

named Fidler. My captain's name is Finn. His wife and Mrs. Fidler are neighbours at Southampton, and good friends. Mrs. Fidler told my captain's wife that her husband was superintending the equipment of Lord Winterton's yacht for a voyage round the world, and that the first port of call would be Table Bay. She knew that the "Shark" had been let by Winterton to a gentleman, but at the time of her speaking to Mrs. Finn she did not know his name.'

'You said just now,' I exclaimed, 'that you had assisted this fellow, Hope-Kennedy, when help was precious to him. I suppose you mean that you lent him money? How can he support the expense of a yacht, for, if I remember rightly, the "Shark's" burthen is over two hundred tons?'

'I lent him money before I was married; within the last three years he has come into a fortune of between eighty and a hundred thousand pounds.'

I paused a moment and then said, 'Have you thoroughly considered this project of chasing the fugitives?'

His eyes brightened to a sudden rage, but he checked the utterance of what rose to his lips and said with a violent effort to subdue himself: 'I start the day after to-morrow.'

'Alone?'

'No, my sister-in-law will accompany me; ' then, after a breath or two, 'and you.'

'I?'

'Oh,' he cried, 'it would be ridiculous in me to expect you to say at once that you will come; but before I leave this room I shall have your promise.' And as he said this he stretched his arms across the table and took my hand in both his and fondled it, meanwhile eyeing me in the most passionate, wistful manner that can be imagined.

'Wilfrid,' said I softly, touched by his air and a sort of beauty as I seemed to think that came into his strange face with the pleading of it, 'whatever I can do that may be serviceable to you in this time of bitter trial, I *will* do. But let me reason with you a little.'

'Ay, reason,' he responded, relinquishing my hand and folding his arms, and leaning back in his chair.

'I have been a sailor in my time, as you know,' said I, 'and have some acquaintance with the sea, even though my experience goes no further than a brief spell of East African and West Indian stations; and, therefore, forgive me for inquiring your expectations. What do you suppose? The "Shark" will have had three days' start of you.'

'Five days,' he interrupted.

'Five days, then. Do you expect to overhaul her at sea, or is it your intention to crowd on to the Cape, await her arrival there, or, if you find that she has already sailed, to follow her to the next port, providing you can learn it?'