

"That case, you remember," Paul's voice was harsh and cold, "that you stored in your cellar some-time ago—open it and bring me one of the larger bottles." Then his lips grinned. "A fair exchange, George—take back the music and laughter—and bring me forgetfulness."

George stood dumb, and his legs refused to move.

"I mean it," Paul said.

Then George went.

When he returned Paul was still standing by the buffet. He had evidently not moved. "Open it," he said.

In a moment George returned and laid the bottle, the cork put lightly in it, on the table.

"Do you need me?" asked George, hardly able to speak.

"No, not again to-night," Paul answered in that same cold voice. "Tell your wife to set the music going," he added as George left him.

George stood silent outside in the hall scarcely knowing what to do. To tell Mabel would be of no avail, but he had to confide his fear to some one. He went to Virginia, it would be best for her to know.

"I fear for him," he explained, "and could not leave the house without telling you about it—the day has been too much for him."

"Yes," said Virginia, "thank you, George, for telling me. Don't worry about him—he will be all right—I know it. What you fear will not happen—