

passing phase. I hated them myself—afterwards. One does go through phases, doesn't one? At least I do. It's rather interesting. Saves one from the bottomless pit of boredom, the only thing we're really afraid of nowadays." She made the statement in all seriousness. "But—looking back—one sometimes wonders how much that other girl was really me?"

He did not answer at once; partly because he was trying not to be aware that while she spoke there had blown through him a chill breeze of doubt: an unwelcome reminder that after all he knew nothing as yet of her life, her antecedents, or—if it came to that—of herself. He only knew that almost from the first moment of contact she had put a spell upon him that he had neither the power nor the will to resist.

"Do I seem to be talking utter nonsense?" she asked suddenly in a changed voice; and doubt fled like a wraith at sunrise.

"Rather not. I was only hoping—that this *is* the real you. I'm not simply a phase—am I?—like all the rest?"

At that she turned to him with the lazy uplift of her lashes, and the astonishing blue of her eyes flashed on him like a light.

"Isn't it—rather too soon to tell?"

"*Is it?*" he challenged her boldly, and exulted to see the blood rise in her cheeks. More than that he could not achieve. For another Lauder chorus had just died down and they were nearing the shore.

"Look here," he said, low and rapidly. "I am off up the loch to-morrow in my little steam yacht—fishing. Come along too—will you?"

She gave him a reproachful look. "I can't. You know I can't."

"Oh, well, bring your police dog along if you must; and I'll get Lenox to make a square. Will that do?"