

The elder brother snatched the paper and read. Then he laughed loud and long. "So you've come to fetch her away," he said, "and this is how you do it!"—he shook the paper. "Well, by—suddenly he stopped. "Come," he said, "have a drink, and don't be a dam' fool. She's our sister,—old Throng stole her,—and she's goin' to marry our partner. Here, Caleb, fish out the brandy-wine," he added to his younger brother, who went to a cupboard and brought the bottle.

Pierre, waving the liquor away, said quietly to the girl: "You wish to go back to your father, to Jimmy Throng?" He then gave her Throng's message, and added: "He sits there rocking in the big chair and coughing—coughing! and then there's the picture on the wall upstairs and the little ivory brush—"

She put out her hands towards him. "I hate them all here," she said. "I never knew them. They forced me away. I have no father but Jimmy Throng. I will not stay," she flashed out in sudden anger to the others; "I'll kill myself and all of you before I marry that Borotte."

Pierre could hear a man tramping about upstairs Caleb knocked on the stove-pipe, and called to him to come down. Pierre guessed it was Borotte. This would add one more factor to the game. He must move at once. He suddenly slipped a pistol into the girl's hand, and with a quick word to her.