

She recognized this look, too—amazing, horrible, how he could act—it was the one he had when, talking to somebody, a new illumination of the subject he was writing about came into his mind.

She felt sure now that the worst was going to happen to her; but first there was to be torture, a long playing about. These revealed depths of cunning cruelty in him, of talent for cleverest acting, froze her blood. Where was Robert, the man of large simplicities she believed she had known? It was a strange man, then, she had been living with? He had never, through all the years, been the one she thought she had married.

"Please——" she said, holding out both her hands, "Robert—don't. Won't you—won't you be natural?"

He still looked at her in silence. Then he said with a sudden air of remembering, "Did you get your boots, Ingeborg?"

This was dreadful. That he should even talk about the boots! Throw in her face that paltry preliminary lying.

"You *know* I didn't," she said, tears of shame for him that he could be so cruel coming into her eyes.

Again Herr Dremmel looked at her as though collecting, as though endeavouring to remember and to find.

"I know?" he repeated, after a pause of reflective gazing during which Ingeborg had flushed vividly and gone white again, so much shocked was she at the glimpse she was getting into inhumanity. It was devilish, she thought. But Robert devilish? Her universe seemed tumbling about her ears.

"I think," she said, lifting her head with the pride he ought to have felt and so evidently, so lamentably, didn't, "one should give one's punishment like a man."