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The Romance

Marriage.

"Pity!" she echoes. "Don't you see You said 'sold herself,' and it is true. she shudders. "Oh, Rick, save her! save her! I know that she loves you-I saw it in her face. Do you think a woman who has loved cannot tell case? Oh, Rick, you must save her!"

He raises, white, and trembling, and paces the floor, his hands folded on keep down the storm that rages with-

"Save her, Rick!" says the low, sweet voice, imploringly, "Only you can do it. I know-I can understand it all. They are marrying her to the this wretched place—a man not fit to touch her! Oh, Rick, I did so long to make her and you happy before-be- sad smile.

She stops and covers her face with through her fingers on to the fur.

"What can I do?" he says, hoarsely, she should do this thing! Flossie, you der runs through her. -you are a good girl.I-I wronged have done your best to make atone- says Flossie, slowly, gravely.

all_" "No, not all!" she says, holding up her hand warningly; for her ears, keen like those of most sick persons, have caught the sound of an opening door, and the tread of feet in the hall. the next room, Rick, and-wait-"

He turns and comes to the couch, and stands besides her, his haggard face dark with despair.

"Promise me that you will not gothat you will remain there, whatever happens, until I call you, if I should call you? Will you promise?"

He puts his hand into hers without s word, and goes into the next room, divided only from the larger one by folding-doors.

Flossie lies back panting; her strength is very low, and she has almos exhausted it. The door opens, and Weston comes in and whispers, then goes out and re-enters, follow by

She is enveloped in her domino, her golden hair ruffled by the sliken hood, you?" her fan even on her wrist-just, infleed, as the left the ball; and as she

Pale and weary, but exquisitely lovely, she comes and kneels beside the othereal form on the couch. "You sent for me," she says in

w. gentle murmur. "Are you so ill' "Hush!" whispers Flossie, putting ner fingers to her lips. "I am no worse than I have been not much, at least

ake it off?" and she touches the

Paula, still kneeling, unfastens the tnot, and drops the cloak. Flossia utters an exclamation of ac

"How beautiful! Oh, beautiful! cleam of the old light. "Why, that is seen. I don't think even I ever looked

etter, even in the old days!" "The old days?" says Paula, with aint smile.

The pale face flushes.

"I-I mean when I wore pretty hings, my dear," she says. "And you have been to the ball, of course? You ook rather tired; but you enjoyed it?" Paula smiles curiously, and her lips witch as if with sudden pain.

"Not very much," she answers gravely. "I don't care very much for balls. But this was a very grand one." "And you were a great success?" says Flossie, with a faint smile.

Paula shakes her head indifferently, her eyes fixed with anxious scrutiny mon the nate face mon which a subtle change has fallen since she saw it last. She can hear the breath cutting the words short-knows that the smile costs more than it is worth.

"Do not talk about myself," she says, gently putting her hand on the

his breast with a tight pressure to eyes fixed on Paula's face with anxi-

"No. I am never in pain-very sel dom. You are wondering why I sent for you? And I-I can scarcely summon courage, to say nothing of strength, to tell you," and she sighs. "But I must, and at once, I wonder how you will take it? Perhaps you will get up and leave me without a word?" "My dear!" murmurs Paula, with a

"No, you will not do that," says Flossie. "You are too good for that. her hands, and the great drops fall It is women like myself who are hard

"I cannot imagine you as unforgivwith outstretched hands. "I can kill ing," says Paula, drawing the furs him. By Heaven! I will, rather than round the frail form, for a slow shud-

you deeply-I see it now; but you and the picture will not be too dark,"

with this pure, delicate piece of waning humanity would be too ridiculous. Herrick, behind the half-opened door, can hear the laboured breathing of There is someone coming. Go into Flossie-can see Paula bending pitifully over her.

Then Flossie speaks again, now very

"Do you remember the first time you came here? Do you remember how each other for years instead of for a

"I remember." says Paula, gently. "It was strange, curious, was it smile. "Do you remember telling me-

there was no occasion? Suppose that I knew your story even before I saw

Paule starts, but her eyes do no leave the white face. "Is that possible?" she says, with

s forced smile. "It is more than possible, it is true

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Paula's face grows pale, and her hand trembles.

"How do you know it?" she asks. "Aht" sighs Flossie, shuddering, trying to find courage to tell you ever know so much that I may as well know all-did you love him very, very dear-

she murmurs almost inaudibly, but with a steadfast look:

"Yes, I loved him very dearly."

"And vet_vet you can forgive the the woman who came between you? swiftly at the face lying on her bosom. You said that, you know," eagerly. "Yes." says Paula, pale and awed.

Yes, if he is happy. Why should I suffered any more than I? Poor girl!" Flossie flings her hands before ner face and cries:

worthy even of your pity-what then?" Paula draws her breath, and is silent for a moment.

"Then, even then, I pity and forgive her!" she says, solemnly. "But-

we talked, we two, as if we had known | member what she did-that letter. It not?" says Flossie, with a singular part, and she—she kept him against Heaven! those three days!-Miss Estcourt-Paula-it was I who se arated you from the man you loved as she had been, has risen and stands looking down with white, strained. averted gaze.

from the house—to be alone—almost vermasters her: then she conquers

Flossie has cowered back, her face emnly, Paula draws the head to her osom and bends and kisses the white

"At last-at last!" she pants, faintry. Oh, Heaven! if I had but known some od woman like you! How different

eagerly.

Paula's eyes drop "You can-you must. Ah, I rememge? That is not true? Say it

Paula looks at her steadily, and

"No, no. Thank Heaven! Ah, no, s not too alte? Tell me suppose hear me? I can scarcely hear myself. Is the sea loud to-night?" And she looks wildly and wonderingly at the

Paula shudders. "No, dear. It is all quiet and still

mind wandering back to the old stage days. "Let me-suppose he-Sir Herrick-were in this place?"

"He is here; I have seen him," says Paula in a low voice. "But-"

Flossie stops her impatiently. "Do not think of me! So you have seen him! And-and-"

amiles afintly. "Ah, I see! He thought all. But he has not, has he? And if he were here—if—what is this—the room is dark-Rick-Rick!"

Paula starts and looks round as the door opens and Sir Herrick comes toed hands, thinking only of his recoverly, and touches the hand with a meek, ed treasure, his regained love—selfish as the best of men are, alas! But Paula puts up her hand, and glances

"Oh. Rick!" shesays, just as if Poor girl, poor girl! Fetch the maid!"

In that moment Paula has lifted Flossie's light weight in her arms and

"Oh. Miss Flossie, Miss Flossie!" s the faithful creature's piteous cry.
"Hush!" says Paula. "Send for a

Flossie opens her eyes. "Is that you. Weston?" she murnurs, almost inaudibly, but with the ill-tempered. I shall get four encores to-night, Weston. I feel like doing my

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