

"I know—I know," she returned hurriedly.
"And that's impossible."

"Why?"

"You understand as well as I do—the obstacles."

"Yes, and they don't frighten me. Shall we come to the bed-rock of the difficulty—this scoundrelly husband of yours. Has he any power over you that he terrifies you so?"

"He has only the power the law gives him to pursue, to annoy, to threaten me."

"You're wrong there. The law gives him no such power. Isn't there something else. But, perhaps, I ought not to put such a question."

"If you mean by that, anything that *I've* done, my answer is no."

"Dearest," he cried somewhat distressed. "Can you think I should make any suggestion? No—no. But you say he's threatened you? That's all the more reason why I should never leave you. Did you tell Perry that you were married?"

"No. I couldn't, and, indeed, there was no necessity."

"But a lawyer sees things from a different standpoint and he might help you."

"No. Mr. Perry can do nothing and—and while no one but you knows that I'm tied to this man I feel, in a way, safe, because I know you'll never breathe a word. But if my marriage were public property, and if afterwards—oh, it would kill me."

She was intensely agitated and Graydon forbore questioning her further, despite the fact that the mystery of her words puzzled and troubled him.

"There's some veil between us, Alicia, which you don't care to raise, and which I daren't ask you to