

**THE TORTOISE: A
NOVEL**

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The tortoise: A novel by Mary Borden

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MARY BORDEN

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THE TORTOISE

BOOKS BY MARY BORDEN

THE ROMANTIC WOMAN

THE TORTOISE

THE TORTOISE

A NOVEL

BY
MARY BORDEN



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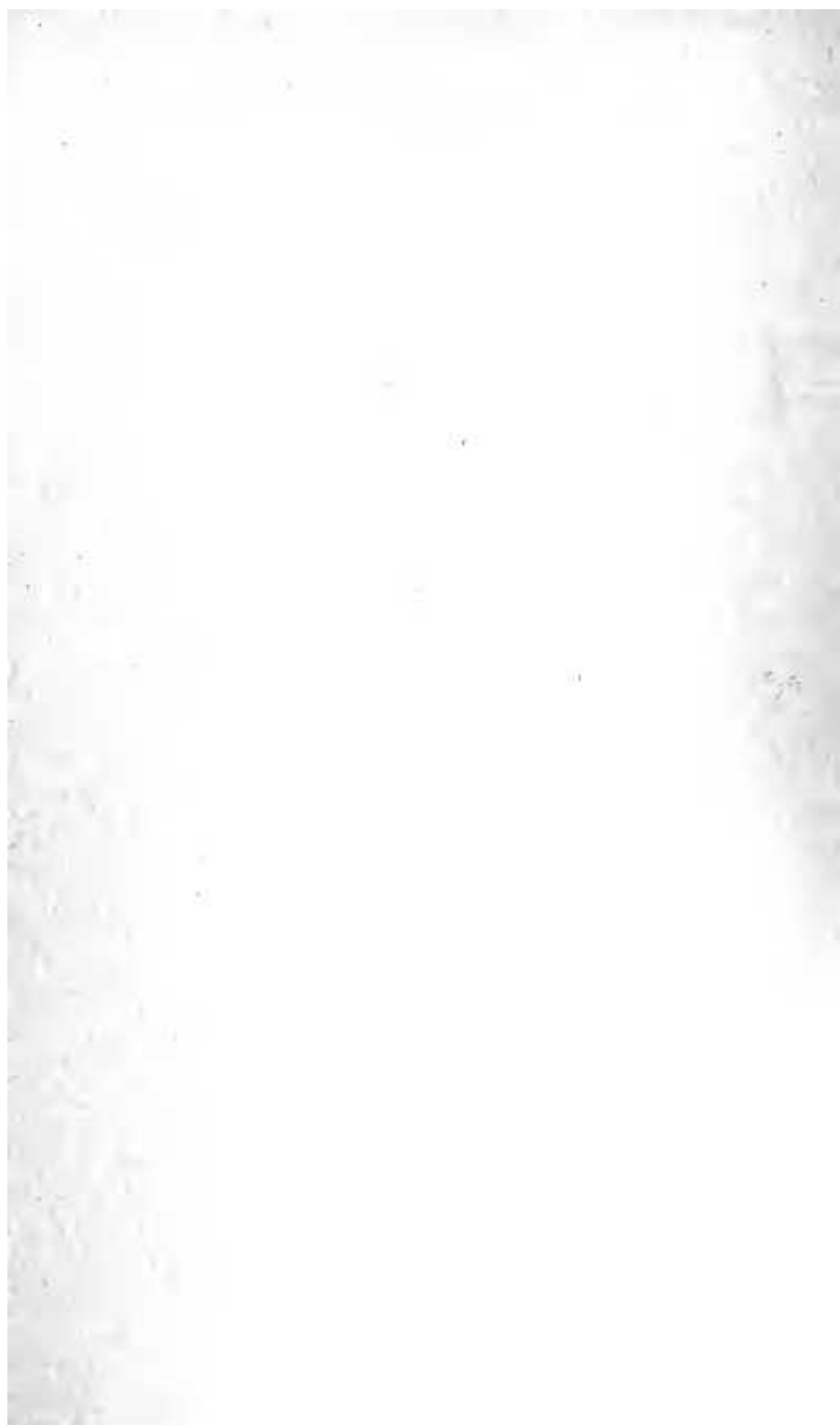
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PART ONE

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THE man and the woman were dreadfully still in the joyous rustling garden. Through the early rippling light of lovely morning they showed like desolate statues—motionless, soundless, pallid. It was as if the dark night had turned them to stone, and left upon them its darkness. The man was at a distance from the woman. The long emerald lawn still silvery with dew, and the shining space above it, where the birds darted and twittered, separated them, but something invisible, taut as a strong wire held them together.

The man was bigger than most men. He loomed huge and heavy before the rose-laden gable of the small doorway, his great back and hunched shoulders turned to the long low house that seemed too small for him. A weary Colossus, his feet planted on the brick walk between the beds of wallflowers and pansies, he waited, immensely still. His attention was fixed on the distant woman, who sat rigid on the edge of a garden seat, in the centre of the lawn, her long body tilted forward, her bosom lifted, her pale head averted and thrown back so that her face received the full light of the sun. Her pose was that of a figure nailed to the prow of a ship. Her arms hung down, slanting backward. The powerful gesture of her hands, if she had