

nervousness in her manner, wondering what it portended. Something told him that this was no ordinary visit; that Lady Abercromby had something in her mind which she deemed of importance, and that she had not yet decided how to express what she wanted to say. He waited quietly until at length she spoke.

"I once knew three people, two of them intimately, one slightly." She paused.

Lord Dion bent towards her, his fine eyes fixed upon her face. She looked at him, then she looked away, then back again, with an expression almost of defiance.

"Yes?"

"I had a great regard, perhaps something more, for two out of these three people, and a respect for the third, but I should have liked him better if he had not come in, with the assistance of one of the others, to spoil my most cherished desire."

Lord Dion's lip quivered for a moment. He could fancy he heard the beating of his heart. He could not pretend to himself that he failed in any way to understand Lady Abercromby's allusions, but something amounting to fear had come into his mind, the kind of fear a man might have in the old days, before anæsthetics, when an