

JAVA HEAD

he told himself that her reluctance could only, must, proceed from one cause — that she cared for him. As he dwelt on this, the one alleviating possibility, he became certain of its truth. He would find her at once and in spite of Rhoda and William Ammidon explain that his whole hope lay in marrying her. With an utter contempt for all the small orderly habits which, he now saw, were the expression of a confirmed dry preciseness, he left his clothes in a disorderly heap. Such a feeling as Sidsall and his, he repeated from the oppressive expanse of his black walnut bed, was above ordinary precautions and observance. Then, unable to dismiss the thought of how crumpled his trousers would be in the morning, oppressed by the picture of the tumbled garments, he finally rose and in the dark, relaid them in the familiar smooth array.

In the morning his disturbance resolved into what seemed a very decided and reasonable attitude: He would see Rhoda that day and explain his feeling and establish what rights and agreement he could. He was willing to admit that Sidsall was, perhaps, too young for an immediate decision so wide in results. The ache, the hunger for happiness sharpened by vague premonitions of mischance, began again to pound in his heart.

At the Ammidons' it was clear immediately that Rhoda's manner toward him had changed: it had become more social, even voluble, and restrained. She conversed brightly about trivial happenings, while he sat listening gravely silent. But it was evident that she soon became aware of his difference and her voice grew sharper, almost antagonistic. They were in the formal parlor, a significant detail in itself, and Roger Brevard saw William