

made me forget. I thought of you and the debts, and the game went on, the stakes mounting higher as the hour grew later. When we drew the curtains and snuffed the candles, the light of morning was streaming in from the courtyard outside. In the end I was owing——"

He stopped a moment.

"Yes, dear, go on," she said.

"Five thousand pounds," he answered grimly.

For a moment her mind reeled.

"And have you paid?" she asked.

"At present I cannot." Sir John set his white teeth together firmly. "I cannot raise five thousand pounds—things are so tight. Everyone is pressing. My lawyers say there is nothing we can mortgage safely, and the only way out is to sell."

"To sell what?" she asked, a new alarm in her grey eyes.

"I am sorry," he answered slowly, "but we must sell Tracy Court."

It was as if he had struck her a blow and inflicted physical pain. Sell Tracy Court! Why it was part of her whole life. It had been the home of the Derings for more than five centuries. To this house Sir John had taken her mother. Before her eyes danced one of her earliest, tenderest memories—her mother, bending over her needlework, as she sat in a sheltered corner of the noble terrace. There she had been born, an only child, slightly spoilt by the figure who filled her mind. Her old nurse lived at Tracy Court, even now, a link between the present and the past. Every room, every piece of furniture, every flag in the courtyard and the terrace was part