

He stood turning the letter in his hand, as one will do when there is dread or uncertainty of its contents. He put his hat down on the table, and brushed his thick hair back from his brow, as if settling himself to receive a blow. Perplexity, anxiety, mingled in shadows over his face, where the sterner emotions could make no mark.

She watched him, moved by his own indefinable fear.

"I don't suppose I'd be anticipating his confidence—" he looked at her, questioningly, as if for permission—"by opening it? He intended that I should receive it through the postoffice, but——"

With sudden decision he opened it, dropping the envelope at his feet.

MY SON: It breaks my heart to leave you again, but we must part. There is nothing that I can do to help you in the mighty task that you have undertaken in my name, and my presence might hinder. This retreat will be the first knowing act of cowardice in my life.

Lately there has settled over me the firm conviction that there is ill luck in my presence. I feel that none of your undertakings will prosper if my shadow falls on them. I firmly believe that my coming into your last venture, when success was in your hands, was foredoomed by the evil forces which have directed my miserable destinies.

My earnest appeal to you, my son, is that you get rid of the old boiler which you removed from here, and shun this place, with all its unfortunate associations, until you have made your fortunes secure. There is disaster in all things