

"I'm quite sure you'll break his heart if you don't," responded Eustace.

"Oh, I couldn't do that!" she said quickly.

"No. I shouldn't if I were you. It isn't a very amusing game for anyone concerned." Sir Eustace took up his pen with his free hand. "He's rather a good chap, you know," he said—"beastly good sometimes. He'll take a little living up to. But you'll manage that, I daresay. When he told me how things stood between you, I saw directly that there was only one thing to be done, and I made him do it. The idea is to get you married before the nurse goes, and she is off to-morrow." He paused, looking at her critically, and again, half-cynically, half-sadly, smiled. "You took that well," he said. "If it had been to me, you'd have jumped sky-high. You're a wise little creature, Dinah. You've chosen the best man, and you'll never be sorry. I congratulate you on your choice."

He turned his face fully to her, and she stooped swiftly and kissed him. "I'm—dreadfully sorry I—treated you so badly first," she whispered.

"You needn't be," he said. "It did me good. You showed me myself from a point of view that I had never taken before. You taught me to be human. I told Isabel so. She—poor girl"—he stopped a second, and she saw that momentarily he was moved; but he continued almost at once—"she was grateful to you too," he said. "You removed the outer crust at a single stroke—just in time to prevent atrophy. Of course"—he glanced down at the letter under his hand—"it was a more or less painful process, but it may comfort you to know that it didn't go quite so deep with me as I thought it had at the time. There's no sense in crying over spilt milk, anyhow. I never was that sort of ass. You may—or may not—be pleased to hear that I am already well on the way to consolation." He lifted his eyes suddenly with an expression in them that completely baffled her. It was almost as if he had detached himself for the moment from all participation in his own doings, contemplating them with a half-pathetic irony. "Shall I tell you what I was doing when you came in just now?" he said. "I was writing to the girl you nearly sacrificed your happiness to cut out."

"Rose de Vigne?" she said quickly.

He nodded. "Yes, Rose de Vigne,"—he paused for a