. It seemed to her that some new life had folded her in its warm embrace and swept her into complete forgetfulness.

She wondered why life passed so quickly; a glory seemed to shine everywhere; she felt like one living always in the warm rays of a golden sunshine; she looked at the wonder-world around and asked her heart, would this glory ever depart, would she ever find that beneath this there were threads

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which might become somber? Standing there in the sweet perfumed silence of the air, she drank deep draughts of the breath of the flowers from the beds around her; she gave herself up completely to the enjoyment of the thoughts and satisfied emotions of her heart. Surely, Life was good and God had been good to her in answer to her prayers for the fulfillment of her best desires. After she had filled her soul with joy, praise, and the exquisite peace of satisfied possession, she passed on to the school.

How unsympathetic is nature! even in the midst of its beauty and joy; how strange that it never seems to feel our woe or warn us of our approaching Gethsemane; no voice of nature sounded even a slight alarm to Audrienne; the bees hummed on, the trees rustled their green leaves, the birds sang in yet wilder madness, the flowers beside Audrienne's path smiled on in undisturbed beauty, the winds stole round in wooing softness; nothing changed; nothing told her a tale of the possible future.

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She had wept in those dull days of the past, wept over the miseries of an untried life; she had wept for the promise of a greater life which she seemed not likely to inherit; she had wept for sympathy, wept for love, for understanding, for appreciation; yet no voice here in the beauty of the world around her whispered to her that there were tears yet to be shed, that she could weep again; weep just as bitter tears over the fullness of her heart, over the secrets of her own soul, over the burning knowledge of all that life could give her and all that life could take away from her. The sweet, dreamy days in which Audrienne lingered were filled with nothing but a breath of peace, a blissful rest; if there was ever to be a cloud-dimmed sky for her, nothing told her, nothing spoke; nothing hinted that fierce lightning flashes would ever cover her.

## CHAPTER SEVEN



WHO DOES NOT LOVE A grand ball? There is something bewitching in it, even when it is not accompanied with embellishments such as Lolone St. Elmo set around her wonderful home.

The house was thrown open from cellar to garret; it was a blaze of light, a bower of loveliness; no skill of floral decorator had been neglected, and the setting of the flowers alone would have been something to remember.

The walls of the conservatory were banked high; here and there were broken spots where lights looked like radiant blossoms, and under the shadowy lights of the glimmering electric dome, the display of the room was indescribable. Soft perfume and an indistinct fragrance floated everywhere.



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In the back, beyond all the beauty of the smaller, softer flowers, waved the tall palmettos, while around them clustered the green ivies; to glance down this wonderful depth and catch its suggestions of perfected, luxuriant beauty, made the heart swell with emotions impossible to put into words.

Through the house, everything that wealth and art could supply had been done to please the curious eye of polite society, and in this wonderland of beauty, perfume, light, and flowers, women and men moved in all the ease and nonchalance of accustomed association. Beauty, laughter, song, and happiness seemed everywhere, and through it Lolone and Audrienne flitted, veritable queens of a mixed people.

Audrienne, tall, easy, graceful, passed from guest to guest, her face lighted with a happy smile. She was dressed in a gown of pure white silk; around her throat she wore a string of the purest pearls and with a soft white rose in her hair, she made one think of dew and early sunshine, with per-

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haps a breath of sweet violets. Her hair seemed to have caught the glint of sunshine, from the day, and gleamed and glistened; her eyes were deep and luminous, more purple than ever. There were many comments upon her appearance, and many thought her the most beautiful woman in the room.

Lolone wore her favorite colors of amber and black; the soft lace rippled over her arms and fell carelessly away from her perfect shoulders. She carried a bouquet of passion flowers and her face with its soft bloom, her level eyebrows, her proud, scornful lips, her eyes with their glow of pride, power, and passion, her wonderful rippling hair, which, soft, scented, curled around her face, made a picture an artist would have longed to portray. With her natural reckless abandon, she was the center of all interest; all knew that she was the finished product of art and nature, as beautiful as a Spanish song, all fire, glow, and passion.

As she and Audrienne paused for a mo-

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ment together, there could not have been a greater contrast. One fair and strong, like a pure white lily lifting its wistful face full of a white light of infinite richness; the other like a tropical flower, rich in perfume, heavy, sweet as some deadly narcotic.

Lolone was always the center of a host of admirers, and for her the sun of chivalry shone in every eye, spoke from every lip, and Lolone St. Elmo sat crowned, showered with the triumphs for which she had risked all her soul happiness. She had played the highest card for this and had won.

The face that had haunted her in the past, the face that had looked at her with silent eyes in the seance, still looked momentarily, above the glow and gleam of the world around; but she only grew more radiant, only smiled more brightly, only sparkled in an irresistible way, while she lived, moved, and rejoiced in this hothouse of opulence, adulation, beauty, and power.

Why should any one blame her; she is just a type. We read of her in this story,

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but we meet her every night in any ball-room; we follow her in every city, in every country; there are thousands of her kind, who have paid in full for what they get out of life.

It is an inviolate law, that one can have whatever he wants in this life if he is willing to pay for it and knows how to get it; it is only after the heart has had and held and lived out its inner madness of desire, that it finds that there are many things not worth the price, and that some things were better forever left in the hands of loss; for after one has bartered all the holy things of his very being, the ghost of his true desire challenges him, and under each new triumph of external power he turns back and hears forever the voice of his own heart telling its solemn story of inviolate faithfulness.

As the evening wore on, Dr. St. Elmo and Audrienne stood in the ballroom. "Let us dance, Audrienne," he said, as the band struck up a low, soft waltz song. They

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paused for a moment in silence and then glided away.

He who does not know the rapture of dancing has lost much; quite too much to say that life has fully accomplished him. It is enough to dance with one who is a friend and a good partner, but to drift away into the languorous dream of music with one we love; to forget all but the intoxicating poetry of motion and his dear presence; to feel for a few moments that heart, mind, and body blend and mingle in the mad clasp of harmony and rhythm; this is true rapture.

There may be moments of greater physical rapture which it is possible to know, but true it is, that no rapture like a mad one of union of rhythm and intelligence can ever be found, ever be consciously continued. Life may lead us away from these mountain tops of intensified feeling, but the human heart, weighed down by the dullness of years, will turn now and then and beat wildly against the bars of its sweetest memory. Those who have loved, lost, and suffered

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will always shudder when they hear the low, sobbing swing of the violins and the soft swish of the feet set to music.

Audrienne and Dr. St. Elmo whirled on in a maze of happy being; her warm, scented hair touched his cheek; his breath fanned her face; they moved in perfect unison; identity was lost; they felt that they were one, whirling away on, on, on, happy, lost in the music and in each other.

A crash and a bang and the band was still; Dr. St. Elmo, looking into Audrienne's glowing eyes, said passionately, "It's too bad that anything of such utter sweetness could ever end; weren't you happy, Audrienne?" Her smiling eyes answered him while they passed out of the room to mingle with the crowd of dancers and lose themselves in the sea of scintillating gayety.

The banquet was over and those who did not dance had gone; the gay crowd of devotees to the dance were whirling in wild disorder, each following in his own way the chase for pleasure, when Lolone, approach-

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ing Audrienne, said, "Have you seen Dr. St. Elmo? Should you meet him, will you say I wish he would come to me?" Audrienne answered with a smile, "Yes, I saw him in the ballroom just now; I think he is on his way to the conservatory; I will go and find him."

Rapidly she went in search of him; he was not in the ballroom, so she went on into the conservatory, and as she entered she saw Dr. St. Elmo coming into the room from a distant door. He was not alone, but seemed to be saying good-by to some one, and Audrienne waited, sinking into a divan behind tall, dense foliage, thinking to speak to him when he had finished his conversation.

After a few moments, Dr. St. Elmo seemed to have changed his intentions, for he came slowly to the side of the room where Audrienne was hidden.

The woman on his arm was one whom Audrienne had met during the evening, a Madame Donley, who had called to herself

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marked attention because of her peculiar costume of pale rose-colored velvet and her flashing diamonds. She was beautiful and bewitching, and Audrienne had observed her closely during the evening; she was the perfect type of the butterfly of fashion.

It was easy to see that she and Dr. St. Elmo had just come out for a few breaths of cooler air after the warmth of the dancing; they paused as they drew near, apparently deep in some argument; Audrienne sat quietly, waiting for the opportunity to speak to the Doctor of Lolone's message, and, in the meantime, they were too far away for her to hear their words or to get any drift of their conversation, so she sat in restful safety.

Madame Donley stood looking up into Dr. St. Elmo's face, talking in a low, rapid manner, while Dr. St. Elmo bent over her, holding her hands in his own.

As they stood thus, a rose fell from her gown to the floor; Dr. St. Elmo stooped, picked it up, lifted it tenderly to his lips,



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then fastened it in the lapel of his coat. When she had ceased talking, he answered her earnestly and then raising her hands to his lips, kissed them tenderly, and, drawing her arm through his own, led her toward a door, through which they passed to one of the secluded verandas.

Audrienne, left alone in the deserted room, had grown whiter than the white flower which she wore in her hair; she was breathless, suffocating; what did it mean? what was this sudden madness that seemed to possess her? why had her heart leaped with such a fierce sharp pain and then as suddenly refused to beat? where had Dr. St. Elmo and Madame Donley gone? why had the Doctor kissed her hand? why so tenderly cherished her fallen flower? Audrienne's heart ceased to beat; her eyes felt blind; her temples throbbed; what was it to her anyway? he had done nothing; any gallant man would have done the same thing, — but, but she remembered the tender bending of his face, the earnest

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lowness of his tone, and her heart throbbed again in bitter, burning, jealous pain; what could she do? what would she tell Lolone?

Nerving herself to appear natural, she went back to the ballroom to Lolone, with the first lie her lips had ever spoken. "She could not find him," she said; "she would send a servant for him."

Later, when Dr. St. Elmo came in eager haste to claim her for their last dance, she was missing, and Lolone said she had a headache and had begged to be excused.

The dance went on to its last dizzy round; the last good-by had been said, the last carriage had gone, and the St. Elmo reception would be one of the themes of conversation for many a day, for it was one of the grand occasions of the season, and society would not soon forget it.

Lolone retired to her room satiated with compliment, filled with pride, happy that she was in a position to reflect credit on her husband, on herself, and to be the supreme note in the overtone of a critical society;

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she had surely reigned a queen in a world of wealth and beauty.

But among the perfume of the flowers, in the soft swing of the music, in the hot-house glare and loveliness, an innocent, guileless heart had died that night and out of the ashes of this gold and tinsel show there had sprung and bloomed a passionate, loving one, whose every throb was torture and whose every beat was a cry of a soul in despair.

