

situation in regard to the Brandon inheritance is a most unusual one."

"Most unusual, sir. I—"

There came a knock at the door, and he left his sentence unfinished. "Come in!" he said, instead, and Trisket entered.

"Lady Eleanor Beaumont, sir, and Miss Selina Chaffers," he announced.

"Show them in," directed Sharp, consulting his watch. "Late, of course. Punctuality may be the politeness of kings, Sycamore, but it is not an attribute of woman."

He rose, bowing with courteous dignity as there entered a very beautiful girl, dressed in deep mourning, followed by her maid and Miss Chaffers, a lady of uncertain age, whose elaborate attire would have been better suited to a girl of eighteen. The clerk hastened to place near Mr. Sharp's desk a comfortable chair for Lady Eleanor; for her companion he arranged a seat more in the background, smiling ingratiatingly