

into the little parlour, and looked at the Spawer, and said "Oh, Morrie!" in a doleful voice of preparation. For, to tell the truth, though she was come here intended to play a little comedy on him, with a triumphant *dénouement*, her own conviction in things actual (including, for the time, their own happiness) had been so surprisingly shaken that, despite her errand's being presumably of gladness, she looked, as she looked at him, for all the world as though she had seen a ghost.

"Good gracious, darling!" said the Spawer, in concern, when he saw her. "Whatever's been happening now?"

"Oh, Maurice!" said Pam again, trying hard to win back assurance that he and she were not two mere unsubstantial figments of somebody else's dream, but flesh and blood, and dear and bond to each other. "I've something to tell you, dear—I mean, to ask you, dear. Do you love me?"

"Do I love you?" repeats the Spawer, with a look of incredulous surprise, and a tinge, in his tones, of severity. "What a remarkable question to ask a man—and at such short notice! Really, Miss Searle . . . I must confess you surprise me."

"Oh, but do you, do you?" begs Pam.

"Well, it's dreadfully, horribly sudden," says Maurice. "And you put me quite in a flutter. But since you're rather an attractive girl . . . well, yes, I do."

"Oh, but suppose . . . suppose . . ." says Pam, going on.

"Yes, little riddle-me-ree?"

"Suppose . . . suppose I wasn't what you've always thought me. Suppose it were found that . . . I wasn't a lady at all. Suppose I was somebody altogether different from what Father Mostyn said I was."

Sundry speculative shadows rise up in the Spawer's mind, but he is not dismayed, and feels no flinching.

"Well?" says he encouragingly. "And suppose you were?"

"Would it make no difference?" Pam asks tremulously, it must be confessed, for oh . . . if now it should!

"Darling," says the Spawer firmly, "not the least little bit."

Pam wants then and there to clasp his avowal and proclaim her mission. Her soul has scarcely strength for further dissimulation, but for the full crop of joy that she hopes to reap in the end, she keeps her hand to the plough.