Alone in her room, in the soft light of the open window, with her hands clasped despairingly over her head, her long hair tossed in unconfined beauty, Audrienne knelt; wretched, wretched, wretched! It was past now, all the innocence, all the guilelessness; kneeling there in the dim light alone, with her face hidden from the sight of angels and men, Audrienne shed bitter, scalding tears, passionate tears, jealous tears, tears of anguish, of shame, and of reproach.

She knew it all now; knew why she had always been living in the sunshine; knew

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why with Dr. St. Elmo for her master and teacher there had been nothing her soul lacked or missed. She knew that she loved him; knew that this knowledge would only end when this life should end; she shivered with the awfulness of the truth. She knew that she had lost forever the sinless peace and quiet of her old consciousness. All had passed, and with it she had flung herself in one long, dizzy leap out from the tranquil wall of blindness on to this barren spot, where she was sobbing alone in the darkness. What could she do? what would she do? this was too great a secret; how could she bear it? was there no way out of it, no help, no hope? She raised her white hands despairingly; she listened for some mystical something to come stealing into her heart, telling her the way; but none came.

The sun had set with its last beams falling on a happy, trusting, glorified woman; the morning rays stole in and shone in shimmering grayness over a miserable, wretched

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one, whose tear-stained face lay bowed in the white ashes of grief; broken, hopeless; the white face told the story of a soul stricken dumb with remorse and despair.

While she weeps on, there are many who still stand beside her with the same gaunt specter of deeper revelation awake in their own breast; as the silence of the night surrounds Audrienne's pitiful secret, so the silence of discretion, conventionality, and duty hides their own. There are hearts everywhere growing weary with this same heavy woe; it is the pathway of spiritual transmutation; in this melting pot, this human crucible, life burns itself into purest gold.

## CHAPTER EIGHT



THE MORNING SUN ROSE clear and bright, its rays falling here and there in smiling gladness.

Audrienne, worn out with thinking, had at last fallen asleep and did not awaken until late in the day, but awoke to the same old torturing thoughts; she knew she had to face the situation, so shutting up her heart, she went out to her lessons at the school; but that night when she returned home, she felt tired and weary, yet, knowing that her absence from the dinner table would bring down upon her head increased attention, she forced herself to be present.

Dr. St. Elmo and Lolone both noticed her unusual pallor and Lolone said jokingly, "Audrienne, you would never do for high

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life; it's plain the good Lord intended you for another purpose."

Audrienne made an evasive answer, for at the first sight of Dr. St. Elmo, her heart had beat again in its fierce suffocation.

The dinner passed in the usual bright talk; Lolone was full of the subject of the ball and Audrienne bravely tried to listen and even appear interested and thought she had succeeded, but the man who watched her with his own heart on fire saw through all her seeming interest and knew that she was forcing her composure, acting a part; and he wondered deeply what had come over her; he could not tell.

After dinner they went into the music room and Audrienne, fearing that Lolone would leave them alone, went directly to her own room.

Dr. St. Elmo thought of her for hours; what ailed her? If she had been overworking, she needed rest and medical attention; but he doubted this, for she had been so well only yesterday. He decided to watch

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her closely for a few days, then he would know; but as the days wore on, Audrienne carefully avoided him.

Lolone, always engrossed in her own affairs, paid little attention beyond cautioning her to rest, as she fancied the whole indisposition came from too close attention to her studies.

Dr. St. Elmo made one attempt after another to bring her into their old familiar companionship and Audrienne in her turn made one or two feeble attempts, from which she barely rescued herself; at last, she always offered some excuse, "she was busy" or "indisposed."

Finally, the truth began to dawn upon Dr. St. Elmo that she was purposely avoiding him. He saw the quick blush come when she met him and then die away, to be replaced by a deadly pallor; and, man of the world as he was, his heart trembled at the sweetness of the thought that perhaps she too was awakening to the truth that he was something more to her than a friend and a master.



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One evening, after she had avoided him for days, he met her on the path coming from the lake. He reached out his hand tenderly to take hers, but she shrank from him as from an unfriendly blow.

Dr. St. Elmo passed this unnoticed and said, "Where have you been all these days? Come, Audrienne, the evening is beautiful, let us take a row on the lake."

She turned away. "Don't ask me," she said; "I cannot, I am going into the house," and he saw the conscious shrinking from his touch and the fear of his presence; he saw her face grow white and tremulous.

Coming to her side he said, reproachfully, "Audrienne, I don't understand you; what have I done? Why do you avoid me?" She only raised her eyes and looked into his questioningly, but the pain in her expression answered him more fully than words could have done. She opened her lips to speak, but no sound came forth and, turning quickly, she left him and passed toward the house.

She left him standing there with out-

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stretched hands; left him in all the beauty of the hour, but not alone. With him there remained a rapturous knowledge, so sweet, that, no matter what bitterness might come, had told him all.

She *loved* him; the knowledge warmed his heart like fire. Some day they should stand in revealed loving; he would tell her all that he had in his heart, she should tell him all that lay behind the silence of her lips and the purple shadows of her eyes. Standing there in silent reverie he longed for her, he must see her; he must see her eyes turned again to him with their hidden secret. He had never been a man of delays; what he wanted he had gone after; he was used to conquest; now that he knew, he was not the one to let life take or withhold anything from him. His heart beat low in the intensity of his own imaginings.

As he stood there under the sky, dreaming on, the day died; the gloaming fell around him; a soft, sweet hush came over everything; the air was breathless; he could al-

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most hear the beating of his heart. The fickle breezes had left and the trees and leaves were unstirred, silent, waiting, like his own heart; waiting, waiting, waiting.

At this hour comes night's great benediction; to those who have never known a sorrow, it comes with the softest stealing, and their hearts grow lighter, their laughter softer, their song sweeter; but to the storm-tossed life it sometimes only makes their burdens fresher, their grief clearer, and in the silence of the eventide the longing voice of their soul can be heard again, sobbing its story of memory through the sacredness of nature's myriad voices of consolation.

The days that followed were strange ones to Audrienne. She fought a great fight with thought and grief; she tried to face life in the same old way.

There were days when she thought the strain would kill her; she had been so happy just a little while ago; now she wondered what happiness meant. Filled with a wild chaos of thought, her days dragged on.

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One afternoon when she had just returned from the school, she went into the library to study over the lectures of the day. She was busy trying to decipher some notes when Lolone, passing the door, entered and said, "Some mighty problem again, Audrienne? You look really perplexed."

Audrienne laid down the paper. "Yes, Lolone, this is rather hard to understand. Madame Arnold lectured this morning on 'The purpose of creation' and she said many rather obscure things. This puzzles me;" and Audrienne read from her paper; "'In the beginning was the One and through the law of emanation another one came forth, and the first pair was; then from the last one another one came and the trinity of creation became manifest in the three; then from the last one of this three, another came forth and the second pair was. Thus has life ever reproduced itself, thus will it ever reproduce itself, for there is nothing in the universe except creation, emanation, and evolution.'

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“Again, she says,” continued Audrienne, “the one and two are exact polarizations, so are the three and the four and these are eternal affinities, whether they be atom or man; but the two and three, one and four, and three and two, are negative polarizations on all planes of consciousness.

“This negation manifesting in the mineral is called positive and negative attraction, in the vegetable and animal it is called the law of harmonious and inharmonious reproduction, and in man it is called hate and love. Those who are natural affinities from the beginning meet in the law of love throughout all eternities; those who are in the negative polarizations meet in passionate attraction in hate and under the law of change.

“Nothing in Heaven or on earth will hold atom, vegetable, animal, or man together in harmonious union, but the higher law of their own polarization; only intelligence and self-evolved understanding gives them mastery over themselves and a control of external condition of time and place and persons.”

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Audrienne laid down her paper. "Can you get that, Lolone, and put it into common sense talk?"

Lolone sank into a soft chair as she said, "Why, yes, Audrienne, that seems quite clear to me. In the beginning of life everything started in pairs and it continues in pairs. There are pairs which are affinities and those which are not; but the ones which make the pairs do not affinitize with other pairs, so there is positive and negative attraction. The negative attractions hold so long as there is not a positive attraction; don't you see? Take a man and woman, for instance; there is always the pair who belong to each other, always did belong to each other from the first, and when they are together, no other person has any power to divide them. That is what the masters meant when they said, 'Those whom God has joined together let no man put asunder.'"

Audrienne still looked perplexed and asked again, "Then, Lolone, you believe that in the beginning there was a twin soul and

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that every one in the world is the half of a pair, do you?"

"Why, yes, Audrienne, how could it be otherwise? Man is a small world in a big world and how could you have a universe or a whole world with only half of it in form? There is always the other half of everything. Man is only a part of himself, woman is only a part in herself, and it is only when they are joined as one, that their world is finished. Every one has his twin soul, and this is the search of the soul, The Holy Grail. When a soul finds true love, it finds God, for life, Love, and God are one and the same thing."

Audrienne looked at her with wondering eyes. "But, Lolone, think of the many people who are married, who do not love each other, and who, it seems, have no reason to be together; surely you could not say they were really pairs, could you, or twin souls? Their whole world seems to be torn to shreds and tatters rather than being finished."

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Lolone smiled. "Yes, Audrienne, that is so, but you must remember that the union of those who are not affinities is just as much a part of the divine plan as is the union of true pairs. Every marriage in the world is the right marriage, but only here and there do we find the true marriage which is the marriage of twin souls; the right marriage is the marriage of those whom the high masters of the spheres use in the construction work of the universe; they are but atoms in the course of attainment. In the right marriages men and women are taking lessons from life, learning to find themselves and to help the one they marry to find himself or herself. Marriage, except between affinities, is simply a training school in which the ordinary man and woman takes a good lesson.

"How do they know, Lolone, when they are affinities and when they are not?" asked Audrienne.

"That's an easy thing to tell, Audrienne; whenever twin souls meet in this world



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they just rush together and stay together; nothing ever parts them, nothing ever disturbs them; 'Perfect love casteth out all fear;' they just go away, marry, stay together and the world never hears of them again unless one or the other dies. It is not from the true lovers that the world hears anything; they have no time, for love must love; that's its sole business; it is only when love has nothing to love and when it is seeking its love and not finding it, that the world hears its voice. Then it breathes its genius of loving into some great picture, some great harmony, or some piece of marble carrying its longing to all the world.

"There is a land where the glorious nightingale is born, and those who traffic in these little creatures put out their eyes so that in the darkness of their little world they may sing the sweeter; and because their eyes are out, those who listen can never forget the tender pathos of their song. So with those who have not found love, who are seeking love, or those who have found and lost

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it; their songs are sweeter because they sweep over heartstrings that are sad.

