

*Brent*—You have never spoken like this to me before.  
*Ethel*—I have often wanted to,—what do you intend doing?  
*Brent*—Separate.—You do not doctor a poisoned limb when your life depends on it. You cut it off. When two lives generate a deadly poison, face the problem as a surgeon would,—amputate.  
*Ethel*—And after the amputation,—what then?  
*Brent*—That is why I am here facing you. Do you understand what I mean?  
*Ethel*—Oh! dear, yes. Perfectly. I have been waiting for you to get to that point.  
*Brent*—*Ethel*. (Tries to embrace her and she draws away).  
*Ethel*—Wait. Suppose we generate poison.—What would you do? Amputate me?  
*Brent*—Do not say these things *Ethel*. (Hurt).  
*Ethel*—I am afraid, Christian, I am too frank, am I not?  
*Brent*—You stand alone *Ethel*. You seem to look into the hearts of people and know why and how they beat.  
*Ethel*—I do sometimes. It is an awkward faculty.  
*Brent*—How marvelously different two women can be. You,—and my wife.  
*Ethel*—We are not really different, Christian. Only sometimes men like change. You do. And the new have all the virtues. Why I might not last as long as your wife did!  
*Brent*—Do not say that! We have a common bond,—understanding.  
*Ethel*—Think so?  
*Brent*—I understand you.  
*Ethel*—I wonder!  
*Brent*—You do me.  
*Ethel*—Yes! That is just the difficulty.  
*Brent*—(Agitated) I tell you I am at the cross roads. The finger board points the way to me distinctly.  
*Ethel*—Does it?  
*Brent*—It does. Would you risk it? (Leans across to her).  
*Ethel*—What?  
*Brent*—I will hide nothing. I will put it up to you honestly. The snubs of your friends. The whisper of scandal that will grow into a roar. Afraid to open a newspaper fearing what might be printed there. Life at first in some little continental village, dreading the passers through, keeping out of sight, lest you be seen and recognized. (Deprecatingly) No, no, it would not be fair to you.  
*Ethel*—No, Chris. I don't think it would be.  
*Brent*—You see I am a cad,—just a selfish cad.  
*Ethel*—Aren't you?  
*Brent*—I will never speak of this again. I would not have now,—only,—I am distracted to-day,—completely distracted. Will you forgive me for speaking as I did.  
*Ethel*—Certainly. I am not offended. On the contrary. Any way I will think it over and let you know.  
*Brent*—You will really!—You will really think it over!  
*Ethel*—I will really.  
*Brent*—And when she sets me free, we could,—we could,—  
*Ethel*—It is a difficult little word at times, isn't it?  
*Brent*—Would you marry me?  
*Ethel*—I never cross my bridges until I come to them and we are such a long way from that, aren't we?  
*Brent*—Then I am to wait.  
*Ethel*—Yes, do. When the time comes to accept the charity of relatives or do something useful for two pence a week, Bohemia, France or Italy,—but then runaways always go to France or Italy, don't they? Suppose we choose Hungary, shall we?—Very well. When I have to choose between charity, labor and Bohemia, Hungary may beckon me.  
*Brent*—What new mood is this? Charity!—Labor!  
*Ethel*—Yes. It has come to that. A tiresome bank has failed with all our six-pence locked up in it. Isn't it stupid?  
*Brent*—Is all your money gone?  
*Ethel*—I think so.  
*Brent*—Good God!  
*Ethel*—Dear mother knows as little about business as she does about me. Until this morning, she has always had a rooted belief in her bank and her daughter. If I bolt with you, her last cherished illusion will have been destroyed.  
*Brent*—Can't I,—Won't you let me help you?