

"And you and me, apparently."

"What was your idea when you wrote? I made Cecily let me come and see you because it sounded as if you had an idea." If he had no idea, it was clear that contempt awaited him.

"I wanted to be friendly. But as for doing anything—well, that hardly depends on me."

"But things can't go on as they are, you know," she said brusquely.

"Unhappily, as I understand the law——"

"Oh, I understand the law too—and very silly it is. I suppose it can't be changed?"

"Good gracious, my dear Madame Zabriská! Changed!" And on this point too! *Nolumus leges Angliæ*. He just stopped himself from the quotation.

"What are Acts of Parliament for?" Mina demanded.

"Absolutely out of the question," he laughed. "Even if everybody consented, absolutely."

"And Harry Tristram wouldn't consent, you mean?"

"Well, could any man?"

Mina looked round the room with a discontented air, there is such a lamentable gulf between feeling that something must be done and discovering what it is.

"I don't say positively that nothing can be done," he resumed after a moment, dangling his glass and looking at her covertly. "Are you at leisure this afternoon?"

"If you've got anything to suggest." Mina had grown distrustful of his intelligence, and her tone showed it.

"I thought you might like to come and see a friend of mine, who is kind enough to be interested in Harry Tristram." He added, with the consciousness of naming an important person, "I mean Lady Evenswood."

"Who's she?" asked the Imp curtly.

To do them justice, Englishmen seldom forget that allowances must be made for foreigners. Lord Southend explained gravely and patiently.