

By some trick of manner she managed to convey to him the impression that if he did not know her sister Page, that if for one instant he should deem her to be bold, he would offer a mortal affront. She had not yet forgiven him that stare of suspicion when first their eyes had met; he should pay her for that yet.

"Miss Page,—your sister,—Miss Page Dearborn? Certainly I know her," he answered. "And you have been waiting, to? What a pity!" And he permitted himself the awkwardness of adding: "I did not know that you were to be of our party."

"No," returned Laura upon the instant, "I did not know you were to be one of us to-night—until Page told me." She accented the pronouns a little, but it was enough for him to know that he had been rebuked. How, he could not just say; and for what it was impossible for him at the moment to determine; and she could see that he began to experience a certain distress, was beating a retreat, was ceding place to her. Who was she, then, this tall and pretty young woman, with the serious, unsmiling face, who was so perfectly at ease, and who hustled him about and made him feel as though he were to blame for the Cresslers' non-appearance; as though it was his fault that she must wait in the draughty vestibule. She had a great air with her; how had he offended her? If he had introduced himself to her, had forced himself upon her, she could not be more lofty, more reserved.

"I thought perhaps you might telephone," she observed.

"They haven't a telephone, unfortunately," he answered.

"Oh!"