

"Yes," he said; "about 3,000 dollars."

"And Gregory can't pay you?"

Edmonds reflected rapidly, and decided to take a bold course. He was acquainted with Hawtrey's habit of putting things off, and fancied that the latter would seize upon the first loophole of escape from an embarrassing situation. That was why he gave him a lead.

"Well," he said, "there is a way in which he could do it if he wished. He has only to fill in a paper and hand it me."

He had, however, not sufficiently counted on Sally's knowledge of his victim's affairs, or her quickness of wit, for she turned to Hawtrey with a commanding gesture.

"Where are you going to get 3,000 dollars from?" she asked.

The blood crept into Hawtrey's face, for this was a thing he could not tell her; but a swift suspicion flashed into her mind as she looked at him.

"Perhaps it could be—raised," he said.

"To pay his mortgage off?" and Sally swung round on Edmonds now.

"Yes," the latter admitted; "he could easily do it."

Then the girl turned to Hawtrey. "Gregory," she said with harsh incisiveness, "there's only one way you could get that money—and it isn't yours."

Hawtrey said nothing, but he could not meet her gaze, and when he turned from her she looked back at the mortgage jobber.

"If you're gone before I come back there'll sure be trouble," she informed him, and sped swiftly out of the room.

Then Hawtrey sat down limply in his chair, and Edmonds laughed in a jarring manner. The game was up, but, after all, if he got his 3,000 dollars he could be satisfied, for he had already extracted a good many from Hawtrey one way or another.

"If I were you I'd marry that girl right away," he said. "You'd be safer if you had her to look after you."