

throw of the Anchor Hotel did the faintest conception of her mother's reason for choosing Fairharbour as their city of refuge begin to dawn in her brain.

She was very fully alive to it now, however, and hotly, furiously resentful, albeit she had begun already to realize (how bitterly!) that no resentment on her part could avert the approaching catastrophe. As Lady Brian pathetically said, something had got to be sacrificed.

And there was Bunny! She could not leave Bunny to try to earn a living. He was utterly dependent upon her—so dependent that it did not seem possible that he could live without her. No, she could see no way of escape. But it was too horrible, too revolting! She was sure, too, that her mother had a sneaking liking for the man, and that fact positively nauseated her. That awful person! That bounder!

"So, you see, dear, it really can't be helped," Lady Brian said, rising and opening her sunshade with a dainty air of finality. "Why his fancy should have fallen upon me I cannot imagine. But—all things considered—it is perhaps very fortunate that it has. He is quite ready to take us all in, and that, even you must admit, is really very generous of him."

Maud's eyes travelled again to the far, blue sky-line. They had a look in them as of a caged thing yearning for freedom.

"It is getting late," said Lady Brian.

Sharply she turned. "Mother," she said, "I shall write to Uncle Edward. This is too much. I am sure he will not condemn us to this."

Lady Brian sighed a trifle petulantly. "You will do as you like, dear, no doubt. But pray do not write on my account! Whatever he may be moved to do or say can make no difference to me now."

"Why not?" Curtly her daughter put the question. The beautiful brows were painfully drawn.

"Because," said Lady Brian plaintively, "it will be too late—so far as I am concerned."

"What do you mean?" Again, almost like a challenge, the girl flung the question.

Lady Brian began to walk along the beach. "I mean, dear, that I have promised to give Mr. Sheppard his answer to-night."

"But—but—Mother"—there was almost a cry in the