

THE PITFALL

—and—I wanted to have her. That was the long and short of it. We settled it between us. . . She hadn't a chance in that house. I thought I'd give her another—a home—where she was safe. She had never had a mother to tell her things. She had never had any up-bringing at that French school. She had no women friends. She had never known a good woman, except her old nurse, till I brought her to you, Mary. I told her you were good and gentle and loving, and would be a friend to her; and that I had known you all my life, and she might trust you."

"She never liked me," said Mary. It seemed to her that she must defend herself. Against what? Against whom?

"If she had only confided in you," he said. "I knew she was in trouble, but I could not make out what it was. She was such a child, and I seemed a long way off her. I took her to plays and things after I had seen them first to be sure they were all right, and she would cheer up for a little bit;—she liked the performing dogs—I had thought of taking her there again;—but she always sank back again. And I knew that sometimes young girls do feel shy about being married—it's a great step