

"Oh, so do I!" said Maud, with sudden vehemence. And then she checked herself quickly, as if half ashamed. "Of course it might be worse, you know, Bunny," she said.

Bunny curled a derisive lip, and looked out of the window.

"Did you really like the 'Anchor' better?" Maud asked, after a moment.

He drew his brows together—beautiful brows, like her own, betraying a sensitive, not too well-balanced temperament. "It was better," he said.

Maud sat down beside his sofa with a slight gesture of weariness. "You would like to go back there?" she asked.

He looked at her sharply. "We are going?"

She met his look with steady eyes. "Mr. Sheppard has offered to take us in," she said.

The boy frowned still more. "What! For nothing?" he said.

"No; not for nothing." The girl was frowning too—the frown of one confronted with a difficult task. "Nobody ever does anything for nothing," she said.

"Well? What is it?" Bunny's eyes suddenly narrowed and became shrewd. "He doesn't want you to marry him, I suppose?"

"Good gracious, Bunny!" Maud gasped the words in sheer horror. "Whatever made you think of that?"

Bunny laughed—a cracked, difficult laugh. "Because he's bounder enough for anything; and you're so beastly fond of him, aren't you?"

"Oh, don't!" Maud said. "Really don't, Bunny! It's too horrible to joke about. No, it isn't me he wants to marry. It's—it's——"

"The mother?" queried Bunny, without perturbation. "Oh, he's quite welcome to her. It's a pity he's been such a plaguey time making up his mind. He might have known she'd jump at him."

"But, Bunny——" Maud was gazing at him in utter amazement. There were times when the working of her young brother's brain was wholly beyond her comprehension. "You can't be—pleased!" she said.

"I'm never pleased," said Bunny sweepingly. "I hate everything and everybody—except you, and you don't count. The man's a brute, of course; but if the mother