

always liked Grace. We went to school together. At first she said she liked me too. Then she said she didn't, and I began to find out how much—"

He stopped abruptly. Bert had risen and had stepped down hurriedly to meet a woman that had turned in towards the house. Joe saw the woman's face and he heard her.

"My baby," she said, "My baby. O Bert, can you come. She is—she is—dying and I'm all alone."

She clutched Bert's arm. "Will you come?" she demanded. Bert answered quickly, "Yes."

The woman was gone and Bert was in the house speaking to her mother. Joe stood a moment on the step and walked with Bert up the street. When Bert turned to leave him he held out his hand. His eyes looked bright in the starlight.

"You are a good girl Bert," he said slowly.

She shook her head and drew away. But before she could leave, he bent his head over her and kissed her impulsively on the cheek. Bert reeled a little under his kiss and stood a moment to listen to his footsteps ringing on the walk. Then she turned and went in.

She felt the woman put the little girl into her arms, she half heard a hurried explanation about getting the doctor and she woke to find herself alone with the child in her arms—dying, its mother had said.

Bert sat down where the light from the lamp fell on the blue little face that had smiled up at her sometimes when she had walked past. The childish little hand fell back weakly against her breast. It seemed a long time that she sat holding the child. She listened to its breathing. Why didn't its mother come, and the doctor? How still it was! Its weight grew heavy on her breast and choked her. It was dying. An hour ago Joe had kissed her and now—what did a kiss matter? This was the only reality—this—death. Love was a dream and this was the waking. How would it all end? The child would die and Joe would love her. O, if she had Joe with her now or if—why

didn't they come? The child was so heavy. It would die here with her. She mustn't let it. Her mother—she must get her mother. She stood up wildly. The child on her arm trembled.

Bert drew a hard breath. There was nothing to do till they came. She sat down again and listened for the child's breathing. There was none. The child had died in her arms.

When the doctor came and the child's mother, they found Bert sitting quietly holding the child and rocking it gently. Her eyes were dry.

"It is dead," she told them apathetically and let the doctor take it from the arms. She roused herself when she heard the mother crying. What ought to be done? What must she do? Her first thought was of her mother.

The rest of the night was long for Bert. Her mother tried to make Bert go home and sleep, but Bert would not go. She helped her mother dress the child for burial and sat for a little while by it. Her mother was talking to the other mother. She felt irritated when she heard them crying. She did not feel like crying, and it had died on her arm. She wanted to think.

So she left them and went into the dark front room. They could call her if they needed her. She sat by the window where she could see the stars fade in the light of morning. She heard the spring night-wind and the rustling of the trees. She thought of the little dead thing lying in the other room, of the kiss on her cheek, the weight over her heart. She thought it all out and when morning came she told herself that Joe did not love her. There was no love in the kiss he had given her. He may have thought so but there wasn't. And what he had started to say was best left unsaid.

She took up her day's work wearily. Things had changed so! nothing seemed real. She could not work steadily. Her head ached and her eyes hurt. At ten o'clock she sat at her desk with her head down on her arm. There was a confused sound of