

Lydia & Mark

MARK. Is the result through?

LYDIA. No. Not officially.

MARK. Well, then -

LYDIA. Have you forgotten 'Lydia, Heroine of the Glorious Estonian Resistance'? - Heroine is funny. Me and two small boys, none of us lasting more. than six weeks – forging mimicking. It's second nature. Uncle Constantin's nurse is Scandinavian. Accent like mine. Only too easy to ask the consultant's secretary on behalf of Dr Schuster. She came back Mrs Lydia Cruttwell leukemia positive. So there you are, now you'll have that drink?

MARK. Yes.

LYDIA gets it. Pause. He sips his drink LYDIA sits beside him.

And he doesn't know a thing?

LYDIA. No.

MARK. Shouldn't you have let him know?

LYDIA. No.

After a pause.

How was Hong Kong?

MARK. What I expected.

Toward door

He should know.

LYDIA *(she kisses his cheek).* And just what do I tell him?

MARK. The truth for Christ's sake! Isn't the truth what you tell your husband?

LYDIA. Not this husband.

MARK. But he'll have to be told sometime.

LYDIA. When the ambulance comes. Not before. Perhaps not even then.

Pause.

MARK. Listen, he could resent you're not telling him, you know that?

LYDIA. Oh yes, he could. He probably will. In fact he certainly will —

MARK. Then why -?

LYDIA. Because I won't bore him, I love him too much for that. Marcus, don't let's fool ourselves - is there any surer way of boring our nearest and dearest than by getting ourselves a long slow terminal illness?

MARK. But isn't that just what our nearest and dearest are for?

LYDIA. You are. And don't you worry - I'll bore you good

and proper before I'm through - Is that correct idiom, 'good and proper'? Or should it be 'well and properly'?

MARK. Good and proper will do.

LYDIA. But Sebastian isn't you —

MARK. You got a point there.

LYDIA. I mean he's so bad at being bored. You must have noticed that —

MARK. I've noticed it.

LYDIA. Of course if I had told him he'd have been quite upset - perhaps even very upset - for a week or so, and he'd have remembered his manners too. Manners Makyth Man. That's the motto of his old school, 'Winchester. 'Don't tire yourself, old girl. just lie there. I'll get you your tea?

She laughs.

Oh God, just to hear that I sometimes wish I *had* told him. But not for two years, Mark. Two years!

She touches wood surreptitiously.

No, Marcus, I've chosen this way, and it's the best way. The best for me, as well as for him. I promise you.