

"They wouldn't be doin' no 'arm, mum, if——"

"No harm!" cried Lady Knob-Kerrick, gazing indignantly at Bindle through her lorgnettes. "Soldiers in my drawing-room!"

"If it wasn't for them, mum," said Bindle drily, "you'd be 'avin' soldiers in your bedroom—'Uns," he added significantly.

Lady Knob-Kerrick hesitated. She was conscious of having been forced upon rather delicate ground, and she prided herself upon her patriotism. Suddenly inspiration seized her. She turned on Bindle fiercely.

"Why are *you* not in the army?" she demanded, with the air of a cross-examining counsel about to draw from a witness a damning admission.

Bindle scratched his head through his cricket-cap. He was conscious that all eyes were turned upon him.

"Answer me!" commanded Lady Knob-Kerrick triumphantly. "Why are you not in the army?"

Bindle looked up innocently at his antagonist. "You got 'various' veins in your legs, mum?" He lowered his eyes to Lady Knob-Kerrick's boots.

"How—how dare you!" gasped Lady Knob-Kerrick, aware that the soldiers were broadly grinning, and that every eye in the room had followed the direction of Bindle's gaze.