

G.F. But when it was time for him to go, then I suddenly knew, and so did he. He kissed me. Once."

Again she paused. "He said it was Arcadia. That is the name of our villa, you know. And he said that he could not stay. That was because he was engaged. I don't know whether I ever told you, Grandfather," she went on with a change of tone that startled him like an abrupt change of key in a song, "that I don't believe in marriage."

"Yes, you once told me."

"Well, I had told him, too. And Madame Ravaglia had once said to me something about the man I should some day love, and that he would have a right to my past, as well as to my future. (That was what she meant, my poor dear, what you told me, you know!) Well, in Torington he had teased me about it, about my 'him,' and because I said it was a mistake to marry. And then, that evening after the wedding, he talked about it again. And when he kissed me, then I knew that we loved each other. He didn't come the next day, and I forgot all about Lady Henny. It seemed to me that—well—I simply didn't think of her at all. But when I dined with them all the next evening, then I remembered, and I decided not to see him again."

"And he let you decide?"

"No. He came the next day. I had written him a letter saying good-bye. And he had one for me, also saying good-bye. We read them together," she added with a laugh, "it must have been funny only we didn't know it."

"And when you had read the letters?"

There was still the glimmer of curious detached amusement in her eyes as she went on. "We went down the hill and spent the day together. We were very sensible, G.F., we knew it must be the last time, but we wanted just that one day."

"Just that one day, Oh Lord!" groaned the old man.

"Yes, and then suddenly, he asked me to marry him. Or rather he just said that I must. And I said I wouldn't."

"On Henny Shanklin's account."