

Dawson; the party began disintegrating almost before it arrived, and Lord Loring and I brought up the last heroic survivors this morning. It was an awful week-end! We were so helpless, so far away. Things are no better now that we're back in town, but we don't feel so much out of it. Well, the Kaiser has till midnight, and then no one knows. In a way people were rather optimistic at the Club; of course, the Germans never intended to bring us in, so it is to be hoped that, *with* us in, we shall be able to end the thing within a few weeks. But it's a dreadful business; I can't believe it's true. Now, if you'll excuse me, I must fly; I hear my old uncle's rather seedy."

As he turned and hurried up St. James' Street, Deryk took Idina by the arm and crossed obliquely to Marlborough House.

"Dangerous crossing this," he observed. "Old Maurice Weybridge was very nearly killed here a few years ago—knocked down by a car. Did you ever know him? He was up at the House, and I met him on the Bullingdon. . . . I believe he's permanently lost the use of his legs, which is bad luck on a keen hunting man. I'd sooner have been killed outright."

They had reached the kerb, and Deryk relaxed his arm, but Idina caught him by the wrist and retained her hold.

"Darling, I wish you wouldn't talk so much about being killed!" she implored him. "You made me feel so wretched at lunch, and I went there to enjoy myself because I hadn't seen you for days and days and because I'd never been to the Ritz before. Sweetheart, you don't want to spoil my day, do you? And you will, if you go on talking about being killed."

"So long as it's only talk——" Deryk began.

Idina's grip tightened on his wrist.

"My dear, do you remember the night when we dined with the Oakleighs? I went to bed the moment I got home and fell asleep almost immediately. Then I had the most awful nightmare of my life; I dreamed that you were dead!"