

The other two smiled. Mr. Disney scowled a little. Obviously he had hoped to find his relative alone.

"Madame Zabriská met Addie Tristram years ago at Heidelberg, Robert; and she's been staying down at Blent—at Merrión Lodge, didn't you say, my dear?"

Mr. Disney had sat down.

"Well, what's the young fellow like?" he asked.

"Oh, I—I—don't know," murmured the Imp in forlorn shyness. This man was—was actually—the—the Prime Minister! Matters would have been rather better if he had consented to look just a little like it. As it was, her head was in a whirl. Lady Evenswood called him "Robert" too! Nothing about Lady Evenswood had impressed her as much as that, not even the early acquaintance with Addie Tristram.

"Well then, what's the girl like?" asked Disney.

"Robert, don't frighten Madame Zabriská."

"Frighten her? What do you mean?"

"Oh, tell him what I mean, George," laughed Lady Evenswood, turning to Southend. Mr. Disney seemed genuinely resentful at the idea that he might have frightened anybody.

"Are you a member of the conference too, Southend?"

"Well, yes, I—I'm interested in the family." He telegraphed a glance of caution to the old lady; he meant to convey that the present was not a happy moment to broach the matter that was in their minds.

"I'm sorry I interrupted. Can you give me five minutes in another room, Cousin Sylvia?" He rose and waited for her.

"Oh, but can't you do anything?" blurted out the Imp suddenly.

"Eh?" His eyes under their heavy brows were fixed on her now. There was a deep-lying twinkle in them, although he still frowned ferociously. "Do what?"

"Why, something for—for Harry Tristram?"

He looked round at each of them. The twinkle was gone; the frown was not.