



# SUICIDE STRUTS

by WILLIAM E. BARRETT

*Disgrace faced young Kane in twenty-four hours. And there ahead of him, with guns jammed—a Fokker's cold meat—was the man from whose hands disgrace would come. Fate was giving Kane his chance—yet he could not take it!*

**O**UTSIDE, THE WAR WAS ROARING and banging its way through the pages of history, but inside the squadron hut of the Seventeenth five men sat quietly around a table. The noise outside had no immediate interest for them. They were C Flight, and their orders were to stand by; A and B flights were taking care of the day's business.

Silver clinked musically across the table; there was a soft rustle as paper exchanged hands and the pasteboards dropped softly. Drawling voices called for "one" or "two." So it had been through weeks of association. A and B were "binge flights," but the voice of C was poker. They played it through the waking hours and some of them played it in their sleep—all of which was good. The more men thought of other things, the less they thought of the war and of what was likely to happen to them.

Jack Kane and Tom Cardigan faced each other across the table; they were two men who represented the opposite poles in training and temperament. Kane, youthful, quick, reckless and cursed with a sentimental outlook on life, was wetting his lips as he looked at his cards. Cardigan, wanderer over the earth, something of a reprobate and very much a realist, was sitting relaxed, his heavily bronzed face unreadable, eyes hooded by lazy lids. Padgett, Hull and Badger, the other players, had dropped out, leaving a sizeable pot in the middle for the winner of the two-man duel.

"I'll—I'll call." Kane's voice was thin, strained, unnatural. He pushed a slip of paper into the middle of the table to match Cardigan's last raise. Cardigan shrugged.

"Four nines," he said indifferently. He spread his hand fan-wise on the table. Jack Kane leaned forward. His face whitened.

"Better than my queen full," he said. "Much better." He essayed a light laugh which sounded flat and unnatural. No one seemed to notice. Cardigan had swooped in the stakes. "The way to discourage sin is to make it expensive," he drawled. Already Padgett's lean fingers were riffling through the cards for the next deal.

IT WAS always like that. A hand was finished and forgotten. The winner collected and that was all there was to it. Kane wiped the perspiration off his forehead. There was much more to it as far as he was concerned—too much more. Tonight was the last night of credit play. Tomorrow everyone settled up. It was warm, but Kane shivered miserably.

His I.O.U.s totaled up in the thousands of francs. He did not have a chance of paying off.

As in a dream, he saw the cards go around again and accepted his own mechanically. That last hand had been Waterloo for him. He had bet heavily and had hoped for a turn. It had been a heavy pot. Cardigan had topped him as Cardigan always topped him.

A buzzer sounded, stridently harsh in the quiet room. On the instant the atmosphere changed. Padgett's fingers stopped in the very motion of dealing the last card. With a deft movement his arm swept across the table and the money in sight slid into the depths of a drawer. That would be sweepstakes money next time they played. A grimmer game was calling them now.

Blinking in the light of mid-afternoon, they hurried out to the idling ships. "Two Jerries are taking pictures near Bouchavesnes," the talking wire had said. The observers were of the opinion that the two-seaters were alone.

"No top protection? Huh! Well, maybe not." Padgett, who was the flight leader, snapped a few terse instructions and they were no longer five men; they were five pilots, five creatures who would lose their identity for a while in the roar of the Sop Camels that carried them.

Jack Kane shivered in the cockpit. The sun was warm and the engine purred as softly as a Clerget can purr, but he was out of tune.

Below him, as the little ship got altitude, was the rough terrain of disputed territory. Bouchavesnes had been taken and retaken so many times that the country around it was hacked to pieces. Ordinarily, Jack Kane would have looked at that familiar section of the Front with a grin and rejoiced that the Allies now held it. Today, he noted only that it would be a hopeless mess in which to land.

THE five ships were flying in a V and Kane was riding the left outside tip. Immediately in front of him was Tom Cardigan. The sight of that well-poised head in the shadow of the wing kept Kane's troubles in front of him and constantly in mind. Cardigan was the very symbol of his unrest, The fellow was scarcely human.

"If only I had his card sense and his lack of nerves and his guts!" Kane shook his head once more. "Or if I had the money that Padgett and Hull and Badger have in back of them! But, no, I'm just a fourteen-carat sap."

