



A Dilemma

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Supplementary

I was just thirty-seven when my Uncle Philip died. A week before that event he sent for me; and here let me say that I had never set eyes on him. He hated my mother, but I do not know why. She told me long before his last illness that I need expect nothing from my father's brother. He was an inventor, an able and **ingenious** mechanical engineer, and had much money by his improvement in turbine-wheels. He was a bachelor; lived alone, cooked his own meals, and collected precious stones, especially rubies and pearls. From the time he made his first money he had this **mania**. As he grew richer, the desire to possess rare and costly gems became stronger. When he bought a new stone, he carried it in his pocket for a month and now and then took it out and looked at it. Then it was added to the collection in his safe at the trust company.



At the time he sent for me I was a clerk, and poor enough. Remembering my mother's words, his message gave me, his sole relative, no new hopes; but I thought it best to go.



When I sat down by his bedside, he began, with a **malicious** grin:

"I suppose you think me **queer**. I will explain." What he said was certainly queer enough. "I have been living on an annuity into which I put my fortune. In other words, I have been, as to money, concentric half of my life to enable me to be as eccentric as I pleased the rest of it. Now I repent of my wickedness to you all, and desire to live in the memory of at least one of my family. You think I am poor and have only my annuity. You will be profitably surprised. I have never parted with my precious stones; they will be yours. You are my sole heir. I shall carry with me to the other world the satisfaction of making one man happy.

"No doubt you have always had expectations, and I desire that you should continue to expect. My jewels are in my safe. There is nothing else left".

When I thanked him he grinned all over his lean face, and said:

"You will have to pay for my funeral."