

himself a bedroom on the ground floor, he had hardly moved from his narrow circuit; the lift was for emergencies, put in after Deryk had been ill; and he went upstairs now, less to oblige Mrs. Benson than to see that Deryk's room in the west wing over the library was in fit state to receive him. Pushing his way from door to door, he paused on the threshold of the central room over the hall; it had once been his own, before him it had sheltered the reigning head of the Stornaway family, and, when Deryk married, it would be for him and his wife. Sir Aylmer rose from his chair and walked unsteadily to the window, looking down the drive, though he knew that he could expect nothing for another six hours. Of late he had been wondering what manner of girl Deryk would marry. Before leaving England he had seemed too much absorbed in his books and music to spare time for any kind of social life; Ripley Court was always full of neighbours and friends for the few weeks of his vacations that he spent at home, but, though they came at his invitation, he was apt to grow tired of them after twenty-four hours and leave them to amuse themselves; these were the days when Deryk allowed his hair to grow untidily long and lay curled in an armchair before the library fire wearing disreputable clothes and never troubling to change out of slippers; it was a period of slovenliness and unsociability. Now, however, he was five and twenty; he must have met many women and would meet more; the relationship of father and son would enter upon its most delicate phase. Deryk must be protected, of course, from people who saw him only as the son of an Anglo-American millionaire, but beyond that he must work out his own salvation. . . . There was nothing like letting people work out their own salvations.

Returning to the lift, Sir Aylmer made his way downstairs, left his chair in the hall and walked into the dining-room. Silent and alone he ate an unappetising luncheon, specially prepared, and retired to his bedroom for the prescribed half hour's rest; a book lay open on his knees, but his mind was too restless for him to concentrate his