

The door opened, and Merrick announced that a gentleman wished to see Mr. Markham.

"Who is he?"

"He would give no name, sir."

Osborne exchanged glances with Armitage.

"Show him in," he said.

A moment later a dark young man in morning dress and a fur coat entered and bowed. He was clean-shaven, with a high forehead and regular features, and wore rimless eyeglasses.

"May I ask which is Mr. Markham?" he began.

"This is not his flat," answered Osborne, faithful to his creed of catholic denial.

"I understood he was staying here," said the stranger. "Perhaps it would be more in order if I asked whether either of you gentlemen is Captain Osborne?"

Armitage stepped forward with a disarming smile.

"Won't you let us know whom we have the pleasure of addressing?" he suggested.

"Forgive me for not telling you! I am Prince Christoforo."

For many moments no one spoke. Then Armitage looked down to the carpet and lowered his voice.

"You have come to accept our apologies, I hope, sir," he said.

"To ask *you* to accept my most grateful thanks, gentlemen," returned the Prince.

Armitage bowed.