

"Well, let's go," said Mina indifferently. "Not that it seems much use," her manner added.

"Excuse me a moment," said he, and he went out to soothe his wife's alarm and assure her that he was not tired.

As they drove, Mina heard more of Lady Evenswood—among other things, that she had known Addie Tristram as a child; this fact impressed the Imp beyond all the rest. But Lady Evenswood herself made a greater impression still. An unusual timidity assaulted and conquered Mina when she found herself with the white-haired old lady who never seemed to do more than gently suggest and yet exercised command. Southend watched them together with keen amusement, while Lady Evenswood drew out of Mina some account of Cecily's feelings and of the scene at Blent.

"Well, that's Tristram all over," sighed Lady Evenswood at the end.

"Yes, isn't it?" cried Mina, emboldened by a sympathy that spoke her own thought. "She hates to feel she's taken everything away from him. But Lord Southend says he can't have it back."

"Oh, no, no, my dear. Still——" She glanced at Southend, doubtful whether to mention their scheme.

He shook his head slightly.

"I daresay Lady Tristram was momentarily excited," he remarked to Mina, "and I think too that she exaggerates what Harry feels. As far as I've seen him, he's by no means miserable."

"Well, she is anyhow," said Mina. "And you won't convince her that he isn't." She turned to Lady Evenswood. "Is there nothing to be done? You see it's all being wasted."

"All being wasted?"

"Yes, Blent and all of it. He can't have it; and as things are now she can't enjoy it."

"Very perverse, very perverse, certainly," murmured Southend, frowning—although he was rather amused too.