

penalty of failure," he added, as she replaced the veil and hood. But Lonia Romanoff only laughed a strange, wild laugh.

And a quarter of an hour afterward the little rendezvous under the wharf was dark and deserted save for myriads of sea rats, which ran squeaking and squealing through its thousand burrows and crevices known only to them.

Several nights later Leopold Alexowitch sat alone in apartments, toasting himself before a smouldering fire. While he sat there the moon rose majestically over the city, casting a distorted patch of light upon the carpet, which slowly crept across the room until it rested on the arm of the dreamer and aroused him. He turned toward the window. His face, though wrinkled with the worries and cares of state, was yet handsome. His eyes were grey as ever, but they had lost their softened light and in its place was a cold, steely glitter. His hair, too, was no longer dark, but had a tinge of silver which gave an added dignity to the features.

And while he gazed at the mellow light the flood-gates of memory were loosed and the past floated before his mind in shifting panorama. He saw Elda, his lost wife, as he had first met her. He lived over again the halcyon days of their courtship and their marriage. Then, like a dream from which he had never seemed rightly to awake, there passed before his mind's eye the scene of that awful wreck and the weary months of vain search which followed. He started suddenly and pressed a trembling hand to his heated brow. Why, it was eleven years ago this very night that the dread accident had happened. His hand moved to an inner pocket and drew forth a small picture—the miniature of a beautiful woman in her bridal robes, and under it the single word, "Elda." And as he looked at it the old tender love-light came back to his eyes, and something very like a sob escaped him. Then he placed the portrait on his knee and bowing his head in his hands wept bitterly.

The heavy portieres at the doorway stirred gently, as though moved by a breath of air. Then a long, white hand parted them, and the form of a woman glided noiselessly inside. It was Lonia Romanoff! With cat-like tread, muffled by the velvety carpet, she stealthily moved behind the sobbing form of Leopold Alexowitch. In her eyes was a wild light, such as one sees in the eyes of madmen and fanatics. Slowly one arm was raised until it poised above the weeping man, and in the upraised hand gleamed