

The sense of misery, of oppression, of terror, all fell away miraculously, leaving only the flower of glory. She would be his plaything if he wanted her.

Silence.

"Kitty, I came out of a dark world—to find you. I loved you the moment I entered your kitchen that night. But I did not know it. I loved you the night you brought the wallet. Still I did not understand. It was when I heard the lift door and knew you had gone forever that I understood. Loved you with all my heart, with all that poor old Stefani had fashioned out of muck and clay. If you held my head to your heart, if that is my blood there—— Do you, can you care a little?"

"I can and do care very much, Johnny."

Her voice to his ears was like the G string of the Amati. "Will you go with me?"

"Anywhere. But you are a prince of some great Russian house, Johnny, and I am nobody."

"What am I, Kitty? Less than nobody—a homeless outcast, with only you and Cutty. An American! Well, when I'm that it will be different; I'll be somebody. God forgive me if I do not give it absolute loyalty, this new country! . . . Never call me anything but Johnny."

"Johnny." Anywhere, whatever he willed her to be.

"I'm a child, Kitty. I want to grow up—if I