“Those who are not affinities are taking a perfect lesson in working for the rest of the race and when they have fulfilled their mission they will be reborn with their very own and life will be for them one long, sweet incarnation of rest and peace.”

Audrienne looked at Lolone with shining eyes; she was plainly laboring under some great strain. She moved restlessly, waited a moment, and then said, “Lolone, are you and Dr. St. Elmo affinities?”

Lolone arose with a rippling laugh and moving toward the door said, “Affinities! Oh, dear, no! We are just fellow-travelers on the same train in life. We are all right because we enjoy each other’s company and because on the same train are thousands just like ourselves. No, indeed, Dr. St. Elmo is slaving his life away for a thankless world, while I am just drifting through, waiting until I find a way out again; if he and I were affinities, do you think he would

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be always hidden in his laboratory trying to seek into all the hidden things which he fancies if he discovers will make the world better? Well, I should say not! If we were affinities, the only mystery world to him would be my eyes, and the only undiscovered world of things would be the secret of our ever renewing love and passion for each other. No one would ever hear of us; we would be aside, apart, living in the realities of life. Why, Audrienne, only those who do not have love in this life are the givers; real, true love is not giving, it is being. Love is not a possession, it is simply a divine revelation of the soul; those who meet in true being have won all the prizes in life; they can rest from their labors." Lolone quietly left the room.

Audrienne sat a long time in silent meditation, then feeling the atmosphere of the house oppressive, she picked up her papers and wandered out into the park.

She had to be alone to think, to think of what had been, of what was, for Lolone's

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answer rung yet in her ears: "Oh, dear, no! If Dr. St. Elmo and I were affinities, the only mystery world to him would be my eyes, and the only undiscovered world of things would be the secret of our ever renewing love and passion for each other."

Yes, that was the great mystery; she wondered if Dr. St. Elmo would understand when he stood face to face with this mystery. He had always explained everything; would this be the mystery which he was ever seeking, and what would he say if he knew?"

She wandered on into the deepest, darkest shrubbery, until it hid her completely from view, and here she sat down to be alone with her heart; here she could dare to think out loud; here she would face this deep secret of her soul; here she would strangle it; here she would snatch it out of her heart. This quiet loneliness was all her own and in the glory of her solitude she sat drinking in again the beauty of the world around her; the thirst of her mind and her heart drove her on.

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There was not a thing which she overlooked; the humming of the bees, the lazy, swirling flies, the slightly rustling leaves, the springing fountain with its dress of ferns and flowers, the little humming bird as it paused with its lips to the heart of a flower,—all seemed to whisper some new story of love that was not strange to her ears.

Through all the after years she never forgot the beauty of that spot, the quiet of the hours, nor the sad anguish of her soul which followed.

With her head resting on a soft pillow of grass she had gone on dreaming of her secret, going over and over again the blindness of the years and the pain of her awakening, when suddenly some one came rapidly through the shrubbery toward her. It was Dr. St. Elmo, who had seen her leave the house and had followed her. She had barely time to spring to her feet, when he was beside her.

Love, holy or unholy, finds its voice sometimes, and there, alone with the woman he

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loved so passionately, so madly, carried away, given up to the impulse and sweetness of the hour, stirred with the tumult of a passion long controlled, he spoke words to her that could never be unsaid and while Audrienne lived she would remember them.

Wild with rapture of the truth her face had told him, alone with her very presence waiting for his own sweet will, he knew no restraint. He loved her; he who had never known what loving meant. This peculiar wonder-woman held his soul in her keeping; she was near him, and for the moment he forgot everything but the intoxication of possession.

He folded her to him in a long embrace, then, putting her from him, gathered her yet more closely into his arms. Her pale, sweet face lay on his breast at last — at last; her beautiful radiant hair fell over his cheek; with rapturous face he bent over her; he told her how he loved; he begged for the assurance of her love for him; he gathered her in perfect possession when her

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shy yielding told him the truth that he was as madly sweet to her as she to him.

The hour he had dreamed of was his at last. The purple eyes looked into his, filled with the shadows of hopeless loving, the starlike face did not turn from his warm caresses.

She lay unresisting in his arms, unconscious of anything but the fact that love had named them for its own; feeling nothing but his mad embrace, hearing nothing but his passionate words of endearment. They had sought for the hidden mysteries of life and here, alone, under the clear sky, looking deeply into each other's eyes, with lips touching lips, they had found them.

There are moments in this mortal life that have in them so much of all that is highest, sweetest, and best, that one would be a coward not to take them; yet even in the moment that we make them our very own, there comes with them the haunting knowledge that they cannot continue.

In the stillness of that hidden solitude,

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the moment struck when the sweetness of their mistaken love vanished and the voice of it, unhappiness, seemed to rise from their hearts.

Among the shadows of the cool green trees, in the midst of happy, singing, careless birds, under the blue of the tranquil sky, they stood at last and looking into each other's eyes read there the story of fierce regrets, of life-long heart-hunger, a deathless loving, and a silence deep as the silence of a grave.

Those who stand by need not condemn them; they need only pity, for all who have known what it meant to have the one they loved best tell them that they were loved in return; those who have known the joy and the pain of mistaken hours, those who have stood face to face yet with a river of eternal destiny dividing them, and have longed fiercely, madly, to cross it on the frail bridge of their human desire,—only those will understand, and these will speak no word, for they will know what Dr. St. Elmo and Audrienne knew in that hour; they had found all they



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had looked for; all they had longed for, far above the law of all mystical research, and found it in an hour when it was too late.

She was not to blame; she had never known what love was, only in the dim ideal; yet even now in the strength of this man's loving her heart gave a glad leap, for she had at any cost realized her ideal.

Yes, it is true, he was weak; they were both weak, but they knew it; it was something both would remember while the stream flowed on with murmuring song, remember while the flowers bloomed, while the rains fell, throughout all time, all eternity; they should love each other; but in vain, in vain.

With this wretched knowledge standing between them, she turned from the arms that seemed to have taken her in forever, turned away her eyes, sad and filled with speechless pain.

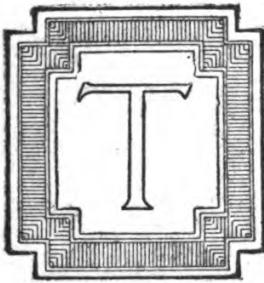
The soft wind blowing past them an hour later saw only a man and a woman standing among the shrubbery, hands

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clasped in hands, heart talking with heart, soul laid bare to soul. It heard Audrienne's sob of sorrow as she put honor between her and love. It heard St. Elmo's passionate words of entreaty; it carried on its bosom a passionate prayer for strength, which fell from Audrienne's lips as she turned away resolutely from the embrace that was weakening her resolution; it saw her white hands lifted in tearful pleading to the man who tempted her, tempted her against herself, tempted her with love's tenderest temptings; it saw her leave him and with a white face and stricken eyes pass to the house in the distance; and the words it whispered from tree to tree, and from tree to listening grass, were the words it had stolen from Audrienne's faltering lips: "I love you, but I will be true to my honor; true to my womanhood forever."

## CHAPTER NINE



THE GREATEST TRAGEDIES of life are often played out in silence; caught in the interest and action of the things which come before us with noise and roar, we miss the greater things which go on in subtle stillness beside us.

In the days which followed their day of gain and loss, Audrienne and Dr. St. Elmo played the master parts in a great tragedy.

How strange it is that those who see the slightest change in a stranger often fail to discover the changes which are carried on under their very roof; Lolone, in spite of her keen perceptions, never noticed a jar anywhere. She often felt anxious about Audrienne and constantly urged her to stop studying and rest, but she never once came near guessing the real cause of her condition.

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Dr. St. Elmo seemed more attentive to his business than ever and his laboratory completely absorbed him. At first he had hushed his desire to be with Audrienne, to have her with him, but her desire too was not dead even though she refused to listen to it, and she found it necessary now and then to seek him for advice in her studies.

He found that he could have her with him if he paid the price of silence, so he tried keeping every love word unsaid; but as the days wore on restraint became impossible and, in the face of all her resolutions, he broke through the command and poured his passionate entreaties into her ears.

“Why could they not be friends? Friends in the closest sense of the word? He loved her, she loved him; why should she shrink from his caress? what could stand between them? Lolone was happy; she had never wanted his affection; he had never known love until he met Audrienne; would she not then come in tenderness and crown his life?”

At her feet, with his heart in his voice, he

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pleaded for her to yield, but he pleaded in vain, for between his tempting words and face she put honor, always honor and duty. She said they could not help loving, but they could help their actions; life was not their own to do with as they chose; some part of it had always to be renunciation. He must be true or lose the pleasure of their being together.

So the weary months dragged on, while the burden of their mistaken loving lay heavy — heavier. She felt every day that her strength was slowly failing, that her longing was deepening in his direction, that her resolutions were unmistakably fading into a subtle sense and longing for complete and satisfied surrender to the call of her own soul.

Who can travel a dangerous pathway and not lose his footing? Who can stand on the edge of a mountain and not grow dizzy? Who can be the comrade with desire and retain virtue?

Audrienne felt all these things; she felt

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that this fiery draught she was daily drinking with Dr. St. Elmo was stealing through her veins, dulling her senses and dimming her vision; she hated herself for loving him; she hated herself for her deception to Lolone; Lolone, who had been her sister, friend, and almost a mother; and, through all, her master, and even the open door to her world of freedom. Often she almost hated Dr. St. Elmo, yet in that very hour she found herself forgiving and excusing him. She thought of him hour after hour; he held her every action in his keeping; she often asked herself the meaning of it all.

Was this love? And was this the lover she had walked so trustingly through the world to meet? Her lover, another woman's husband? Was it possible that she had turned from Harold's pure affection to welcome to her heart this unholy, passionate incense, fascinating while it destroyed her?

She had said that her lover should be all fire and glow and passion and come to her, pure from the hands of the first woman, his

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mother. She shuddered at the distance she had fallen. She loved honor; she loved Dr. St. Elmo; was there ever such an impossible condition? She felt that she was daily slipping toward a precipice over which those who fell never again sought or found the tops of the mountain, and yet — yet, she went on waiting — struggling — at last worn out by the war from within and without; weary of struggling against herself; in spite of her love for Lolone, her reverence for duty, and her pledge to honor, she faltered, faltered.

Filled with this great love which she could not kill or conquer, drunk with the glamour which his loving brought her, she forgot something of the realities of life; forgot the great principles for which they had both been living; forgot all but his love for her, her love for him; and they lived some time in a world of their own making, made beautiful with the consciousness of what loving can bring.

