

your knees and pray that your bully may stick there till I'm clear, or Ah!—smell that!" It was his knife-point, open, close to her face. In a moment he was out in the Court, now so far clear of fog that the arch was visible, beyond the light that shone out of Ragstroar's open door.

Another moment, and M'riar knew what to do. Save Mo, or die attempting it! If the chances seemed to point to the convict passing the house unobserved she would do nothing.

That was not to be the way of it. He was still some twenty paces short of Ragstroar's when old Mo was coming out at the door with the light in it.

Aunt M'riar, quick on the heels of the convict, who was rather bent on noiselessness than speed, had flung herself upon him—so little had he foreseen such an attack—before he could turn to repel it. She clung to him from behind with all her dead-weight, uncumbering that hand with the knife as best she might. She screamed loud with all the voice she had:—"Mo—Mo—he has a knife—he has a knife!" Mo flung away the coat on his arm, and ran shouting. "Leave hold of him, M'riar—keep off him—leave hold!" His big voice echoed down the Court, resonant with sudden terror on her behalf.

But her ears were deaf to any voice but that of her heart, crying almost audibly:—"Save him! Never give that murderous right hand its freedom! In spite of the brutal clench that is dragging the hair it has captured from the living scalp—in spite of the brutal foot below kicking hard to reach and break a bone—cling hard to it! And if, power failing you against its wicked strength, it should get free, be you the first to meet its weapon, even though the penalty be death." That was her thought, for what had Mo done that he should suffer by this man—this nightmare for whose obsession of her own life she had herself alone to blame?

The struggle was not a long one. Before Mo, whose weak point was his speed, had covered half the intervening distance, a kick of the convict's heavy boot-heel, steel-shod, had found its bone, and broken it, just above the ankle. The shock was irresistible, and the check on the knife-hand perforce flagged for an instant—long enough to leave it free. Another blow followed, a strange one that M'riar could not localise, and then all the Court swam about, and vanished.

What Mo saw by the light of the lamp above as he turned out of Ragstroar's front-gate was M'riar, dressing-gowned and dishevelled, clinging madly to the man he could recognise as her