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"With you! Good God! Why?"

"Nannie Cloots was ill, and she sent—for one of us. It was very late. Marlesford and the Thorburns were here. I told Marlesford, after the Thorburns had left, that I must go to Nannie, and when he heard where she lived, he said I could not go there by myself. He took me in his hansom, waited for me, and brought me home."

Firmalden's pride in his own judgment was receiving a series of hard blows. He sat down, putting his elbows on the table, and hid his face in his hands.

"Nannie is now in the hospital," said Sophy; "she is going on very well. But it was a case of attempted suicide, and it is already in the afternoon papers."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" he burst out. "If she asked for me, I should have been told. I'll go to the hospital now."

Sophy moved instinctively toward the door to bar his way.

"You mustn't," she cried; "she's half mad—she will say anything."

"What do I care about that? The girl is ill, and she asked to see me."

"But only to make a scandal."

"I am going to the hospital."

"It means ruin—absolute ruin. I have been trying to save you. If you go there, she will accuse you, at the top of her voice, of things which are false."