

rose from her seat, and hurried the maid from the room: One backward look she gave at the couch, with its motionless, recumbent figure. As she looked, the figure stirred.

"I heard," said a clear but quivering voice. "Go to him; and then tell me what—what he comes for. Go quickly, come back, and tell me—quietly."

"My dear, most likely it is some mere matter of business. Don't be disturbed."

"O, I entreat you to go to him at once," she repeated, in a sharp tone, too piteous to be wholly querulous, and let me know—all; don't keep anything from me. Go."

She went, without more words.

The little library was steeped in shadow. The lamp, just lighted by the servant, burned only dimly. Miss Kendal's first care was to rectify that, and turn a full and brilliant light upon every corner of the room. Then, still standing, with stern and stately deliberation, she looked towards that corner where her visitor was seated.

"Well, sir; your business with me?"

Vaughan Hesketh, in his mourning dress, with white, haggard face and disordered hair, wore a different appearance to what she had expected; his voice, too, was hollow in tone—his manner subdued even unto humility.

"I come to tell you—to tell Caroline—that I am utterly ruined—utterly hopeless—I leave Redwood to-night—for ever. I would I could blot myself from the world as easily."

There was something of a studied inflection, his hearer thought, perceptible in the utterance of these desperate words. She preserved her rigidity and coldness.

"Indeed! What has happened?"

"Perhaps you are already aware," he answered, with what was apparently an uncontrollable burst of bitterness. "I know you were in my late uncle's confidence. Possibly, he consulted you before making his will."

"I am quite ignorant of anything in Mr. Hesketh's will that should discontent you. By it, I understood all his property was to be yours. Is it not so?"

The slight shade of anxiety in her tone assured him that her ignorance was unfeigned. His manner changed.

"Such was, I well know, his original intention; but during his illness he made a new will."

"Ah!"

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