

Let Not Man Put Asunder

kept from any allusion to the subject; Lechmere had ignored it. Now both men grew silent—Vassall because he feared being indiscreet, Lechmere because his thought was already back in the life from which he had fled.

So they smoked on silently. The moon mounted higher in the sky, lighting up the valleys of the forest. The laughter ceased from the verandas of the inn, and soon the whole house sank into stillness. The lights on Faneuil Hill went out.

"It is growing late," said Vassall, moving from his perch on the balustrade. "I think I'll turn in."

"Don't go yet," said Lechmere. "It is too lovely a night for sleep. Besides, I want to yarn on a little bit."

Vassall said nothing, but lighted another cigarette and refilled his glass.

"You're a good sort, Harry," Lechmere went on. "You would let me give you advice and yet never say, 'Physician, heal thyself.'"

"I am willing that you should make my business yours, Dick, without insisting that yours shall be mine."

"I've often wondered, since we've been knocking about together, what you've thought of my life during the past three years."

"If you want me to criticise it, old man, I don't know that I can oblige you."

"No, I suppose you can't. And I'm not sure that criticism is what I want. I rather think it's counsel."

"I'm not much good at that. Counsel is generally so cheap—"

"And nasty; so easy to give and so hard to take; so stale and flat and unprofitable. I know all about that, and yet I should like to hear your ideas, none the less. I want a dose of good stiff Puritan severity to brace me up, and I don't know where else to look for it."