

A moment after I heard the Duke's voice within, a little unsteady, but very clear and distinct. He was standing, I think, on the far side of the bed.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the King wishes all to retire excepting the Earls of Bath and Feversham."

(Bath and Feversham! thought I. Why those two, God's name, that were such a pair of Protestants? But indeed, it was the one good stroke that the Duke made, the names reassured, as I heard afterwards, all that had any suspicions, and even the Bishops themselves.)

There was a rustle of footsteps, very plain, that followed the Duke's words. I turned to the room behind me, again, and saw that Mr. Huddleston too had heard what had passed. He was standing up, very pale and agitated, with the book clasped in his hands. I moved down the steps again so not to block the way; and again there followed a silence in the midst of which I heard a door latched somewhere in the Bedchamber.

Then, suddenly, the door opened at the head of the staircase and the Duke stood there, he too as pale as death. I nodded once, very emphatically, and disappeared again. Then the priest went by me without a word, up the steps and so through. The door, as before, remained a crack open. I went up to it, and put my eye to the crack.

On the left was the end of the bed, with the curtains drawn across it; and beyond the bed I could see the whole room down to the end, for the candles were burning everywhere, as well as the fire. I could see the great table before the hearth, the physician's instruments and bottles and cupping-glasses upon it, the chairs about it; the tall furniture against the walls, and at least half a dozen clocks, whose ticking was very plain in the silence. Three figures only were visible there. That nearest, standing very rigid by the table, was Mr. Chiffinch: of the two beyond I could recognize only my Lord Bath whose face looked this way: the other I supposed to be my Lord Feversham. The Duke was not within sight. He was kneeling, I suppose, out of my sight, beyond the bed.

Then I heard His Majesty's voice very plain, though very weak and slow.