

JAVA HEAD

Roger Brevard stopped: the Ammidon men, he knew, seldom drove about Salem. He had heard of Nettie Vollar's accident and came to the conclusion that Rhoda was within. If this were so, her visit, limited to a charitable impulse, would be short; and thinking of the pleasure of driving with her he turned into the side way. As he approached, the coachman met him with an evident impatience.

"No, sir," he replied to Brevard's inquiry. "But we were to get Mrs. Ammidon at the bookstore. Mrs. Captain Gerrit called here for her, but she went inside unexpected. All of an hour ago. I don't like to ask for the lady, but what may be said later I can't think."

He had scarcely finished speaking when a woman whom Brevard recognized as Kate Vollar appeared at the door. "Oh, Mr. Brevard!" she exclaimed with an unnaturally pallid and apprehensive face. "I'm glad to find you. Please come upstairs with me. Why I don't know but I'm all in a tremble. Mrs. Ammidon went to see Nettie, then Edward came in, and when he heard who was there he acted as if he were struck dumb and went up like a person afflicted. I waited the longest while and then followed them and knocked. Why the door was shut I'd never tell you. But they didn't answer, any of them," she declared with clasped straining hands. "Three in the room and not a sound. Please—" her voice was suddenly suffocated by dread.

"Certainly. Quarles," he addressed the coachman, "I'll get you to come along. If there is a lock to break it will need a heavier shoulder than mine."

Mounting the narrow somber stair, followed by the man