

"Mrs. Fairbanks, I could never force your daughter away from you, but I shall always love her. Can I say more?"

"I have told her," said Mrs. Fairbanks between her sobs, "I will never consent to her marriage with you."

Shock's heart gave a leap.

"And what did she say?" he inquired in an unsteady voice.

"She said you would not marry her without my consent."

"And that is true," said Shock.

"And what, then, will you do?" inquired Mrs. Fairbanks.

Shock threw up his head, with joy illumining his face.

"I—we—" changing the pronoun with a sudden ecstasy of rapture, "we can wait."

"And how long, pray?" inquired Mrs. Fairbanks, scornfully.

"How long?" He paused as if pondering the question. "Forever!"

"Shock!"

He turned quickly. There at the door, in all her glorious beauty, her eyes luminous with the light of love, stood Helen.

"Helen!" he cried aloud, in his surprise. "You heard! Can you? Can we?"

With a movement of ineffable grace she was at his side. He put his strong arms about her. She looked into his eyes.

"Yes, Shock, we can wait—now."