Constance and Hastings

MISS NEVILLE. My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to  
what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?  
  
HASTINGS. Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have  
hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.  
  
MISS NEVILLE. An inn! sure you mistake: my aunt, my guardian, lives  
here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?  
  
HASTINGS. My friend, Mr. Marlow, with whom I came down, and I, have  
been sent here as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow, whom we  
accidentally met at a house hard by, directed us hither.  
  
MISS NEVILLE. Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks,  
of whom you have heard me talk so often; ha! ha! ha!  
  
HASTINGS. He whom your aunt intends for you? he of whom I have such  
just apprehensions?  
  
MISS NEVILLE. You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd  
adore him, if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it  
too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to  
think she has made a conquest.  
  
HASTINGS. Thou dear dissembler! You must know, my Constance, I have  
just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here to get  
admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now  
fatigued with their journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then,  
if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon  
be landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage are  
respected.  
  
MISS NEVILLE. I have often told you, that though ready to obey you, I  
yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The  
greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India director, and  
chiefly consists in jewels. I have been for some time persuading my  
aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeeding. The  
instant they are put into my possession, you shall find me ready to  
make them and myself yours.  
  
HASTINGS. Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the  
mean time, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know  
the strange reserve of his temper is such, that if abruptly informed of  
it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for  
execution.  
  
MISS NEVILLE. But how shall we keep him in the deception? Miss  
Hardcastle is just returned from walking; what if we still continue to  
deceive him?----This, this way----[