

Harry Jacob
Lorenz

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LET them say what they will, the die was cast when my lord kissed the king's hand at Berwick. Certain people of the Iago stamp, oily, subtle, intent to entangle, would have gasped, half in chagrin, half in glee, had they beheld that kiss, and yet more the look of tender appeal and quick response which went before.

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My lord's eyes shone with a sudden flux of loyalty; the king's smiled graciously, wooingly, and a trifle sadly, as was their wont. To one ever apt in understanding they said unmistakably, "I wronged thee; but that was because I was deceived and misled. Forgive and come back. I have need of thee." All the ineffable grace and fascination of Charles Stuart were in that penitent, beseeching look. My lord's heart leaped forth on the instant. The past was blotted out. Coldness, neglect, disdain, fatuity, were forgotten. The king was in trouble; the king, with eyes of trust and affection, was imploring aid. It was enough.

The king, in truth, was in dire straits; for the game he had played, for some two years now, was grown hot and hard and desperately grim. But a short month had passed since the Scots army,