

"I tell you it is impossible."

"Why?"

"The infection. Madame would carry it away."

"But I shall not go away. I shall stay while he does. Stand away, and let me pass. But here, take your money."

"It is not money. It is the law."

Then, of a sudden, the voice outside rose to a higher note.

"I tell you, you must let me in. I refuse to be shut out. I am his wife, the wife of Monsieur Amédée Leleu."

And the words, floating in through the open window, pierced the sick man's dreams. For an hour, he had been sleeping quietly; now he half opened his dark eyes, as he murmured drowsily, —

"Arline."

Only a moment later, a swift step came up the stairs and a tap, soft, but imperious, sounded on the door. Before the nurse could cross the room, the door swung open and on the threshold stood Arline Leleu. Her radiant hair, damp with the river mist, clung close about her face, her cheeks were blazing now, her violet eyes glowing and wet with tears. Her arms, outstretched towards the narrow bed, had pushed aside her long, dark cloak, showing the pale dinner gown beneath. And face and eyes and poise bore witness to a new-born love which had leaped into being, never more to die.

For one instant, she stood there motionless, undaunted by disease, by the reek of disinfectants, by the barren room, terrified only at the wild beating of her own triumphant heart. For Leleu, roused again by the little stir of her coming, had opened his dark eyes once more and now lay staring at the vision which stood upon his threshold.