

Uncertain lights danced in Laurenz Terbroich's eyes. His small lips trembled. "Of course," he answered shortly. "We have been friends from childhood."

"Would you be kind enough, to tell me something of the development and aims of this friendship?"

"Such a love-story ought not to be very interesting to you."

"Ah!—Love-story. A moment ago you called it—childhood friendship. I see, we are rapidly getting to understand each other better."

"I do not understand you at all, Herr Doktor."

"I would not like to disturb you in your pleasures, Herr Terbroich. Therefore let us march straight ahead, and within a quarter of an hour we can part with a friendly bow."

"What is your purpose, anyway? This is no day for serious discussion."

"For me all days have become alike. And if they were not, you would leave me no other choice. And that you expect serious discussion, is proven by your own words. Please, speak on."

"Herr Doktor, I object——"

"Speak on!" It sounded like a command.

"Really, I don't know what you want of me," Laurenz Terbroich muttered.

"In other words: You want me to ask. Very well, then. You love Carmen——?"

"We are very fond of each other."

"You are very fond of each other—— And Carmen loves you in return?"

"She returns my feelings for her."

"Very diplomatically said. But with that we make