TENDER IS THE NIGHT

Book II

III

About a year and a half before, Doctor Dohmler had some vague correspondence with an American gentleman living in Lausanne, a Mr.Devereux Warren, of the Warren family of Chicago. A meeting was arranged and one day Mr.Warren arrived at the clinic with his duaghter Nicole, a girl of sixteen. She was obviously not well and the nurse who was with her took her to walk about the grounds while Mr.Warren had his consultation.

Warren was a strikingly handsome man looking less than forty. He was a fine American type in every way, tall, broad, well-made - "un homme tres chic," as Doctor Dohmler described him to Franz. His large gray eyes were sun-veined from rowing on Lake Geneva, and he had that special air about him of having known the best of this world. The conversation was in German, for it developed that he had been educated at Gottingen. He was nervous and obviously very moved by his errand.

"Doctor Dohmler, my daughter isn't right in the head. I've had lots of specialists and nurses for he and she's taken a couple of rest cures but the thing has grown too big for me and I've been strongly recommended to come to you."

"Very well," said Doctor Dohmler. "Suppose you start at the beginning and tell me everything."

"There isn't any beginning, at least there isn't any insanity in the family that I know of on either side. Nicole's mother died when she was eleven and I've sort of been father and mother both to

her, with the help of governesses - father and mother both to her."

He was very moved as he said this. Doctor Dohmler saw that there were tears in the corners of his eyes and noticed for the first time that there was whiskey on his breath.

"As a child she was a darling thing - ever/body was crazy about her, everybody that came in contact with her. She was smart as a whip and happy as the day is long. She liked to read or draw or dance or play the piano - anything. I used to hear my wife say she was the only one of our children who never cried at night. I've got an older girl, too, and there was a boy that died, but Nicnle was - Nicole was Nicole - "

He broke off and Doctor Dohmler helped him,

"She was a perfectly normal, bright, happy child.11

"Perfectly."

Doctor Dohmler waited. Mr.Warren shook his head, bl ew a long sigh, glanced quickly at Doctor Dohmler and then at the floor again.

"About eight months ago, or maybe it was six months ago or maybe ten - I try to figure but I can't remember exactly where we were when she began to do funny things - crazy things. Her sister was the first one to say anything to me about it - because Nicole was always the same to me," he added rather hastily, as if some one had accused him of being to blame, " - the same loving little girl. The first thing was about a valet."

"Oh, yes," said Doctor Dohmler, nodding his venerable head, as if, like Sherlock Holmes, he had expected a valet and only a valet to be introduced at this point.

"I had a valet - been with me for years - Swiss, by the way." He looked up for Doctor Dohmler's patriotic approval. "And she got some crazy idea about him. She thought he was making up to her - of course, at the time I believed her and I let him go, but I know now it was all nonsense."

"What did she claim he had done?"

"That was the first thing - the doctors couldn't pin her down. She just looked at them as if they ought to know what he'd one. But she cerainly meant he'd made some kind of indecent advances to her - she didn't leave us in any doubt of that."

"I see."

"Of course, I've read about women getting lonesome and thinking there's a man under the bed and all that, but why should Nicole get such an idea? She could have all the young men she wanted. We were in Lake Forest - that's a summer place near Chicago where we have a place - and she was out all day playing golf or tennis with boys. And some of them pretty gone on her at that.

All the time Warren was talking to the dried old package of Doctor Dohmler, one section of the latter's mind kept thinking intermittently of Chicago. Once in his youth he could have gone to Chicago as fellow and docent at the university, and perhaps become rich there and owned his own clinic instead of being only a minor shareholder in a clinic. But when he had thought of what he considered his own thin knowledge spread over that whole area, over all those wheat fields, those endless prairies, he had decided

against it. But he had read about Chicago in those days, about the great feudal families of Armour, Palmer, Field, Crane, Warren, Swift, and McCormick and many others, and since that time not a few patients had ome to him from that stratum of Chicago and New York.

