

FOUR LETTERS

(Continued from Page 9)

volved you also. God pardon me for that. Yet, I believe I am doing right. I've got to believe it, or I could never go on with this.

Will you try to understand, and forgive and forget?

J.

The One That She Wrote

NEW YORK, September 30, 1911.

YOUR LETTER came today. It was postmarked the 25th of September; and when I saw the date and the handwriting, I caught my breath. Is it really ten years since you last wrote to me? Ten years since that letter came to me!

So, you are coming to New York again, and your wife is coming with you. And you want to bring her to call upon me. Why, I wonder? Not that it matters, really. I should like to see her, I think; but I shall not be here. I'm going to run away.

You said once that you were a coward, because you wrote that other letter to me. Now, I tell you that I am a coward, because I am afraid to see you.

You thought—you wrote—that I would forget you; but in your heart, you knew that I would not. Could I ever forget those wonderful summer days with you? Yet, I have not been unhappy; I have had my work and my memories. It is not often that I dare trust myself to think; but I'm going to think now, to let down the bars of my will and to tell you all, without reserve.

You "wonder that I never wrote to you." Never wrote! I have written a hundred letters, written out my very heart and soul. But I could not send them. On that warm September day, ten years ago, with your letter before me, I sat down and penned just two lines, to let you know that I understood and that there was nothing to forgive.

And then, my struggle began. It has never ended. Sometimes I am victorious for a little while, and then—the scent of a flower, a glimpse of blue sky through interlacing boughs, a bird singing in the dusk; and the old sick longing sweeps over me—the desire to see your face, to hear your voice, to feel the pressure of your arms about me.

You "assure me of your friendship, unchanged and unchanging." Friendship! It is your love I want. I gave you up to another woman; but I could not give up the desire for you. It is stronger than I; and all the long, lonely years have been powerless to weaken it. The days we spent together, Boy, the dear, wonderful days! And you thought I could forget!

I am glad that you are happy. I wanted you to be happy. They tell me that you are well and prosperous, and that your wife adores you. That makes me glad, too; for it shows me that you faced your duty unflinchingly, and that she never dreamed she was not first in your heart.

But I can not see you, Boy. It is one thing to know you are the husband of another woman; it would be another to see you together. Have you ever suffered, and been obliged to laugh and to talk? Have you ever plucked at your very heart strings, and smiled through your pain? Yet, that is what you ask of me. And I am neither brave enough nor strong enough to do it. I love you; I always shall love you. And that is all.

L.

The One That She Sent

NEW YORK, September 30, 1911.

MY DEAR MR. EDWARDS: To my infinite regret, I shall be unable to receive you and your wife next week, as I am sailing on Saturday to supervise the production of my new play in London.

It is very sweet of Mrs. Edwards to want to meet me, and I am glad to hear that she likes my work. Above all things, I should enjoy seeing you both; but I simply can not postpone my trip. Perhaps on your next visit to New York, I may be more fortunate.

With kindest regards and best wishes, believe me,

Most sincerely yours,

LUCIA CARROLL GRAHAM.

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