

tonight, and I can't if you will be so restless.' There was a note of intense annoyance in Vere's voice. She looked up from the sheets of foolscap arranged in neat piles before her. The afternoon had closed in – Pearl⁸ was writing by candlelight. Juliet had drawn down the blinds. The rain in the street hurt her. She had arranged all the odd books in a neat line on the mantelpiece. She had twice pulled the tablecloth straight and then flung herself in a chair, tried to read and failed, tried to write and torn up the paper, sighed, tossed her hair out of her eyes, and finally started walking up and down the room, swiftly, quietly . . . She had a headache, felt tired, nervous, and longed to burst out crying. For days the rain had been falling steadily, monotonously over London until it seemed to be suffocating her, beating into her brain. She had slept very little at night and her face [was a] little worn and set. At Vere's remark she stopped walking and said 'I – I beg your pardon. I did not quite realise what I was doing.' Vere laid down her pen and pushed back her chair. 'Got a mood?' she said. 'Yes', said Juliet. 'It's the very Devil. While it lasts I think it is going to be eternal and I'm contemplating suicide.' 'It's sure to be something physical. Why don't you sleep better Juliet? Are you – you're not – expecting?' 'Good Heavens, no. The truth is, my dear girl – well I hardly like to own it to myself even, you understand. Bernard Shaw would be gratified.' 'You feel sexual.' 'Horribly – and in need of a physical shock or violence. Perhaps a good smacking would be beneficial.' 'Don't laugh so much at yourself Juliet. I'm sorry dear – you look wretchedly ill.' 'It's the candlelight. Also I am in need of exercise. I shall go out, I think, for a walk, despite the fact that I shall become physically, mentally, and psychically damped.' 'Do, dear.' 'I feel a need of a big grey sky, and a long line of lights. Also a confused noise of traffic, and the sense of many people – you know?' 'Yes, I understand, but I loathe the rain. It makes me irritable. I hate the slashing effect that it has – and it makes me "fussy".' Juliet went over to Vere and suddenly kissed her. 'Think, my dear' she said, one hand on Vere's shoulder, 'if it had not happened I should be in the middle of Summer. Saturday night – helping the family to entertain a few friends to dinner perhaps, or hearing Father first snore and then yawn and finally tell me all he had for lunch and all that everybody else had for lunch. The evening would come to an end at ten o'clock with lemon and soda which Mother would refuse to drink because – quotation of course – it was so "windy". O Lord! Instead, I earn at least £1.0.0 a week, I live with the best friend that anyone could wish for in London, and I am free! Voilà, by enumerating all these excellent fors and againsts I feel better – and inclined to kiss you again.' 'Our friendship is unique' said Vere, folding her arms and staring at the light. 'Nothing could separate us, Juliet. All the comforts of matrimony with none of its encumbrances, hein?' 'My word yes! As it is we are both