"She got worse," continued Warren. "She had a fit or something - the things she said got crazier and crazier. Her sister wrote some of them down - " He handed a much-folded piece of paper to the doctor. "Almost always about men going to attack her, men she knew or men on the street - anybody - "

He told of their alarm and distress, of the horrors families go through under such circumstances, of the ineffectual efforts they had made in America, finally of the faith in a change of scene that had mad him run the submarine blockade and bring his daughter to Switzerland.

" - on a United States cruiser," he specified with a touch of hauteur. "It was possible for me to arrange that, by a stroke of luck. And, may I add," he smiled apologetically, "that as they say: money is no object."

"Certainly not," agreed Dohmler dryly.

He was wondering why and about what the man was lying to him. Or, if he was wrong about that, what was the falsity that pervaded the whole room, the handsome figure in tweeds sprawling in his chair with a sportsman's ease? That was a tragedy out there, in the February day, the young bird with wings crushed somehow, and inside here it was all too thin, thin and wrong.

"I would like - to talk to her - a few minutes now," said Doctor Dohmler, going into English as if it would bring him closer to Warren..

Afterward when Warren had left his daughter and returned to Lausanne, and several days had passed, the doctor and Franz entered upon Nicole's card:

Diagnostic: Schizophrenie. Phase aigue en decroissance. La peur des hommes est un symptome de la maladie, et n'est point constitutionnelle... Le pronostic doit rester reserve.*

*Diagnosis: Divided Personality, Acute and down-hill phase of the illness. The fear of men is a symptom of the illness and is not at all constitutional . . . The prognosis must be reserved.

And then they waited with increasing interest as the days passed for Mr.Warren's promised second visit.

It was slow in coning. After a fortnight Doctor Dohmler wrote. Confronted with further silence he committed what was for those days "une folie," and telephoned to the Grand Hotel at Vevey. He learned from Mr.Warren's valet that he was at the moment packing to sail for America. But reminded that the forty francs Swiss for the call would show up on the clinic books, the blood of the Tuileries Guard rose to Doctor Dohmler's aid and Mr.Warren was got to the phone.

"It is - absolutely necessary - that you come. Your daughter's health - all depends. I can take no responsibility."

"But look here, Doctor, that's just what you're for. I have a hurry call to go home!"

Doctor Dohmler had never yet spoken to any one so far away but he dispatched his ultimatum so firmly into the phone that the agonized American at the other end yielded. Half an hour after this second arrival on the Zurichsee, Warren had broken down, his fine shoulders shaking with awful sobs inside his easy-fitting coat, his eyes redder than the very sun on Lake Geneva, and they had the *awful* story.

"It just happened," he said hoarsely. "I don't know - I don't know.

"After her mother died when she was little she used to come into my bed every morning, sometimes she'd sleep in my bed. I was sorry for the little thing. On, after that, whenever we went places in an automobile or a train we used to hold hands. She used to sing to me. We used to say, 'Now let's not pay any attention to anybody else this afternoon - let's just have each other - for this morning you're mine!" A broken sarcasm came into his voice. "People used to say what a wonderful father and daughter we *were* - they used to wipe their eyes: We were just like lovers - and then all at once we *were* lovers - and ten minutes after in happened I could have shot myself - except I guess I'm such a Goddamned degenerate I didn't have the nerve to do it."

"Then what?" said Doctor Dohmler, thinking again of Chicago and of a mild plae gentleman with a pince-nez who had looked him over in Zurich thirty years before. "Did this thing go on?"

"Oh, no! She almost - she seemed to freeze up right away. She'd just say, 'Never mind, never mind, Daddy. It doesn't matter. Never mind.'"

"There were no consequences?"

"No." He gave one short conclusive sob and blew his nose several times. "Except now there's plenty of consequences."

As the story concluded Dohmler sat back in the focal armchair of the middle class and said to himself sharply, "Peasant!" - it was one of the few absolute worldly judgments that he had permitted himself for twenty years. Then he said:

"I would like for you to go to a hotel in Zurich and spend the night and come see me in the morning."

"And then what?"

Doctor Dohmler spread his hands wide enough to carry a young pig.

"Chicago," he suggested.

