

Let Not Man Put Asunder

"Are you sure it isn't best to let sleeping dogs lie?"

A subtle change came over Lechmere.

"There is no sleeping dog in my life. There is only an untamed beast that is always trying to down me."

Vassall had the nervous discomfort of a reticent man who covers up his own wounds and dreads to look upon those of another. He was not unsympathetic, but he had the New England fear of being called upon for a show of emotion.

"You'd better think twice, Dick, before you speak of that," he said with constraint. "You will perhaps regret to-morrow what you may say to-night."

"Not with you."

Lechmere sat up straight and looked hard at Vassall through the moonlight.

"Did you ever see my wife?" he asked, abruptly.

"Yes," said Vassall, entering on the subject with reluctance.

"Where?"

"At Covent Garden; at the Metropolitan in New York; and when she first began to sing at the Opéra-Comique in Paris."

"What did you think of her?"

"I thought she sang well."

"Is that all?"

"I thought her pretty."

"Of course. But is that all?"

"No. Only I hardly know how to express the rest. I don't see why you are questioning me. She seemed to me extremely charming — extremely seductive, I ought to say."

"Didn't it strike you that a man could more easily go to the devil for her than for any one else in the world?"

"Perhaps so. I may have had some such feeling about her."