

eyes dwelt a little anxiously on the silhouetted view of her son's profile, as he set a match to his cigarette. The straight, outstanding nose and square chin vividly recalled his dead father. But the imaginative brow was of her bestowing, and a splash of light on his hair showed the reddish chestnut tint of her own people: the tint she loved.

"Come along, children," she added, including in that category four out of her five guests—two girls, unrelated to herself, Ralph Melrose, a Gurkha subaltern, and Maurice Lenox, an artist friend of Mark's.

Keith Macnair, professor of philosophy—his rugged face lined with thought, his dark hair lightly frosted at the temples—was the only genuine grown-up of her small house-party. A connection of her own, and devoted to both mother and son, he was so evenly placed between them in the matter of age that he could play elder brother to Mark or younger brother to Lady Forsyth as occasion required. And, whenever professional claims permitted, occasion usually did require his presence, in some capacity, either at Wynchcombe Friars or Inverraig. Between times, he lived and lectured and wrote philosophical books in Edinburgh; and never, if he could help it, did he fail to spend most of his summer holiday at Inverraig.

When the party rose from the table he joined Mark in the window: and as the two girls stood back to let Lady Forsyth pass out, she slipped an arm round each. Her love of youth and young things seemed to deepen with her own advancing years. But she had her preferences; and it was the arm round Sheila Melrose that tightened as they passed through the long drawing-room to the terrace, where coffee was set upon a low stone table in full view of the illumined lake and sky.

"It's splendid to have you safe back again, child," she said, releasing Monica Videlle and drawing Sheila down to the seat beside her. "India's monopolised