

The Stowaway

to learn that the President preferred a straightforward way of talking.

"I want you to forego this marriage," he said.

"Why?"

"Because that charming girl loves another man, but feels that she is bound to you. I understand the position at last. Mr. Bulmer, you cannot wish to break her heart and drive that fine young fellow, Philip Hozier, to despair. Come, now! Let you and me reason this thing together. Possibly, when she agreed to marry you she did not know what love is. She is high-minded, an idealist, the soul of honor. What other woman would have consented to be separated from her friends on Fernando Noronha merely because it increased their meager chances of safety? How few women, loving a man like Philip Hozier, who is assured of a splendid reward for his services to this State, would resolutely deny the claims of her own heart in order to keep her word?"

Bulmer had never heard anyone speak with the crystal directness of Dom Corria. Each word chipped away some part of the fence which he had deliberately erected around his own intelligence. Certain facts had found crevices in the barrier already; Dom Corria broke down whole sections. But he was a hard man, and stubborn. Throughout his long life he had not been of yielding habit, and his heart was set on Iris.

"You are mighty sure that she is wrapped up in this young spark," he growled.