

This had been the shadow she had feared, a little shadow in their lives, and she had died—almost happily, he thought—before it had grown into a cloud sinister and engulfing. Holding his daughter's hand, Sir John looked into her eyes, but it was the other woman he saw.

"The Derings," he said very slowly, almost painfully, "have gone to the death cheerfully and even gaily in the defence of their honour. In this sad transaction the die is cast, but, as God is my judge, never again will I risk a moment of your life's happiness, or the honour of our name, on the turn of a card."

Her face lit up with a great joy.

"My mother knew what the honour of a Dering meant," Rosa said. "It sufficed her as a religion. I do not ask for more than your promise. That you have given it, makes me happier than I can tell. When Harry calls me to him—when this little cloud has passed away—I should hesitate to go if I knew the one vice of the Derings held my father in danger. I shall go with a lighter heart now I know I have his word."

She had barely finished speaking when a servant entered the room.

"Captain Trevelyan," he said, standing to attention like a Grenadier.

"Show Captain Trevelyan up at once," Sir John directed, looking keenly at his daughter. Her manner had strangely altered. The expression of tender solicitude gave place to a cold, almost harsh, look of pride. Hastily she gathered her shawl, fan, and a handful of flowers with which she had entered the room.