In his arms life bloomed to a heaven of love which had in it all the qualities of

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eternal tenderness. Love, warm, sweet, clinging; too sweet to be ever forgotten, too hidden to be ever absolute; but it warmed their hearts like wine and shone like radiant stars over their darkened world, which without it would have been too desolate.

She gave him all the love her heart was capable of, yet with it she gave him misery, wretchedness, and tears, for she knew no peace day or night from thought. She worked harder than ever; constantly, unceasingly; yet nothing could drown the voice in her heart; and driven half mad with thought, laden with mistaken hours, the months wore on, until, ill with unrest and pain, she felt she could stand it no longer.

Standing one day in the golden October sunshine, with the pure air caressing her cheek, the carol of gay songsters ringing in glad happiness, she felt that in all this pure, sweet earth, she alone was impure; reading her story, turning the pages of her life's book, she felt all at once the innocent white pages becoming a flaming crimson.



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She felt that she was losing her immortal birthright of noble womanhood; what would she do? and her soul answered her, she would endure it no longer; dauntless in the past when a blind future tried to check her, in her headlong plunge into experience, she felt now within her a deathless something which should help her to rise and save her, when in answer to her soul's command she should fling herself out again, even if it was over into a chasm of a deathlike hopelessness. She would shake off this deadly thing that was strangling her and stand out in the light of her own soul.

She resolved then and there to leave the St. Elmo home; she would no longer live with Lolone and hide this great secret; she would go away and with work drown some of her sorrow; she would go to Madame Arnold and be taught how to work for others.

She owed it to Lolone, to herself, and to Dr. St. Elmo, to God, even, for if she went away Dr. St. Elmo's path would also become

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unshadowed. Yes, she would go, but—but—and her heart sprang up in wild questioning; could she leave him forever and live? Oh, what bitterness! surely, surely she had planted where she could never hope to gather. Well, she would bury her dead alone, keep her secret forever; no one but God should know it; standing there, she whispered over and over again her resolutions, and some hidden voice seemed to say, "Only truth can hold truth; this is the soul's resurrection."

When she had silenced the voice of her own complaining, she went into the house; she wanted to see Dr. St. Elmo, so going down early to dinner she found him alone. She said, "Will you meet me at the boats at eight? I want to see you."

Lolone was going out, so Dr. St. Elmo eagerly assented.

After dinner, Audrienne waited with feverish impatience for Lolone's departure. At last she heard the carriage drive away and knew that she had gone, careless, free, in-

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different, gay, with a party of the gayest, totally unconscious of the sorrow she had left behind her.

Throwing a soft black shawl around her shoulders, Audrienne went out into the beauty of the night; went resolutely to battle for what seemed to her the open road of virtue and womanhood, to conquer in the name of the ideal she revered.

Dr. St. Elmo was waiting; he did not speak, only pressed her hand in silence; he assisted her into a boat and, stepping in after her, shoved off from the shore; rowing gently, they were soon out upon the bosom of the lake. When he had rowed for some time, he laid down the oars and said, "What a wonderful thought of yours, Audrienne; I have longed so to see you; I am weary with waiting and hungry for the gift of yourself." He slipped from his seat to the bottom of the boat and, kneeling at her feet, turned with eager, outstretched arms to embrace her.

She met him with a quiet resistance how-

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ever. "Arthur, listen; I have come to you not for happiness, but to make us both still more wretched. Our talk cannot be of love, but of that dark shadow of love. Doctor, dear Doctor, our love had no future but to part and I have come to tell you that I am going away; I cannot stay; I am not strong enough to be near you and still be all I wish to be.

"It must be wrong for us to love each other; if it is not wrong, what can be wrong? Deception can surely never be truth. Madame Arnold says that those who sow deception will reap deception and their harvest of deception has in it the weeds of dishonor. I had rather leave you now, loving you better than my own soul, than miss the higher pathway of life and all of our great usefulness. Oh! can't you feel how I could better live forever a homeless exile in the land of love than try to build my love-house on the land where another held the right of dwelling?"

She turned to him pleadingly. "Won't

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you help me, Arthur? Won't you do your part? Won't you let your blessing be the star to guide me? It may help me to forget, help me to know how to live through my soul's midnight."

She had turned her face fully toward him; she looked so beautiful in her passionate pleading that the man before her trembled; he was face to face with a loss his soul dare not accept.

He turned with reckless daring towards her; he crushed down the white hands raised in pleading and gathered her madly to his heart; he kissed her over and over again in perfect forgetfulness; then, releasing her, he knelt at her feet with his head bowed low over her hands.

He pleaded, pleaded for what was more than life to him. He said: "Audrienne, you don't mean it; would you destroy my life like that? Don't you know that I could not live without you? Leave me, and I will fling myself behind the veils as another would fling himself over a precipice; having

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known you and then to live without you — Audrienne, I cannot! I will not! Promise me that you will not go; promise me, promise me, Audrienne!”

She drew her hands resolutely away; turned her eyes from his pleading face. “I must not promise you; we know that there can be no hope for a love like ours; think of the great river of duty that rolls between us, which we can never bridge. You are seeking the highest; so am I; and can the mysteries of life reveal and truth explain to those who walk with their feet in the chains of a lie? We have been mad, Doctor, — mad!”

He saw the tears on her face; he heard the trembling pathos of her tones; and again he gathered her into his arms. “Yes, Audrienne, but it was such sweet madness, and it would be a greater madness to break our hearts by parting; you are mine, mine, and there is no law in the absolute to keep us apart; what shall part us?”

“Only honor,” Audrienne answered; “this is the law of man, and you have said all

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laws are one, 'that as above, so below;' so this must be the law divine. Doctor, we must walk where the right is, even if we have to carry with us a sorrow more dreadful than death. Come, take my hands in yours again, but this time help me to walk the higher pathway." She had slipped from her seat too into the bottom of the boat, and she looked up at him with sad, entreating eyes; she was not crying, but there was agony in her voice, which Dr. St. Elmo heard and which made his own eyes misty with unshed tears.

"See, Doctor," she went on; "I am kneeling here in weakness before you, struggling with my own heart. I met you an innocent, trusting woman with all her dream of love untold, and I am leaving you a sad and unhappy one. What has our love brought me? Nothing but tears and pain in these days of our past and a future robbed of joy; it has driven me out of my garden of Eden, out of my regained paradise; it has taken everything, every rapture, every hope, every

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ambition, and left me nothing but silent remorse and a secret to lay forever like a scar on my heart. Now, when every dream has failed me, when my heart is struggling madly against its own sweetest happiness, won't you help me, Doctor, won't you help me be strong?"

She had never looked so glorified to him as she did now; she raised her face all white and pleading to him; the pain in her violet eyes trembled, died, and sprang to life again; she seemed like some fair spirit of another sphere pleading not for herself, but rather for his higher life and the resurrection of truth and right in his soul.

She did not plead in vain, for this man, who had often made his own consciousness a link between this world and that one over there, who had stood so close to the borderland of many worlds, who had spoken for those who have the destiny of the race in their hands, knelt now in the mystery light of a new revelation. From the hidden deepness of her shining eyes,



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new truth revealed and new mysteries explained. He felt that he was overshadowed by the spirit of all women, with love divine; love in all its God-born whiteness knelt before him beckoning him on.

His heart sank and died in his breast; he took the tender, wistful face in his hands, and the light of a noble purpose shone in his eyes as he said, "Truly, you walk with the angels, Audrienne; you echo their music. You are nobler than I; you are choosing your path and pushing me into mine. I know the way and I shall go, but I shall wander in darkness until I unlock the other door and set my own spirit free.

"Here or hereafter, I shall hear nothing but the call of my heart, and its sob will be always, 'Audrienne, Audrienne.' May those who know the way to comfort you help you to find the strength to bear the burden our loving has laid upon you."

He took her hands tenderly in his own. "Audrienne, beloved, you have been the star of my earthly life and though it has

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set in shadows, all the eternities to come cannot change my loving. I shall say good-by to you now, but I shall claim you again, no matter where our feet may wander; I will come back from the very darkness of the grave to answer your call, for death could have no silence which my call of love to you would not break.

“Audrienne,” he went on, and his voice grew tender with all its ardent, masterful entreaty, “this is indeed our last farewell, and for the last hour let us live as masters. All this mighty love came to us without our knowing, but in this last hour when we are drifting forever apart, let us write upon the pages of life a story of perfect human loving. Audrienne, in this last hour press your face to mine for the kiss that we shall only know again when we wake in immortality; let me bear with me the memory of your last caress; say that you will always love me; say, ‘I love you — love you — love you,’ say it so that my soul will remember it when you whisper it again in eternity.”

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She said it; she yielded to the glory of the hour, to the knowledge of their deathless union. Pain and pleasure lie closely together, and while she felt his despairing kisses on her face she knew only that she was in his arms, which in a few short hours she would be robbed of forever. He held her by some mystical right; she would die tomorrow, die to all that made life worth living, but just for this moment she would be crowned by love's perfect benediction, for it was the last time, the very last — oh, God! the very last — the last.

In sweet abandon she returned his caresses; all earth, all heaven, all fate, all destiny was forgotten in the completeness of their last good-by.

With her white arms around him they floated; the moonlight grew faint and dim and misty; the stars hid their shy eyes in the midst of the passing clouds; the night winds hushed their whisperings to a softer murmur; the water lapped against the sides of the boat in quiet kisses; and

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through all the calm stillness of the summer's night, that boat with its burden of mistaken, broken hearts floated on and on and on.

There are hours in every life when we pray for defeat even while we fight for victory; hours when the things which victory can bring are useless in the final prizes of the soul. We stand in such strange hours before the iron gate of our creation and try to break it with the weak axe of a resolution; but after a while, when our hands are bleeding, we lay down our weapon; then we find that this blood-strewn way is the short cut for the soul; we sow our seeds of desire and the purple flowers of passion blossom around us.

We must gather at the harvest what we sow, and we cannot refuse to go on, even though the thorns of our harvest stab like a knife through our heart.

## CHAPTER TEN



HERE ARE LIVES WHICH seem particularly free from initiations of suffering; probe them as you will, there is found no deep-moving emotion, no sealed spring of overflowing feeling. There is for them no great height or depth of human transports; they never fall into valleys; and they escape easily the precipices over which many fall to pain and agony.

There are hosts of lives who have never felt the tragedy of self-renunciation; they drift along in their easy channel of selfish abandon, and the lesson of the "great surrender" is still before them. They flinch at any little demand that is made upon them; they hate to give up the slightest thing which fills the field of their desire; they never really suffer, for in the divine plan of their develop-

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ment suffering has not yet been brought to the surface; they must live and eat the fruits of their own growing and wait for some other turn of the path to call them to look on the face of their own will and pass it by.

