SPOKEN IN ANGER: A NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES, VOL. III

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Spoken in Anger: A Novel, in Three Volumes, Vol. III by Anonymous

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SPOKEN IN ANGER.

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3 Nobel.

"Aye, they ruled him, those fierce passions."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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SPOKEN IN ANGER.

CHAPTER I.

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ILL you come with me to the library for a few moments, Captain Stanley?" said Sir Hugh, taking Vivien's arm

as he left the breakfast-room. "A shocking bad day, is it not? It was really very good of that poor devil to come. I have ordered Hewit to pack him up some game, out of gratitude, Nina would say, for we were positively dying of ennui; but really, now all the hampers are packed, we don't know what to do with the birds. You are all

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such good shots, and grouse have been plentiful this year; I don't think we've had such a good season since I've owned the place."

This in his usual pleasant, lazy voice; but when they were seated in the library, Hugh's cynical, devil-may-care face suddenly became very grave.

"I wish to speak to you on a very delicate subject, Captain Stanley. I believe I am right in saying that you have known Mr. Strafford since his childhood, and that you are related to him in some way?"

"We are not related; but had we been brothers, we could scarcely have been more together in our childhood!" Vivien said, smiling at the thought, D'Arcy and he brothers! Yet, could he have loved a brother better than gentle little D'Arcy? To be sure, there had come an estrangement between them of late, that had pained

Vivien not a little; but he with his manhood's health and strength was not likely to remember peevish irritability from D'Arcy.

Then I am not, perhaps, betraying confidence in asking you to acquaint Lord Clowden with his son's recklessness. To my certain knowledge he has lost several thousands lately; of course it is no business of mine how Mr. Strafford pays these large play debts, but I confess I don't at all like the responsibility of his ruining himself in my house."

"Play debts!" Those two words smote on Vivien's ear like the bitter sting of a personal insult. That was the reading of the riddle that had puzzled him so of late. He would as soon have thought of striking a little child as touching a card for gain—and D'Arcy was a gambler! Many memories came crowding back of the little,

gentle, fair-haired child, and how once Marion had said, "When I am dying, Vivien, I should like to think I had trusted D'Arcy to you." She had been very near death at the time, and how the soft, pale face came reproachfully back, for how had he kept that trust! He had seen daily that some anxiety weighed on D'Arcy's mind, and yet he had never tried to win his confidence; he had stood calmly by, watching the weak spirit go the road to dishonour. It seemed to Vivien that the dishonour was almost his own.

"I wish I had known this before," he said; "do you think there is no hope of his giving up playing?"

"Give up 'Play!" cried Sir Hugh, with a short laugh. "When a man has gone so far as he has, he'd sell his own soul to the devil rather than miss a single night.