IV

"Then we knew where we stood," said Franz. "Dohmler told Warren we would take the case if he would agree to keep away from his daughter indefinetely, with an absolute minimum of five years. After Warren's first collapse, he seemed chiefly concerned as to whether the story would ever leak back to America.

"We mapped out a routine for her and waited. The prognosis was bad - as you know, the percentage of cures, even so-called social cures, is very low at that age.

"These first letters looked bad," agreed Dick.

"Very bad - very typical. I hesitated about letting the first one get out of the clinic. Then I thought it will be good for Dick to know we're carrying on here. It was generous of you to answer them."

Dick sighed. "She was such a pretty thing - she enclosed a lot of snapshots of herself. And for a month there I didn't have anything to do. All I said in my letters was 'Be a good girl and mind the doctors.'"

"That was enough - it gave her somebody to think of outside. For a while she didn't have anybody - only one sister that she doesn't seem very close to. Besides, reading her letters helped us here - they were a measure of her condition."

"I'm glad."

"You see now what happened? She felt complicity - that's neither here nor there, except as we want to revalue her ultimate stability and strength of character. First came this shock. Then she went off to a boarding-school and heard the girls talking - so from sheer self-protection she developed the idea that she had had no complicity - and from there it was easy to slide into a phantom world where all men, the more you liked them and trusted them, the more evil - "

"Did she ever go into the - horror directly?"

"No, and as a matter of fact when she began to seem normal, about October, we were in a predicament. If she had been thirty years old we would have let her make her own adjustment, but she was so

young we were afraid she might harden with it all twisted inside her. So Doctor Dohmler said to her frankly, 'Your duty now is to yourself. This doesn't by any account mean the end of anything for you - your life is just at its beginning," and so forth and so forth. She really has an excellent mind, so he gave her a little Freud to read, not too much, and she was very interested. In fact, we've made rather a pet of her around here. But she is reticent," he added; he hesitated: "We have wondered if in her recent letters to you which she mailed herself from Zurich, she has said anything that would be illuminating about her state of mind and her plans for the future."

Dick considered.

"Yes and no - I'll bring the letters out here if you want. She seems hopeful and normally hungry for life - even rather romantic. Sometimes she speaks of 'the past' as people speak who have been in prison. But you never know whether they refer to the crime or the imprisonment or the whole experience. After all I'm only a sort of stuffed figure in her life."

"Of course, I understand your position exactly, and I express our gratitude once again. That was why I wanted to see you before you see her."

Dick laughed.

"You think she's going to make a flying leap at my person?"

"No, not that. But I want to ask you to go very gently. You are attractive to women, Dick."

"Then God help me! Well, I'll be gentle and repulsive - I'll chew garlic whenever I'm going to see her and wear a stubble beard.

I'll drive her to cover.11

"Not garlic!" said Franz, taking him seriously. "You don't want to compromise your career. But you're partly joking."

"-and I can limp a little. And there's no real bathtub where I'm living, anyhow."

"You're entirely joking," Franz relaxed - or rather assumed the posture of one relaxed. "Now tell me about yourself and your plans?"

"I've only got one, Franz, and that's tc be a good psychologist - maybe to be the greatest one that ever lived."

Franz laughed pleasantly, but he sqw that this time Dick wasn't joking.

"That's very good - and very American," he said. "It's more difficult for us." He got up and went to the French window. "I stand here and I see Zurich - there is the steeple of the Gross-Munster. In its vault my grandfather is buried, Across the bridge from it lies my ancestor Lavater, who would not be buried in any church. Nearby is the statue of another ancestor, Heinrich Pestalozzi, and one of Doctor Alfred Escher. And over everythin there is always Zwingli - I am continually confronted with a pantheon of heroes.11

"Yes, I see." Dick got up. "I was only talking big. Everything's just starting over. Most of the Americans in France are frantic to get home, but not me - I draw military pay all. the rest of the year if I only attend lectures at the university. How's that for a government on the grand scale that knows its future

great men? Then I'm going home for a month and see my father. Then I'm coming back - I've been offered a job."

"Where?"

"Your rivals - Gisler's clinic on Interlaken."