There are others, again, who have met some slight renunciation and who pride themselves upon their strength and greatness; they feel strong to meet everything and, having faint scars of small battles, they think themselves able to tackle the biggest wounds.

Beside these two currents of human living, yet another current flows, swiftly, silently, while white, anguished faces tell of the burdens that have met them.

True it is, that each life seeks its own unhappiness and that we "never kiss aught but the lips of our own desires," but in the hours of darker living, submerged by the misery of a forced renunciation, it is hard for those who suffer to see truth and understand.

Audrienne passed a wretched night. The

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world had surely changed for her when she entered the house after her mad parting with Dr. St. Elmo. All the years of future reflection and denial would never burn his kisses from her lips, his passionate love from her heart; and she had flung herself across the bed to fight out the remaining hours of the night, to gather courage to bury her dead tomorrow.

The morning found her silent, but still determined; she waited until a late hour before going down to breakfast, dreading to meet Dr. St. Elmo again, although on this point she had no need to fear, as he had not retired and had left the house early in the morning. Lolone greeted her as she entered the room. She had finished her breakfast and was just leaving. "Why so late, Audrienne? You will miss some great metaphysical message at the school if you do this often."

Audrienne stood before her, getting ready to play the part she had chosen, and said, "I was packing, Lolone; I am going away

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for a lecture tour with Madame Arnold and wanted to put a few things together. I do not know just how long we shall be gone, but I can send for what I shall need if I remain too long. I am going just as soon as I have breakfasted, so good-by, Lolone; you will not miss me too much, for your list of engagements is gigantic."

Lolone looked at Audrienne's pale face and downcast eyes. "Audrienne, why will you be so foolish? Why don't you take a good rest? You are just wearing yourself out with this senseless work for others; the world can get along without you; God is in his heaven and he will take care of his own; forget all this metaphysical nonsense, and be just a simple woman for a while, Audrienne."

Audrienne lifted her eyes wearily, "Never mind, Lolone, this is the way I have chosen, and I must go; don't worry about me; I will come back and rest when I can, and when I have satisfied that within me so that it will give me rest."



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Lolone came back from the door to the side of Audrienne's chair and, kissing her fondly, said, "Well, don't linger away too long; I must let you go, for you have my promise never to get in the way of your ambition. So good-by, Audrienne, and more power to you." She left the room. Audrienne sat alone in shame-faced silence, with a heart that said "lies" over and over to her, "lies," "lies;" "nothing but truth can hold truth;" and she shrank again in agony at the thought of all that had made them necessary.

Audrienne finished her breakfast and went out of the house; she walked through all the grandeur and stood in the center of the park which only a few short months ago had seemed nearly her own. What an empty world now lay around her! what a mystery life was! what a curse! Surely she had done nothing willfully that she should be so disinherited; she had walked blindly into the whirlpool.

Why had Dr. St. Elmo loved her and

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not Lolone? She could not answer; she only had the memory of the past hours, which were eternal evidence. She thought of her own strange influence over him. Was it true, as the Doctor had said, that they had met before in manifold incarnations; that this life was only the remnant of others and he and she only scattered fragments? Would she ever forget his tenderness, his strange, magnetic influence? The mark he had made on her life, would it grow fainter? The thought was stifling.

She went on through the sunny park and out into the street; then she turned and looked again at the beauty of all she was leaving. She heard the faint whispering of the trees and the splash of the fountain as the water fell back upon the stones, and it seemed like a real paradise which she had lost through sinning.

There she had been happy, happy; there she had walked with sealed eyes and purest innocence; there she had dreamed her long-drawn dream of future peace and greatness;

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there she had strolled a light-hearted, trusting, confiding girl-woman; and there, at last, she had eaten of the bitter fruit of the tree of knowledge; there she had known wisdom, love, all included in one master stroke of experience; the sands of innocent, trusting fondness had run out; the end that comes to all human error had come to her — and to him; the weight of the burden of loving off the law of true possession had been felt and could not be laid aside now, only taken up and carried. Surely it was a cross and she was carrying it in the shadows.

Her weary eyes said a long farewell, while the light of her heart went out and was displaced by the glimmering mists of pain, regret, and remorse; she could have walked on forever, stung by the whiplash of her own consciousness. . . .

Madame Arnold was a wise woman; she had known for weeks that Audrienne was suffering some great mental distress, and the deathly pallor of Audrienne's face as she entered the schoolroom that morning

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told only too well that the storm of emotional fury was at its height.

Audrienne looked at Madame Arnold as she sat in the classroom and a faint feeling of comfort came to her from the restful beauty and tranquillity of Madame's face.

Flinging herself into a chair close to Madame Arnold, she said, half hysterically, "Madame, what is life? I feel that with all your teachings, I do not know anything. I have tried so hard to understand and yet — yet —"

Madame Arnold took her hand in both her own and drew her nearer. There was love, sympathy, and understanding in the action and in her voice as she answered, "Human life as we know it, Audrienne, is only an initiation; but life in the true meaning is God; there is nothing but life in the universe and there is nothing but God, so life and God are one. This thing we call living is simply different initiations in the one life that is in all and through all. Life runs through everything like the current

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that runs along the wire, and it crowds us on from one initiation to another."

"But, Madame," Audrienne said, "as it crowds us on, or as we go on, we have to go so blindly; we make so many mistakes, and these mistakes bring us such bitter grief; how can we know what is the best thing for us to do, and how can we help doing the things we ought not to do?"

Madame Arnold held her hand a little closer. "We cannot choose but go on from one experience to another, because our desire pushes us. Our life is a means to an end and that end is God consciousness, or consciousness of the whole. We arrive at this end through experience, brought to us by our own desires; back of the effect is the cause, back of the cause is desire, and back of desire is necessity; one seeks to get that which he needs, to more perfectly fulfill his own being."

Madame Arnold paused a moment, and Audrienne said, half bitterly, "But often the thing we need cannot be attained; our

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desire does not lead us into union with it, or if it does, we reach it in such a way that we cannot keep it, and its surrender is only misery."

"Not if we know the truth," Madame answered. "Life is not meant to be all possession; desire has action on many planes; to find the thing we desire, to know that it is one with us, then to pass on in happy realization, to project and fulfill another desire,—this is wisdom and this is divine possession. Perfect fulfillment in form is not always a part of the universal plan; in the true idea of life, one has only to meet his desire to know it; then it is finished, for it has been fulfilled in his own being and this is the end. Only the babes in wisdom demand that all their innermost hopes and aspirations shall pass into form or into possession."

"But, Madame, how can the human heart find comfort, and how can it forget the old desire and pass on to something new? It seems to me that the old, unfinished desires

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hold so fast; they stand like a sentinel at the door of a human heart and mind and will not let the senses pass to peace or new life."

"Listen, Audrienne, the pathway of the soul is ever onward; nothing can hold it long at one time or in one place; time in the hearts of men builds them out into new harmonies; time makes the old grow dim; and time brings new hope and dreams and aspirations; the memory may remain of that which we have left behind, but the pain leaves us."

Audrienne buried her face in her hands and sat for a time in drooping silence, then, rising, turned toward the door. "Oh, Madame, words are so useless! isn't there a time when nothing will speak peace to the soul? One seeks and seeks, but still that fierce something within burns on; there is nothing in all the world that will put out the fire of remorse or regret, is there?" She picked up some books, idly looking at them. "What shall I do for you this morning? Do give

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me something that takes deep concentration."

Madame Arnold followed her to the door. "Yes, Audrienne, go and teach the junior class their special lesson in metaphysics; it will require all your attention; and remember, Audrienne, that work is the best balm for unhappiness; service to others will heal mighty wounds.

"The way to live the greatest human life is through love and service; life is a repository and we get out of life just what we put into it and no one wants to go on taking out pain and suffering, so the only way is to lose the personal self in the need of the many. No one has a special sorrow, nor a special loss; life is pretty much the same to every one and every soul takes the same lessons, which only vary in degree and are only different because different minds give responses to them.

"Life is really big and wonderful when you learn to speed its ebb as you do its flow and just take everything which comes



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as a new and wonderful adventure; when we learn to let go and let life's tide flow through us and refuse to have a dragging undertow, then we get freedom and liberty, which makes us great, makes us able to help others. Those who help the greatest number of struggling souls into larger life are called the masters and saviors of the race.

"You, Audrienne, have chosen to be one of the saviors and are here because you have chosen the path; and on your human pathway you must find those things which will bring you big tests through which you can gain higher spiritual supremacy. Go on! Put up the proofs of your real desire; he who puts his hand to the plow and turns back is not fit for the kingdom of God." Madame Arnold returned to her desk and Audrienne went slowly to her classroom, nerving herself to do the duty at hand.

There are hearts that can hold to their faith in spite of the tempest of doubt and pain raging within them; no matter how deep they may be wounded, they still find

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some illusive thing to hold fast in their inner being; it comforts them and helps them to be strong where they would have gone down in weakness.

Audrienne had a faith, deep, strong, and enduring, that she had done right; that no matter how her heart might break, her reason said that there is no other way; and she schooled her mad longings to keep pace with her reason. She flung her whole life into the invisible powers which Madame Arnold had said always backed the wavering human intelligence. She prayed through the hours as she taught; prayed, not in blind supplication, but in close, intimate union with a God who was a father, friend, and guide; she walked with God and begged that light and peace should gather round her. She prayed as one would pray who stood on the edge of a precipice; she prayed with the sadness of one who had lost her fondest treasure; she held her empty heart and life up to God and demanded that he who held the plan of life in his keeping should

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fill them again so that she might escape the blindness and darkness of her loving.

She asked for a grand exaltation of heart, for courage to keep her resolves, and even while she felt that she was scarred by the fires of loving overmuch, she looked God in the face and demanded that she be permitted to live the rest of life in majestic usefulness and divine wisdom.

There is no greater victory than this that mortals can ever win; these are life's bravest warriors; each day their peace is gained from hours of higher realization and conscious selection; they have within them the divine spark that crowds to generous unfoldment each chastened power and passion of the soul; there may rise each hour the temptation of the soul to turn back, but that temptation is resisted and conquered, bringing them the highest spiritual victories.

They have done the hard duty of facing their own nature and transmuted it into higher desires; they may want with all

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their heart and mind and body the thing which they turn from, but they want with a mightier want the ideals of life which they know will bring them the highest righteousness.

