

immobile faces and legless bodies moved backwards and forwards between the table and the shadowland by the long wall. With an actuality never before felt, Deryk suddenly appreciated that the garniture of the room, living and dead, would one day be his, with the power to issue his own invitations and surround himself with his own guests. They would come at his bidding, as they came now; the potent two pounds a minute would bring Sally Farwell, who had been standing in the social slave-market, rather young and wistful, when he went abroad; and her aunt, the old Duchess of Ross, who always tried to interest Sir Aylmer in politics; and Yolande; and all the others.

The pride of power gave place to a feeling of short-lived cynicism. Ripley Court always seemed to contain three or four pretty girls, eligibility stamped and tooled on their well-connected names and prefixes; they were gracious and friendly, but Deryk wondered how much sincerity there was in it all, how long their favour would survive the sudden collapse of the Lancing Trust Corporation. He half wished that his father had never mentioned the amount of his income; then he laughed at himself for taking himself so seriously.

Yolande Stornaway turned to him a clear-cut, boyish, pale profile, surmounted with auburn hair parted over one eye and sweeping low over the opposite ear.

"Are you glad to see me, old man?" she began. "I suppose everybody's asked you about your travels, so I won't. But I want to know what you're going to do now."

"I *have* touched upon *that* subject," Deryk interrupted diffidently.

"You're as easily bored as ever," she commented. "Deryk, d'you ever contemplate what you'll be like at forty? But you'll have cut your throat in sheer ennui before then. I wish your father'd lose his money or something."

Deryk sighed extravagantly.

"You're rather vindictive, you know," he commented.

"I've always been rather fond of you, so I don't want to see you wasting yourself."