

"I used to think that; but I was wrong." The smile that Mina Zabriská knew came on his face.

"You were wrong? Who's like her then?"

"Her successor. My cousin Cecily's very like her."

Lady Evenswood was more struck by the way he spoke than by the meaning of what he said. She wanted to say "Bravo" and to pat him on the back; he had avoided so entirely any hesitation or affectation in naming his cousin—Addie Tristram's successor who had superseded him.

"She talks and moves and sits and looks at you in the same way. I was amazed to see it." He had said not a word of this to anybody since he left Blent. Lady Evenswood, studying him very curiously, began to make conjectures about the history of the affair, also about what lay behind her visitor's composed face; there was a hint of things suppressed in his voice. But he had the bridle on himself again in a moment. "Very curious these likenesses are," he ended with a shrug.

She decided that he was remarkable, for a boy of his age, bred in the country, astonishing. She had heard her father describe Pitt at twenty-one and Byron at eighteen. Without making absurd comparisons, there was, all the same, something of that precocity of manhood here, something also of the arrogance that the great men had exhibited. She was very glad that she had sent for him.

"I don't want to be impertinent," she said (she had not meant to make even this much apology), "but perhaps an old woman may tell you that she is very sorry for—for this turn in your fortunes, Mr. Tristram."

"You're very kind. It was all my own doing, you know. Nobody could have touched me."

"But that would have meant——?" she exclaimed, startled into candour.

"Oh yes, I know. Still—but since things have turned out differently I needn't trouble you with that."

She saw the truth, seeming to learn it from the set of his jaw. She enjoyed a man who was not afraid to defy things,