

through a long window into the drawing-room. She moved to the hearth and sat in her great, gilt chair, staring into a deep bed of coals above which, many-hued, played the flames. There was in the room a closed piano. "No; she did not use it. Her mother had." He opened it, sat down and sang to her. He sang old love-songs, old and passionate, and he sang as though the piano were a lute and he a minstrel knight, sang like Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli.

When he made an end and rose, she was no longer by the fire. She had moved to the end of the room, opened the long window, and was out in the sunset light. He found her leaning against a pillar, her eyes upon the narrow, ragged, and gleaming ribbon into which had shrunk the flood at Cape Jessamine.

For a moment there was silence, then he spoke. "Nice customs curtsy to great kings," he said, "and great love knows no wrong times and mistaken hours. Absence and the chance of war are on their way. I dare hold my tongue no longer. Moreover, you, too, — I believe that you, too, know what this is that has come upon us! The two halves of the whole real world must in some fashion know each other — I love you, Désirée Gaillard — loved you when I saw you first, there on the river bank —"

He put out his hands. Hers came to them, unhesitatingly. She uttered the same sound, half cry, half singing note, with which she had turned upon the stair the night before. In a moment they had embraced.