"Don't touch it," Franz advised him. "They've had a dozen young men there in a year. Gisler's a manic-depressive himself, his wife and her lover run the clinic - of course, you understand that's confidential."

"How about your old scheme for America?" asked Dick lightly. "We were going to New York and start an up-to-date establishment for billionaires."

"That was students' talk."

Dick dined with Franz and his bride and a small dog with a smell of burning rubber, in their cottage on the edge of the grounds. He felt vaguely oppressed, not by the atmosphere of modest retrenchment, nor by Frau Gregorovious, who might have been prophesied, but by the sudden contracting of horizons to which Franz seemed so reconciled. For him the boundaries of asceticism were differently marked - he could see it as a means to an end, even as a carrying on with a glory it would itself supply, but it was hard to think of deliberately cutting life down to the scale of an inherited suit. The domestic gestures of Franz and his wife as they turned in a cramped space lacked grace and adventure. The post-war months in France, and the lavish liquidations taking place under the xgis of American splendor, had affected Dick's outlook.

Also, men and women had made much of him, and perhaps what had brought him back to the centre of the great Swiss watch was an intuition that this was not too good for a serious man.

He made Kaethe Gregorovious feel charming, meanwhile becoming increasingly restless at the all-pervading cauliflower - simultaneously hating himself too for this incipience of he knew not what superficiality.

"God, am I like the rest after all?" ½ so he used to think starting awake at night - "Am I like the rest?"

This was poor material for a socialist but good material for those who do much of the world's rarest work. The truth was that for some months he had been going through that partitioning of the things of youth wherein it is decided whether or not to die for what one no longer believes. In the dead white hours in Zurich staring into a stranger's pantry across the upshine of a street-lamp, he used to think that he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it in.

V

The veranda of the central building was illuminated from open French windows, save where the black shadows of stripling walls and the fantastic shadows of iron chairs slithered down into a gladiola bed. From the figures that shuffled between the rooms Miss Warren emerged first in glimpses and then sharply when she saw him; as she crossed the threshold her face caught the room's last light and brought it

outside with her. She walked to a rhythm - all that week there had been singing in her ears, summer songs of ardent skies and wild shade, and with his arrival the singing had become so loud she could have joined in with it.

"How do you do, captain," she said, unfastening her eyes from his with difficulty, as though they had become entangled. "Shall we sit out here?" She stood still, her glance moving about for a moment. "It's summer practically."

A woman had followed her out, a dumpy woman in a shawl, and Nicole presented Dick: "Senora - "

Franz excused himself and Dick grouped three chairs together.

"The lovely night," the Senora said.

"Muy bella," agreed Nicole; then to Dick, "Are you here for a long time?"

"I'm in Zurich for a long time, if that's what you mean."

"This is really the first night of real spring," the Senora suggested.

"To stay?"

"At least till July."

"I'm leaving in June."

"June is a lovely month here," the Senora commented. "You should stay for June and then leave in July when it gets really too hot."

"You're going where?" Dick asked Nicole.

"Somewhere with my sister - somewhere exciting, I hope, because I've lost so much time. But perhaps they'll think I ought to go to a quiet place at first - perhaps Como. Why don't you corn to Como?"

"Ah, Como - " began the Senora.

Within the building a trio broke into Suppe's "Light Cavalry." Nocole took advantage of this to stand up and the impression of her youth and beauty grew on Dick until it welled up inside him in a compact paroxysm of emotion. She sailed, a moving childish smile that was like all the lost youth in the world.

"The music's too loud to talk against - suppose we walk around. Buenas noches, Senora."

"G't night - g't night."

They went down two steps to the path - where in a moment a shadow cut across it. She took his arm.

"I have some phonograph records my sister sent me from America," she said. "Next time you cane here I'll play them for you - I know a place to put the phonograph where no one can hear."

"That'll be nice."

"Do you know 'Hindustan'?" she asked wistfully. "I'd never heard it before, but I like it. And I've got Why Do They Call Them Babies?' and 'I'm Glad I Can Make You Cry.' I suppose you've danced to all those tunes in Paris?"

