

love her – to me she is an angel, she has always been an angel – but I do not. She is too like me. I understand her too well. We are both too moody, we both feel too much the same about everything. That is what I feel, and so she does not attract me – do you understand?’ ‘Perfectly. But Pearl?’⁸ David paused, then ‘Pearl?’⁸ Need I tell you? I *cannot* help myself. I am madly in love with Pearl.⁸ She is so inexplicable, so reckless, so unlike me. I cannot understand her, I cannot think how she feels about me. It attracts me . . . and she challenges me. The Lord only knows how all this will end’, he added. (pp86a–89a)

N And the winter came again. The rooms in Carbury Avenue began to look cold and cheerless. ‘Don’t for Heaven’s sake start fires’ said Pearl, ‘they stop me working strenuously – also the price of coal.’ So they kept the screen in front of the fireplace and resolutely refused to think of the long sweet drowsy evenings that might have been theirs. Juliet was sleeping badly again. ‘I dream so much’ she told Pearl. ‘Every night, terrible dreams, all about when I was little, and about people I’d quite forgotten – and then I wake, and try not to sleep again – it is so heart-breaking.’ She had become intensely pale, and the shadows were always under her eyes, now. ‘You ought to feel more, and think less’ Pearl would answer. ‘Write something stupendous, create a colossal scheme and then it will cure you.’ ‘Ideas keep coming to me – it is not for lack of ideas that I have not written. But somehow that last play seemed to have stolen so much of my vitality.’ They were both sitting in the half dark, talking thus, when Pearl suddenly looked at the clock and cried ‘Good Heavens! I must fly. I’m due for a sitting at half past six and it’s nearly that now.’ She went. Juliet listened to the sound of her steps going down, down, down, then along the corridor, and then lost. She folded her hands in front of her, and suddenly the tears poured down her face . . .

I wonder why I am crying, she thought. Am I sad? Am I, am I? She crept over to the lounge and lay down, her head buried in the cushions. She was assailed with the most extraordinary thoughts. They seemed to be floating towards her, vast and terrible. I feel as though I was on a great river, she thought, and the rocks were all closing around me, coming towards me to sink me . . . And now and again Rudolf’s face came before her – the broad low brow, the great sweep of hair, the fire of the eyes, the eager curve of his mouth – almost just a trifle mocking, but also concerned, just a trifle concerned. She saw the strong supple hands, hands such as Aubrey Beardsley would have given an Artist. It is Rudolf – and Rudolf, and Rudolf, she said to herself. Then suddenly a fierce thought sprang to birth in her brain . . . Did he ever think – that there might be consequences to his act? Did he ever for one moment