
GRANNIE FOR GRANTED

had, because she had told me, in those few minutes, that she was in love, and no girl finds time so spent dull. But she was just showing off to the young man and she knew I knew it. As she danced away she whispered, 'You angel,' and I was pleased . . . but quite suddenly I felt rather lonely and certainly older than usual and a little sadder, which was selfish of me when every one was so happy. I went upstairs and instinctively found my hand on the schoolroom door.

I opened the door expecting to find the room empty. It was not.

Reaching in front of the faintly flickering fire I saw the figure of a boy. Dozens of times in years gone by I had so found my boys, nursing in solitude their sorrows—the death perhaps of a favourite dog, of all sorrows the hardest to bear, an examination not passed, a love affair even. On the boy's head I now laid my hand, as I had done many times before. But the face that looked up was not a boy's face, but Dick's, worn with unhappiness, drawn with misery.

'Richard, my son, is this right?' I asked, and for answer he took my hand and held it against his cheek.