

on a wharf and went home. By this time James is enroute for France and I could swear that of the two men with him—"Michael had controlled his features well under the circumstances, but he was keyed up to pretty high tension just now, not that he expected a denouncement by the girl he loved, still he knew not what to think; he was muddled,—“of those two men neither was Sir Michael O'Connor.”

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That evening at the home of Lady Ormond Sir Leslie Cruikshank talked privately with Nora. By some means he had inveigled her into the drawing-room, alone, while her mother was taking an after-dinner nap.

“Nora, he said, when he had convinced her to stay for a short time, “I love you. I want you for my wife. But for you we could not exist. The fact that you are the wonderful Miss X has, if possible, increased my affection for you. Could you, brave darling, be mine for ever?”

She looked at him horror-stricken. She had never taken her dapper little cousin seriously. Indeed he amused her; in some ways she liked him. But now he was repulsive. The very air he breathed was full of repugnance.

“Ugh!” she said, not very gracefully in fact, “I abhor you.”

“Well, well,” he said, not especially put out, but the enamoured tone had left his words and a cold light settled around his eyes, “I see I must force your hand a bit. I am sure once you are my wife that I can win your love.”

She smiled scornfully, but he went on in the same hard way:

“I know more than you wot of, my foolish little intriguant. Dutch William was too eager to be deceived by your little story. I was not—” he hesitated slightly, and grinned in a perfectly beastly way, when she said,

“No! no! It was the truth.”

There was a slight sound in the hall, but neither noticed it.

He went on sneeringly.

“Yes, you were very cute; but listen now and I will lay my cards upon the table. I did not believe your tale, and neither in his heart of hearts did the King. Oh, I know Old Bill and his ways. I heard more than I permitted you at the trial to know. He was not jesting when he said in that funeral voice of his, ‘I was knighted by King James last night.’ No man but a Jacobite would call the Pretender ‘King.’ I have influence with the King and if I press matters he will ask O'Connor point blankly if he denies James as his rightful lord and sovereign, and the Catholic belief? This is my ace of trumps. You know how your fool Irishman would answer?” She nodded dumbly but respectfully, “He is no fool; He is a gentleman.”

“There is but one card you can play that will beat me,” he went on insinuatingly, “you may become my wife!”

She did none of the things the usual heroine of the movie drama does under great stress. Instead she sat down quietly, thought for a moment and answered, her voice like steel:

“Here, then, are my cards, first, if I agree to your proposal, you would have mother’s consent to gain. I would not elope with you; and she would