

**THE WORLD
ABOVE; A
DUOLOGUE**

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The world above; a duologue by Martha Foote Crow

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MARTHA FOOTE CROW

**THE WORLD
ABOVE; A
DUOLOGUE**



The
World
Above

A Duologue *by*
Martha Foote Crow

The Blue Sky Press
Chicago

*Of this first edition of The World
Above there have been printed five
hundred copies on Van Gelder
hand-made paper and twenty-
five copies on Japan vellum, of
which this is number 223.*

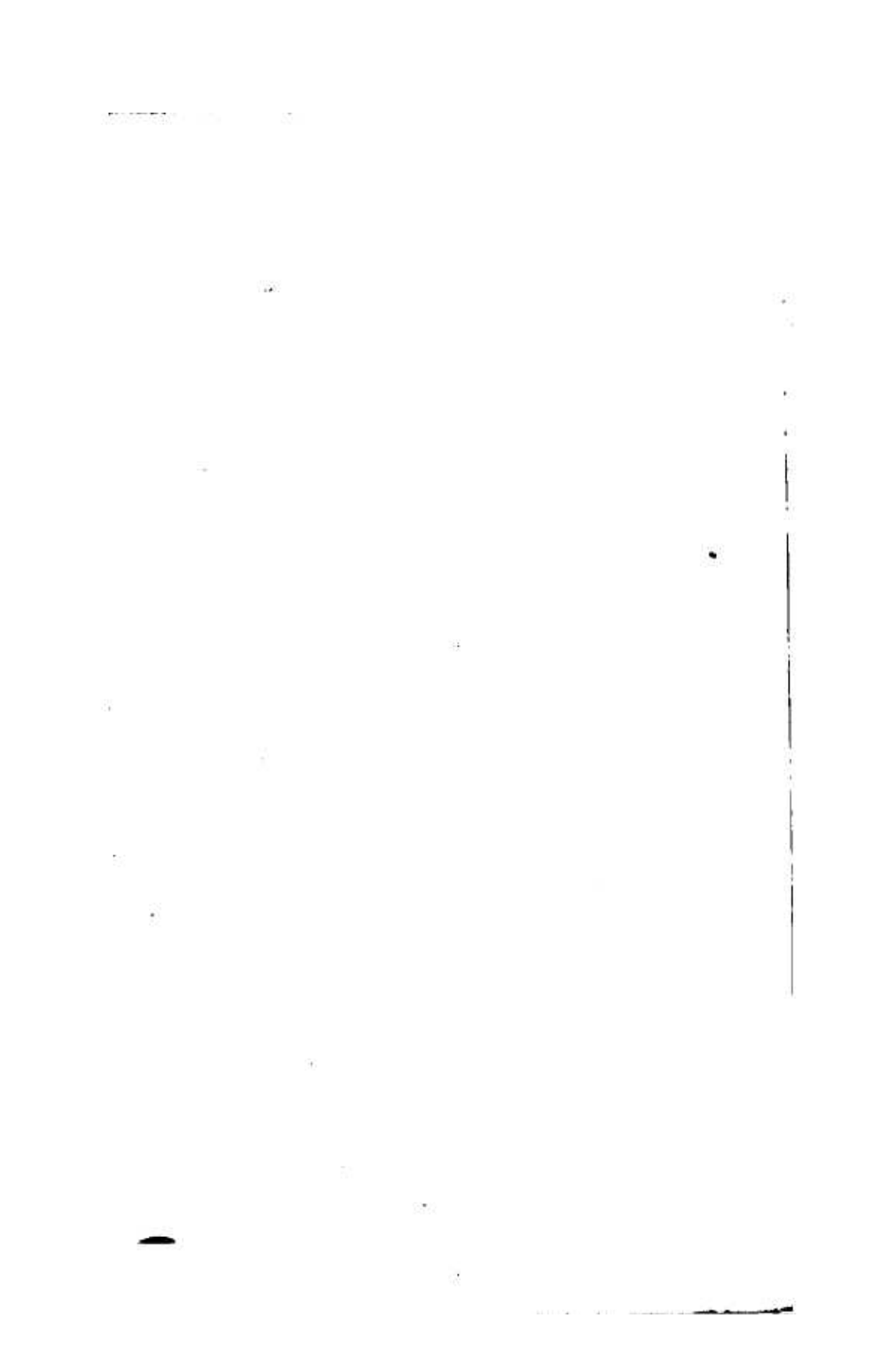
THE WORLD ABOVE.

The scene is laid in a shadowy and mystic place known to the dwellers there as The Darker Realm. It has been built and burrowed from time immemorial far down underneath some great, beautiful, sunny, human metropolis, called The World Above, but of this light-crowned city those who inhabit the subterranean retreats of The Darker Realm know but little, of its happy days and doings they can but dream.

The galleries of The Darker Realm are like an interminable network—one could so easily be lost there! Some parts are new and are built up smoothly with polished stone; other parts are old—so old and irregular that it seems as if they must have been set there many, many centuries ago. Perhaps the place has been an ancient mine where dim-eyed people sought the turquoise gem for their devil-altars; perhaps it was once a human town over which volcanic ashes and desert sands have fallen and drifted for many a long century. Unexhumed and rediscovered, it lies there, and the dwellers in The World Above find use for the water-way conduits that thread its interminable passages.

