

gether preserve property rights. Morena could say something on that score. So could I . . ."

"Hush!" said Joan; "I will tell him myself. Pierre, I left you for dead and I went away with this man, and after a while, because I thought you were dead, and because I was alone and sorrowful and weak, and because, perhaps, of what my mother was, I — I —" She fell away from Pierre, crouched against the side of the door, and wrapped the curtain round her face. "He told me you were dead —" The words came muffled.

Pierre had let her go and turned to Prosper. His own face was a mask of rage. Prosper knew that it was the Westerner's intention to kill. For a minute, no longer, he was a lightning channel of death. But Pierre, the Pierre shaped during the last four difficult years, turned upon his own writhing, savage soul and forced it to submit. It was as though he fought with his hands. Sweat broke out on him. At last, he stood and looked at Prosper with sane, stern eyes. 6068

"If that's true what you hinted, if that's true what she was tryin' to tell, if it's even partly true," he said painfully, "then it was me that brought it upon her, not you — an' not herself but me."

He turned back to Joan, drew the curtain