

## *Japonette*

---

So they left her there in the studio, standing in the dusk, head held high, and in her eyes that dauntless courage that remains though lips quiver and the hot tears sting the straining throat.

Cautiously, lest self-control slip the leash, she reseated herself and lay back in the chair, closing her eyes. Whatever battle raged within her was fought out there in darkness and in silence. She lay motionless, never stirring save for the slow clenching and relaxing of her fingers; and at last even that ceased.

Then the steel nerves and iron will that had mastered the storm and soothed it, turned traitor, tricking her, furtively relaxing in the wake of exhaustion.

In the dark the white cat stole in, hesitated, looked at her; then, satisfied, stretched out on a Persian rug in front of her.

Long ago all sound had ceased in her ears; her heart beat quietly, her breath came and went as evenly and softly as the respiration of a sleeping child.

Through the tall windows the starlight touched her; at her feet the white cat dozed, dreaming of nothing.