

ESMERALDA

said Mrs. DeWynt impatiently. Really, the girl was too trying!

By the time the kingfish was served, Hoskins was able to report authentically that Miss Esmeralda had not telephoned. 'Things began to look serious.

" 'Then telephone to Mrs. Ted Collins!' " commanded Mrs. DeWynt, "and find out whether she is there."

It was the only possible solution. And when, at the salad, Hoskins reported that not only was Miss Esmeralda not at Mrs. Ted's, but that that lady herself had gone out of town, our alarm became acute.

"Allie," said Mrs. DeWynt, "this is no light matter! It is impossible to guess what that extraordinary young woman may have done. I wish you would go at once to her room and see if you can find any evidence of her actions. I will stay and finish the salad while you do so."

I rose instantly and did as I was told, waving aside Hoskins' offer of assistance. Instinctively I felt that it was