Slumped in the cockpit, Jack Kane let gloomy thoughts race unchecked through his brain. Disgrace

loomed ahead of him when he faced the men who held his I.O.U.s and confessed that he could not pay. They would be polite, but they would remember that he had gambled against gentlemen with money he did not have.

Kane, who was very young, could not bear the thought of facing life with such a stain on his honor. "Be better if I died before—" Die! The thought came to him like a chill whisper from his own icy veins. Why not? It was waiting for all of them eventually.

Two tiny specks seemed to hover in the sky over there above Bouchavesnes. C-type Albatrosses. At sight of the Camel flight they banked around and hit their tails for home. That meant probably that they had their pictures and that their job was done.

Padgett, at the point of the V, was already hitting the gun in pursuit, nose down. Kane, banking about with the rest, cast a wary look back and upward. There were few clouds and the sky was clear. For once, it seemed, the observers had been right. The Boche were over without any top support.

Like messengers of destiny, the Camels came down. Faster than the German ships, and with a five-to-two advantage, there was nothing to it. The German angel of the doom book was already dipping his pen to write four more names.

Kane knew that, but the thought of death rode with him. He played with it, fascinated. It would be so easy. A little blunder as he dived down and one of those hard-pressed gunners would get him. There was a tradition to the effect that no sensation accompanied death in the air unless one came a flamer. "Like going under ether," some one had said.

Kane wondered about that. But suppose that it did hurt—it couldn't last long. He looked down at the rough and tortured terrain that represented German territory at this point of the line. A fellow would crack on that and he'd probably be dead, anyway, when he cracked. If he weren't, there would just be a few seconds while the ship broke up and the engine came through the dash.

THE German ships were plainly defined now. The tense gunners were crouching behind their guns. He'd have to decide quickly. His jaw clicked as he brought his firm teeth together.

"Hell! They'll think I'm less than dirt when I pass up those I.O.U.s, and I'll feel so much like a dog that I'll get bumped off, anyway, in the first fight I get into. This way I'll be going out with the crowd still believing in me."

Kane was soaked in sentiment and he believed in this line of reasoning. Still he was conscious of the chill wind that blows from the wings of death. It paralyzed him.

Padgett, Hull and Cardigan were going down under the Germans in a long swooping dive. Kane, still flying automatically, teamed off with Badger on top and came at the pilot's office of the left-hand plane with blazing guns. The German rolled, and in a frantic attempt to escape, dived into the group that had been shooting for the blind spot.

Kane fired another hasty burst that missed altogether and became conscious of the fact that he had let his chance of glorious suicide slip. He had fought with fierce intensity, as he always fought, and he had forgotten for the moment that he had planned to lose this fight.

He was after the German in a trice. Padgett and Hull and Badger were shooting the other Albatross to pieces with a nice sense of the eternal fitness of things. The Jerry that Kane had let get away was mixing it up with Cardigan. The ace of the card tables was doing a nice job, buzzing about his awkward, two-gun antagonist and spraying the lead carefully. It would be only a matter of moments before the little Camel would have its foe cold.

Kane nodded with satisfaction. He was glad of that. He couldn't pull this suicide stunt of his if it meant leaving a comrade in the lurch. As it was, he would probably give Cardigan the chance he was looking for when he staggered into the guns and tied the German up.

With startling suddenness, the German dived. Kane cursed as he lost him; then he dipped down and gave chase; noticing the fact that Cardigan had stayed with his foe and that the German was being forced back into battle a thousand feet closer to the earth. Black puffs of smoke flowering out in the sky gave evidence ofarchie's interest in the battle. Kane's eyes hardened.

"Be a bunch of scouts down here in a few minutes," he growled. "Cardigan's down too low. I'll have to—"

He was diving straight now, and fighting hard against the temptation to shut his eyes. He was going to ram that German and take him down to earth with him. Messier than he had planned, but—

Cardigan's plane staggered. It was hit and the pilot was trying to withdraw. Lumbering after him, like a heavyweight closing in on a lightweight, was the Albatross. Kane corrected his dive and his hand went to the trips. Cardigan's guns were suddenly silent and that meant only one thing—a jam. With a hit ship and no guns, Cardigan was cold meat.

KANE forgot all thought of suicide. In a swooping rush he came into the Albatross. He was standing on the rudder bar. His eyes squinting down the sights. A good burst in the right place, and that Boche would forget Cardigan in a hurry. Just one.

