

"Julia's a fool—and not even a pretty one."

"Well, there'll be a pair of you and probably more to follow. But I never heard 'hat she was a forger, and she's got the money."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then you may go to—your own place. You know what you have to expect."

"How'll you do it?"

"Barty is in trouble too—financially. He's not such a fool as to forge or steal. I saw it by his face and made my own enquiries. He's got a wife and a couple of children. If he goes smash it'll be bad for them all round. He couldn't get another place, readily, if at all. I shall offer him £5,000 to take this"—nodding at the cheque—"on himself."—

"He won't do it."

"He may—for £5,000. It's a big price to pay, but it's nothing compared with the alternative. . . . In his place I'm inclined to think I would. The other means starvation for them all. He'd find it difficult to get a place. This will give his wife and children a certain income till he comes out, and then he will have £5,000 to start on in Australia. He'll probably die a millionaire—if he keeps straight."

"Well, . . . if you can bring him to it, I agree," said the young man sulkily at last.

"We'll put it into writing. I'm taking risks and I intend to keep the whip hand."

The following evening George Barty sat in the chair young Frazer Burney had occupied the night before, and waited for something the head of the firm had told him he wished to say to him. Mr. Burney sat in his own arm chair and did not find it easy to begin. He had been in many a strange transaction and driven