

that she was getting seriously offended, he added: "Well, the truth is—er—Cleo—is—a so—young, don't you know. One can't introduce their female relatives to many of their male friends. You understand. That's how you put it to me once."

"Yes!" said Takashima, "I remember that I tell you of that. Then I am most flattered to know your relative."

As Tom moved off and left them together, feeling afraid to trust himself for fear he would make things worse, he heard the gentle voice of the Japanese saying very softly to the girl:

"I am most glad that you do not flirt. I do not like that word. Is it American?"

Tom chuckled to himself, and shook his fist, in mock threat, at Cleo.