

"I'm tired of both of them," she cried. "They do nothing but talk about you."

That night as he sat in the garden at Blent with his wife, Harry returned the compliment by talking of the Imp. He looked up towards Merrion and saw the lights in the windows.

"I think Mina is with us for life, Cecily," said he.

"I like her to be," she answered with a laugh. "First because I like being loved, and she loves me. And then I like you to be loved, and she loves you. Besides, she's been so closely mixed up with it all, hasn't she? She knew about you before I did, she knew Blent before I did. And it's not only with you and me. She knew your mother, Addie Tristram, too."

"Yes, Mina goes right back to the beginning of the thing."

"And the thing, as you call it, is what brought us here together. So Mina seems to have had something to do with that too. It all comes back to me when I look at her, and I like to have her here."

"Well, she's part of the family story now. And she'll probably keep a journal and make entries about us, like the late Mr. Cholderton, and some day be edited by a future Mr. Neeld. Mina must stop, that's clear."

"It's clear anyhow—because nothing would make her go," said Cecily.

"Let's go up the hill and see her now!" he suggested.

Together they climbed the hill and reached the terrace. There were people in the drawing-room, and Harry signed to Cecily to keep out of sight. They approached stealthily.

"Who's with her? I didn't know any one was staying here," whispered Cecily.

Harry turned his face towards her, smiling. "Hush, it's old Neeld!"

They peeped in. Neeld was sitting in an arm-chair with some sheets of paper in his hand. He had his spectacles on and apparently had been reading something aloud to Mina; indeed they heard his voice die away just as they came up. Mina stood in front of him, her manner full of her old excitement.