

silent house; was he faint, giddy, affected by the sun? He could not tell them that he had spent more than two hours drawing one sketch, smoking three cigarettes and, well, thinking. He must leave proof of a little more industry than that. . . . Down in the street the three were standing on the opposite kerb, waiting for a negotiable gap in the long chain of taxis, Felix talking and stammering hard, the others occasionally nodding. Then they crossed and came too much under him to be seen any longer. He jumped up and was dusting his clothes, when the tap of a cane on his front door rang clear and echoing through the empty hall; Deryk tiptoed guiltily to the open skylight and knelt down, leaning on his hands and peering into the shadows. The tapping was repeated; then someone began to whistle (it was some kind of bogle call—"Officers' wives has puddings and pies; soldiers' wives has skilly"—some nonsense of that kind). Well, they could not break down that door, and no one seemed inclined to open it for them. The whistling, like the tapping, came to an end, and, as Deryk once more threw himself on his face and crawled to the parapet, he was in time to see their three backs (puzzled and hesitating, or so he fancied) paraded on the kerb, diving between two waves of traffic, reaching the far side and turning for a last enquiring look at the uncommunicative house.

Then they disappeared, and his world was his own until these servants came to take possession. He had said "Tuesday night," naming the hour, and from what he knew of the English domestic servant, they would come at about midnight. Or else within the next five minutes; you never knew where to have these people. If they came soon, there would be someone to open the door when the next search party arrived; before then he must provide himself with an excuse.

Returning to his old seat on the piled up planks, he began to make and discard half a dozen hasty sketches of his roof garden, crumpling the sheets between his fingers and tossing them hastily in a semi-circle round him. Then he returned the book to his pocket, pulled off his coat and