Hungry lead whined through Kane's wing and the white face of the German gunner seemed to leap at him. He bore down on the trips and the face disappeared. Something hit him with sickening force and he felt the warm flow of his own blood. The pilot of the two-seater had come about and was bent upon avenging his gunner. The sky seemed filled with screaming lead.

There was a salt taste in Kane's mouth and he was no longer cold. The fires of battle were lighted in his blood and his eyes narrowed above the nights. Just one more burst would do it. He banked sharply.

Like some great prehistoric bird sprawling awkwardly after a smaller antagonist, the German tried to match his maneuver. Jack Kane smiled grimly and pressed the trips again.

Time stood still as those tracers winged across the sky. The Albatross raised on its tail and for a split second hung suspended as though on a wire; then the nose swished down and it went wing over wing to oblivion. Jack Kane expelled his breath in a low whistle and mopped his forehead. A chip off the strut came away in his hand and the blood gushed warmly after it. He grinned and looked over the side.

Tom Cardigan, the silent, waved to him from the other cockpit and Kane came suddenly back to reality. Most of the ruinous I.O.U.s were in that other man's pocket and they were over German territory. His suicide plan had been unnecessary. He could have hung back from that fight and let the German work. Cardigan, not he, would have died, and that would have ended it.

With a gesture of disgust, Kane flung the thought from him and turned toward his own lines. He was cold again and he knew that there would be another card game when they got back. He wiped the blood out of his eyes.

"Four Germans!" he muttered. "I'll bet not one of them wanted to die. I did and I'm still right-side-up. Now what in hell am I going to do about it?"

The rocky terrain upon which a man could not hope to land safely intrigued him for a moment, but he turned his eyes away. He was a fighting man and there was only one way for a fighting man to go out and that was—fighting.

CARDIGAN made a mess of his landing when the little flight got home. He came out of the wreckage, spitting dirt and nursing a cut along his jaw. Padgett and Jack Kane reached him at the same moment, but he waved them away.

"The Kraut shot the bus up pretty badly," he drawled. "Didn't think it would get this far." His expressionless eyes rested for a moment on Kane. "Much obliged," he said.

Kane became suddenly conscious of humor on a vast and comic scale. Cardigan was thanking him for saving his life and the man was doing it as he'd thank a fellow for a match. "Much obliged," he'd said. Just like that. It was something to laugh about, especially since Kane had been thinking how convenient it would be had Cardigan been killed. Funny, too, that he was trying to get killed himself. "Never tried to save the blighter's life at all until I found myself doing it without thinking."

Kane's inward laughter did not last long. There was a card game coming up and a problem to be faced. He would be expected to play and there was no way for him to enter the game without pushing out more I.O.U.s—worthless paper which he could not back up. It would be crooked. He couldn't do it. Yet could he tell the crowd that, and admit that his signature was no longer good on an I.O.U.?

He brushed a hand across his eyes. His thoughts were all scrambled. Going war batty like a lot of the others who went back to Blighty with the shakes and with mirthless laughter on their lips. "I've got to snap out of it," he muttered.

They went back to the hut. Reports were made out and the table was squared away. Charley Hull took the cards out of the drawer. Kane hesitated before sitting down, his decision to withdraw hesitating on his lips. He felt Cardigan's cold eyes on him and turned toward them. Cardigan nodded and flipped a crumpled wad of notes across the table.

"Write me a ticket when you get a minute," he said crisply. His eyes shifted to Charley Hull, whose fingers were already caressing the pasteboards. Kane hesitated a moment more; then his hand closed around the notes and he sat down. Something very like the old fever flamed in his veins. Maybe this was the time. Maybe the cards would turn and his luck would come in. One never could tell. His fingers trembled as he reached for his cards.

Three hours later Jack Kane left the table with the biggest winning of his life and with most of his

I.O.U.s back in his pocket. He was dazed, incredulous, numbed—but for the first night in weeks he really slept.

C FLIGHT took the dawn show in the morning and the five came through intact with only a light brush with the foe to show for their time. All afternoon they played cards. The next day was the same. Theirs was the afternoon patrol then, and they had lots of time.

They played and Kane's streak kept up. Sometimes he would lose for a while, but he always came back when his money started to run out. A pucker of doubt appeared on his forehead, and he looked across the table with a queer look in his eyes. Finally he excused himself and took his pipe out into the air.

