

"I only did what he wished. I couldn't know that it would be fatal."

"And you feel no remorse?"

"Why should I? His death seemed only a question of days" — —

The woman began to sob.

"My only crime has been my love!"

"From the bottom of my heart I pity you!" Stuart broke in, softly. "Not merely because I know that you have committed murder, but because you lack the moral power to realize that it is a crime. The state will never reach your act with the law. But the big thing is you have no consciousness of guilt, and feel no remorse because you have no soul. You have only desires and impulses. You must have these desires fulfilled each moment. That's why you couldn't wait for me to earn my fortune honestly, and so betrayed me for gold. I can see it all now. Your beauty has blinded me. The touch of your hand, the perfume of your breath, the sweet memories of our young life together have held me in a spell."

"For God's sake, Jim!" she cried fiercely — "don't — don't talk like that! I can't endure it! You don't mean, you can't mean that you are going to turn from me now! Just when I've found your love. Tell me that you hate me, if you will, strike me, tell me I was a murderess when I stabbed your heart twelve years ago, but you must love me or I'll die! We love because we love. I'd love you if you had killed a hundred men!"

Stuart looked at her through a mist of tears.

"The spell is broken, Nan, dear, our romance is ended. I don't say it in pride or anger, I say it in sorrow — a great deep, pitying sorrow, that cuts and hurts!"