

I was not in the least awed by his eminent position, while he himself was, and found it difficult therefore to understand me. This was as I wished.

"Americans are very shrewd, I know, especially American ladies, who are also beautiful. But such matters as this——" and he waved his white hand again loftily; as though the problem would have baffled the wisdom of the world—any wisdom, indeed, but his.

Now this was just the opening I was seeking. I had only become governess to his two girls in order to make an opportunity for myself. I used the opening promptly.

"Will your Excellency send for your daughter, Charlotte?"

He started as if I had stuck a pin in him. If you wish to interest a man, you must of course mystify him.

"For what purpose?"

"That you may see there is no collusion."

"I don't understand you," he replied. I knew that, as clearly as I saw he was now interested enough to wish me to do so. I let my fingers dawdle among the chessmen during a pause intended to whet his curiosity, and then replied:

"I wish you to ask her to bring you a sealed envelope which I gave her six days ago, the day after the jewels disappeared."

"It is very unusual," he murmured, wrinkling his brows and pursing his lips.