

when he called at her house. They have never met since. Don't you pity him, Marion?"

"Yes," said Marion in a low voice.

"And now at last he is going to be happy again," Kitty went on, "and I know—well, I know that within a few days I shall have an engagement to announce. And, Marion, dear, he is coming to call tonight and I wanted so much to have you meet him."

Marion sat staring into the fire. She was trapped, fairly trapped. To run away was impossible; it would not only mortally affront Kitty, but would tell her the secret. And it would show Harry that she was afraid of him. How miserable she had been over that affair! For months she had struggled with the impulse to write to him, but her pride was too strong for her. And now—how foolish she had been!

Well, there was nothing to do but to meet him brazenly, and for Kitty's sake no word must pass that would betray them.

A ring at the bell and Kitty started up excitedly.

"That's Harry!" she exclaimed. "And I haven't got ready. Marion, I can't—I simply can't let him see me with my hair like this. You must entertain him for five minutes till I am ready." And she flew up the stairs just as the maid announced the guest.

They knew each other at once, and stood dumbly watching each other, each conscious of the same bewildering surprise and pain. Then Marion found herself murmuring the conventional words of greeting.

"Sit down, Mr. Lamont," she said. "Kitty won't be long. I'll go and see if—"

"Marion," said the man in a low voice, "it is no use playing with each other like this. For God's sake tell me what you are going to do."

"What I am going to do?" Marion found herself automatically repeating. "Why, Harry"—the word broke spontaneously from her lips—"I am not going to do anything. For Kitty's

sake no mention of the past must be made. We have met for the first time; we are indifferent strangers. That is all."

He took a step nearer to her.

"That is your last word, I suppose?" he answered bitterly. "But I want to tell you first what I think of you. There was a time when I felt crushed by your unkindness, but then I realized that if you had loved me you would at least have let me explain. You would have read my letters, or given me one interview. It was a wretched subterfuge to break off an engagement of which you had grown weary."

"Mr. Lamont," said Marion quietly, "this is not the time or place for recriminations. The past is past and you are Kitty's. Believe me, the pain I have to bear for my foolish pride—"

They stood face to face under the glow of the lamp and there was no sound heard except that of their breathing and of the slow clock-ticks.

"I have repented a thousand times, if you must know," said Marion gravely. "I must confess my fault. I have loved you and can never cease loving you. Therefore, for Kitty's sake, remember that we have never met before."

"Do you mean that, Marion?" murmured the man, and in a moment he had taken her into his arms and she was lying upon his breast and weeping out the sorrows of half ten years.

"Marion, I don't know what you mean about Kitty," he said, "but it was to meet you that she asked me here. She learned about our broken engagement from the Fernleys, and—"

A musical laugh broke in upon their ears. They started guiltily apart, to see Kitty, resplendent in her evening gown, gazing mischievously from one to the other.

"Kitty!" exclaimed Marion accusingly, but there were happy tears upon her cheeks.

"I told you," Kitty almost sang, "I told you that in a few days I should