

he disappeared from sight. A clock, striking eight, reminded her that she was hungry; and, ringing for her maid, she ordered her bath and breakfast to be prepared.

"I'm afraid poor Lady Cartwright isn't at all well. Sir Norman has been asking my advice about her," she volunteered, hardly caring whether the explanation would still the chatter of the gaping girl who had let him in. "Do you know if his lordship is getting up yet?"

"I believe not, my lady. I've not heard his bell."

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Half way to her room, Gloria checked and descended again to the study; though the revolver was securely hidden in its drawer, the cartridges still lay scattered on the table where Norman had jerked them out. Collecting them in her handkerchief, she once more mounted the stairs and paused to listen at the door of her husband's room. At the sound of whistling she knocked and went in to find him standing half dressed by the window, filing his nails.

"My dear, why didn't you take things easy this morning?" he enquired solicitously. "You were very late last night."

"I couldn't sleep," she answered. "And then Norman came here again."

Without looking up, Freddie allowed his forehead to pucker in a frown:

"I nearly came down to remind him that two and seven in the morning are equally unconventional times for calling."

"It's as well you didn't. He came to see you, but I said you'd gone to . . . Birmingham, I think it was." Opening her handkerchief, Gloria spread the six cartridges on his dressing-table. "I've saved you something this morning, Freddie. I wonder whether I shall regret it."

Fully conscious that she was watching for the least change of expression in a face that was turned to the sun, Freddie laid down his file and crossed the room to Gloria's side, where he bent enquiringly over the six little grey-and-yellow objects.

"Where do these come from?" he asked, 'picking up one of the cartridges and then looking with incongruous petulance at two stains of grease on his fingers.

"Norman . . . I made him take them out for fear of accidents. He brought a revolver. . . . I've told you already it was you he came to see. Is it worth while bluffing any longer, Freddie?"