



many tastes in common, they have been to the same places, and know the same people, one would fancy they would like each other's society. But they avoid each other, and never have any conversation that sharp little word thrusts do not pass between them.

When Irma came at her summons, and resumed the book she had been reading, Mrs. Fontenoy listened for some minutes to the clear, sweet voice, then she said: "Put the book down, Almee, and go and bring me the locket that has a picture in it of your mother."

"I know you felt that way, but Almee, I tell you that I give my free and full consent to your marriage with my son, and Mr. Fontenoy will think as you do."

"You do not love him, then?" Irma rose, white, but calm. "If I loved him as man never was loved before, I should tell you and to him, I can never be his wife."

"There is a mystery about her," he said. "There is something in her past that is sad and strange; but there is no shame about it. Her face is the face of a woman who has been through a great deal of life."

She sat down and looked toward Bella. "You wanted to see me?" she said. "Yes, about the invitations to your wedding. John has just brought the cards and envelopes. They are very elegant. They will have to be printed to-morrow."

"I will leave her to herself, and welcome. I don't understand such a thing as a woman's jealousy. It is a bitter shame," she said. "It is a honor would do a thing like that."

"The letters were for Vane," she said. "Come into the sitting-room," Dr. Fontenoy said. "We have a little fire there. These October evenings are chilly—too chilly for walks on the river. Miss Almee, you in."

"I shall not say farewell to thee—farewell that means forever?" she asked. "The light was dim, the quiet brown room where the only light shone from the little figure in red in the shadowy doorway. The sad music pulsed through the room, the like voice seemed to sob the words—it was a song of adieu."

"How dare I say it, when you are another's?" he asked. "I am not another's. And you can dare to say it. You are after to-night, if you really feel it."

There was dead silence for a moment. John Fontenoy arose from his seat, but he sat down again. "But I shall never see you again," he said. "I have not had the courage to speak it. I have known that I do not love my cousin John, but I have known that I-I love another."

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CHAPTER X. John Fontenoy did not go back to Live Oaks after he had said good-bye to Vane. He had mounted his horse and rode to his own home.

"There'll be plenty of blossoms here for Miss Fitcher's nosegay on your wedding-night, Mrs. John," he said. "Your ain't well, surely," he added, pulling his spectacles down from his forehead.

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