

David sat silent and humbled; at last he said: "Go on, Cassandra. Don't cover up anything."

"When I got back to the hotel, everything seemed so splendid and stuffy and horrid — and every way I turned it seemed as if those dead ancestors of yours were there staring at me still; and I thought what right had they over the living that they dared stand between you and me; and I was angry." She stirred in his arms, and pressed closer to him. "David — forgive me — I can't tell it over — it hurts me."

"Go on," he said hoarsely.

"The old man told me what was expected of you because of them — how your mother wished you to marry a great lady — and I knew they could never have heard of me — and I forgot to eat my dinner and stayed in my room and fought and fought with myself — I'm sorry I felt that way, David. Don't mind. I understand now." She put up her hand and touched his cheek, and he took it in his and kissed it. Then she laughed a sad little laugh.

"Remember that funny little old silver teapot. Mother brought it to me before I left, and I took it with me! She is so proud of our family, although she has only that poor little pot to show for it, with its nose all melted off to make silver bullets sure to kill. Did you know it was one of those bullets Frale tried to kill you with? Oh, David, David!"

"And yet your mother is right, dear. That little wrecked bit of silver helps to interpret you — indicates your ancestors — how you come to be you — just as you are. How could I ever have loved you, if you had been different from what you are?"

For a long moment she lay still — scarcely breathing — then she lifted her head and looked in his eyes. One of her silences was on her, and while her lips trembled as if to speak, she said no word. He tried to draw her to him again, but she held him off.

"Then tell me what it is," he said gently. But she only shook her head and rose to walk away from him. He did not try to call her back to him, respecting her silence, and she moved on up the path with long, swift steps.

When she returned, he held out his arms to her, but she stood before him looking down into his eyes, "I couldn't