

"Need you ask? You have smirched me until I cringe within myself. Your drawn sword stabbed my love. In this atmosphere, affection is strangled. I go back to Brandon, and hope the sweet breath of the country will cleanse me from the town fog of falsehood. I go where the birds sing, and the waters murmur truth and purity, there to purge the poison from my soul. Sir, stand aside, and let me pass."

Brandon crossed to the table, standing with his back against it.

"Madam," he said, "the way is clear."

Eleanor did not at once take advantage of the fact, but lingered, arranging her glove, and looking at it steadfastly while she spoke.

"You will not follow me?"

"No." The reply was conclusively firm.

"It will be useless to attempt to see me."

"I understand that."

"How could you think so ill of me?"