

Let Not Man Put Asunder

"In what rôles have you seen her?"

"Several times as Carmen."

"And—?"

"As Marguerite."

"Never as Aïda?"

"Yes, as Aïda, as Elisabeth, as Santuzza, as Eva in the 'Meistersinger,' as—as—I forget for the moment what else."

"Juliet?"

"Yes—Juliet."

"Did you ever hear anything on earth like her voice in the two duets—on the balcony and in the chamber?"

"Never."

"Doesn't the very memory make you thrill?"

"Yes, Dick," said Vassall, speaking now with greater freedom and conviction.

"And you have only heard it from the stalls. I have lived through it. We have not only sung the things together, but we've lived them together. You can imagine what it must be to me."

"I think I can, Dick."

"It was so real at the time—*la douce nuit d'amour*. The thought that that time is over isn't easy to bear."

"Are you sure it is over?"

"I don't know. That's what I want to ask you. My own life has become a riddle to me; and I have no clew at all to hers."

He sprang suddenly to his feet, and moved away to the end of the balcony. Vassall, who felt his fridity melting, followed.

"I will do anything I can for you," he said.

"Thanks," Lechmere answered, quietly. "I want only to know which way to turn."

"Have you had no communication with her?" Vassall asked, "since the—the—?"