Again he rose and paced the length of the Long Gallery. The moment was come. There was a great alliance against him. He fought still. At every step he took he came to something that still was his, that he prized, that he loved, that meant much to him, that typified his position as Tristram of Blent. A separate pang waited on every step, a great agony rose in him with the thought that he might be walking this room as its master for the last time. Yes, it had come to that. For against all, threatening to conquer all, was the girl who sat in his mother's chair, her very body asserting the claim that her thoughts did not know and her mouth could not utter. And yet his mood had affected her. The upturned eyes were full of excitement, the parted lips waited for a word from him. Mina Zabriska had left her terrace and gone to bed, declaring that she was still on Harry's side; but she was not with him in this fight.

He returned to Cecily and stood by her. The sympathy between them kept her still; she watched, she waited. For minutes he was silent; all thought of time was gone. Now she knew that he had something great to say. Was it that he would and could have no more to do with Janie Iver, that another had come, that his word must go, and that he loved her? She could hardly believe that. It was so short a time since he had seen her. Yet why could it not be true of him, if it were true of her? And was it not? Else why did she hang on his words and keep her eyes on his? Else why was it so still in the room, as though the world too waited for speech from his lips?

"I can't do it!" burst from him suddenly. "By God! I can't do it."

"What, Harry?" The words were no more than breathed. He came right up to her and caught her by the arm.

"You see all that—everything here? You love it?"

"Yes."

"As much as I do? As much as I do?" His self-control was gone. She made no answer; she could not understand.

With an effort he mastered himself.