

about doing this, well, then, everything else stands too ! I said the worst I could say to you last night, and I'm not taking any of it back, all I want to impress on you now is that you've got to play fairly with me now and in the future, and to do what you suggest isn't playing fair. And now you'd better get into bed again."

He turned to go, but she called to him.

"John !"

He paused.

She looked at him pleadingly.

"Let me go . . . oh ! let me go . . . I . . ." she broke off and then went on, "you've got Isabel and she will do everything for you. I understand what you mean. You feel you must do your duty where I am concerned, but this—is just—what—will—kill me ! . . . Let me go ! Believe me, Jack darling, it will be the best thing for me . . . for everybody and everything. . . ."

He came back to where she stood, and he answered her hotly :

"No ! You belong to me and you're going to stay ! I've already written to this chap Baldwin, so you won't have him to go to. Sir Thomas told me I wasn't to do this ; he rubbed it into me that if you wanted to marry again, it was brutally selfish of me to stop your doing this, but Sir Thomas doesn't quite understand. You've meant such a lot to me, mother, and . . . and I don't want you to go. Now I'm off. Good-night."

She stood with her two hands gripped together, watching him as he turned round and moved to the door. He had almost passed out of the room when he looked back.

"So that settles it, doesn't it ?"

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