

it plain that she was not going to give me an opening for any apology or explanation. Besides, as I said before, what explanation could there be for saying what I did—right on the heels of the letter?"

"There might be an explanation for the letter. . . . Miles, did you ever have any fancy for Owen Meredith? Anyhow, do you know a poem of his called 'Resurrection'? The end goes something like this, as near as I can remember:—

*For I think, in the lives of most women and men
There's a time when all would go smooth and even,
If only the dead could find out when
To come back and be forgiven."*

"What do you mean?" he asked in a low voice.

"Lydia thinks *you* are dead. Perhaps—who knows?—this may be your moment. . . . I must be going, Argent. She is staying with me now. I want to be home in good time."

He came back across the room.

"May I go with you?" he asked, "or is it too late?"

The words seemed to have more than a surface meaning. So did mine as I answered:

"It's late, certainly, but not too late, perhaps. Yes, come, Miles."

When I pulled out the latch-key and pushed the door open, I saw that it was dark within, except for the firelight. Had Lydia not returned yet, then? Or had she come and gone straight to bed? I went half way up the stairs, and seeing a light show beneath her door, called to her. She opened the door and stood on the threshold, saying:

"Yes, I've just come back. Are you going to work, or shall I come down for a little?"

"Yes, please come down," I said, and I retreated to the level again.