"Even, by God!" he said huskily. "I never expected to be even again. But I haven't been playing good poker. I'm a worse sucker than I thought. I never noticed what a rotten player I was when I was losing. Always too desperate, I guess. Now I know I'm rotten."

His eyes stared out across the bustling drome and he pulled hard on his pipe. The time had come to admit the truth to himself. He had evaded it before, but he knew now beyond a shadow of a doubt and he could no longer fight shy of facts. The reason he had won was because Cardigan felt obligated to him. Cardigan felt that he owed him his life and Cardigan had been paying a debt. Cardigan was crooked as hell.

Framing the thought into words produced a sense of shock. He had never suspected it through all those long dreary weeks when he had lost so steadily. He had thought Cardigan an exceptionally good player. Now he could appreciate the cleverness of the man. He won steadily but never spectacularly. The cards did what he told them to do, and he had made them work for Jack Kane.

Hand by hand, Kane reviewed his winning streak. He had played terrible poker but he had carded wonderfully—and his big hands had come to him always on Cardigan's deal. Jack's hands clenched into hard fists.

"The dirty mucker!" he said. "A man who would cheat his friends in the shadow of death is the lowest creature that walks. We all trusted him and—"

His fists slowly unclenched and his pipe dropped from his lips. Like a dash of cold water came the realization that he could not do anything about what he knew; that he was in a worse position than he had ever been through that very knowledge that was his.

"I wouldn't have known," he whispered, "if he

hadn't tried to help me. He tipped his hand by paying me a debt that he thought he owed, and I can't use knowledge that I got that way."

The thought stunned him. On the one hand, there were those other fine fellows playing trustingly and decently, and on the other was a man who was trying to pay a debt of gratitude to him. He was caught in the middle. He could not denounce Cardigan and he could not continue to win by crookedness. Yet he knew that Cardigan would continue to feed him the cards.

He retrieved the pipe and lighted it. After all, he was as big a crook as Cardigan. He had played past the point where he could hope to pay and they had trusted him, too.

"Tarred with the same stick, both of us," he said huskily, "and now we're teamed up. Cheating our comrades blind and taking the money out of their pockets."

A hail from the hut brought him to his feet. He had forgotten. It was time for them to go on patrol again. He would go up into the sky once more and dice with death among the clouds; then he would come down to the card table and gamble with dishonor. Life was a mess.

NOT till the little flight of Camels roared across the seamed terrain near Bouchavesnes did the pilot's head clear of its fog. Then he saw things plainly. He had only two alternatives. He could go to Cardigan, accuse him without proof and earn the man's enmity without doing any particular good, or—

The alternative frightened him a little, but his jaw squared. Cardigan's crookedness was none of his business, as long as he was not a party to it. It was a grave personal problem while he continued to profit from that crookedness. O.K. He would put Cardigan out of his debt. Cardigan owed his life to him, did he? Well!

In a compact little group and at about ten-thousand altitude they swept across the lines. Kane's eyes rested appraisingly on the striped Camel ahead of him. Cardigan was riding that ship, and he had a rendezvous with Cardigan that Cardigan didn't know about. There would be three of them at the trust. Kane and Cardigan and death.

Padgett was wagging his wings and Kane stiffened, his eyes alert as he searched the sky. There they were! Four Fokkers were hitting it back for Germany, survivors, probably, from some scrap up the line. Good hunting.

Padgett's wings talked. The left side of the V would stay up as protection; the other three men would go down. Perfect! Kane and Cardigan would be teamed on the protection. Nothing could be better for "the plans of Jack Kane.

Like arrows released from the bows of giant bowmen, the three Camels went down on the four Fokkers below. Kane, circling above and paying little attention to his partner, saw the blue noses of the Camels spit destruction. Two of the Germans went speeding down the sky to the last bivouac of the airman. In a buzzing swarm, the remaining machines locked for a minute and then spread over the sky. He cast a look aloft and froze.

Five more Germans were coming down out of the clouds. Pfalz scouts! He wheeled toward the menace and fired his Very pistol as a warning to the embattled scouts below. Cardigan was beside him and their noses lifted to the diving Boche.

