

from the remote region it had gained. She would have understood, have returned, have denied.

He remembered his arrival in Sicily.

How different Dolores had seemed to him in Sicily ! While he had been away in England she had subtly changed. He had noticed it directly. And, that night in Sicily, when he took her in his arms, how she had cried !

Why had she cried like that ?

Again the blood rushed to his face. If it were true ! If his dead wife had really taken a lover ! If—the terrible date flamed, as if written in fire, before his mind.

Nurse Jennings !

He stood still. A memory had arrested his activity, the memory of his conversation with the nurse when he wished to take his wife out of Rome, believing that some weeks must elapse before the birth of the child. She had said the journey was impossible, and she had said, 'Everything is quite normal.' If the child that was then about to be born had been his, and if everything had been quite normal, then such a journey as he had proposed would not have been impossible. He had felt as if the nurse were trying to deceive him. He had even almost said so. His instinct had led him right. He was sure of it now, suddenly sure of it. Nurse Jennings had known before, long before, when the child must be born, and she had kept him in ignorance. She had not dared to tell him.

He turned sharply, went out of the library, traversed the green and red drawing-room and the adjoining chamber, and came into the hall. As he was about to go down the passage to the right, in search of Nurse Jennings, whose bedroom was there, he heard a slight noise, and stopped. Some one was inserting a latchkey into his front door. He stood facing the door. The key turned, the door opened inwards, and Cesare Carelli stood before him, pale, hard, resolute, with unflinching eyes, the eyes of a man devoured by purpose, by the desperate will to act.

When he saw Sir Theodore he showed no surprise. He drew the key out of the keyhole and shut the door behind him.

The two men stood for a moment face to face in silence.