

"Never mind who. It needed saying. It was true. I sinned against the light. I knew what you were. You were good and you loved me. You were happy through loving me, and I shut my eyes to it. I've done more harm to you than that poor girl Maggie. You would never have gone to her if I hadn't driven you. You loved me."

"Yes. I loved you."

She turned to him again; and her eyes searched his for absolution. "I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't understand."

"No. A woman doesn't, dear. Not when she's as good as you."

At that a sob shook her. In the passion of abasement she had cast off all her beautiful spirit and apparel. Now she would have laid down her crown and her purity, at his feet.

"I thought I was so good. And I sinned against my husband more than he ever sinned against me."

He took her hands and tried to draw her to him, but she broke away, and slid to the floor and knelt there, bowing her head upon his knee. Her hair loosened, upon her shoulders, veiling her.

He stooped and raised her. His hand smoothed back the hair that hid her face. Her eyes were closed.

Her drenched eyelids felt his lips upon them. They opened; and in her eyes he saw love risen to immortality through mortal tears. She looked at him, and she knew him as she knew her own soul.