

Witching Hill

rupted Uvo, sadly. "But that's all over. I'm going to clear out, and you'll find things far happier when I'm gone. It's I who have been the curse to you—to both of you—if not to all the rest. . . ."

His voice failed him; but there was no mistaking its fast resolve. Its very tenderness was not more unmistakable, to me, than the fixity of a resolution which my whole heart and soul applauded. And suddenly I was flattering myself that the man by my side shared my intuitive confidence and approval. He was no longer a man of stone; he had come to life again. Those hands of his were not fiercely frozen to the crop, but turning it gently round and round. Then they stopped. Then they moved with the man's whole body. He was looking the other way, almost in the direction by which he and I had approached the temple. And as I looked, too, there were footsteps in the grass, Mrs. Ricardo passed close by us with downcast eyes, and so back into the wood with Uvo at arm's length on the far side.

Then it was that I found myself mistaken in Ricardo. He had not taken his eyes off the retreating pair. He was crouching to follow them, only waiting till they were at a safe distance. I also waited—till they disappeared—then I touched him on the shoulder.