

He told her the story as his mother had told it to him. Then at last he said:

"And now you know Barode Barouche got what he deserved. He ruined my mother's life; he died the easiest death such a man could die. He has also spoiled my life."

"Nothing can spoil your life except yourself," she declared firmly, and she laid a hand upon his arm. "Who told you all this—and when?"

"My mother in a letter last night. I had a talk with her afterwards."

"Who else knows?"

"Only you."

"And why did you tell me?"

"Because I want you to know why our ways must for ever lie apart."

"I don't grasp what you mean," she declared in a low voice.

"You don't grasp why, loving you, I didn't ask you to marry me long ago; but you found out for yourself from the one who was responsible, and freed me and saved me; and now you know I am an illegitimate son."

"And you want to cut me out of your life for a bad man's crime, not your own. . . . Listen, Carnac. Last night I told Mr. Tarboe I could not marry him. He is rich, he has control of a great business, he is a man of mark. Why do you suppose I did it, and for over two years have done the same?—for he has wanted me all that time. Does not a girl know when a *real* man wants her? And Luke Tarboe is a real man. He knows what he wants, and he goes for it, and little could stop him as he travels. Why do you suppose I did it?" Her face flushed, anger lit her eyes.