Blind and self-satisfied as the world is with its own desires, satiated as is the world-heart with its own weak self-indulgence, it is not too blind to see, nor too deaf to hear, when it stands in the presence of one of these victorious souls. Their songs ring with a rare sweetness; their word is spoken from a level which brings with it a supreme conviction; and mankind everywhere listens and stirs itself from its stupor as if, indeed, it heard songs and voices from heaven. The cold ear of indifference will turn to catch that faint something unheard by them in other voices; the listless unperceiving eyes will glisten again with unshed tears, when these tender, loving, enduring hearts stand before them and cheer them with their glad songs and words of hope, trust, and power.

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Audrienne closed the day of battling firm, resolute; she went to the drawing-room in the evening to help Madame Arnold with her evening lecture.

Madame Arnold looked at her pale, determined face, at the dauntless fire glowing in her violet eyes, and knew that no matter what the trouble might have been, Audrienne had for the moment triumphed; and no matter if weakness should come, the victory gained would make the days of the future something more possible.

Everything was arranged and waiting for the audience, when Audrienne, standing by the window, saw the St. Elmo carriage driven rapidly to the door.

With a sharp cry she turned as a messenger ran quickly to the house and in a moment an attendant brought her a message. In a cold tremor of expectancy she tore it open. "Come at once," it read. "Dr. St. Elmo has met with an accident." The paper dropped to the floor; she stood irresolute; what could she do? Lolone would never understand;

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she must go to her in her hour of trouble, for a little while at least; she would return as soon as Lolone was comforted.

Eagerly she told Madame Arnold; silently she entered the carriage and was driven back to the scene which she had left that morning with dark despair driving her.

She uttered a deep demand for strength as she ran up the white steps to the house; when she saw the hushed faces of the servants, felt the stillness of the house, her heart gave a strange throb of terror, and one look at Lolone's beautiful face in the drawing-room door told her the truth — he was dead.

Lolone turned to her with horror-stricken eyes. "Oh, Audrienne, you are too late! we are all too late! he was dead when they found him! Oh, heaven, I shall go mad!" and with a deep, despairing cry she sank at Audrienne's feet.

It was no time to give way to personal sorrow, so with an almost superhuman control, Audrienne followed Lolone to her room,

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whither kind hands carried her, and, sitting beside her through the long hours, coaxed her back to consciousness and reason.

Gentle hands robed the master of the house for his last long sleep, telling in tenderest tones how he had met his death.

He had left the house early in the morning; no one knew where he had gone, save that he had mounted his horse saying that he was going into the country and would not return until evening. Toward night he had been seen in the suburbs of the city riding toward home, his head bowed in deep thought, the reins lying loosely over the neck of his beautiful horse; a few moments later he had passed a house where a small white dog had sprung out from the roadside with a sharp bark straight into the horse's path. The animal had given one wild leap, then had shot away like mad. Later, the crowd on the street saw only a riderless horse dashing with wild fury into their midst, which after a few moments they succeeded in capturing; but he had done

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the work that "fate" or "error" or "karma" or "Heaven" had willed, for there on the hard pavement Dr. St. Elmo lay dead, a sharp stone driven into his brain, bringing instant death.

Tenderly he had been taken home and the young wife told as best they could. Her surprise and horror was beyond words; she had never stood face to face with real trouble, and death to the uninitiated, at any time or place, or in any way, is terrible. It was a blow that had prostrated her.

She had turned from her dead with a despairing cry for Audrienne, and when she had come, all strength deserted her and now she was lying in blissful unconsciousness of the sad story her friends whispered to Audrienne.

Audrienne, calm beyond the calmness of human power, had listened; and while the hours wore on and the dying leaves rustled in the park outside, while the autumn night drew down in darkness, Lolone lay without moving hand or foot, cared for by the woman



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whose very heart was bursting with its bitter fullness, whose eyes were hot and burning with their unshed tears, who not two hours ago had felt strong and brave enough to face anything, but who sat now, trembling inwardly, drinking the cup of love's unutterable desolation.

As the hours wore on, Audrienne felt an uncontrollable desire to go to the side of the man whom she had last seen with his face all warm with tenderness and ideality; to look upon his face just once more and alone, where no prying eyes could see her grief, nor busy tongues comment upon it.

She rose and, stealing through the rooms, passed into the one which held her dear, dear dead. The pitying watchers saw her pass in like a pale ghost, clad in the dress of clinging black she had worn from her paradise that morning.

She entered and knelt beside the still white figure; she turned back the cloth from the beautiful cold face. No mark upon it told of the cruel accident; it was

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left unscarred for Audrienne's loving eyes to look upon. She bent over it in grief too deep, too bitter to find a voice. She kissed the silent lips, the hair, the eyelids with their long curling lashes; they hid the dark, glowing eyes of passion forever. Death had made him more truly her own; she would sweeten the quiet grave for him with kisses.

Any one entering a half hour later would have thought she was praying. She knelt on the floor with her arms stretched over the snowy sheet covering his heart, her head bowed low upon it; but in reality she was thinking — thinking — living through the sad, happy, beautiful past, going over their old, old way again; living in her love for him, his love for her, their pain at parting, and the joyous, half-mad sweetness of their last farewell.

She had suffered, he had suffered; but he had rest now, while she knelt beside him, silent, wide-eyed, dumb with despair. Had she sinned in loving him? Had he sinned? Who could tell? Madame Arnold said, "All

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life was for creation, experience, expression, and inclusion, and the biggest lives were the ones which included the most;" then surely they had included much; they had in truth "kissed the lips of their own desire;" and as she knelt there, she remembered all the commandments of men which they had broken, but had they broken the real commandments of God? Anyway, death was his portion, and living, weary, wretched life was to be hers.

She looked at the pale dead face, so utterly beautiful in its stillness; at the strong, free hair; at the eyes closed so calmly in their last closing; at the curved white lips that had spoken so madly, "I love you, love you, Audrienne," and her heart trembled with anguish of memory.

He was dead; she was not afraid of being with him now; he would never turn in passionate tenderness and tempt her; he would not feel her presence a sweet torture, nor the sight of her a snare. Had he forgotten? He had said there was a pause of

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consciousness between this world and the one over there; when would he awaken and remember? Would he return to comfort? He had said, "Love will last even unto death and on beyond into the dream to come." Would he speak to her? He had promised that if he went first, that from the uttermost ends of the worlds of space, her call should bring him! Oh, God! Thought was agony, was he robbed of it now?

Perhaps there is no eating of the bread of bitterness after death; but for the woman-heart who knelt there over that dead face there was no hope, no light, no future, no happiness. Life had claimed all its reward; the long look into her hopeless future stifled her; every ambition, every longing aspiration was dead; all a dream, all vanished into nothingness, all hidden in the silence of that tranquil, placid face before her.

At last she lifted her white hands despairingly; she had been dreaming, perhaps, but she was awake now, awake in the stern

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realities. Every dream was gone, vanished — vanished — like the hope of her heart. In unutterable sorrow she knelt in the glimmering darkness of the room. The watchers saw her kneeling on through the dim hours of the dawn, but they turned away, leaving her to her dreams and her dead.

Are they in truth only dreams? Perhaps so; perhaps they are built out of the dream substance of a fitful brain; but, after all, there are few, in the initiations of life itself, who have not dreamed just such bitter dreams sometimes in their weary round of living. There are few who have not shed bitter tears when their brightest hopes have been replaced by deep clouds of loss and helplessness; when some fairy kingdom that sprang up and crowned them with a new glory suddenly disappeared into the unfathomable ocean of life and was lost to them forever.

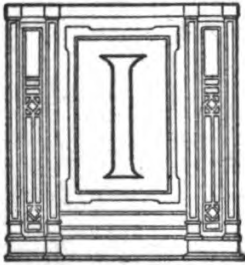
Our dreams and our dead; these are the milestones by which we reckon our unfoldment. Standing before them with vision

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won through seeking, finding, and losing, we read the depth of an unconquerable wisdom, the secret of the self which the Almighty Intelligence often seems to have set in riddles at our birth.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN



IN THE AFTERGLOW OF a clear October day, all that was mortal of Dr. St. Elmo was carried to the tomb. Out of his beautiful home through the still beauty of the park, while the air rang with the songs of the happy, careless birds. Those who had known and loved him stood with uncovered heads, to bid farewell to the dead master.

All the wealth and aristocracy of the city and most of its needy and poor followed him to his grave, for he had been widely and universally known and loved. The rich, the cultivated had loved him for his mind; the poor and lowly had loved him for his heart. The sun shone on tears, honest tears, that fell from eyes that grew dim from heart-felt regret; the rich and free mourned a

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companion, the poor and lowly mourned a friend.

Back through the golden October sunlight, back from the cold grave in the cemetery, back to the cheerless palace, back to emptiness, loneliness, and grief, the carriage carried the two women who had been closest to him in life; the one who had been crowned by his respect and kindness, and the other by his heart's best love.

Lolone had never loved him, but she knew that by his death she had lost a loyal champion and friend; the shadows in her eyes were true and heartfelt, and life indeed seemed really shadowed for this proud woman who had sacrificed heart-happiness, for the wealth she would henceforth enjoy alone.

She looked at the pale, silent woman beside her and wondered at her composure. She knew that Audrienne must feel his loss deeply, yet no sound came from the tightly closed lips, no tears fell from the sad eyes; only the purple shadows in them



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grew darker and rose and fell with the dull, throbbing pain in her heart.

Deep wounds are often bloodless, or, at the worst, bleed inwardly; deep griefs weep not, and the bitterest tears are those which never fall. While Lolone laid her head on the carriage window and wept hot, scalding tears for the friend and husband she had left in the cold graveyard, Audrienne sat still, wide-eyed, silent, thinking of the hope she had buried with her dead love, thinking of the misery she had yet to bear and live, and her heart beat in time to Lolone's stifled sobs.

At last the carriage drew up at the home; the sun was just sinking behind a mountain of cold gray clouds and another night of wretchedness was near at hand.

After a few words of encouragement to Lolone, Audrienne left her; she felt that she must be alone or go mad; she could no longer think for others; her very life was ebbing away; she must be free to talk with her own soul.

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She left the house and stole out through the veranda into the solitude of the park; out in the cool breezes of the woods, she might get the fever out of her brain. She passed on to the spot where she had lived her first hour of love with Dr. St. Elmo; she sat down in the long, dying grass; she looked with straining eyes at the scenes which had once filled her heart with joy; she thought again of her unconscious loving, her painful awakening, all its bitter end.

She remembered her wild hatred of the farm and the life of her childhood; she went over her wild ambition to be free. To know, to live life, to get wisdom. Had she really achieved anything? She had been filled with all she had longed for, filled with the fullness of joyful possession, but now she had only agony over its end.

