

"I am so sorry," he said earnestly. "Please forgive me, Miss Beverley, and do sit down. It was an absurd thing to force my way upon you like this. Only, you see," he went on, as he helped her to a chair, "the circumstances which required my use of a partially assumed name have changed. I ought to have written you and explained. Naturally you thought I was dead, or at the other end of the world."

Katharine smiled a little weakly. She was back again in her chair, but Sir Denis seemed to have forgotten to release her hand, which she made no effort to withdraw.

"It was perfectly ridiculous of me," she murmured, "but I was just telling Dick — he is back again for another four days' leave and we were talking about you at luncheon time — that I wasn't feeling very well, and your coming in like that was quite a shock. I am absolutely all right now. Do please sit down and explain," she begged, motioning him to a chair.

The waiter had disappeared. Sir Denis shook hands with Richard, who wheeled an easy-chair forward for him. He sat down between them and commenced his explanation.

"You see," he went on, "as a criminal I am really rather a fraud. When I tell you that I am an Irishman — perhaps you may have guessed it from my name — and a rabid one, a Sinn Féiner, and that for ten years I have lived with a sentence probably of death hanging over me, you will perhaps understand my hatred of England and my somewhat morbid demeanour generally."