

JAVA HEAD

clearly than did the ordinary mind or heart. But, in retaliation, the world they differed from curtly brushed them aside. Roger Brevard could not see that they had made the least mark on the callous normal cruelty or the æsthetic and spiritual blindness of the existence they shared. But it was always possible that something bigger than their grasp of justice or beauty was afoot.

He turned from the darkened prospect of the window and his thoughts to the room. Without a light he removed his formal street clothes, hanging the coat and waistcoat, folding the trousers in a drawer, with exact care; changing his light boots for fiber slippers he set the former in the row of footgear drawn up like a military review against the wall. Though it was quite obscure now, and no one would see him, he paused to brush his slightly disarranged hair, before — tying the cord of his chamber robe — he resumed his seat.

The year, he reverted to Sidsall, would pass; but, try as he might, he had no feeling of security in the future, however near. It was the present, this Sidsall, that filled him with a tyrannical and bitter longing. She was unbelievably beautiful now. Against the faintness of his hope, his patience, he saw the whole slow process of the disintegration of marine insurance, and with it his own fatuous insensibility to the decline: that decline with its exact counterpart in himself. Salem and he were getting dusty together.

He straightened up vigorously in his chair — this would never do. He must wind up his affairs here and return to New York. The tranquil backwater had overpowered him for a time; but, again awake, he would strike out strongly