

10 THE CASTLE OF THE SHADOWS

Virginia. "You are both very mysterious. But perhaps it's the influence of the place. Everything seems mysterious here."

Roger Broom sighed, and roused himself with an effort from his reverie. "Queer that we should have drifted here by accident," he said—"especially with *you*, Loria."

"Why especially with me?" the other asked with a certain sharpness.

"You were the poor fellow's friend. Oh, Virginia, forgive me for not answering you. This place is reminiscent of tragedy. A man whom I used to know slightly, and Loria intimately, lived here. That grim old house perched up on the hillside has been the home of his ancestors for hundreds of years. Now, you see, it is for sale. But it's likely to remain so. Who would buy it?"

"Why not?" asked Virginia. "Is it haunted?"

"Only by melancholy thoughts of a family ruined, a man cut off from life at its best and brightest, to be sent into exile worse than death. By the way, Loria, do you know what became of the sister?"

"I have heard that she still lives here with an aunt and one old servant," answered the Italian,