

NURSE. No man and woman ever can. Such a relationship is always silly. Sometimes it is dangerous.

MILICENT. How then is it possible between two men?

NURSE. Because the language of friendship is words. A man and a woman communicate by a series of acts.

MORAY. There are acts of friendship, too.

NURSE. Merely on the surface. When they are fundamental the friendship ends.

MILICENT. But how do you determine what those fundamental actions are?

NURSE. The giving of money, as Professor Moray gave to me, will serve as an example.

MILICENT. In money lay the beginning of our trouble.

MORAY. But a friend may give money to a friend.

NURSE. Yes, as a loan: but even then the relation of borrower and lender supersedes the relation of friendship.

MORAY. Not as a gift?

NURSE. No, for the man who gives has converted his friend into an enemy. The recipient has betrayed his infirmity, and henceforth his desire is to destroy the witness of his weakness.

MILICENT. But a woman may take money from a man.

NURSE. Only if she is able to pay in coin or willing to pay in kind. In the one case she sunders friendship: in the other she loses virtue. If she is not willing to pay in one medium or the other, she is a beggar, and a swindler too.