

is past despair even—a woman scrubbing a porch. She did not kneel, but bent from the hips down, like an animal on all fours. Yet, with great skill she ran the scrubbing brush slopping up and down, moving hands and feet jerkily at the same time. Ah, better to be that stupid careless animal, than a high-strung strenuous American of twenty-five! Beer, music, a man and children—better than this burning disgrace.

The telephone bell rang at his side. Mechanically he put the receiver to his ear.

"Hello!"

"Long distance, New York—Mr. Conrad?"

"Yes."

"Hold the wire."

CONRAD reflected calmly that this was Curtis, the president. It was his moment to explain and resign—resign before the report got to those yellow newspapers. At the thought of newspapers, with red headlines, a new shock went through him. He found his hand trembling again. His heart seemed to shrink small, and again, like a red mist, intolerable fear fell on him. It was as if he were a toy in some unseen hand. He felt powerless, sapped of strength, and then—

"Conrad, this is Curtis. Get me?"

"Yes, sir."

"How are things?"

"No news."

"Men ugly?"

"Nothing doing."

"No rioting yet?"

"None."

"State Constabulary there?"

"Yes, sir."

"How are the newspapers?"

"The same."

"Ring me up if anything happens."

"Yes, sir."

"You're sure there's nothing else?"

"Sure."

"Remember—" the hard voice snapped small in the receiver—"I depend on you, Conrad. You hold the key to this strike, keep a firm front, a stiff upper lip. If they see you mean business, they'll lose heart. Get me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good-bye."

He put up the 'phone and his opportunity. Now it was too late. He was doubly disgraced. And why? What was this fear, this deathly fear?

In the Sabbath silence, he noted keenly that the flipping of the cards had stopped. He was sure that Miss Winter's eyes were upon him—even as they had been at the first moment. It struck him then that possibly Miss Winter, Miss Haldane and the others had been in danger when they came to work this morning—even though a squad of khaki-uniformed constables escorted them. Had they braved a peril he had run from? These women? He burned to ask Miss Winter, but felt sharply that if he spoke his voice would tremble with betraying fear.

AT this moment a clerk came in, and to Conrad's amazement, he heard Miss Winter say, quietly: "He's busy now. He can't be disturbed."

The clerk went out.

Something in her voice remained with him—something warm with hope. What hope? Where? Who can pick up spilled milk? Who mend the shattered lamp?

And then it came like a blow in the face. There were two things to do: Resign, or—electricity flooded him tinglingly—get up, put on his hat, and walk straight into that triumphant mob—that mob that had tasted blood, and was aroused and hungry, keen with the man-hunt. Get up, and walk into them. That were expiation—in this way he could re-establish himself—in this way make good. Horror filled him; blood beating about his temples. He put his face in his hands. No, he could not do it. Again that red mist of fear.

And yet the thought hammered at him, spoke to him, insistently, harshly: "Face the music! Face

it!" He felt that he was compelled, that he had to do it, whether or no. And then cunningly he devised a ruse. He remembered that Miss Haldane had sobbed for him. He would go to her and tell his project and she would dissuade him from it. He felt sure of that—and in that way he would escape. He did not marvel at all at that moment of panic that he was acting a strange and unheard-of part. When had he consulted with women employees? But no man would understand this—only a woman.

He arose, shaking a little, and pushed open the side door. Several idle stenographers—the few who had dared come to the works—looked up fear-stricken. They saw blood-shot eyes, cowardice, and their leader crouching.

"Miss Haldane—"

She leaped up, gasping.

"Yes."



The young alien tumbled headforemost.

"Step out in the hall."

He followed her out, walking as one in a trance. In the gloom he saw her flashing eyes, her trembling lips.

"You see—" he found himself saying, "everybody'll find it out—this running away—there's just one thing to do—"

"What is that?" she gasped.

"Go out and face them."

She bit her under lip.

"No!" she cried, "You have no right."

"Why not?"

She drew near.

"You must think of others!"

"Who?"

Her face turned near his.

"Your mother—and others."

"Who?"

She gave a short sob.

"They're a lot of animals. They ought to be shot to pieces. Of course, you ran from them. Your life is too valuable. What can a man do against a mob? Thank God you escaped. And, now—send for soldiers—clear this place out—that's the thing to do."

"Send for soldiers?" he asked stupidly.

"Yes—suppose they killed you—the company would lose the strike."

"Soldiers?" he repeated. Then he cried, "You're right! I will!"

They were silent. Then he spoke in a queer voice.

"What do you think of me, Miss Haldane? You see I'm a coward."

Her eyes were blazing and yet moist with tears. "It doesn't matter what you are—"

A strange, comforting warmth entered his heart.

"Thanks," he muttered, and turned and went into his office. Miss Winter did not look up as he passed her, and kept fingering, placing, and pulling out the cards.

He sat down heavily, and rubbed his forehead.

"What's the capital of Pennsylvania?" he asked, aloud.

"Harrisburg," said Miss Winter.

"I suppose the Governor's there."

But Miss Winter said nothing. Then, as he tried to frame a message, he remembered the hope in Miss Winter's voice. What did she think of him? Didn't it make any difference to her? He seemed to feel the X-rays of her eyes dividing his soul again—the candid blue eyes—the pale face. He feared to speak

to her. Miss Haldane had been comforting, but Miss Winter—what if he arose now, put on his hat, and walked quietly down the street as daily he had always walked—and that mob down there. Again in him the struggle began, the faintness, the red mist.

"Come here," he muttered.

Miss Winter sat down again, with notebook spread.

He drummed on the desk and kept his eyes on his fingers.

"I wonder," he muttered, in a strange voice, "if I ought to go down and face that mob. Do you think so?"

There was a deep silence. He knew he had to look up. Their eyes met. He saw the answer written in flame. The flame seemed to go into his breast. And with it, by contrast, came a wide and clear calm. He laughed softly, arose, and strode without hesitation to the door, snapped his hat from a hook, and turned. Miss Winter was standing, her cheeks flushed, her eyes shining. A light of purpose, and something more, went into his face, which was very pale, and set like steel.

"Of course, you're right!" he said, and went.

MISS WINTER rushed to the window, and leaned over. She saw him walk steadily from the building. At once someone was at her side.

"I knew he'd go," said Miss Winter, with great exultation.

"He went?" It was Miss Haldane, leaning out with her. "Good God! Oh, Marion! Now he'll be killed!"

"Now he's himself," said Miss Winter.

Miss Haldane gave a hoarse sob.

"If anything happens to him, I'll—"

"See," said Miss Winter, "how brave he is now!"

Miss Haldane seized Miss Winter by the arm, and spoke in her ear:

"It was you! You sent him!"

The two women faced each other, and read a revelation in each face.

Miss Haldane leaned near:

"But you don't love him as I do, Marion. I forgave him everything—forgave his being a coward—tried to save him—and you—"

Miss Haldane stopped sharply. The quiet little woman was betraying a passion unbelievable—her voice was tense, quivering, cutting.

"You loved him that much? I loved him enough to send him out—"

They glared at each other, and then embraced, Lily Haldane sobbing on Marion's breast.

Down that seemingly endless street Conrad walked very quietly. The sun cruelly withered him; life hummed dimly among the houses as he passed; and all the air was hanging heavy with ominous silence. The silence of the grave! the silence of death! He walked on and on, calm and cool. He did not even remember whether he had his revolver with him. He did not stop to think whether life was good or bad, worth saving or worth rejecting. He was again the manager, the boss—executive, firm, with the direct drive.

No mob was at the corner, or across the wider—
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