

life. Lucia was in trouble—some inexplicable shadow of disgrace was threatening her—something so grave that even her mother, who knew him so well, thought it an unsurmountable barrier between them—something which looked the more awful from its vagueness and mystery. It is true that he was only troubled—not discouraged by the appearance of this phantom. He was as ready to fight for his Una as ever was Redcross Knight—but then would his Una wait for him? To be forcibly held back from the combat must have been much worse to a true champion than any wounds he could receive in fair fight. So at least it seemed to Maurice, secretly chafing, and then bitterly reproaching himself for his impatience; yet the next moment growing as impatient as before.

To him in this mood came Mrs. Costello's last letter. Now at last the mystery was cleared up, and its impalpable shape reduced to a positive and ugly reality. Like his father, Maurice found no small difficulty in understanding and believing the story told to him. That Mrs. Costello, calm, gentle, and just touched with a quiet stateliness, as he had always known her, could ever have been an impulsive, romantic girl, so swayed by passion or by