

## THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

were both of us slaves to the same master—the call of the East. His voice seemed to sound for me the murmur of a familiar worship. His strong, brutal, crafty face, the full lips and dominating eyes, I understood and yielded to unresistingly, because he was as much in thrall as I to the dream, the visions, the sense of uncomprehended things.

When he slipped down on his knees beside me, and drew my face over to his lips, I did not think of refusing; it seemed part of the ritual to a long-acknowledged faith. Why should I resist? We both of us granted something stronger, an attraction deeper, a fascination more intense than the human sense could satisfy. It was only the symbol of the less for the greater. He kissed me as I, in thought, clambered up the steps of some difficult shrine to waste touch on the vapour of its incense.

## NEW JERSEY

*Woodlawn.*—When I wakened this morning the pungent smell of burning leaves was creeping into my room through the crevices of the curtains, with the sunshine.

The air tingled when I threw the shutters open as though it had dissolved from crystals of excitement. The gardener was raking together great heaps of dead leaves and setting fire to them on the lawn, the fox-terriers were tearing around in insane concern and barking deliriously. I flung myself back on the bed, and let the air, the sun, sweep over me, and flutter the magazines on the table and ripple all the frills on the soft white curtains. It was sanctuary.



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I raised myself on my elbow to see myself in the glass. A serious face and serious eyes, fair hair pushed back from an absurdly good forehead for a woman. There was nothing in the face that would tell.

I leaned back on the pillows raptured by the purity of the room, the outside sweetness of the smell of burning leaves—the essence of the forest consuming in the chilled air.

Through it all I had been conscious, had set every breath since I wakened to the rhythm of the Bach fugue that some one was playing below. Vancouver and Dresden and London were all part of this Fugue and Prelude in C major, the expectation of the audience, the step into cloudland, the roaring applause as the visions tinkled back into silence. The notes staccatoed around me, and held me in a clinking net. A net filled with wood

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perfume and the touch of white smooth pillows, their undisturbed lace frills, the immaculate smooth-drawn bed, the relief of gold cool sunshine after the deep unbroken sleep of night.

These are weeks interspersed with music and the foam-caught shreds of chrysanthemums, earth perfume, filaments of mauve and bronze and white, the very white and texture that spray back from the touch of the ship through the waves at sea. Long walks through the radiant woods showing to the sun all the colour they have stolen from his warmth, the shrill sweet yelp of the darting fox-terriers racing with me, leaping at me, circling me, and when I sink down under some tree, laughing and tired, smothering my hands in the caresses from their thin red tongues.

I am free from the revelation of human



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things. I am supremely happy to be alone with myself, and the thrilling of the autumn air, the dogs, and the music.

Max comes and plays too sometimes, and sings. The drawing-room where the cool sea-coloured faded silks blend into the hushing twilight, the transparent curtains disclosing the vines and trees outside, the fragile tall glasses holding the cloud-broken chrysanthemums.

When I am lying back listening to him, all the faint sheltering mists of dawn and twilight, of sea breath, creep around me, and still me in their eternal quiet.

His voice is so pure, so young, so only touched by fervour, by the very quality of its beauty. Liza Lehmann's Persian Garden—"Myself when young did eagerly frequent"—the great arpeggioed chords ring gorgeous and clarion, but formed like tinted tulips, not made for

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touch, or to touch with perfume. They spread out in waves of colour, they lift up cup after cup of dew-washed amethyst and rose and pallor.