

T H E W I L D O L I V E

he was on the veranda of the house, and I was afraid he meant to kill Mr. Wayne. I went after him. I thought I would entice him away and hide him. But the minute he heard my footstep he leaped into the house. The next I saw, he was talking to Mr. and Mrs. Wayne—and something told me he wouldn't hurt them. After that I watched my chance till he looked outward, and then I beckoned to him. That's how it happened."

"And then?"

"After that everything was easy. He must have told you. I kept him in the studio for three weeks, and brought him food—and clothing of my father's. It seemed to me that my father was doing everything—not I. That's what made it so simple. I know my father would have wanted me to do it. I was only the agent in carrying out his will."

"That's one way of looking at it," Conquest said, grimly.

"It's the only way I've ever looked at it; the only way I ever shall."

"It was a romantic situation," he observed, when she had given him the outlines of the rest of the story. "I wonder you didn't fall in love with him."

He smoothed the colorless line of his mustache, as though concealing a smile. He had recaptured the teasing tone he liked to employ toward her, though its nervous sharpness would have betrayed him had she suspected his real thoughts. While she said nothing in response, the tilt of her head was that which he associated with her moods of indignation or pride.

"Perhaps you did," he persisted. Then, as she remained silent, "Did you?"