

The sight of that fury calmed, but did not alarm the girl. On the contrary, it seemed but to nerve her courage. She rose, and quietly extending her hand, said:

"Stay, Adolphe. *That* has failed, but *all* has not failed."

"What now?" said he rudely. She continued quietly:

"All is not lost. On the contrary, there is a gain. The game is simplified. It is now definitively a combat à l'outrance. It is now a war of extermination. They or we are to be destroyed."

"Yes: I like that better:" said the Frenchman. "'War to the knife'—that is my motto."

"This night then; barely two hours hence—you remember what I told you?—battle will be delivered; and it *must* be decisive; do you mark me?"

"I do: but I scarcely understand:" replied he. "*If* these people come, we may do something. But there is another *If*:—*if* the prisoners will consent to escape."

"*Bah, mon ami!* I have changed all that. We will make them very glad to escape, if they can; but we will no longer assist them. On the contrary, *not one* must be suffered to escape. Look to it, Adolphe. I have need of them all for my revenge."

"But, Marie, still I do not understand. That would only ensure the *exposé* we wish to avoid."

"You are obtuse, *bel ami*;" and she fixed on him a Lady Macbeth stare.

"I tell you, I do not comprehend your drift in the least;" and his eyes shifted uneasily beneath her sinister gaze. "I—in short, I fling my tongue to the dogs. What is it you mean, Marie?"

The girl bent towards him, and with the cruel gleam of a tigress' flashing eyes, and bared teeth, she hissed behind her hand one word into his ear.

Hardened as he was, even *he* recoiled.

"No; No! That is too horrible. Besides, it is altogether too uncertain."

"You must make it certain;" she insisted. "The same fortunate conjunction of circumstances will never occur again. We are shut up to this, or to ruin,—death."

"Be it so: I accept;" said Delaval, after long pondering, and looking up gloomily.

"And now:" resumed he, "where is that precious grandfather of yours? He has blundered all through the piece. I will shoot him like a mangy hound, if he fail me now."