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A Desperate Thought. "What if there is no God?" The dreadful thought struck him like a bolt of lightning...

MISTAKEN. Thoughtless Words and the Results They Wrought in Two Young Lives.

A cool breeze blew up from the river. It played among the reeds and tall grasses on the bank and ran lightly up the slope...

"What a delicious breeze!" exclaimed Florence Freeman, rising as she spoke. The slender, thoughtful-looking young man reclining upon the sofa...

"Listen, girls," interrupted another voice, "Florry is on her high horse. Now we shall see some prancing."

"Duty is often unpleasant," she said, "but it is best, after all, to have a settled plan and purpose and cling to them."

"Oh, yes; there must be plans, of course, and they must be carried out, or nothing would be accomplished. But take special cases. There is cousin Dora, for instance. Why must she give up her painting to marry Fred Long, merely because she promised to when a mere child, and didn't know what she wanted?"

"Sh-h! here she comes," whispered Edith Stanley as a bright-faced girl flitted up from the garden, like a dainty white butterfly, and perched herself on the steps.

"Have I been so blind?" he questioned. "O, my little Dora!"

When Dora, only 15 then, had given him her hand so contentedly, they walked together in this very grove—it was morning then, and spring-time, and the air was filled with the scent of wild crab-apple blooms...

"Dora, you are not happy." "No, I'm not," she said almost sharply. "How lovely Florence is."

"Yes, indeed. She is well-nigh perfect. But there is only one Dora in all the world," taking her little cold hand in his. "Without Dora the world is meaningless to me."

view. How shall he find a minute in which to speak alone with Dora? He feels that he cannot bear the suspense until another day shall come, and then mutters to himself, "Fool! what if I must last a lifetime? What if I am never to know?"

As he recalled the piazza a flash of voice cried out eagerly, "O, Mr. Long! where have you been hiding yourself?" and in an instant he was surrounded by a laughing group, who scolded and questioned with such vivacity that their victim found it unnecessary to say a word; it was, in fact, quite impossible.

Dora's first careless glance at his pallid face changed to one of alarm. The light from an open window fell upon it and she saw its deadly pallor. "Why, Fred!" she cried, "you are dead!"

Fred Long was just now taking a well-earned vacation. After years of hard work and months of illness he had come back to the home of his childhood to regain lost health and strength.

Presently the flock of merry school girls took flight. "Only Florence, and you, and I," said Dora; "just as it used to be." But for both the old charm was destroyed.

"Yes," he answered, "I must go back to my law books and you must have time for your painting."

"Yes; perhaps more. Give me a year," she said eagerly, quite unconscious of the pain her words inflicted, and only anxious for time wherein to prove whether, after all these years of devotion, Fred could be won from her.

"This suspense is killing me," he would say; "but I'll wait—it is better—it will soon be over."

Early in the summer Fred found himself again in the old familiar haunts, but alas! the old joyous light was wanting everywhere. A shade, a mist, seemed hanging over everything, and Dora was further away than ever.

"Dora, you are not happy." "No, I'm not," she said almost sharply. "How lovely Florence is."

"Yes, indeed. She is well-nigh perfect. But there is only one Dora in all the world," taking her little cold hand in his. "Without Dora the world is meaningless to me."

"It seems to me I would be if only things could be as they once were between us."

This was the first allusion he had made to the fact that he had noticed a change in their relations. Dora realized that a crisis was coming. She simply awaited it in silence. She would neither strive to avert nor to hasten it.

"I have sometimes feared that you and I have been mistaken. That is the word I think. If so, I love you too well to ask you to keep a promise which has become hateful to you."

And so they parted. The tie formed almost in childhood was broken, and they went their separate ways.

By and by Dora's pale, resolute face bent over her canvas, and she steadied her trembling hand for greater achievements. She worked so hard, they said, she was too ambitious; she put too much of her life-blood into the strokes of her brush, and a few months ended the struggle.

By all odds the best watering-place story comes from the Northwest, where a young lady from St. Louis, summering at Lake Minnetonka, created a sensation last week by disabling a young man from Minneapolis.

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