Was it really ended? Was it? Would she never find it again in some other state of existence? Could love ever be lost? Dr. St. Elmo had said it could not be, but with the blindness of pain in her heart and with

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the emptiness of her arms, she bowed her head, she did not know. She asked it of the blue sky above her, "Is love lost?" she bent over and whispered it to the pale flowers still blooming beside her; she called it out to every voice of nature, "Is love lost?" and no answer came to her.

She looked down into the silences of her own soul, she turned toward that deep center within her from which wisdom comes, and still darkness reigned. She lay on the damp ground and whispered to Heaven that her heart was broken; she commanded the eternal heavens to open and receive her; she called for death to come and silence the wild raging of her discordant soul.

She wondered, as she lay there, if any one had ever suffered as she did. Lolone had said, "You cannot rescue from passion's pyre, the hearts that are fated to feed its fire," and it must be so; surely she and Dr. St. Elmo had been fated — fated.

While she lay on the damp ground, blindly thinking, questioning, the darkness

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fell around her. It fell upon the trees, the flowers, the shrubbery, the soft lapping waters of the lake where she and Dr. St. Elmo had lived their last hour of perfect loving. It fell upon the damp new-made grave of her dead and over the graves of those who had died before she was born — as the harvest comes after the seed time, as the flowers follow the budding, so the eternal questions of Life, of Love of God, of Fate came to Audrienne in her midnight of despair.

As the waves of memory cast their driftings on the sands, she saw the face of the man she loved, — who had loved her; with her soul speaking into his she could not fail to see the wondrous path they had been treading. Though the turf should turn green and the roses bloom above the grave, would memory ever leave her? No matter what came, her love had been her holy transgression; she could not change it now; again she laid her heart in the coffin with her dead love and turned away — who could understand?

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As a child she had never lain down without praying for life — more life; as a woman she must kneel for years with this prayer upon her lips, "Let me die, let me die."

This great love story of hers; how strange that upon a marble stone above that dear, wonderful, passionate face she should read in flaming letters, "The End." She stretched her hands to the pale heavens above her, she turned her face, all white and anguished, up to the silent stars, and yet this cup of bitterness did not pass.

The night grew darker and Audrienne grew only more desolate; the full meaning of their eternal separation grew upon her. She could not bear it; the long, long years of loneliness were all revealed to her soul; never again to see his face, never to hear his voice — Oh, God! It was terrible, it could not be!

She lay prone upon the ground and dug her hands into the sod; he must come back; he must speak to her; from that other side

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of life he must speak some message into her heart which would help her to bear their eternal parting. She lifted up her hands in wild pleading; she called, "Doctor, come back to me, speak to me just one word. I shall go mad with the pain and loss and the blindness of living." She beat the earth in despair—but still no answer. She lay like one dead, then struggling to her knees, she turned her face heavenward in one last appeal. "Doctor," she said, "I wait for you; I hold out my arms to welcome you; come! take me with you. Oh, Doctor, Doctor! Life is anguish!"

As she knelt there in blind appeal, a soft wind seemed to sigh around her; a soft light seemed to gather near her; she stared in fixed attention at a misty light hovering close by the spot where he had first held her to him. Slowly a shadowy form became outlined in the whiteness; soft and shimmering as the light from the skies, it moved nearer to her. She pushed back her hair in wild excitement, as out from the center of

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the shimmering rays there came slowly the face and form of Dr. St. Elmo.

His arms were wide open to receive her, his eyes looked into hers, softly, tenderly. "Audrienne!" the whisper was like the sighing of the winds, "Audrienne, I love you; there is no parting; life and death are one. Audrienne, be comforted; my spirit is linked with yours for all eternity; I will wait for you. My love shall shine eternally over your human pathway; Audrienne — Audrienne, do you hear, do you understand?"

Audrienne struggled to her feet; she stood before him; he was there, really there. All the beauty of his face and the tenderness of his tones thrilled through her. With one wild cry, which rang loudly through the stillness of the night, she flung herself rapturously upon his breast — the hard gravel ground and the cold damp grass received her — he was not there — he had vanished.

With this overwhelming vision of his life and death, in this superhuman touch of agony, her consciousness trembled, flickered,

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and went out. The stars, peering out from their veils of clouds, looked down upon the prostrate form of a beautiful woman, who lay with a white, set face, insensible at last to the lash of human suffering and despair.

“Through life to light, through light to love, through love, oh God to Thee—how wonderful the way.” Perhaps the invisible helpers just behind the veil mingled their tears with her own; perhaps in some inscrutable way they had sent the darkness of the human mind to comfort her. There are depths of human suffering which can only end in blankness, yet it is not in vain. Deep, unspeakable anguish purifies the heart and sets the spirit free. The hours of super-human endurance, the wild longings of the soul is the melting pot of life through which we spring, full-fledged into higher evolution. A great anguish can do the work of years; out of its crucible the soul comes ready to do the hardest duties of life.

There are many great curtains shutting us out from the land of wisdom which these



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hours of pain and torture lift for us; they are not alone retribution, but often Universal reward.

These great hours teach us an endurance that cannot again leave us in weakness or pain. When the last blow to our heart has been given, we mount on the wings of our soul.

It is pitiful to watch a soul's struggling through the fierce fires of its own building, but, truly, the spirit that is set free in the travail of these hours, is born again on the tableland of higher revelation.

Life — Love — God, these form the heart's eternal song, and these together form the world's celestial resurrection anthem.

With these words locked fast in our hearts, our future of crucifixion is over; we stand free, triumphant, glorified. "We have never a morrow of tears, our today of content is eternal."



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**PART THREE**  
**REVELATION**

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**T**HERE is an essence, a triumphant power,  
That trembles wildly through the human mind;  
A fragrance, touching every passing hour,  
That hungering human hearts may seek and find.

*It touches grief and bids it pass to joy,  
It breathes its breath upon the lips of pain;  
It radiates a peace without alloy,  
It makes tragic loss seem greater gain.*

*It is a sweet, exalting, rapturous thing,  
Unseen by human eyes, or held by hands;  
Its gleaming heights with wondrous music ring,  
Our very self has reached the glory lands.*

*There flows through all, this essence from above;  
Men touch its heights while walking on the sod;  
And human hearts so touched, have called it LOVE,  
While loving human hearts have called it GOD.*

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## PART THREE

# REVELATION

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### CHAPTER ONE



SAY, HAROLD, YOU ARE a stick; you have not spoken a word for two hours; not even looked up. Why don't you talk, or read, or move? Do something, anyway; what are you mooning about? Come on, wake up, let's smoke."

The speaker, a handsome man of about sixty years, arose and sauntered over to the window. He looked out upon the busy street from one of the most fashionable commercial hotels in New York City. The lobby of the hotel was filled with groups of men reading or chatting in little animated centers.

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Harold Douglas turned lazily from his half-slouching attitude and, rising, followed his friend to the window. "How now, Paul," he said, "why so restless? Can't a fellow think awhile? Smoke, to be sure, if you want to, but don't force me to chatter all the time like a magpie;" and he smiled into his friend's rather heavy, bored face; then taking from his pocket an oriental cigar case, passed it in silence.

Harold Douglas has greatly changed since we last saw him. We left him alone with his heart and the stars, while his love had gone smilingly to meet new fields of experience. He had tried to follow her advice, and had not pursued her with his attentions, but the day following Dr. St. Elmo's burial, he had received a telegram from Lolone, saying, "Come to me." He had gone at once and had found ample chance to become friendly with the woman he had once hated so cordially.

After Audrienne had left the house that fatal night, Lolone had missed her; and

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going out walked through the woods calling her name. After a long search she had come upon her, lying unconscious in the wet grass, with her face white as marble, her hands tightly clenched in the hard sand.

Lolone had summoned help and Audrienne was carried to the house, where she remained for days, fighting through a long darkness with brain fever. In her fright, Lolone had called for Harold, and together they tried to restore and calm the half-mad creature, tossing in wild delirium before them.

Through these long hours of darkened understanding, Audrienne told over again the whole hidden secret of her broken heart; told it with tears and reproach; told it with bitterness and deep self-scorn, with passionate pleading. The two who sat beside her heard it and looked at each other in mystified silence.

Lolone listened to it at first with pained surprise, then with remorse, then with a deep, tender pity. She had surely been blind, she told herself; why had she not

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understood? Where was her keen perception? She forgave Audrienne all, she forgave him all, for they had not been to blame; it was all her own foolish fault. She had thrown them together from the first; how could it have been otherwise? Audrienne, so soft and sweet and wonderful, with all the charm of the earnest seeker after the untried things of life, and Dr. St. Elmo, the dreamer, the master, the artist; of course, they had been affinities, heart, soul, mind, and, yes, bodies; for surely love had been born through the very center of their beings and she herself had said, "Love must love."

She looked at the burning face that lay before her; she heard the low, insistent prayers for death; she caught over and over the passionate raving words of self-reproach; saw the white arms reached out in fancied pleading; and tears of pitying forgiveness fell from the eyes of this cold, wise woman who could play so well the world-part of heartless scorn.



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She took the hands, all burning and pleading, into her own and with gentle words calmed the wild ravings; she watched with the care and tenderness of a mother over the woman who had found her Gethsemane in her home, and in her own soul she vowed a solemn vow that as she had been blind in the past, so she would be blind forever and ever. Audrienne should never know that the dead she had buried alone in the midnight of her soul's despair had been seen with all the pathos of its mystery unshrouded. The fault of loving had been theirs, but the crime of blindness had been hers, and she would expiate it by concealing from this gentle soul forever the knowledge that it had ever been discovered.

So she comforted Audrienne through the long hours of soul darkness, and when reason dawned again and the violet eyes opened to understanding, they found Lolone sitting by her bed, looking pale, tired, and worn with watching, but kind and tender, her dark eyes soft with loving sympathy.

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Often in the days of her convalescence, Lolone and Harold both despaired of rousing Audrienne again to her natural ambitions; she had lost the light of life and do what they would, they could not seem to interest her. It took months to drag her drooping soul back to the things of the world around her.

Audrienne turned listlessly from everything; she often watched them and wondered what they knew, for she was sure she must have revealed her secret; but no word of theirs helped her to know. Often, when stung by the lash of memory, she was tempted to tell Lolone all, but Lolone always anticipated her mood and turned her away from the purpose, until at last she gave up and sealed down the lid of her own coffin, saying to her soul, "Let the dead past bury its dead."

Harold had tried, as ever, to comfort her, and had thrown his whole life again and again into her hands, but her answer was always, "I am tired now, let me rest." So,

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wearying again of what he could never hope to forget, he had gone his way back to the farm, to follow his own path.

