

Again her voice ceased. When she spoke again it was in level colourless tones.

"No one's a good word for girls like me. 'Bad women' they call us. And we'll go to hell. P'raps we shall. But I've had a piece of heaven."

Once more she was silent and the magnetism of her thoughts spread and captured the mind of the other woman, and she too felt the almost breathless glamour of those summer nights, and for a moment grieved that she would never know again the exquisite passion of youth.

Roona was speaking again.

"Then we went back to London. Mother hadn't come with us to Bourne End. Mrs. Benson just had a woman in. I'd told her I was going to be married. I told mother too. She said she'd believe it when I'd my marriage lines. The idea that I was going to marry a gentleman seemed to turn her against me. She'd nag at me and sneer about Lennie. Mrs. Benson was different. She was kind to me. But she'd her own troubles, for things began to be bad again with Mr. Benson.

"Lennie said he'd marry me in November, and then one day he came and I could see there was something wrong. He'd had an awful row with his father; there was some trouble about money and his father was mad with him. Captain Bernuth let out to Mrs. Benson that Lennie had got himself into a bother about a cheque, and it was then that we had words. She said things against him. I couldn't believe Lennie would do anything like that.