

seem unforgivable to you. It would surely be a miracle if they did not. But before you sit in judgment on me you must know all you have meant to my life. You must know something of the depth of my love for you."

He thrust one hand into his coat pocket and withdrew the revolver it had contained for so many weeks now.

"See this gun?" he went on. "It's loaded in every chamber. No, don't be afraid, dear," he smiled as a look of trouble crept into his wife's eyes. "I had no thought of suicide. That is an act of cowardice; and, whatever my shortcomings, I am not afraid to face trouble when it comes along. But I want to let you see into my heart and mind, and know the man I am. That gun was meant for Austin Leyburn. The man I had wronged, and who was bent on revenge. His vengeance meant nothing to me personally. If he had succeeded in ruining me utterly I could still have laughed at him—so long as I had you. But all unconsciously he had made it possible that the help you needed, the help that was to save your precious life to me, might not be forthcoming. Had you died, I should have shot him dead. Furthermore, I should have been glad that my hand had crushed out his life. There is nothing more for me to say now, dear," he went on, after a pause. "You know me now as I am, or at least as I know myself to me. The future, my future is in your hands."

He sat up and returned the ominous weapon to his pocket, while Monica remained silent. Her eyes were no longer upon him. Their lids were lowered to hide the thought so busy behind them.

The man glanced at her. Illness had left its mark. Lines of suffering had drawn themselves about the corners of her beautiful mouth, where lines had not been before. Deep shadows were gathered about her eyes, and the hollowed cheeks displayed the ravages of ill-health.

But, even so, her beauty had in no wise departed. To this man, at least, there was no difference from the superb beauty once hers. It was the woman he loved, the soul and mind. Those things which he felt no ravages of illness could ever change.

He waited wordless. Of that which his heart might fear he gave no sign. It was his way.