

wrong it must seem to you that I did what I did. But now, when we both know that even if we came together the union could never make us one, be strong and let me go and work my life out by myself."

"I can not," he said stubbornly, and she saw his eyes turn involuntarily toward his brother with a sudden blaze of hate.

"I know," she said in sympathetic recognition. "It is doubly hard for you when you think I am going to another man. But this too is true, Egor, that, even if I could not go to Luka, I would not give myself to you. I am Luka's and he is mine and, if I lose him, his place in my heart will be consecrate and no man shall ever fill it, while I live." He lifted her hands and stood looking at them in apparent curiosity, bending his head so that she could not see his face. She waited for him to speak and, when he did not, she made shift and spoke again.

"Can you not have the courage, Egor?" she said tremulously. "It is the only way." He hesitated a full moment longer, and then raised her hands farther till they lay against his lips.

"What is it that you want me to do?" he