

who should have been her man, tramped the Indies seeking Manoa and finding nought. Curse—curse whom? Himself—who else? and on through the blackness of the wintry byways Martin Hughes tramped, wrath and self-reproach shredding the good of life to pieces with every thought of the past, the present, and the days to come.

Presently his hearing, long trained in the New World's forest silences, caught the sound of voices seawards down from the road, voices held in check, and yet, to an alert ear like Martin's, voices with a menace in them.

A stretch of pasture, broken by blurs of thickly-set leafless trees, lay down to the left, and beyond them a darker and more solid curve told of pine, fir, and such-like shelter timber drawn across the west. As he paused, listening, it came upon him in a flash that hereabouts lived the Mary Barriscote that once had been, and hereabouts was the rabble of mischief set upon doing the devil's work.

Schooled by his woodman's instinct, Martin Hughes shirked the pasture and plunged into the black shelter of the pine belt, and swiftly, soundlessly skirted round behind the house which lay hidden somewhere in the darkness. Presently the loom of it came against the sky, and Martin Hughes crept from the shelter and