

mercy that he would have shown her, though in truth, Lorelie thought not of herself, but of the dead Eric Marville, so cruelly wronged both by her father and herself: Eric Marville, who had generously refrained from claiming the peerage justly his in order that the present earl might enjoy it. And he had received his death-stroke from the hand of the very man whom he had benefited! Was this a case for pity!

"By yon tapestry, silent witness of the deed, I adjure you, speak! Whose skull is this?"

A portion of the arras within view of the earl was clutched from behind by an unseen hand, and was suddenly rent in twain from top to bottom with a sharp ripping sound: then came the fall of some dull body, (though nothing was seen by the audience), followed by a faint soughing like an expiring breath.

The earl shook convulsively. The very sounds that had accompanied the fall of his victim in Ormfell!

With slow motion Lorelie raised her hand to her head. The earl followed her action with his eyes, wondering what new terror was in store for him. Drawing the broken stiletto pin from her hair she placed the fragment of the blade within the orifice of the skull, where it remained, the jewelled hilt projecting above, and glittering with weird effect.

"By the very stiletto that let out the life of your victim, I adjure you, speak! Whose skull is this?"

She was determined to have her answer, and that openly.

In darkness and secrecy the deed had been wrought: amid brilliant light and before a crowd of hearers the truth should be proclaimed. Like some struggling victim in the torture-chamber, who, doggedly speechless, is forced onward to the rack that will soon wring the confession from his reluctant