

how many different kinds of people would be appropriate to their surroundings, and he began with some of the ardor that he had given hitherto to envy of life to covet all varieties of intellectual experience. What a wonderfully suggestive word was University, and how exciting it was to see Viner tabulating introductions for his benefit.

Michael sat by himself at the concert. During the afternoon he had talked to Stella for a few minutes, but she had seemed more than ever immeasurably remote from conversation, and Michael had contented himself with offering stock phrases of encouragement and exhortation. He went early to King's Hall and sat high up in the topmost corner looking down on the orchestra. Gradually through the bluish mist the indefinite audience thickened, and their accumulated voices echoed less and less. The members of the orchestra had not yet entered, but their music-stands stood about with a ridiculous likeness to human beings. In the middle was Stella's piano black and lifeless, a little ominous in its naked and insistent and faintly shining ebony solemnity. One of the orchestra threaded his way through the chairs to where the drums stood in a bizarre group. From time to time this lonely human figure struck his instruments to test their pitch, and the low boom sounded hollowly above the murmurous audience.

A general accession of light took place, and now suddenly the empty platform was filled with nonchalant men who gossiped while they made discordant sounds upon their instruments. The conductor came in and bowed. The audience clapped. There was a momentary hush, followed by a sharp rat-tat of the bâton, and the Third Leonora Overture began.

To Michael the music was a blur. It was soundless beside his own beating heart, his heart that thudded on and on, on and on, while the faces of the audience receded farther and farther through the increasing haze. The