

said, in a shy voice, speaking very slowly. 'I—I wouldn't have known you. Oh—yes I would. When you smile—oh yes—but you've changed—changed—. He's very nearly frightening, isn't he Maisie?' But Maisie had turned aside and seen Rhoda Bendall, standing apart, very pale, with a thin smile on her lips, waiting. She determined to capture Maata before Rhoda could speak to her. 'Maata, you're coming home with us now, aren't you? They're all expecting you. We promised to bring you.' 'Look here, dear girl, what about your luggage?' asked Philip, grave and practical all of a sudden. At that Maata's laughter bubbled up again, so sweet and delicious to hear that it started Pip and Maisie off, and the three, looking at each other, laughed like little children. 'Of course—my luggage. I'd forgotten all about it, I'm a nice person to travel about all over the wicked world. It's in the van Phil. Which is the van—back or front? I can't remember.' 'Why,' said Philip, waving his hand, 'here's Miss Bendall.'

What an extraordinary thing! How could it have happened? From the moment she had found Maisie and Phil Maata had quite forgotten Rhoda—forgotten all about her. 'Rhody dear.' She kissed Rhoda's cold cheek. 'Where *have* you been? Have you been looking for me all this time? I'd—I'd forgotten all about you.' At the gay cruel words Rhoda grew paler and when she spoke it was in a musing* affected voice to hide her horrible agitation. 'I didn't see you at first and then—you had found Maisie and Mr Close. So I ran after your luggage. Two big yellow boxes and a hat box and a roll of rugs. I had them put in a hansom. It's waiting. Was there anything else?' 'No, that was all. Oh Rhody dear how wonderful of you to have found them. Let me see. Now what had I better do?' 'Come to us, come to us' said Maisie 'and let Miss Bendall take your luggage.' 'What do you want to do?' said Philip. She looked at him while she spoke. 'I really ought to go off with Rhoda now and see my new rooms and unpack a little and come to you for supper if I may? Otherwise I shall have to go back late at night into a strange room not even knowing where the matches are kept, Maisie. Yes, that's my best plan.' 'But the cake' said Maisie. 'There's a cake with your name on it for tea.' 'We'll hide it till supper,' Philip consoled her. 'Yes, that's best. You'll come as soon as you can, Maata?' 'As soon as I can,' she answered. 'Where's the hansom, Rhoda?' 'Here quite close.'

Rhoda and Maata were alone, side by side in the jolting swaying hansom. 'We have a long way to go,' said Rhoda. 'Have you enough room? Are you quite comfortable?' Fearing to touch Maata she squeezed up to a corner and tried to stop the exhausted trembling of her body. Those moments at the station hurt her still. Her throat ached, tears pressed on her eyeballs. Courage, courage,