

"It's awful, he's being ill. I can't imagine him ill——"

"I know—I know."

He knew well enough she wasn't in love with Dick, and dreaded his return. But why she wasn't in love with him he couldn't imagine. Was she no woman? Just a beautiful doll?

Violet asked him how it was he understood everything?

He asked her smiling if she thought he did understand? He didn't say so, but he was beginning to think how little he did understand her. She said he certainly understood where other people's affairs were concerned.

"And not my own?" he said, seeking to distract her, not because he found it interesting to talk about himself.

"Certainly not your own?" she said.

"What should a nun know?"

"This nun knows about you, and——"

"And?" he said.

He felt safe in asking the question, if it amused her. The only love he cared for was buried deep down in his heart, beyond the reach of idle curiosity. He felt no danger of its being discovered. All he wanted to do was to amuse Violet. The only way to do that apparently was to talk personalities. To talk of her affairs, at the moment, seemed fraught with danger. They couldn't well wreck themselves on the shallows of his. He wanted to make the drive seem as short as possible.

"What is she like? tell me that! I shall know if it is the one I mean," said Violet.

"It's quite impossible; we're talking nonsense!"