

THE SAILOR

"I . . . I think you are right. You understand him much better than I."

"That we can neither of us believe." He spoke with a queer laugh. "But if I am asking you to give too much, mustn't blame me. You have always taught me to ask much." His voice tailed off in the oddest way. "But time I don't ask for myself."

She was crying. "I was never the woman that thought me. Or that I thought myself."

She stood a moment, the tears running down her cheeks. "You must go to that poor mariner," he said, with suddenness, trying now for the first time in all the long time to impose his will upon hers. "He has a very wonderful cargo on board. You and I—we owe it to each other perhaps to future generations—to see that it comes to port."

Such a tone was startling. She had never heard before. A new and very potent voice was speaking.

"There is no time to lose." This was Edward. His voice raised to a higher power. "Every hour is going to waste. If it is still possible, go and offer him a refuge from the storm."

She stood it resolute. But already she had begun to feel. A masculine nature in its new and full expression was weighing in the scale.

"If we go back at once," he said, "there will be time to catch the twelve o'clock train from Woking. You can telegraph to your maid. And Catherine Ellis will understand. Or you can write and explain."

Either the call was stronger than her weakness, or she underrated the forces within herself. For suddenly she turned round and they began to retrace their steps along the road they had come.

Good walking gave them time for the midday