

"My dear!" purred Mademoiselle, reproachfully, "you should not speak so. It is most unsuitable, and such emotions will ruin your complexion. I am sure it would be a match most convenable."

"Oh, if I could only discover that she had done something very, very wicked," cried Cissy—"really wicked—a crime—I should be glad—glad! I would tell—not Guy, but everybody else, even the police. Then her career would be finished. I—I wish she had murdered Sir Edgar Malvern!"

"Cecily!" protested the little old lady, aghast. "I am amazed—horrified! What has put such an abominable idea into your head?"

"Someone whom you like very much," said the girl, her heart beating so that her voice came unsteadily, "A man who—who knows a lot about her past, I'm sure, or he wouldn't have said what he did to me."

"A man—dared to say to you that the Duchess of Oxfordshire had murdered Sir Edgar Malvern? Madness!"

"No, not that; but he hinted at other things, just as bad, which had put her into her present position."

"Of whom can you be speaking? A person, you say, whom I like very much?"

"I can't tell you any more, so there's no use asking me," said Cissy. "I can keep a secret—when it's necessary—as well as anyone else."

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The Duke had written to Magda, as he had planned, and the letter he had received was her answer. She was at home, and would be pleased to receive him and his friend at four o'clock.

The blood sang in the young man's ears. He could scarcely wait for the

moment to come when he should confront the Duchess with Vanderlane. If he saw her blanch, and Vanderlane start, what should he do? He would know the truth then—that Magda was connected in some hideous way with the tragedy of last night. All must be over between them; he must kill his love, if it refused to die a natural death. And Magda herself? He would be inclined to kill her too for cruelly deceiving him, making him believe that she cared, when in reality her thoughts were occupied with another man. But—had she loved Edgar Malvern? Was it by her order that he had been stabbed? He could scarcely believe that, yet the murderer had—the police said—worn a foreign looking overcoat, and the deed had been done with a knife of foreign appearance. The man in the train had been unmistakably English, but he might lately have come home from abroad, and might easily have been one of Magda's numerous adorers in Vienna.

Guy found Vanderlane already waiting for him at the club, calmly reading various newspaper accounts of the murder. Apparently there was no new clue, though—as usual in such cases—the police were said to be "reticent."

"Come along, Nick," said the Duke, trying to speak carelessly; drop those papers; they'll tell you nothing you haven't heard from me already, and I want you to go with me and call on the Duchess."

Vanderlane looked merely lazy, neither startled nor surprised; but he was thinking. "Awkward if she should turn out to be my lady of the bridge; but of course, she won't. I needn't worry. Such coincidences