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there. It will always be there—what we made together. It is like a citadel, a place of strong refuge—and we can enter it or leave it as we will. It has survived, it is changeless. It will always be there, even though we change.

But Lisette, he cried in agony, Lisette, we haven't changed. No—it hasn't destroyed me. It hasn't poisoned me. I'm not polluted. I won't be.

My dear—don't be afraid. Has it been that bad?

He passed his hand over his brow.

No, not really. Not bad, at all really. In fact even happiness and content. Even that. But there was something I had that I valued more, much more than happiness or content, something that was most vital, most urgent always in your presence. With her, it never responded, never could. And I have dreaded its atrophy. I have dreaded it. Then you came back—and more than physical death, I dreaded I had lost it—that the years in the backwaters had killed it. I dreaded seeing you, although I longed to. For I knew only you could tell me if it had gone. Only you could reawaken it if it seemed gone but was only dormant.

SHE was silent. Then she said—Have you worked here all the time, Richard? Did you never go away as we—as you planned?

No, I never went away. I have three more children you know. And she likes to stay where she belongs. He sighed. That's so with all of us—we all like to stay where we belong. And where we belong is not a street we know or a house we love or a city with which we are familiar—it's where our souls repose. Isn't it, Lisette?

Yes, Richard. It is where our souls repose.

Mine in yours, and yours in mine.

Yes, Richard.

It is unaltered then?

Yes, it is unaltered.

He sighed again, but with a different quality. An infinite calm settled on his spirit, images of things at rest came into his mind, a bird with head under folded wing, a weeping willow in windless sunlight, a flower with closed petals, a lake.

Walking to where she sat in quiet repose, he cupped her cheek in his palm and turned her face up to him. He smiled at her with a great sweetness.

We built better than we knew, Lisette.

Yes. We built well. The years have not worn what we built at all. Indeed, I think it has new strength, new beauty.

Ten years—not to have seen you, spoken to you, or heard from you for ten years—and then one day the phone goes, I answer, you say, It is Lisette speaking, and then you come.

She laughed softly. Then I come—and here I am.

He sat down. I could sit and gaze at you all afternoon, without saying anything, and yet we would have talked with each other more intimately than any communication of speech could ever be. I was so afraid—

You were afraid we would have lost that unity, that peace?

Yes, And above all, I was afraid that it would be some change in me that would cause our loss. You see, I feel so old nowadays. I get the feeling life is over, and there is only death to come.

Life is only acceptance and waiting now. And then you come back. And now I don't know. What is to happen now, Lisette?

There was almost the helpless dependence of a child in his question. As if he were putting his fate in her hands and asking her to do well with it.

She answered him quietly. That I can't tell you, Richard. We must wait, and see what happens. Don't you remember we learnt that—not to force it, but to wait quietly, and in time we knew?

Is that how you knew to come to me again? By waiting quietly?

I suppose so. You see, I've done many things these last ten years. Many of the things I told you I wanted to do when we used to talk. I've travelled, and I've loved. I've seen things and I've done things. I've met scores of people of all sorts, made all sorts of friends—but—

But—?

How can I put it? I don't know quite what it was we had, Richard. Perhaps it was something so rare and so precious, it was too ethereal to grasp properly. I don't know yet quite why I went away, except that I felt I should, that it was the right thing to do. And in the same way I felt it the right thing to do to come back. Somehow, not in the workings of my mind, but in something deeper or higher than my mind. Perhaps intuition—perhaps soul—I'm not sure. And now that I have seen you, I know my intuition was right.

Yes, I am sure too. We won't worry. We won't strive or fight. As you said—we will be calm—and wait.

Tell me about yourself in these years. Have you been writing?

He shrugged, smiling wryly. I don't know. The poetry went out like a light turned off when you went. As for the rest—a story now and then—but poor stuff. No heart in it somehow. But there has been something else. He hesitated.

What, Richard?

I suppose you'd call it a philosophy—a sort of autobiography of the soul. Yet that sounds pretentious—and I don't mean to give that impression. I think really, it's a kind of trying to find myself on paper. He smiled again. It's like chasing something that has the power to become invisible. Just as you think you're close enough really to grasp it at last—puff—it vanishes. So you see, the writing I do on such a theme is naturally elusive, he added.

And the rest? Still the same as when I left?

Much the same. The days and the nights the same. Only in myself sometimes it is different. A weariness. As I told you—a growing old.

But Vera?

The same. A little plumper, a little blinder—but just as happy, just as easy to live with, like a sort of endless, soft eiderdown you sink into in complete indolence, and just drowse away your life.

You sound bitter, Richard.

I'm not really. At least, only seldom. If I have failed, I daresay it is my own fault. The kids are nice though. Elva's 13 now, you know.

Yes, of course. I find that hardest to realise perhaps. She was only a tiny girl with soft hair as I remember her. And the others?

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## PARENTS and the SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

### The measure of a good secondary education

The School Certificate is proof that a boy or girl has completed a good secondary education. The School Certificate Examination is ordinarily taken at the end of three or four years at a secondary or technical school. It is of the same standard as the old University Entrance ("Matriculation") Examination, but the choice of subjects is much wider.

For the School Certificate, a pupil can take a course adapted to his own special abilities and his future occupation. This means that the Headmaster and the parent, taking the child's own wishes and abilities into account, can select from a number of courses of study one which will not only give a good general education as a preparation for citizenship, but will also be a preparation for a chosen career.

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