"I haven't been to Paris."

Her cream-colored dress, alternately blue or gray as they walked and her very blonde hair, dazzled Dick - whenever he turned toward her she was smiling a little, her face lighting up like an angel's when they came into the range of a roadside arc. She thanked him for everything, rather as if he had taken her to some party, and as Dick became less and less certain of his relation to her, her confidence increased - there was that excitement about her that seemed to reflect all the excitement of the world.

"I'm not under any restraint at all," she said. "I'll play you two good tunes called 'Wait Till the Cows Come Home' and 'Good-by, Alexander.'"

He was late the next time, a week later, and Nicole was waiting for him at a point in the path which he would pass walking from Franz's house. Her hair drawn back of her ears brushed her shoulders in such a way that the face seemed to have just emerged fromit, as if this were the exact moment when she was coming from a wood into clear moonlight. The unknown yielded her up; Dick wished she had no background, that she was just a girl lost with no address save the night from which she had come. They went to the cache where she had left the phonograph, turned a corner by the workshop, climbed a rock, and sat down behind a low wall, facing miles and miles of rolling night.

They were in America now, even Franz with his conception of Dick as an irresistible Lothario would never have guessed that they had gone so far away. They were so sorry, dear; they went down to

meet each other in a taxi, honey; they had preferences in smiles and had met in Hindustan, and shortly afterward they must have quarrelled, for nobody knew and nobody seemed to care - yet finally one of them had gone and left the orther crying, only to feel blue, to feel sad.

The thin tunes, holding lost times and future hopes in liaison, twisted upon the Swiss night. In the lulls of the phonograph a cricket held the scene together with a single note. By and by Nicole stopped playing the machine and sang to him:

"Lay a silver dollar
On the ground
And watch it roll
Because it's round - "

On the pure parting of her lips no breath hovered. Dick stood up suddenly.

"What's the matter, you don't like it?"

"Of course I do."

"Our cook at home taught it to me:

'A woman never knows
What a good man she's got
Till after she turns him down ...'

"You like it?"

She smiled at him, making sure that the smile gathered up everything inside her and directed it toward him, making him a profound promise of herself for so little, for the beat of a response, the assurance of a complementary vibration in him. Minute by minute the sweetness drained down into her out of the willow trees, out of the dark world.

She stood up too, and stumbling over the phonograph, was momentarily against him, leaning in to the hollow of his rounded shoulder.

"I've got one more record," she said. "Have you heard 'So Long, Letty'? I suppose you have."

"Honestly, you don't understand - I haven't heard a thing."

Nor known, nor smelt, nor tasted, he might have added; only hot-cheeked girls in hot secret rooms. The young maidens he had known at New Haven in 1914 kissed men, saying "There!," hands at the man's chest to push him away. Now there was this scarcely saved waif of disaster bringing him the essence of a continent ...

B III, I

Frau Kaethe Gregorovious overtook her husband on the path of their villa.

"How was Nicole?" she asked mildly; but she spoke out of breath, giving away the fact that she had held the question in her mind during her run.

Franz looked at her in surprise.

"Nicole's not sick. What makes you ask, dearest one?"

"You see her so much - I thought she must be sick."

"We will talk of this in the house."

Kaethe agreed meekly. His study was over in the administration building and the children were with their tutor in the living-room; they went up to the bedroom.

"Excuse me, Franz," said Kaethe before he could speak. "Excuse me, dear, I had no right to say that. I know my obligations and I am proud of them. But there is a bad feeling between Nicole and me."

"Birds in their little nests agree," Franz thundered. Finding the tone inappropriate to the sentiment he repeated his command in the spaced and considered rhythm with which his old master, Doctor Dohmler, could cast significance on the the tritest platitude. "Birds-in-their-nests-agree!"

"I realize that. You haven't seen me fail in courtesy toward Nicole."

"I see you failing in common sense. Nicole is half a patient -she will possibly remain something of a patient all her life. In the absence of Dick I am responsible." He hesitated; sometimes as a quiet joke he tried to keep news from Kaethe. "There was a cable from Rome this morning. Dick has had grippe and is starting home to-morrow."