This was ten years ago, and tonight he stood before his friend in the hotel, the embodiment of what life had given him since that time.

He had spent five years on the farm; during this time, his mother, Uncle John, and Aunt Katherine had all followed each other quickly and quietly to the grave, and he stood entirely alone with a freedom so vast that he hardly knew what to do with it.

Filled with a deep unrest of mind and soul, he had gone abroad, seeking some respite from the thoughts which stood like sentinels at the door of his heart and which would not let his senses pass to peace.

He had spent over three years in India in deep study of life; then on over the burning sand of Egypt, where one day he had met Sir Paul Chesterton, the wandering, idle English gentleman, who was his companion today.

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Sir Chesterton had loved the young, silent American at first sight and with a father's tenderness had drawn toward him; they spent all their time together and, after a prolonged stay, had returned to the continent, then to England, to Sir Chesterton's estate, and were now just a short time arrived in New York en route to Harold's home in the country.

Sir Chesterton helped himself to a cigar, and, seating himself on the arm of a chair close to the window, he looked at Harold, and after a while spent in deep scrutiny, said, "Harold, I think your stay in India somehow got into your blood; I don't like it; I don't see how you can spend so much time in silence, just hobnobbing with yourself. My idea of life is action — action; it's not a head full of thoughts like cobwebs that makes for progress, but deeds, my lad, deeds!"

Harold looked smilingly at him and answered, "But how could any one ever do deeds without thoughts, dear man? One has

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to be very full of thoughts, for the very few things he wants to accomplish; thought power always runs ahead of its own form."

Sir Chesterton shifted uneasily. "Please don't preach," he said; "talk something easier than Hindoo philosophy. Your life in India spoiled you for common sense; I wonder if you will forget to be a real American again."

Harold still smiled as he replied, "No, indeed. My life in India did me no harm, but it saved my reason; it taught me the real value of meditation and consecration, and, more, it taught me that all life is one, and while I am just as good an American, I am redeemed out of all races and all countries into the One life that is in them all. In India I learned to find my own center and to go within myself for peace and rest; in meditation, silence, and deep reflection is my strength, for within the self there is all wisdom, and when one goes deeply enough, he gets the answer to his most unanswerable problems.

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“You, Sir Paul, are always trying to find your peace through some person, place, or thing; you never had peace; you never will have it, for it does not come that way; persons, things, and conditions change too easily. You may say that I am mooning in myself, but it certainly is a great thing to know how to turn into the Self and find there a great undiscovered country which, when explored, becomes filled with nuggets of purest gold. I am free, Sir Paul, since I have found myself; I know what life means; so will you some day when you stop long enough to get acquainted with yourself.” Harold laughed good-naturedly and crossed to the elder man’s side.

Sir Paul turned to him, his dullness lifted a little; had he told the truth, he had rather quarrel with Harold than not talk at all. He put his hand on Harold’s shoulder as he said, “There you go, Harold, with a lot of gibberish; just tell me what does a man want to go exploring around inside of himself for, when the whole world outside of

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himself is offering him free entertainment and there are still millions of undiscovered territories just spoiling to be staked out and claimed. It is only the one who knows too much about himself that ever gets sick of life, and he always makes others sick of him; the worst bores on earth are those who are not human beings at all, but just a bunch of damned psychologies!"

Harold laughed as Sir Chesterton continued, "If you want to keep on this dull, drab thought all night and spoil the evening for a show or a game, then you had better come with me to where you can get the real thing. There is some sort of a fool meeting at the Colosseum tonight,—has been for a week; some of the boys here went last night and have been talking of nothing else all day."

Harold looked interested. "Have they? I didn't hear a word." "That's just because you have been locked up in your own shell," replied his friend, "but come on, let's go and hear this new revelator; any-

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thing will be better than sitting here looking at one spot."

Harold rose. "Surely, Sir Paul, let's go, by all means, but isn't it too late? look at the hour." Sir Chesterton looked at his watch. "Yes, it is late; it will be nearly over; but we won't have to hear too much of it, that's all, and a little of this stuff goes a long way with me." They passed out into the street and were soon within the Colosseum walls.

Passing quickly to their seats, Harold looked inquiringly at the speaker who was standing in the center of the platform. He stood still, then half started back and stumbled heavily against Sir Paul, who put his hands on his arm saying, "Steady, lad, sit down."

Harold sat down in awe-struck silence, for there on the platform stood Audrienne Lebaron, looking at him across the sea of faces. There was the same wistful face of his never-to-be-forgotten past. He sat in stunned silence while her closing words fell like a benediction on the crowd.



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They had indeed arrived only in time to hear a few closing words. Harold, springing to his feet, half dragged Sir Chesterton by the arm to join the crowd surging to take Audrienne's hand. He saw her eyes fall on his face, and his heart beat with its old, rare sweetness as he pressed quietly forward. "Audrienne, Audrienne," he said; "is it possible that it is you?" She bent her face slightly and smiled. "Harold," she said, "have you come at last?"

Later that evening the brilliant lights in the beautiful dining room of Lolone St. Elmo's home fell upon a scene of loveliness.

At the table sat Lolone, Audrienne, Harold, and Sir Chesterton. After the lecture the four had returned together for a social hour in Lolone's home, which had been for several years the center from which Audrienne did all her public work of lecturing and writing.

After the first few years, Audrienne had taken up her burden of life again and gone

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back to the world to give it all she could of love and service.

At first the effort seemed all in vain, but as the heavy days dragged on, she grew in grace, in revelation, in usefulness; her olden dream of ambition and power never returned, but in its place came to her a gentle inspiration to do some lasting good for the world of needy she found everywhere around her.

She gave her whole time to dragging from the hidden thought world the mysteries that are so many. Often she fancied Dr. St. Elmo was beside her, helping her, although she never saw him, and after a while ceased to call him.

From Lolone's home she went to sow the seeds broadcast; she taught the hard lessons of life as one who had won the knowledge from the hot harvest fields of experience. The great artists of love and suffering had given their master touches to her soul, and it looked out over the world in its own peculiar inspired beauty; she bore upon her face the seal of conquest.

## REVELATION

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Lolone would never hear of her going away or of leaving her; in this magnificent gilded palace of life and gayety, Audrienne's pure presence was the only thing which redeemed it from being completely swamped in the softened glamour of the flesh and the world.

Lolone had never married again; she had "No excuse," she often said laughingly; she had wealth enough, more than she would ever use for herself, and love was everywhere; love was always young with her, always new, always enchanting; for when it threatened to become tiresome, she changed her mood and attraction; she never asked constancy, never promised anything; she never loved anything but the praise, ease, luxury, and admiration, which she could win so easily; so, cold, cynical, sharper than a serpent's tooth, she lived her life and swung her great charities around Audrienne. As much as she could love, she loved her, and was proud of her genius and popularity; she would aid her to any length in any new adventure, but to work or take part in her

## DESTINY

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world of love and service to humanity, she would not.

There is a time for everything, and the bud of love and tenderness in her nature had been frosted in its opening and had died in the cold winds of selfish pride and personal power.

She sat tonight in the possession of her heart's desires, side by side with the woman who had suffered so much, but who from her crucible had taken what she had longed to take and who through it all was living on the peace-crowned heights of her own destiny.

Lolone had not suffered to get her desires answered, and yet she had just as much; at least, she had the things she wanted, and even Audrienne had no more than this. Who had been the wiser? Vainly Audrienne had tried to show her the universal side of the human pathway, and, as vainly, she had tried to measure Audrienne's life by the slender reed of her own understanding. At last they had agreed to go side by side in

## REVELATION

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their pathways, and each year saw them draw closer together in a more wonderful understanding.

Tonight, the dinner had passed in discussion and brilliant repartee by Lolone and Sir Chesterton. At last they had risen from the table; Lolone and Sir Chesterton went directly to the music room, while Audrienne, begging to be excused for a while, to finish some important message, went to her studio. Harold spent half an hour in the library, then went out into the covered veranda.

It was a glorious night; he stood a moment irresolute. A long, soft gleam of light fell on the floor at his feet; it came from Audrienne's open window and it mingled with the white light of the full moon.

He went near the casement and looked at Audrienne as she sat revealed under the bright lights of her room. Her face with its rapt expression was bent over her paper, her busy pen was flying on and on. Harold leaned against the window and watched her.

## DESTINY

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There was the woman who had longed for fame and found it; the woman who had asked for wealth and gained it; the woman who had dreamed of love and known it in all its sweetness and its pain.

The light of the night grew darker, the stars shone on with their unclouded brightness; they had seen that face many times before, mirrored in snatches of human living; at last, with a sigh, Audrienne laid down her pen and, putting her arms out in her old despairing way, laid her head upon them.

Harold bent over the casement. "Audrienne," he whispered, "Audrienne, the moon is calling you." Audrienne started up in surprise, then with a smile came out and sat on the casement of the window and leaned out into the night. The light fell full upon her inspired, wistful face.

Harold covered her hand with his own. "Audrienne," he said, "see, the same moon smiles upon us and in just the way it has done since we were children. Do you re-

## REVELATION

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member the question I have always asked you beneath it? I am the same man, Audrienne, it is the same question; have you not now a new answer?"

Audrienne looked down upon his upturned face; the moonlight flickered upon his lips, which seemed to tremble. She breathed a long sigh. "Harold, my answer is changeless, too, as this white moonlight; how could it be otherwise? I am a bride, Harold; I am married forever to the memory of the man I loved so madly; my pathway must lead onward and upward."

He tried to hush her, to make one last appeal, but lifting her face skyward, she went on, "I cannot choose but go on up the slopes of high endeavor; I marked out my pathway by my own desire, while before me, for all of this life at least, I shall only see the radiant face of my heart's best love and, beneath this, the upturned faces of the multitude."

The stars shed a softer light; her voice sounded like rippling water.

## DESTINY

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Harold took both her hands in his and laid them over his eyes; he was face to face again with the second death.

“Harold,” she continued, “my maker is my husband and the Lord God of Hosts is his name.” Love is God, and love never dies.” Harold raised his face; it was very near her own, and the light fell over it, touching it to a priestly whiteness.

She loosed one hand from his grasp and put it caressingly over his face. “Harold, we were friends when the rays of our first moon fell over us in childhood; we are friends still; isn’t that enough? Be content! It is finished!”

He caught the hand and stayed it in his soft caress; he drew her closer to him through the open window. The full whiteness of the skies fell over them; it shimmered on his face like moonlight on a grave; he drew her cheek closer against his own. “Audrienne,” he said again, gently, “there are many portals to paradise — friendship is one of them.”



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