

short of frantic, and saving herself from a revelation of secret things, which would be, she now judged, in a high degree selfish and unfaithful. Herc was ground for self-congratulation! The few spoken words prelude such revelation, while easing long pent-up emotion, showed her—as has already been hinted—the wilderness of risk and danger necessarily encompassing fuller confession. Showed her, further, the futility and weakness of it if addressed to so amateur and unofficial an ear as Lucia Fitz-Gibbon's. To take that charming little person unreservedly into her confidence, would be to tie her own hands in respect of all subsequent action. Even should Lucia keep faith—as in essentials she would valiantly strive to—she'd still be for ever on the alert, on the watch, literally humming with questions, ready to enter protests and offer advice on the slightest provocation. Once in it, there'd be no keeping her out of it. To expect her to keep out, the thing in itself being of so prodigious a nature, was to expect a restraint and self-effacement quite superhuman. While, if the affair did eventually run to the lengths Frances—in her inmost heart—hoped and prayed for, wouldn't Lucia throw her promise to the winds