

Striving against him with both hands she freed herself a little, she saw his face red in the dark. "You!" she gasped, and turned in his arms and caught at the door. My lord grasped at her wrists and held them, and as she writhed in his arms he crushed her to the seat beneath him.

"Would you slay me, child?" he laughed as he used his heavier strength upon her. She struggled wildly beneath him, panting, and cried out. But the noise of tramping hoofs deadened her cries, and soon they whirled off at a wild pace, and horsemen were galloping at either window.

My lord's prey lay gasping, crushed beneath him. He moved from her a little way, but held her still. "What, sweeting?" he laughed in her ear. "I might take you if I 'ld spare him? Gad, I've not spared him and I've taken you."

She shuddered in his arms: "My lord—my lord, is he dead?" she gasped.

"By now," says my lord with relish.

Rose drew a long sobbing breath and fell back in the corner, and lay very still.

"Rose," says my lord huskily, "dear child!" and drew her against him. Her bosom was still against his heart, her cheek cold to his burning lips. My lord seemed to himself to embrace the dead. His arm dropped from about her, and she fell slowly back on the cushions. My lord stared at her white face through the darkness; he caught her hands. "Rose," he muttered, "Rose!" and pressed them to his lips. "Dear heart, I have been a brute and a boor, but"—the voice grew hoarser—"you have made me mad, child. There is nought in the world but you. I 'ld go to hell to win you. Child, what more do you ask than I'll give you? Before God, I have meant you honestly; ay, I mean it yet. I'll live but to serve you. I'm your slave. God, you must see it, you must know it! Rose!" he pressed her hands and drew her closer. "Rose, I'll give you all I have—have you nought for me?"

"For you?" and her laugh rose shrill above the roar of the