

"Yes," she answered him, and there was a dry sob in her voice. "Yes, I thought so. But now I don't know. —Oh, James, I never even asked him to forgive me! —I never told him that I forgave him!"

"That was not needed, between you."

"Oh no—not then." The sob caught her throat again. "But now, now I want it!"

"Morna, less than ever is it needed now."

So he tried to comfort her. But he understood: she wanted words to treasure, in the loneliness of her heart; precious words of reconciliation, of understanding, of love —All she had was the great silence. That silence had been full of love—but it had been full of death. It was not enough now for her desolate humanity.

When they reached the rough road that skirted the glen, she stopped suddenly and fixed him:

"James, it is you who are now Lord Stronaven, it is you now who are master here."

She saw the stricken look on his face. He had dreaded the moment of inevitable revelation; had hoped to delay it at least. Coming straight from the new grave, it was intolerably chosen. She misunderstood his misery:

"Oh, poor, poor James! I know how you feel. How terrible it is to you! How much it adds to the sorrow. But——"

He interrupted her, the colour flaming into his face:

"Morna, my dear, I—I don't know how to tell you!"

Her gaze became filled with astonished questioning. He had to say it:

"There may be a son to inherit——" Then, characteristically, he amended the too vague statement: "The child that is to be born may be a son."

She repeated the words voicelessly, "The child that is to be born," and then turned so deathly white that he thought she was about to fall. He put out his hand; but she thrust it from her fiercely; took a few headlong steps and struck against a tree. Then she stood, press-