

in their battle something so intensely feminine, so beyond his ken, that he himself felt nearly as if he were not there because he ought not to be.

"Oh—you know you were wrong. Well—let me tell you this, Mary Wymondham, good, honourable, perfect Mary—that I am right in what I know about you. You are going away because, when Sandy broke his engagement, when he found he no longer needed you—you have not forgotten his reason, you could not bear to stay here. It is because you love him. You love him who does not, never did, love you. You love a man who asked you to marry him solely because you are healthy."

Suddenly, before Sandy could speak, Mary had laid her strong hands on Maria Paz's shoulders and stripped her loose sable cloak from her. It lay like a vast soft shell on the floor at her feet, and out of it rose her small figure, thin and straight, almost boyish.

"Do not struggle, you impostor," Mary said in a hoarse undertone. "You can't move until I allow you to. This is the twelfth of October; you say your baby is coming in January. It is a lie. You are not going to have either a boy or a girl. As long as you live you cannot have a Sharrow child. Now go!"

Releasing her prisoner, Mary drew back, and as she did so her eyes fell on Sandy.

"You see?" she cried to him. "You understand? At home she wore—clothes that hid her, but going out with her big cloak on she thought she was safe! Do you see?"

"Yes, I see. Maria Paz——"

Maria Paz looked at him. "She is a fool," she said, "a fool, and an old maid." Then suddenly she had seized the old silver candle snuffers that Sandy had known ever since she was a child and struck Mary repeatedly on the face with them. Even after Sandy had caught her she managed, with marvellous strength, to give Mary another blow. And as she struck she screamed and cursed in Spanish, biting at Sandy's hands, and kicking him.

It took all his strength to master her, and when finally he did so, and turned to Mary, whose face was streaming with blood, Maria Paz again beat him by going off into a kind of hideous convulsion.

Together he and Mary worked over her; they gave her water, bathed her face, forced a little sherry down her throat,