

THE FRUIT OF THE TREE

"Yes, I remember," she said.

"And do you remember how we said that it was with most of us as it was with Faust? That the moment one wanted to hold fast to was not, in most lives, the moment of keenest personal happiness, but the other kind—the kind that would have seemed grey and colourless at first: the moment when the meaning of life began to come out from the mists—when one could look out at last over the marsh one had drained?"

A tremor ran through Justine. "It was you who said that," she said, half-smiling.

"But didn't you feel it with me? Don't you now?"

"Yes—I do now," she murmured.

He came close to her, and taking her hands in his, kissed them one after the other.

"Dear," he said, "let us go out and look at the marsh we have drained."

He turned and led her through the open doorway to the terrace above the river. The sun was setting behind the wooded slopes of Hopewood, and the trees about the house stretched long blue shadows across the lawn. Beyond them rose the smoke of Westmore.