There are two persons in the story: Jean, a young man, a workman in The Darker Realm, and Angelica, a young maiden, daughter of another workman in the same.

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Scene I.

(A place in The Darker Realm. The background forms a cave-like enclosure or gallery with an arched roof composed of massive blocks of fitted stone. At the center of the enclosure is a tall well-sweep with other gigantic structures. Chains and tubes range along the walls and ceiling. At the right there is an opening into one of the larger conduits, and over the opening a trap-door is held up diagonally by a long dusty rope with a pulley attaching it to the wall above. From above this opening dangles a cord that floats out tensely, showing that a strong current of air is coming down through the conduit and is flowing out into the gallery. Near the front a foot-bridge crosses a gully in the floor of the passage; one can see the glint of the water flowing below. At the left, high up on the wall, juts forth a crane and on this hangs an iron lantern from which a sickly light is given forth. This is almost the only center of light in the place, though it is possible to see that there is some kind of a lamp beyond the half-open door of a windowless hut which is dimly perceived at the back of the gallery. Also, above the foot-bridge, there is a flue in the ceiling, and through this flows downward a faint, pale light, almost imperceptible, like the dimmest twilight. At the back of the gallery, arched openings on either side lead to passages of impenetrable blackness.)

From the door of the hut a young girl emerges and passes across the gallery. She hums a strain of the hymn Varina, and as she comes along, she touches the wall lightly with her white finger tips and walks with a hesitating step as if the floor were slippery, or as if she were accustomed to find her way more by the sense of touch than by that of sight. She is a slender and delicate looking girl, and the pupils of her eyes are large and dark as if they were trying to gather all the light they could. Her garment is a poor, dull-colored thing, and her face and her two hands are the only spots of pure white in the whole picture. She comes forward slowly, touching the wall sensitively and sings, as she approaches, in a voice like a soft, sweet flute, and yet more pathetic than any words can describe.)

U O P N



Angelica—"There is a land of pure de-light,"—

(She comes forward to the bridge and looks down into the water.)



Angelica—"Where saints immortal reign;"

(She looks up toward the flue; the dim radiance there falls like a halo upon her head. She whispers:)

Angelica—"Saints immortal!" I wonder what "saints immortal" may be!

(She looks around wonderingly and then looks down at her hand and turns a ring upon her finger, and then holds it up to the pale light from above, and smiles as she sings the second line of the stanza.)



Angelica—"Infinite day excludes the night, and pleasures banish pain."

(Then she turns and takes in long breaths of the air from the fresh current, lifting her shoulders as if she enjoyed the mere pleasure of breathing.)



Angelica—"There ev - er - last - ing spring a - bides,"

(She rests her face upon her hand meditatively.)

Angelica—This air—it must be the "everlasting spring" that mother sings about, it is so sweet!—for when I ask mother what "spring" is, she says it is where the air is fresh and sweet. Ah, yes! I would rather be out here, rather than in the close room, since mother is so sad and will not talk with me. Here the air comes rushing down the conduit and pours out into the gallery and fills me with such joy that I can scarcely breathe enough of it! I breathe and breathe it in! But—(she stops, listening, and holds her hand to her heart) surely, surely that is Jean's step! It comes nearer! It turns down the Branch of Blind Alleys. It is, it is! Jean! Jean! (Then with an effort to gain composure of tone—) Why, Jean, is that

you? (A boyish-looking fellow comes forward; he is dressed in workman's clothes and has all the marks of sordid labor upon his frame. His body is muscular but his complexion shows the pallor that suggests the cellar-grown plant. His eyes glow, however, with happy expectancy as he moves swiftly toward Angelica and takes her hands in his.)

Jean—Angelica! Do not pretend you did not hear my step; I saw you listening. I could tell from the very Court of Miracles what you were thinking of if I saw only the bend of your head! But look you! I am here! Jean! It is Jean!

Angelica—I know. (She turns and seems to make up her mind to throw all ruse aside; with a gesture of welcome she cries:) Ah, I thought I was never to see you again!

Jean—I thought so, too. I have wished to see you!

Angelica—Why, then, were you so long?

Jean—I was working with old Jacques over in the Old Freestone Branch beyond the Court of Miracles.

Angelica—(She shudders.) The Old Freestone? O, why did you go there?

Jean—Some one must go, Angelica, and I was the youngest and strongest. If I had not gone, old Jacques would have had to as he was the only one that understood the buttressing of the ancient wall, and I wouldn't have had old Jacques made to go for worlds!

Angelica—No indeed, old Jacques that saved your life and pulled you out of the Great River!

Jean—Yes, dear old fellow! And it's dangerous over there. You know they made the walls of the Old Freestone Branch out of blocks of stone so large that when a break starts and they begin to fall, it is not safe to be working among them.

Angelica—Yes, I know; Didon was lost there. Ah, poor Didon!

Jean—Yes, alas! But do not think of Didon; think of me! I am here again! I came to see you!

Angelica—But not for so long, for so long! And all the time I feared and wondered what I should do if you should fall from a bridge into the water, or should be caught beneath a break, or should have illness, or should get drawn into the quicksands.

Jean—Ah, do not think of these things! Think only of the pleasant side! Think that we are together!