

loved you, Violet, and from that moment my hell began, and will last till I die. I think of all I've lost, of all I have sacrificed for a worthless passion, when all the time the real love was there within my reach, and I, blind fool, never knew it. This is my punishment, Violet, and a just one, to love and to know that by my own fault my love is now too late. Losfontein, the ruin of my career, is nothing to me in comparison. It's losing you that makes life valueless. That is all. I—I think I am . . . dying. Violet! Violet!"

He fell back gasping and was still, for, the story ended, the strength born of excitement and determination to go through with it was ended also. Death crept a pace nearer, his shadow deepened on the white face, but the woman thrust herself between, battle joined.

"Henry, my love," she whispered, and, raising him in her arms, she held him close to her. "You shall not die, Henry; there is no need to die. Live, dearest, for me."

The heavy eyelids unclosed, for a moment he stared, not comprehending.

"Violet, you can't mean . . . forgive."

"Forgive, of course I forgive, so freely and fully, dear. What would my love be worth if I did not? Oh, Henry, fight—fight for your life now, for it is mine. I am helping you, Henry. You're in my arms, and together we're stronger than death."

"To what purpose, for you to cast me off in the end? No, no; you've forgiven me, that is enough. Let me die."

"You shall not. Be quiet, lie still in my arms, and listen. I cast you off now that you are broken and need me; I give up the battle when victory at last is in my hand? Oh, shame, dear, to judge me so. Ah, Henry, you were right, you never have taken love into account, you do not now, or you'd know that love, real love, is never hard, never condemns, but forgives always, and loves on."

"My God, is it possible?"