

The Mysterious Affair at Styles

As he spoke the last words we drew up in front of the fine old house. A lady in stout tweed skirt, who was bending over a flower bed, straightened herself at our approach.

"Hullo, Evie here's our wounded hero! Mr. Hastings Miss Howard."

Miss Howard shook hands with a hearty, almost painful, grip. I had an impression of very blue eyes in a sunburnt face. She was a pleasant-looking woman of about 40, with a deep voice, almost manly in its stentorian tones, and had a large sensible square body, with feet to match these last encased in good thick boots. Her conversation I soon found was couched in the telegraphic style.

"Weeds grow like house afire. Can't keep even with 'em. Shall press you in. Better be careful."

"I'm sure I shall be only too delighted to make myself useful." I responded.

"Don't say it. never does. Wish you hadn't later."

"You're a cynic Evie" Said John, laughing. "Where's tea today—inside or out?"

"Out. Too fine a day to be cooped up in the house."

"Come on then, you've done enough gardening for today. "The labourer is worthy of his hire", you know. Come and be refreshed."

"Well," Said Miss Howard, drawing off her gardening gloves. "I'm inclined to agree with you."

She led the way round the house to where tea was spread under the shade of a large sycamore.

A figure rose from one of the basket chairs, and came a few steps to meet us

"My wife, Hastings." Said John.

The Mysterious Affair at Styles

As he spoke the last words, we drew up in front of the fine old house. A lady in a stout tweed skirt, who was bending over a flower bed, straightened herself at our approach.

"Hullo, Evie, here's our wounded hero! Mr. Hastings—Miss Howard."

Miss Howard shook hands with a hearty, almost painful, grip. I had an impression of very blue eyes in a sunburnt face. She was a pleasant-looking woman of about forty, with a deep voice, almost manly in its stentorian tones, and had a large sensible square body, with feet to match—these last encased in good thick boots. Her conversation, I soon found, was couched in the telegraphic style.

"Weeds grow like house afire. Can't keep even with 'em. Shall press you in. Better be careful."

"I'm sure I shall be only too delighted to make myself useful," I responded.

"Don't say it. ~~never~~ Never does. Wish you hadn't later."

"You're a cynic, Evie," ~~Said~~ said John, laughing. "Where's tea today—inside or out—?"

"Out. Too fine a day to be cooped up in the house."

"Come on then, you've done enough gardening for today. ~~"~~ "The labourer is worthy of his hire," you know. Come and be refreshed."

"Well," ~~Said~~ said Miss Howard, drawing off her gardening gloves, "I'm inclined to agree with you."

She led the way round the house to where tea was spread under the shade of a large sycamore.

A figure rose from one of the basket chairs, and came a few steps to meet us.

"My wife, Hastings," ~~Said~~ said John.