

ask a question, but did not give way to the temptation. She did not know that Cartoner was in the house at that moment, and Wanda too. She did not know that Deulin had brought Wanda to London to stay at Lady Orlay's until Martin effected his escape and joined his sister in England. She only knew what the world now knew—that Prince Martin Bukaty had died and been buried at sea. It was very sad, she had said, he was so nice.

Deulin did not join in the conversation again. He seemed to be interested in the fire, and Lady Orlay glanced at him once or twice, seeking to recall him to a sense of his social obligations. He had taken an envelope from his pocket, and, having torn it in two, had thrown it on the fire, where it was smouldering now on the coals. It was a soiled and worn envelope, as if it had passed through vicissitudes; there seemed to be something inside it which burnt and gave forth an aromatic odour.

He was still watching the fire when Netty rose and took her leave. When the door closed again Lady Orlay went towards the fire.

"What is that in which you are so deeply interested that you quite forgot to be polite?" she said to Deulin. "Is it a letter?"

"It is a love-token," answered the Frenchman.

"For Netty Cahere?"

"No. For the woman that some poor fool supposed her to be."

Lady Orlay touched the envelope with the toe of a slipper which was still neat and small, so that it fell into the glowing centre of the fire and was there consumed.

"Perhaps you have assumed a great responsibility," she said.