# CHAPTER 24

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**NARRATOR:**

My sense of how he received this suffered for a minute from something that I can describe only as a fierce split of my attention—a stroke that at first, as I sprang straight up, reduced me to the mere blind movement of getting hold of him, drawing him close, and, while I just fell for support against the nearest piece of furniture, instinctively keeping him with his back to the window.

The appearance was full upon us that I had already had to deal with here: Peter Quint had come into view like a sentinel before a prison. The next thing I saw was that, from outside, he had reached the window, and then I knew that, close to the glass and glaring in through it, he offered once more to the room his white face of damnation.

It represents but grossly what took place within me at the sight to say that on the second my decision was made; yet I believe that no woman so overwhelmed ever in so short a time recovered her grasp of the ACT.

**MILES:**

Yes—I took it.

**NARRATOR:**

At this, with a moan of joy, I enfolded, I drew him close...

**GOVERNESS:**

What did you take it for?

**MILES:**

To see what you said about me.

**GOVERNESS:**

You opened the letter?

**MILES:**

I opened it.

**NARRATOR:**

My eyes were now, as I held him off a little again, on Miles's own face...

**GOVERNESS:**

And you found nothing!

**MILES:**

Nothing.

**GOVERNESS:**

Nothing, nothing!

**MILES:**

Nothing, nothing.

**GOVERNESS:**

So what have you done with it?

**MILES:**

I've burned it.

**GOVERNESS:**

Burned it? Is that what you did at school?

**MILES:**

At school?

**GOVERNESS:**

Did you take letters?—or other things?

**MILES:**

Other things?... Did I STEAL?

**GOVERNESS:**

Was it for that you mightn't go back?

**MILES:**

Did you know I mightn't go back?

**GOVERNESS:**

I know everything.

**MILES:**

Everything?

**GOVERNESS:**

Everything. Therefore DID you—?

**MILES:**

No. I didn't steal.

**GOVERNESS:**

What then did you do?

**MILES:**

Well—I said things.

**GOVERNESS:**

Only that?

**MILES:**

They thought it was enough!

**GOVERNESS:**

To turn you out for?

**MILES:**

Well, I suppose I oughtn't.

**GOVERNESS:**

But to whom did you say them?

**MILES:**

I don't know!

**GOVERNESS:**

Was it to everyone?

**MILES:**

No—only to… I don't remember their names.

**GOVERNESS:**

Were they then so many?

**MILES:**

No—only a few. Those I liked.

**NARRATOR:**

I seemed to float not into clearness, but into a darker obscure...

**GOVERNESS:**

And did they repeat what you said?

**MILES:**

Oh, yes—they must have repeated them. To those THEY liked.

**GOVERNESS:**

And these things came round—?

**MILES:**

To the masters? Oh, yes!... But I didn't know they'd tell.

**GOVERNESS:**

The masters? They didn't—they've never told. That's why I ask you.

**MILES:**

Yes, it was too bad.

**GOVERNESS:**

Too bad?

**MILES:**

What I suppose I sometimes said. To write home.

**GOVERNESS:**

Stuff and nonsense! What WERE these things?

**NARRATOR:**

I sprang straight upon him. For there again, against the glass...

**MILES:**

Is she HERE?

**GOVERNESS:**

Miss Jessel, Miss Jessel!

**GOVERNESS:**

It's not Miss Jessel! But it's at the window—straight before us...

**MILES:**

It's HE?

**GOVERNESS:**

Whom do you mean by 'he'?

**MILES:**

Peter Quint—you devil! WHERE?

**GOVERNESS:**

What does he matter now, my own?—what will he EVER matter? I have you...

**NARRATOR:**

I caught him, yes, I held him—it may be imagined with what a passion; but at the end of a minute I began to feel what it truly was that I held. We were alone with the quiet day, and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped.