

better to forget. You will be happier——” And then he heard the door open, and she stood before him. The words that he had meant to write rushed to his lips but no farther. Moved by a common impulse, they advanced to meet each other, and the next moment she was in his arms. Neither spoke. It seemed as though, once face to face, there could be no doubts, no misunderstanding between them. Their love was wordless, but it had spoken in a silence more eloquent, more complete than words could ever have been.

“I could not come before,” she said, after a little. “I could not leave her. She was only at peace when I held her hand. She was very happy at the last—now it is all over.” He held her closer to him, and she clung to him, not sadly or wearily, but like a strong woman who has fought and won the thing she fought for.

“It was Fate after all,” he said, under his breath. “She meant us for each other.”

She looked up at him. Though suffering, physical and mental, had drawn its ineffaceable lines upon her face, it had also added to her beauty the charm of strength and experience.

“I knew long ago that it was Fate,” she answered. “Do you remember that first evening? You told me that people do not drift aimlessly into each other’s lives. Even then, against my will, I felt that it was true. Afterwards I was sure. I had entered into your life in a moment of frivolous recklessness, but you had entered into mine with another purpose, and I could not rid myself of you. Your hold upon me was strong. It grew stronger, do what I would, and the farce became deadly earnest.”

“For me it was always deadly earnest,” he said. “When I first saw you standing before the idol, it was