Relieved, Kaethe pursued her course in a less personal tone:

"I think Nicole is less sick than any one thinks - she only cherishes her illness as an instrument of power. She ought to be in the cinema, like your Norma Talmadge - that's where all American women would be happy."

"Are you jealous of Norma Talmadge, on a film?"

"I don't like Americans. They're selfish, selfish!"

"You like Dick?"

"I like him," she admitted. "He's different, he thinks of others."

- And so does Norma Talmadge, Franz said to himself. Norma Talmadge must be a fine, noble woman beyond her loveliness. They must compel her to play foolish roles; Norma Talmadge must be a woman whom it would be a great privilege to know.

Kaethe had forgotten about Norma Talmadge, a vivid shadow that she had fretted bitterly upon one night as they were driving home from the movies in Zurich.

" - Dick married Nicole for her money," she said. "That was his weakness - you hinted as much yourself one night."

"You're being malicious."

"I shouldn't have said that," she retracted. "We must all live together like birds, as you say. But it's difficult when Nicole acts as - when Nicole pulls herself back a little, as if she were holding her breath - as if I <u>smelt</u> bad!"

Kaethe had touched a material truth. She did most of her work herself, and, frugal, she bought few clothes. An American shop-girl, laundering two changes of underwear every night, would have noticed a hint of yesterday's reawakened sweat about Kaethe's person, less a smell than an ammoniacal reminder of the eternity of toil and decay. To Franz this was as natural as the thick dark scent of Kaethe's hair, and he would have missed it equally; but to Nicole, born hating the smell of a nurse's fingers dressing her, it was an offense only to be endured.

"And the children," Kaethe continued. "She doesn't like them to play with our children - " bu Franz had heard enough:

"Hold your tongue - that kind of talk can hurt me profes-sinally, since we owe this clinic to Nicole's money. Lt us have lunch."

Kaethe realized that her outburst had been ill-advised, but Franz's last remark reminded her that other Americans had money, and a week later she put her dislike of Nicole into new words.

The occasion was the dinner they tendered the Divers upon Dick's return. Hardly had their footfalls ceased on the path when she shut the door and said to Franz:

"Did you see around his eyes? He's been on a debauch!"

"Go gently," Franz requested. "Dick told me about that as soon as he came home. He was boxing on the trans-Atlantic ship. The American passengers box a lot on these trans-Atlantic ships."

"I believe that?" she scoffed. "It hurts him to move one of his arms and he has an unhealed scar on his temple - you can see where the hair's been cut away."

Franz had not noticed these details.

"But what?" Kaethe demanded. "Do you think that sort of thing does the clinic any good? The liquor I smelt on him to-night, and several other times since he's been back."

She slowed her voice to fit the gravity of what she was about to say: "Dick is no longer a serious man."

Franz rocked his shoulders up the stairs, shaking off her persistence. In their bedroom he turned on her.

"He is most certainly a serious man and a brilliant man. of all the men who have recently taken their degrees in neuro-pathology in Zurich, Dick has been regarded as the most brilliant - more brilliant than I could ever be."

"For shame!"

"It's the truth - the shame would be not to admit it. I turn to Dick when cases are highly involved. His publications are still standard in their line - go into any medical library and ask. Most students think he's an Englishman - they don't believe that such thoroughness could come out of America." He groaned domestically, taking his pajamas from under the pillow, "I can't understand why you talk this way, Kaethe - I thought you liked him."

"For shame!" Kaethe said. "You're the solid one, you do the work. It's a case of hare and tortoise - and in my opinion the hare's race is almost done."

"Tch! Tch!"

"Very well, then. It's true."

With his open hand he pushed down air briskly.

"Stop!"

The upshot was that they had exchanged viewpoints like debaters. Kaethe admitted to herself that she had been too hard on Dick, whom she admired and of whom she stood in awe, who had been so appreciative and understanding of herself. As for Franz, once Kaethe's idea had had time to sink in, he never after believed that Dick was a serious person. And as time went on he convinced himself that he had never thought so.