

"I ain't," said Tony, sullen as a school-boy. "You shouldn't say a feller's lyin' when he ain't. Reelly you shouldn't."

"I don't," said the lady; and went on patiently, "Shoot who?"

"It's no business of yours anyway," snapped Tony. "The shootin's my job—the shootin' and the lush. You see to the maids and the milk and your back hair—that's plenty enough for one little gal," and he ran off up the stairs.

The lady followed across the hall. "You may as well tell me now, Tony," she persisted patiently.

"Why?" halting on a stair.

"Because you know you'll have to in the end."

"O shall I?" snorted the other, hopping up the stairs one at a time.

"Yes," said patient lady at the stair-foot.

"Why?" turning.

"Because I'll make you," said patient lady.

"Make me?" scoffed the other. "I like that! How?"

"Same as usual," said patient lady.

"Ha! she'll nag!" said the other bitterly. "Good old nagster! I know you women. She'll nag."

"I shall be very kind," said patient lady, "and very firm. I know you men."

She stood at the stair-foot, patient, remorseless.

"Shoot who?" she asked.

"What d'you want to know for?" snapped the other.

"Because you won't tell."

"O rats!" said Tony.

"And because you and Joliff looked so sheepy and conspiratory when I caught you. Now, tell me, Tony."

"Won't," said Tony.

"Yes, Tony," said patient lady. "Tony must. Tony be good; there's a Tony."

She stood at the stair-foot, large-eyed, reproving, very fair to see. He hovered, hesitated, he then came slipping down the stairs.