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'Ay, it's me. I have come to see you—ye mind I said I had; but he has forgotten that as well? The bitterness of his tone struck terror into her.'

'Weel, are ye continued; are ye no glad to see me?' She dared not speak. 'The last time I saw ye,' he said hoarsely, 'ye gie'd me a kiss; was that a lee? An' ye said ye lo'd me; was that a lee? Speak, canna ye?'

Terrified by the strange roughness of his manner, she could scarcely answer. 'O Robin! forgive me, I'm sorry,' she said at last.

'That's easy said,' he replied; 'but it's no sae easy done as ye think. Jean, when my father wrote me that he had seen ye, I was glad; but I was not glad when I saw ye in person. What garred ye? he cried brokenly. 'O Jean! ye dinna care though ye break my heart?'

Her courage came back a little. 'I'm no sorry for ye, Robin; I am; she said again. 'You must mind my ain man,' and she laid her hand on his arm.

'No mind!' he exclaimed fiercely, shaking off her touch; 'is it sae matter to pit awa' a wife? Tell me the truth, if ye can; what did ye promise when we cam' awa' frae the dance at Aleck's? were ye cheatin' me?'

'No!' said Jean, trying to meet his gaze. 'I meant it then; but it's sae long ago.'

'Long ago!' he repeated, with bitter emphasis; 'aw, three months! And ye forget what ye had said when my father askt ye, an' there was naething at aw—naething, that ye could mind. An' ye smile as bonnie, an' gang on the same ga'd, nae doubt, with that pair of doited fule o' a captain. Na, he cried, with a swift change of mood from scorn to regret, 'it's me that's the fule, for I canna had mysel' from loving ye for a' ye had said an' done.'

'Robin!' she urged timidly, after a pause, 'I ken it's a' my fault; but try to forget about me, won't ye, and gang hame.'

The shallowness of her nature was clear to him in her words; he perceived that his grief only wearied and frightened her; it did not touch her heart.

'Ye needna bid here; he said, 'gang in, I'll stay by myself.' Jean looked surprised and alarmed.

'Ye needna fear,' he added, with a contemptuous smile, as he guessed her thought, 'I'll no come to the house, nor trouble ye any way; gang in.'

She wished he would go, and let her feel the thing was at an end; but she dare not remonstrate with him. She must give up her visit to her father's now, lest he should still be watching when she returned. 'Good-night, then,' she said slowly.

He made no answer. 'I wish ye would forgie me, Robin!' There was a mixture of stulness and entreaty in her tone, as she paused, looking back.

'Never in this world!' was all his answer; and afraid to rouse him further, she said no more. He watched her re-entire the house; the door closed behind her; she was gone. Only now, when the interview was over to which he had looked forward with a strange, unexpressed hope that it would yield some relief, some escape from the misery her faithlessness had wrought, only now did he quite resign himself to despair.

'I ken the house better than Lisbeth,' said Kate; 'an' can't up myself to seek ye.'

'What is it?—what do you want?' said Jean impatiently.

'Lisbeth!' was the old woman's solemn answer, 'this is an awfu' day for you, God help ye!'

across the gravel, and burying the border of withered sea-pinks in quivering foam. Jean shivered as the storm, and yet Jean would have gone on for ever, to escape what she knew awaited her. Neither of them spoke, she supposed they were going to the old weaver's cottage, when Katie turned down a sandy cart-track towards the shore. 'It was here,' she explained briefly, seeing Jean pause, 'he shot himself in Aleck's garden w' his gun, and they carried him in here.'

'Jean would have shrunk back from the keen edge of pain the old woman's words unconsciously laid for her; but she knew she must go on, round the end of the cottage, into the little garden. She was thankful that the rain driving in her face hid her tears from the wind-swept dreariness of the familiar place. Aleck's wife the bride of that memorable day, met them at the door and held up a warning hand.

'Hoo is he no?' whispered old Katie.

'He's gone,' was the answer.

'Eh me!' she ejaculated, 'an' did he ken ony o' ye afore he dee'd, Mary?'

Mary shook her head. Just then the inner door opened. Robin's old mother came out and took Jean, by the arm. 'Come in,' she said in a hard, leafless voice, 'an' see if ye have done; an' she drew the unreeling girl into the room. Robin's father and brothers and one or two neighbors were there.

His young sister knelt on the floor, her face hidden in the bedclothes, sobbing in an agony of grief. On the table by the bed were some strips of linen torn up for bandages, and a cup which Jean, with that strange unconsciousness known at a crisis, recognized as a set given by Robin to the bride, which had been used for the first time at the wedding-party.

'This is your work,' repeated the mother, as she stood by the bed, 'have absoo, w' ye had, an' her husband, 'it's no' for us to judge.

Aleck's wife, her schoolfellow, came and took her hand in silent pity; but Jean—whose white, quivering features were changed almost beyond recognition by the working of her conscience, so tardily, so terribly awakened—paid no heed.

As she stood there, a devotion which she had of the storm swept through her soul. All that had ever given her pleasure, all her selfish aims, seemed to be so worthless and meaningless now. What would she not give to recall the past, which had been bright and happy, the horror of blood-guiltiness! As the slow heartwring tears filled her eyes, she loathed herself increasingly—realizing with the certainty of despair that her punishment was, and would be, not alone in what others might say or think, but in a self-condemnation as remorseful now as it was unavailing, and from which there was no escape.

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