

THE HOUSE OF FEAR

"I'll dance at your wedding, my dear; and I suppose that means you are leaving the stage."

"You'll do more than that," Quaile said. "As an extra humiliation you'll be best man. It will remind you that, although you're a great detective, you do make mistakes."

McHugh grinned.

"Anyway, that won't prevent my kissing the bride."

He grasped her shoulders. He touched his lips to her forehead. There was something pathetically paternal about the caress. Quaile suspected moisture in the narrow eyes. McHugh tried to carry it off.

"Have you asked that maid of yours yet, Barbara? Maybe she won't let you have him."

She flushed, turning to Quaile.

"If Mr. McHugh is right—about us—I mean, you'd better overcome your dislike for her."

McHugh slipped out. The door clicked behind him. They faced each other alone in this room as they had done the other night. Only now her cheeks showed no pallor, and, if she shrank away, it was with a different fear. When he followed, her struggle possessed an unconscious witchery.

"If McHugh is right!" he jeered.

"I guess he's right," she whispered. "He is always right."

There was no longer any point in struggling. The room was very quiet.

THE END