

Manisty, will *one* of you remember to give the old man my love and say I called for his blessing? Good-bye, everyone! I'm in a fairish hurry. If I've got to be killed, don't let's be too quick about the business, say I; but my old colonel—you can't start killing his junior officers soon enough. Cheero!"

He clattered out of the room with even more speed, noise and imperturbability than he had shewn on entering. Idina had turned her face to the window once more, sick with disappointment and doubt, but the other two were exhilarated by the moment's diversion.

"Lord Summertown's quite hopeless," laughed Yolande. "If *I* were on the point of going out to fight, I shouldn't be as cheery."

"I must have m-met him at Ripley Court," said Felix reflectively. "He s-seemed to know my name. I *say*!" Once again the clock on Deryk's mantelpiece had caught his eye. "It's half past seven," he whispered to Yolande. "We must start some time."

Yolande nodded and walked up to Idina.

"It's quite clear Deryk won't be back till after dinner," she said. "The evenings are so light that one doesn't notice how late it's getting, but we really must go now, Dina, and we're going to take you with us."

There was an almost imperceptible struggle and a momentary stiffening of Idina's muscles; then she allowed herself to be led towards the door.

"I'm not frightened, Yolande," she protested. "What worries me a little bit is the thought that he may have been taken faint with no one at hand to help him."

"He couldn't be fainting *all* this time," Yolande assured her. "No, he's forgotten us and remembered something else, as he always does. One thing we might do is to telephone and see if the servants are there; then we can leave a message to say that we've taken you home with us."

After a short search Felix found the telephone number on the flyleaf of a shorthand note-book.

"I'd better do this," said Yolande, taking the instrument