

sure—I'm positive now that men think less of women who are ready to sacrifice themselves than of women who wish to make slaves of them. I see that now. It's the selfish women they admire, the women who take their own way, and insist on having all they want, not the women who love to serve them—not slavishly, but out of love. A selfish woman they can understand; but a woman who gives up something very precious to her they don't understand. Maurice never understood my action in going to Africa. And you—I don't believe you ever understood it. You must have wondered at my coming as much as he did at my going. You were glad I came at the moment. Oh yes, you were glad. I know that. But afterwards you must have wondered; you did wonder. You thought it Quixotic, odd. You said to yourself, 'It was just like Hermione. How could she do it? How could she come to me if she really loved her husband?' And very likely my coming made you doubt my really loving Maurice. I am almost sure it did. I don't believe all these years you have ever understood what I felt about him, what his death meant to me, what life meant to me afterwards. I told—I tried to tell you in the cave—that day. But I don't think you really understood at all. And he—he didn't understand my love for him. But I suppose he didn't even want to. When I went away he simply forgot all about me. That was it. I wasn't there, and he forgot. I wasn't there, and another woman was there—and that was enough for him. And I dare say—now—it is enough for most men, perhaps for every man. And then I'd made another mistake. I was always making mistakes when my heart led me. And I'd made a mistake in thinking that real people get beyond looks, the outside—and that then life begins. They don't—at least real men don't. A woman may spend her heart's blood for a man through years, and for youthful charm and a face that is pretty, for the mere look in a pair of eyes, or the curve of a mouth, he'll almost forget that she's alive, even when she's there before him. He'll take the other woman's part against her instinctively, whichever is in the right. If both women do exactly the same thing a man will find that the pretty woman has performed a miracle, and the ugly woman made some preposterous mistake. That is how men are. That is how you are, I suppose, and that was Maurice, too. He forgot me for a peasant. But—she must have been pretty once. And I was always ugly!"

"Delarey loved you," Artois said, suddenly interrupting her in a strong, deep voice, a voice that rang with true conviction.

"He never loved me. Perhaps he thought he did. He