

still better to be with Magda. She is so magnetic. She can almost cure me when I am ill."

"I lunched with Cissy and Mademoiselle Renaud," said the Duke.

"Oh, did you?" exclaimed Lady Wentwood, looking half alarmed.

"She is afraid that Cissy and I have had a talk about Magda," Guy told himself. "Now, I will at least find out whether Magda did leave the Abbey last night or not. Nothing shall prevent me." Quickly he went on: "Cissy seemed very much upset too. She said you were horribly worried about lots of things."

"I—worried about lots of things?" echoed Madonna, timidly.

"Yes, last night. She had a queer story about Magda, here, having disappeared into space, and said you thought she might have run up town in the same train as I did for a lark. Of course, she did nothing of the sort; you might have known she wouldn't, Madonna, and anyhow, the papers this morning would have told you all about my only travelling-companion."

"I—I hardly thought it possible," stammered Doris. "But I was anxious."

"But then, of course, when you found that she hadn't left the Abbey after all," the Duke caught her up, "your mind was relieved."

"Yes," Doris assented, bowing her head so low that her face became invisible, and the Duke could see nothing but the crown of her black hat, with its long, drooping ostrich feather.

Her way of saying "Yes," and the manner accompanying it, was almost the same as it she had answered "Magda did go; I would have shielded her if I could, but I am not actress enough

to hide the truth, even for my dearest friend's sake."

The Duke, Vanderlane, and Magda all felt this, and Magda's face flamed; but she kept silence. Whether it were a brave silence or a guilty silence only a clairvoyant reader of souls could have told.

There was a slight but awkward pause, and it seemed to Vanderlane that the Duchess's eyes reproached her friend for delivering her so easily to the enemy. Then, hastily, Lady Wentwood began to speak confusedly of the murder, of her own horror and consternation, and her husband's opinions. "Gordon thinks poor Sir Edgar may have killed himself," she faltered. "I know that no one else agrees with him yet, but people may come round to that idea later. Gordon says the disorder of the room might have been only a blind; and, you know, Sir Edgar never seemed a happy person. He was of a peculiar, melancholy disposition. He always fancied that no one liked him."

"Hardly anyone did," said the Duke.

"Oh, don't speak like that, now that he is dead. Many people found him fascinating."

"A few women. Magda, for one, apparently thought him interesting."

Neither Lady Wentwood nor the Duchess answered, and the statement went by default.

"You didn't care much for him, Madonna," persisted the Duke. "I remember your telling me a few weeks ago. You said you were nice to him and invited him a lot because he was such a chum of Magda's."

"Oh, I'm sure I didn't say 'chum.'"

"Well, some word to that effect."

Again Lady Wentwood was unable