

very sorry that we have trampled your garden. If you are loyal the government will indemnify you—"

She spoke, scarcely hearing her own voice: "It is not that—I am loyal—it is only I wish to ask you where my brother's regiment—where the 60th Maryland is."

"The 60th Maryland—oh—why, it's in King's brigade, Wolcott's Division; I think it's yonder." He pointed toward the beechwoods.

"Yonder? Where they are firing?"

Again the cannon thundered and the ground shook under her. She saw him nod, smiling faintly.

But around the house the last of the troops had passed; she could see them, not yet far away, moving up among the fields toward the ridges where the sun burned on the bronzing scrub-oak thickets.

She stood a moment watching the yellow dust hanging motionless in the rear of the disappointing column. Beyond Benson's Hill a bugle blew faintly; distant rifle shots sounded along the ridge; then silence crept through the sunlit meadows, across the leveled corn, across dead stalks and stems, a silence that spread like a shadow.

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On the hair-cloth sofa in the parlor she lay, flung face down, hands pressed to her ears. But silence entered with her, stifling the sob in her throat.

When she raised her head it was dusk. She sat up, peering fearfully into the darkness, and she heard the clock ticking in the kitchen and rustle of vines on the porch.

When she had sat silent a little while dreaming over the sins of a blameless life, there came to her, peace, so sudden, so perfect, that she could not understand. How should she know peace? What thought of the past might bring comfort? She could just remember her mother—that was all. As for her father, he had died as he had lived, a snarling drunkard. And her brother? A lank,

blue-eyed boy, dissipated, unwholesome, already cursed with his father's sin—what comfort could he be to her? He had gone away to enlist; he was drunk when he did it.

There was a creak at the gate, a click of a latch, and the fall of a foot on the moonlit porch. She half rose; she was not frightened. How she knew who it was, God alone knows, but she looked up, timidly, understanding who was coming, knowing who would knock, who would enter, who would speak. And yet she had never seen him but once in her life.

All this she knew—this child made wise in the space of time marked by the tick of the kitchen clock; but she did not know that the memory of his smile had given her the peace she could not understand, she did not know this until he entered—dusty, slim, sunburnt, his yellow gauntlets folded in his belt, his cap and sabre in his hand. Then she knew it. When she understood this she stood up, pale, uncertain. He bowed silently and stepped forward, fumbling with his sabre hilt. She motioned toward a chair.

He said he had a message for the master of the house, and glanced about vaguely, noting the single place at table. She said he might give the message to her.

"It is only that—if I do not inconvenience you too much—" he smiled faintly—"if you would allow me—well, the truth is I am billeted here for the night."

She did not know what that meant and he explained.

"The master of the house is absent," she said, thinking of her brother.

"Will he return tonight?" he asked.

She shook her head; she was thinking that she did not want him to go away. Suddenly the thought of being alone laid hold of her with fresh horror.

"You may stay," she said faintly. He bowed again. She asked him if