

longer to convince Idina. It was so absurd! At any moment the door would burst open, and Deryk would cry out, "I say! I'm sorry! I entirely forgot all about you." He was probably at the Club. . . . Certainly he had behaved like this a dozen times to her in the course of their friendship, and she was afraid that this would be his standard of conduct to poor Idina, when they were married. In a way, it was just as well that she was getting a sample of it beforehand, but she would have to acquire rather more placidity if she intended to survive more than three months of married life.

"He's probably arranging about the servants," Yolande suggested after a silence. It was certainly inartistic, perhaps it was rather foolish to go on finding new reasons, but Idina was staring vacantly out of the window, Felix was softly beating the side of his leg with a paper knife, and all of them were ill at ease in the dingy, worn bachelor rooms. No one commented on her sally; no comment was possible. "He said something about servants, didn't he?"

"They're coming in to-day," said Idina with an effort. "But what time——"

She stopped with eyes suddenly dilated and her hand pressed against her side as the street door slammed and, a moment later, feet were heard coming up the stairs. The slow clamber gave way to a rapid reverberation on the thinly-carpeted boards of the corridor; the handle rattled, and the door was flung open. Idina, Yolande and Felix were straining forward like the leading birds in a flight, as a young officer in uniform clattered into the room.

"Lord! I'm so sorry!" he exclaimed, pulling back and addressing himself in some embarrassment to Felix. "I—er—I came to see Lancing; seems to be a goodish party on."

Yolande started and held out her hand.

"Why, it's Lord Summertown!" she cried. "I didn't recognise you in all this war-like get-up."

"Oh, I'm off immediately. I looked in to say good-bye to Lancing. Will one of you, Manisty, Mrs. Dawson, Mrs.