A flight of flashing scouts passed the two defenders in screaming dives and three of the Pfalz were down below to the rescue of their comrades in the Fokkers. Kane found himself menaced by the guns of a silver scout that had flattened miraculously out of its dive. With a touch of his foot and a quick maneuver with the stick Kane wheeled into his foe. A spray of bullets passed through the wing tip and his own guns stuttered under his hands.

HE WAS in a climbing bank now and fighting for altitude. He could see the grim face of the German pilot as the Pfalz tried to block his maneuver—the dull, heavy face of a plodder. Kane decided to gamble. Dropping his nose, he rolled out of the top of his climb and pulled over on the German's left.

The Pfalz skidded and Jack Kane laughed. There was a nervous, indecisive hand on those controls! The Jerry had figured him one way and it took several seconds for the man's mind to untrack. Having the better ship was not going to do that fellow much good. He was cold meat.

A neat little pattern of disaster appeared in the side of the Pfalz fuselage before the fellow squirmed out. That was just a preliminary. Out of the corner of his eye, Kane saw the other Camel riding the tail of the second Pfalz. Cardigan—and in the top position.

That brief, photographic impression brought back to Jack Kane the dilemma confronting him. He had saved Cardigan's life and he had to give that life back. He had to let Cardigan even things up, and then

the fellow would no longer try to pay the debt with crooked cards that Kane could not call.

The Pfalz hung in his gun sights and Kane's fingers tightened on the trips, only to relax again. The fellow was a dub and he could call the minute and get him. Cardigan was his problem and he would have to let Cardigan get him out of this so the debt would be squared. His problem would remain unchanged if he got this Boche himself.

There was a flash of flame to his left and the other Pfalz was going down with a black streamer. Ugh! Dirty stuff, that! Cardigan's Camel had come about and the man was coming down. Kane gulped the air. No time now to lose. Cardigan would help him with this fellow, but the debt would not be squared unless he needed the help badly when Cardigan came down.

LIKE a swimmer taking a plunge in water that he knows to be icy, Kane shoved the stick over and crossed the German's nose. For a split second, the prop threatened him, and then he was clear and slightly below his foe. He banked out and pretended to tinker with his gun. His heart raced furiously and his breath came hard. The German was coming for him with Spandaus spitting fire.

"I'm a damned fool, I guess." Kane's fingers fumbled. "If Cardigan slips up, I'm cooked and—"

There was a crash and a clatter as the German's gun swept across his nose and Kane stared fascinated at the damage. The German had rushed past and was coming back at him, but it was hardly necessary. His burst had gone through the prop. Kane's engine was kicking itself to pieces.

Instinctively, Kane turned off the ignition and then Cardigan's ship entered the argument; a whirling, blue-nosed Camel that fainted twice and then blasted the German out of the skies with two bursts that were placed with a master's skill in the vital spots.

Like a crippled bird, Kane's ship fluttered down. Vibration had shaken the engine loose from its mounting and at the second bank he lost it. The tail dropped and he set his jaw hard. A spin now. No! With both hands on the stick, he held her into the safe gliding angle and played for luck. He was straight out and headed across the lines. Funny how close they were. He hadn't noticed the fighting swing back. Tough terrain, that. Nobody could land there and live. He had to. How the gods jested!

His arms ached and there was a tightness in his jaw that caused his ears to hurt. Well, he'd paid the debt,

but it made no difference now. Cardigan would go on cheating and no one would know.

He wiggled his legs a bit in the tight cockpit. Helluva thing in a crash, the Camel. The murdering little brutes cramped a man up and the engine came into his lap. Hell! He'd forgot. He didn't have an engine. Oh, well, there were a lot of things that could happen to a man's lap when he was cramped up like this.

Black flowers bloomed all around him and he smiled grimly. Archie was paying its last respects to him—and he couldn't duck. He had to go straight down.

A SHADOW fell across his wing and then there was another Camel beside him. He looked across into the lean hard face of Cardigan. The man looked almost human. He was trying to smile with a face that wasn't built for smiling, and he was making motions. What were the motions about? The fellow was trying to tell him that landing wasn't as tough as it looked. Very decent of him, but too blamed optimistic. Cardigan could be cheerful about it. He didn't have to land a blasted motor-less Camel on the stuff.

