

consideration for its growth should be more than a feather to the scales with you in the balance. That shows you, doesn't it, the manner of man I am? No moral policeman could warn you to keep off the grass of my quality of soul; I myself invite you to trample it—it "just divides the desert from the sown."

As I said, you'd simply wreck Chelling, and he's too good—such men are too few to be sacrificed to a woman of your temperament. For you are not capable—you know it as well as I—of sustaining the place he has given you. You are like a paste diamond—forgive me, Katherine!—in the setting he has made exquisitely of his own purest gold.

You have always been a flirt. I, who have known you all your life, recognize it as characteristic of you—your attribute—just as the sparks fly upward. You wanted admiration as a child—do you remember our school days?—you wanted it as a girl, and the more you received, the more you craved. It was to satisfy this craving more than your concept of a compelling talent that made you finally go on the stage. To do this, you had to break with your relatives who opposed it, and you did so without, as far as I could ever discover, a single pang.

To say that your success in your art has proved your justification, is, of course, an eloquent defense. But your art has been in making people admire you, and you have done it so consummately that few have understood that your talent as an actress has always been subordinate to your charm as a woman.

Analysis, you understand, is a foe to sentiment, but I, who am an analyst by profession, deplore in you the lack of the quality I am supposed to decide. It is still a weakness on the part of men to wish women to illustrate the feminine virtues and I suppose it is a measure of the way I regard you that I fortuitously regret your attitude toward Chelling.

It isn't difficult for me to remember the you of ten years ago. It was the real you then, I think; that is, the you I thought you—not a part you took up or put down. You were charming, graceful, girlish—like (you remember her?)

Leonardo's princess, whose profile haunts one's memory far more persistently than Mona Lisa's dubious smiling. I was almost—oh, well! quite—in love with you then. To a boy of twenty-two you were the ideal—a Daphne, shy, immortal, an inspiration for the first unspoiled devotion a boy gives from the best in him. You didn't want it, and I outgrew later—with a wrench—the power to give it.

"No diver brings up love again"—the flawless pearl is found only once. But in some way, though I understand you so fully, though everything is changed, that old time is the perfect thing of my life, and I wish I could blot out the years and be, for my soul's good, the boy I was—even if you were out of the question. But I can't ever lose you in that way again, and it's my loss and my tragedy. It was the best way, Katherine—even if I were as crude as we used to think Chelling.

You are a brilliant woman—an actress who has achieved the praise that is still the "golden cry" in your ears, but you've deteriorated as a woman from that earlier self that might have been the key—the index—to the character I thought you were long ago, and that Chellings thinks you now.

To be popular, to be exploited as an actress whose cleverness was as daring as it was brilliant, has satisfied you perfectly. That a few people of an old-fashioned sort in the little places where you used to live, held up their hands in horror over the roles you took, over the notoriety the press manipulated for you, was nothing to you. Their opinions of you not only didn't trouble you—you didn't even think about their having one.

When I met you three years ago in France, after so long a time, I saw you didn't mind the disapproval you might provoke; you were as careless of it as Undine.

I, too, you comprehend, had reached a place that if it didn't match yours in brilliancy, at least equaled it in cynical pessimism. I hadn't any illusions about myself or my books. I didn't believe in the milk of human kindness any more than you. We were two of a kind—products of

arid materialism; and you were much more interested in me when you discovered this than ever before. I had acquired—analysis; and I studied you frankly. You remember I told you when you asked me once the result of my analysis. It wasn't flattering. I pointed out the fact that there was one direction in which you couldn't advance—that you'd shut the door. That direction was the normal one for every woman—love.

I didn't think you had ever considered its existence—outside its necessitous part in your profession. As a sentiment, as an exaltation of the best in human nature, you hadn't considered it. In your profession it was a pose assumed as you put on a costume, and I told you that though you could trick an audience—at a pinch trick the one person—yet you'd never trick yourself.

That's the test, you understand, of the real thing—to lose one's self utterly, past finding, in devotion that's single-hearted and real. We quarreled, of course; you said my estimate was embittered and I resented the implication. I watched your manner to Chelling—Chelling, who was awkward, shy and amusing. It was a fine bit of acting off the stage. We had discussed him half contemptuously during those first days before our disagreement, and had wondered that our hostess should have invited so stupid a relation—cousin, wasn't he?—to introduce to her French in-laws. Old Madame de Silancourt liked him, I remember, even if he did blush over her droll stories—and she made them less droll, I noticed, when he was by.

But I don't think, in looking back, that any of us even suspected his real worth—it wasn't in us to recognize it until the world flung it into our faces. I feel sure it was merely the difficulty of attracting him that made you determined to conquer. He was different from all the men you had ever known—he wasn't even aware of your charm, for it belonged to an atmosphere he didn't comprehend. To be charming to him it was necessary to abandon your real self—to take a role that appealed to him. You divined it exactly

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