

She put out a hand and timidly touched his shoulder. She was on the verge of an equal loss of self-control. "Please not to—to do so," she said. "I can't bear it."

"Why are you so good to me?" said he, not looking up.

"I am only just, not good."

"No. Is it possible? How can I believe that! Oh, I cannot bear it! Your sweet goodness, I mean. I am not fit to talk to you. I must go." He stood up. She said, instantly:

"You cannot go."

"I must."

"But—" and she flushed and was silent, speaking only with her eyes.

"But what? You have not blamed me? Say what you will; I have deserved the worst you can say."

"How could I hurt you? How could I blame you? You, who are so good to me, to all—"

"You ought to wish never to see me again."

"No, no. I can say nothing like that. Oh, never—because—" Then he raised his eyes, and saw the truth in hers. He held her off, seizing both wrists and facing her.

"You love me? I ought to be sorry that—you love me. I see it in your eyes. My God! It is pitiful."

"Yes, I love you," she said, faintly. "Oh, what have I done? Let me go. How could I!"

"Never!" he cried, and he lifted her hand reverently to his lips, as Miss Letitia entered.

For the first and last time in her life she said: