

"Towards sunset, to-morrow. There is still much to get ready, but you must first rest after your journey."

"No, I am not tired. I am quite prepared now to take on the lion's share of all you have arranged to do," she asserted stoutly, once more courageously confident to face the worst that might befall.

All at once she clasped her arms again round her mother's neck and looked deep into her eyes.

"You must be glad with me," she whispered tremulously. "Pierre has been found, and again it was entirely owing to John. By now he is certainly free. John would not let me wait on the chance of seeing him. There were terrible reasons that made it impossible and perilous for us to linger where we were. But Pierre will come to us, perhaps very soon. John will arrange that. Do you quite understand, darling mother? Pierre is found! He is alive! We shall meet again."

For a moment her voice though low had the thrill and music of a happy singing bird. Mme. Severin swallowed a sob. She longed to weep—to weep for pity for the girl's dream of love hovering like a mirage in a wilderness of woe; to weep for wrath at the monstrous depravity which was odiously destroying a myriad hearths and homes as well as the dreams of every lover in the land.

"*Douschka moya*," said Mme. Severin, tenderly, lapsing as always in moments of deep emotion into the tongue of her childhood, "remember we are all in God's hands. We can be sure of nothing but what has already come to pass."

"You must not say that," said Veronica with a sudden catch in her voice. "I would rather think now that he was dead than be led to expect to see him and then find later I had lost him forever."