

now of a danger to be warded off, but of an opportunity to be seized.

These new thoughts suited well with the visit which he paid to Lady Evenswood and gained fresh strength from it. His pride and independence had made him hesitate about going. Southend, amazed yet half admiring, had been obliged to plead, reminding him that it was not merely a woman nor merely a woman of rank who wished to make his acquaintance, but also a very old woman who had known his mother as a child. He further offered his own company, so that the interview might assume a less formal aspect. Harry declined the company but yielded to the plea. He was announced as Mr. Tristram. He had just taken steps to obtain a Royal Licence to bear the name. Southend had chuckled again half-admiringly over that.

Although the room was in deep shadow and very still, and the old white-haired lady the image of peace, for Harry there too the current ran strong. Though not great, she had known the great; if she had not done the things, she had seen them done; her talk revealed a matter-of-course knowledge of secrets, a natural intimacy with the inaccessible. It was like Harry to show no signs of being impressed; but very shrewd eyes were upon him, and his impassivity met with amused approval since it stopped short of inattention. She broke it down at last by speaking of Addie Tristram.

"The most fascinating creature in the world," she said. "I knew her as a little girl. I knew her up to the time of your birth almost. After that she hardly left Blent, did she? At least she never came to London. You travelled, I know."

"Were you ever at Blent?" he asked.

"No, Mr. Tristram."

He frowned for a moment; it was odd not to be able to ask people there, just too as he was awaking to the number of people there were in the world worth asking.

"There never was anybody in the world like her, and there never will be," Lady Evenswood went on.