The French lines were beneath Kane now and he was low enough to look into the trenches. He bet himself that he would spit into them. That was a humorous thought. It would surprise the Frogs no end if he did spit into their trench. He laughed hysterically and his knuckles pushed against his skin. He was going to crash in a few minutes—going to crash.

A tiny craft swooped out in front of him and headed down into that awful, shell-plowed mess behind the lines. A Camel! Cardigan! The fellow was going to land. Damned fool!

His own bus was settling and he saw the other Camel kick dirt. It touched, bounced, tipped onto one wing, folded a little and then settled on an undercarriage that suddenly disappeared from under it in a mess of wreckage.

Kane stared and his hand fastened on the stick with something of his old confidence, lifting the nose a trifle, letting it settle. Cardigan had landed, and what Cardigan could do, he could do.

The broken ground rushed up to him, but he was no longer reconciled to dying in the cockpit. He was going to fight it out.

With a shattering crash he came in. His tail touched momentarily and then the right wing dipped and folded. Everything seemed to break up and crack and splinter all about him. Dust choked him, and he felt

as though he were riding a fast train into the dark. His ears filled with sound and the darkness swallowed him.

Strong hands were tugging at him when Kane came back to consciousness. His eyes blinked in the light as he struggled to gain his feet. Some one was holding him up, and he was conscious of blood on his clothes. He struggled to focus his eyes and found himself staring into the hard, bronzed face that had been across the card table from him since time began. "I—what—" he began doubtfully. Cardigan spat.

"You made one helluva lousy landing," he said.

LATER, while awaiting the conveyance that had been promised them, the two men sat on a pile of lumber and lighted pipes. Kane was strangely silent. He felt washed out and exhausted. His plan had succeeded, and it was certain that Cardigan would never feel again that he owed a thing to Kane.

On the contrary, the shoe was now on the other foot, and another set of problems reared threatening heads. Kane owed much to Cardigan—far too much. Only sheer heroism could account for the wild play that the lean pilot had made. Cardigan had scaled the heights in that one moment and put Kane forever in his debt. Kane brushed a hand across his face.

Cardigan had deliberately taken his life in his hands when he landed that tiny ship on the wild terrain behind the trenches. He had done it to show Jack Kane that a landing could be made on the impossible stuff—but he could not have been sure of it himself until he tried it. It had been magnificent. Yet the man was a crook.

"Kane, just what in hell is the matter with you?" Cardigan's crisp voice burst through Kane's reverie like a blast of shrapnel.

"Er—what do you mean?"

"Just what I asked you. You tried suicide today against that Pfalz. Clumsiest thing I ever saw. I could have understood it last week. I don't get it now."

Kane swallowed. "I didn't;—"

"You did." Cardigan made a disgusted gesture with his pipe. "Why, boy, I've been flying for so long that I can tell when a man sneezes in the cockpit. Last week you were broke and over your neck in debt. Lots of men have stepped through the curtain for that reason. If you'd pulled it then, I'd have understood, but what in hell was your reason today?"

KANE'S face whitened through the tan and the grease. It was going to be hard. His chin came up

and suddenly he found his voice. In quick, blasting sentences he outlined the story of how he had worried and fretted with himself; of his decision to get accounts squared and stop taking crooked money. He was breathless when he finished, but there was a new maturity to his face.

"I'm through with gambling," he said. "It isn't my game. I'm going to ask for a transfer to B. Then I won't get in any more messes like this one. I—"

"Good idea!" Cardigan knocked the ashes from his pipe and stood up. Something very like a smile curled across the poker face of the man. "But don't worry about what's past, kid. You didn't take any money out of the game. You only got your own back." He looked away for a minute and then his eyes came back.

"If it helps you any," he drawled, "I didn't stack those paste-boards for myself. I just used a little extra knowledge on your behalf. You needed it."

Kane came to his feet with a choked cry. "Is that the truth?" he said.

Cardigan waved his hand carelessly. "Of course it is. A fellow would be an awful crook to cheat in a friendly game."

Later, when he sat alone with the stars and his battered pipe, Cardigan allowed himself the luxury of a full-grown smile. Kane's eager, youthful face seemed to float before him and he swore softly.

"The crazy little blighter!" he said. "Everybody in that game has been stealing the shoes off everybody else. He was just too dumb to know. When I do a little burglary for him, it hurts him like a toothache. Oh, well!"

Cardigan was a realist. It was hard for him to get the sentimental viewpoint.