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## *Lovers at the Crossroads*

He is an orphan. And she is an orphan. Can these two each be orphaned? Yes, it is best they both be orphans. And we be ready to love them more than we ever could were we to know they were well loved by their parents. Both parents, two perfectly normal loving parents.

Better than if there were two unequally lovable parents, one cruel, insufferable, egotistical, crass, miserly, oafish, plausibly vile. The other withering, passive, recalcitrant, stand-offish, clueless.

And rather than muddy matters with our impulses of plausible complications—her parents were alive but she was given away to be raised in the country by an elderly aunt—before his birth his father perished in a train wreck and his mother, barely eighteen, raised her son on grief—we think it's best to let them keep leaning toward their emblematic sides. Therefore they are both orphans.

And this uncluttered unambiguous profound fact determines nearly everything about them.

And nearly everything about them determined they would be lovers.

What kind of lovers—this has to be fixed by their two different ways of adjusting to their orphanhoods' vicissitudes. More on that later.

By the way, you can be an orphan, too, for the purposes of this story.