

WATSON (*noticing the book*). What is that?

STAMFORD. Oh this? Just a book. *The Fellow Travellers* by D.W. Graham.

WATSON. You're reading D.W. Graham? You surprise me, Michael. I would not have taken you for a fan of novels about young women studying medicine.

STAMFORD. Yes, well, you know. Mother read it, said she thought I'd learn something from it. Not sure why. Rather silly stuff, to be honest.

(*WATSON's expression drops.*)

WATSON. Oh. Well. I'm afraid I can't talk long. What brings you all the way down to the Royal Free Hospital?

STAMFORD. Well, I wanted to discuss the letter you sent to Mother.

(*WATSON halts.*)

STAMFORD (*cont'd*). If you needed money, I wish you had come to me.

WATSON. If *I* needed—? Did you even read the letter?

STAMFORD. Read Mother's correspondence? Don't be silly.

WATSON. What exactly did she tell you?

STAMFORD. Just that you'd written, and something about needing money. Makes sense. That awful boarding house you live in. (*Seeing WATSON's expression.*) I'm only saying I understand how hard it can be, for a woman in your position. With your parents gone, and that unfortunate business with your brother—

WATSON. I am not comfortable having this conversation with you.

STAMFORD. She only wants what's best for you, as I do.

WATSON. The money wasn't even for me. I was hoping she'd make a donation to the school.

STAMFORD. The school? Oh! Yes, well, I can see why you might need ... *(Again off WATSON's look.)* Anyway, I have a counteroffer.

WATSON. Oh?

STAMFORD. Yes. I wish to renew my proposal.

WATSON. What proposal? *(Pause.)* Michael, you can't mean—

STAMFORD. I do.

WATSON. That was eight years ago.

STAMFORD. Nine, almost.

WATSON. That was before I left for Edinburgh.

STAMFORD. Yes.

WATSON. I thought you were joking. You said you were joking.

STAMFORD. No; you said I was joking and I agreed because it was less embarrassing that way. But wait. Let me do this properly.

*(STAMFORD kneels.)*

WATSON. Oh please don't.

*(STAMFORD takes WATSON's hand.)*

STAMFORD. Dorothy Watson, I asked once before, and now I ask again: Will you marry me?