

for hatred which sprang, perhaps, which surely must spring, from other reasons of love.

His mind was exaggerating, as minds do when the heart is intensely moved, yet it discerned much truth. And it was very strange, but his now acute consciousness of a personal hatred coming to him from out of the darkness of this almost secret chamber, and of its complex causes, causes which, nevertheless, would surely never have produced the effect he felt but for the startling crisis of that day, this acute consciousness of a personal and fierce hatred bred suddenly in Artois a new sensation of something that was not hatred, that was the reverse of hatred. Vere had once compared him to a sleepy lion. The lion was now awake.

"Hermione," he said, and now his voice was strong and unfaltering, "I seem to have been listening to you all this time that I have been standing here. Surely I have been listening to you, hearing your thoughts. Don't you know it? Haven't you felt it? When I left the island, when I followed you, I thought I understood. I thought I understood what you were feeling, almost all that you were feeling. I know now how little I understood. I didn't realise how much there was to understand. You've been telling me. Haven't you, Hermione? Haven't you?"

He paused. But there was no answer.

"I am sure you have been telling me. We must get down to the truth at last. I thought—till now I have thought that I was more able to read the truth than most men. You must often have laughed—how you must have laughed—secretly at my pretensions. Only once—one night in the garden on the island—I think I saw you laughing. And even then I didn't understand. *Mon Dieu!*"

He was becoming fiercely concentrated now on what he was saying. He was losing all self-consciousness. He was even losing consciousness of the strange fact that he was addressing the void. It was as if he saw Hermione, so strongly did he feel her.

"*Mon Dieu!* It is as if I'd been blind all the time I have known you, blind to the truth of you and blinder still to my own truth. Perhaps I am blind now. I don't know. But, Hermione, I can see something. I do know something of you and of myself. I do know that even now there is a link between us. You want to deny it. You wouldn't acknowledge it. But it is there. We are not quite apart from one another. We can't be that. For there is something—there has always been something, since that night we met in Paris, at Madame Enthoven's"—he paused again, so vividly flashed the scene of that dinner in Paris upon his memory—"some-