

let me go. God bless you! Do big things in the world for both our sakes. Kiss me!"

The girl came forward and offered her slender self to the big man. He took her into his arms slowly and reverently, then drew her up very, very close, his great, deep-seeing eyes drinking in every detail of her face as he lifted it toward his and after a long, long moment planted upon the pitiful, beseeching lips a kiss that was as soft, as tender, and consoling as heart-broken love could make it. Then he let her go and stood like a frozen man while Rachel Aurenstsky, throwing one corner of the shawl which perpetually hooded her head over the shoulders of her daughter, led the girl from the room weeping silently and so engrossed in her own sorrow that she forgot a word of good-bye to her friends.

But they were in a mood to forgive her. Ruth, humbled and mystified by this incomprehensible devotion of a daughter to a race that was greater than her devotion to herself, turned back to cross the threshold and was surprised to find Jerry and Aunt Letitia standing breathless and sympathetic beside her.

Victor, meanwhile, moved across the larger room and stood staring out into darkness. Jerry instantly made his way to him and, not venturing on speech, laid a brotherly hand upon his shoulder. Victor, after a receptive interval, shrugged the hand off.

"She was right," he said gravely. "That's why I let her go."

"You are a big man, Vic, old fellow," comforted Jerry, "bigger even than I thought. And the time needs big men. You'll have to throw yourself into things now—things that make you forget."

"No," declared Victor, turning suddenly, "I don't want to forget. So long as I live, Jerry, the picture of that girl giving up her immediate personal happiness for the sake of her duty, will remain and be an inspiration to me."

"It's a message to me, too," affirmed Jerry.