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It's an actual fact that my Fireless Cooker saves 75% of your fuel bills, 75% of your time and worry, it cooks your food 75% better and you will never keep house again without one, once you have tried it. I am the Original Fireless Cooker Man. I sold 30,000 Fireless Cookers last year. Nearly every cooker sold brings me from one to four customers—friends of the first customers.

I am the Original Fireless Cooker Man

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did not. You are wondering whether I am the sort of person you ought to know."

"No," she replied, "I am not wondering. I am in no doubt whatever."

He looked at her sadly. "I thought you above prejudice," he sighed in weary irony. "But when you sit in judgment, remember that I have committed no greater follies than most men placed as I am placed, that I have committed less than some. By the only code to which I am answerable I am respectability itself."

"You are under no obligation to tell me this."

"I feel that I am. It is one of the oddities of the situation that I feel constrained to excuse things that it has never before occurred to me required excuse. In fact, you make me harbor regrets. Will you remember those regrets also, as you sit in judgment?"

"I am not your judge," she returned coldly.

"I am not unwilling that you should be both judge and ally."

"I can be neither," she answered. "I am sorry you chose as your confidante a woman who—who disappoints you; but that is certainly your fault, not mine. I must ask you to release me from my promise to help you; but I want you to feel that you can trust me still. Nothing that you have told me—"

"What are you saying?" he interrupted.

"I can't release you now!"

"You must! I can't say more than I have. It has been most painful for me to discuss the thing at all." She looked about for the others. "My aunt will be waiting."

"Your aunt considers you quite safe in my company, and has gone on," he pointed out grimly. "I am not a pariah in her eyes."

"Nor in mine. You exaggerate."

"Do I? How then shall I describe a man so base that you would destroy his whole future in order to be rid of him?"

"Destroy your future!"

"Perhaps you think I still exaggerate? If you do, I must beg you to reflect that it is no small affair in which I am concerned. I cannot afford to undervalue my obstacles. Haven't I made you realize that there are men who would rather see me dead than disturb the present arrangement in the Balkans? For over two months you have given me immunity from their spying. In a month more, perhaps in less time, even in a few days, I may go to my work. Not in a hundred years has the time seemed so ripe. Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, all Southeastern Europe, is in a ferment. The newspapers, inspired by the chancelleries, tell you that there is no danger; but I know the pulse of those people. War may flame out tomorrow. When it does, my hour will have struck, unless—"

His gesture left the issue with Ann.

The fiery magnetism of his personality had never done him more eloquent service. It might be absolute unreason, it might be sheer immorality, but she could not help feeling that she had taken a narrow view.

"I don't want to imperil your cause," she said; "but—"

"It is for the cause alone I am pleading," he assured her quickly. "Forget me and my imperfections, if you can. Think of the millions you will serve! It is for my people, not myself. Be their ally a little longer. Tell me you will!"

The voice of the individual may be disregarded; the voice of the people will not take no for an answer.

ANN heard scarcely a word of the final act of the luckless play. Rodoslav, not the royal rake, filled her mind's eye. The sinner she had gone forth to stone had turned and bombarded her. He had made her outlook seem petty, her tardy scruples selfish. Why, if she had not perceived his past as a bar in the beginning, had she had the folly to raise it now? She should have kept upon the impersonal footing she had so imperiously required at the outset. Now it was he who was impersonal. He had not pleaded with her like an erring lover. He had effaced himself in his cause. Humanly, she was less to him than those nameless casual Others. The triumph she had savored with his morning roses turned to naught.

The one definite result of it all was a further swing of the pendulum toward Oliver. On their way home, during the little midnight supper that followed, and for several days thereafter, Justin saw his protégé favored as the difficult Ann favored few. He even made the discovery that Rodoslav's morning offerings found their way to the waste basket with unflattering despatch. As for Page himself, he dropped much of the reserve that marked his first coming. It was not easy to be cautious toward Ann at her friendliest. He liked to have her rally him upon his seriousness. He would even pretend gravity for the sake of the mocking challenge of her eyes and the miracle of her smile. And Ann—Ann of the magic smile, the lovely mouth, the cornflower eyes and

the chestnut hair which showed copper glints in the sun—knew that she beguiled him, as she had beguiled him at Old Point, and was happy in the knowledge.

But how different this dalliance! Page was no longer a man. He was possibly a man. Not that she put it thus baldly. Indeed, her whole feeling was so fluid that she did not formulate it even to herself. With the measure of his regard for her in doubt, she let herself go no further than the admission that, if he was to sue, she would listen with sympathetic ear. There was no vagueness about her sympathy. The incident at the Palais d'Hiver had left her with an intense craving for the wholesome and the normal. Her compact with Rodoslav had lost its glamour. If war did not free from its yoke, something else must. If Page would only let her see, let Rodoslav see, his real heart!

HIS real heart! How industriously she probed for that elusive organ in those days of reaction!

"Have you an ideal woman?" she plumped at him once.

Page shook his head with emphasis. "Give me the actuality," he said.

"That may mean you can't idealize me."

Page waited for her smile and, having seen it, smiled himself. "It means only what I said," he answered. "I am content with the actuality."

Ann tried to read a personal tribute between the lines; but it took imagination. "I suppose it's safer," she said. "You'll not be disappointed when you marry."

"Much safer," he agreed. "What would an everyday man do with an ideal wife?"

"Or an everyday wife with an ideal husband? But I fancy not many men think as you do. They want us to be feminine, and yet they are impatient when we are most feminine and say or do things without knowing why. One can't be a woman and have reasons for everything."

"Or human, for that matter. Are men reasonable?"

"You are. You don't expect too much of us."

"I would not have a woman expect too much of me."

Ann's lashes swept her cheek. "For instance?" she prompted.

Page's color rose. "I mean," he said, "I would have her realize that for years I have been practically a hermit; that I am behind the times in nearly everything that would interest her; that I still have little leisure to give to the softer side of life; that I am poor in debt—"

He ended the catalogue abruptly. "No," he added as if to himself. "I am not reasonable. Far from it!"

She got no nearer than that in her probing; but it seemed a promising start. Give her other such moods, and she would solve the riddle. But Page's leisure was more semblance than fact, and such moments were rare. He and Justin were much together at one or the other of the aerodromes and, even if Page joined her at golf or for a motor ride, Ann perceived that his work preoccupied him constantly. One day he utterly forgot that he had promised to go with her and the Truscotts to a meet of the Pau hounds, and they rode away without him.

RODOSLAV came, however, and in spite of prising fashion. Ever since his arrival he had delighted the avian spectators with his impetuous ascents and splendid curves, and he now outdid all his other performances by striking across country to join the hunt. His descent demoralized the meet; but it was conceded that he had done something brilliant in the way of aviation, and he was made the hon of the hour.

Ann kept on the outskirts of the crowd about the aeroplane; but Rodoslav's eyes searched her out. Coming straight to her side, he laid his hand upon her saddle, and by attitude and lowered voice advertised his devotion.

"I want people to know that I did it to meet you," he explained. "We have not been seen often enough together."

"Is it my fault if you called when I was out?"

"Surely not. But it is odd, isn't it, that little Pau should make more demands on your time than Paris? But this will help along the make-believe. I wish you would let me take you back."

"By aeroplane?"

"Why not? I know you want to fly."

"I never told you so."

"Not with your lips; but I was not blind at Rheims."

"I should be afraid when it came to the point."

"You think that as you stand below. Is the air you would not be afraid. Let me prove it to you. Come!"

"You're joking, I know."

"You are mistaken. I am most in ear-