

her to deaden these sounds of aerial battle and tumult.

Within the drawing-room she breathed an atmosphere of quite arresting quiet. This was very welcome. Yet for a moment she stood still, hesitating where to place herself. The piano-stool was conveniently handy, and her knees did most annoyingly give under her. She felt absurdly shaken and weak. But to any making of music she couldn't devote herself. It was dear, very dear and lovely, yet would, just now, be somehow out of place; and would, moreover, make demands upon her energy she did not care to meet. For she must reserve herself—reserve herself in the interests of some impending event of cardinal importance, of the imminent arrival of which she was as convinced as of its particular nature she was ignorant.

She crossed the room—how surprisingly, exhaustingly great its width!—to the gilt cane-seated arm-chair set at the farther side of the fireplace, and sank down on it with a little gasp of thankfulness and relief. But only just in time. For, hardly had she settled herself, leaning back languidly, when everything went black—a blackness rising, spreading