

O'Donnell she is drawing, and it is Redmond O'Donnell himself who stands smiling before her.

"Good day to you, Lady Cecil"—he lifts his hat as though they had parted yesterday, and holds out his hand—"I am afraid I have startled you; but not so greatly, I hope, that you cannot shake hands. Ah! thanks!" As scarcely knowing what she does she lays four cold fingers in his. "I thought at first you meant to refuse. And how have you been since I saw you last?" He takes a seat in the rustic chair, which accommodates three, and she sinks down, scarcely knowing whether she is asleep or awake, beside him. Her heart is throbbing so fast that for a moment she turns giddy and faint. She has not spoken a word—she does not try to speak now. "Well," O'Donnell says, in the same cool tone, "you *don't* look over-glad to see me, I must say. This is what comes of giving one's friends a pleasant surprise. And I flattered myself you had sufficient friendly interest in me, or if not, common politeness enough at least, to say you were glad to see me back."

"I *am* glad." Her voice is not steady—she quivers as she sits. "But—it was so sudden. I am nervous, I suppose, and little things startle me." She lays her hand on her heart to still its tumultuous beatings, and looks up at him for the first time. "You are the last person I expected to see. I thought you were at Algiers."

"The last person we expect to see is very often the first person we *do* see," O'Donnell answered, still eminently self-possessed. "I haven't been at Algiers, and I'm not going. I shall turn my sword into a scythe, my rifle into a plowshare, and go in for peace, respectability, and pastoral life. I have been out in New Orleans."

"In New Orleans?"

"Yes. I received a telegram from my grandfather after leaving here, telling me his wife and son were dead, and requesting me to bring Rose back. We went. We have been there ever since."

She was beginning to recover now. She drew a little further from him, and began tracing figures in the grass with her white parasol.

"Your sister is well, I hope?"

"My sister is quite well, thank you."

"She remains in New Orleans with your grandfather?"

"She is in London, and my grandfather is dead."

"Indeed." She is strangely at a loss what to say, something very unusual with Lord Ryeland's high-bred daughters.