

mind. He could not even study for thinking of what he had done.

He looked across at Pete wondering how in the world he was going to get his courage up to tell. It was easy enough to go and find new rooms; it had not taken much care to get his things moved out unnoticed. He dreaded to have Pete look up and notice, perhaps, that there was one trunk less in the room and that the bookcase had two empty shelves; that, of the assistant and his belongings, everything had vanished except the assistant and a handful of papers and books on the table. But Pete evidently had too much on his mind tonight to notice trunks or empty shelves. He shifted his chair a little and looked up. The light through the white shade on the lamp made his face look gray and somber. His thin hair hung damp across his forehead.

"Paid to-day, Hilton?" he asked at last.

The assistant did not answer quickly.

"Paid today? I said," he repeated.

The assistant nodded.

"Goin' out to-night, then, I suppose," he laughed insultingly.

Hilton flashed up. "I'd like to know what business that is of yours. If I go, I'll go; if I stay, I'll stay."

His eyes met Pete's and he weakened sullenly, but he went on. "I was paid today and I have the money. If it will be any comfort to you to know it, I mean to keep it. I've fooled away now enough to buy a kingdom; I'm going to quit, I'm tired of it."

Pete sneered.

"You've tried it before, you know," he said calmly.

Hilton shut his eyes. "Nobody knows that better than I do," he said slowly. A picture came before his eyes of Jean's face as he had seen it in the laboratory. He ended up eagerly. "But this time is different."

Pete shifted his chair again. The muscles of his mouth twitched and he leaned heavily forward with his hands on the edge of the table.

"You're a fool, Hilton," he began irresistibly. "You're a fool. You know as well as I do that you can't change. You've gone as far as devils generally go and you can come back as far as devils usually come back. Don't I know? You'll make yourself miserable for a week. You won't touch a card or go near a saloon. But that's all

the good it will do you. Afterwards you will be all the worse. Sit down. Let's have a game to steady your nerves."

Hilton was gathering up his papers.

"It isn't a matter of nerves," he said desperately. "You fellows have had your own way with me and you know it. You have spoiled me, and now you can spoil my good name whenever you please. I can make a new one. I'm done with you any way. I've broke off."

And with a gesture, half of fear, half of defiance, Hilton turned and opened the door. "You can tell the boys," he said with affected carelessness. "I don't expect to."

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Tuesday, as Jean came towards the laboratory she met the assistant. She had been thinking on the way. She just hated chemistry. How nice it would be if girls could always study just what they liked, mathematics and history and nothing else. Or if they had some other assistant in the laboratory! If the professor of chemistry could help them with the experiments. He was at least polite. And now after what had happened last Friday she would feel less at ease than ever with the assistant. How rude he must have thought her.

Then she met him. She saw him and almost ran against a small boy on the walk in front of her. She looked from the boy's dirty face up to the assistant's eyes again just in time to get one glance before he dropped his own eyes to the boy. Then an odd smile crept over his face and made Jean wish that he had smiled at her instead of the boy. In a moment the assistant had lifted his hat to her and was gone.

Jean went on to the laboratory. The assistant had smiled at that dirty, ragged little boy. She felt that it was odd for him to do that. But she felt better acquainted with him than she ever had in the laboratory.

As for the assistant, he went his way in a curious frame of mind. Why in the deuce had he smiled at that little beggar. He had meant the smile for Jean.

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This was in the fall. In the winter it came to be different. The laboratory work went quietly. Jean did not know at first that her attitude towards the assistant had changed. She liked her chemistry better; she felt less disturbed when the assistant