

But there was no agony there now to be assuaged. My boy was on his way home, and the words he had written, the cable that he had sent when he heard of my illness, lay near my heart, too sacred to show her. I let her think I had not heard from him. Closer even than a sister lies the tie between son and mother. Not perhaps between her and her rough Tommy, her fair Violet, but between me and my Dennis, my wild, erratic genius, who could nevertheless pen me those words . . . who had sent me the sweetest love-letter that has ever been written.

But this has nothing to do with me and Dr. Peter Kennedy, and the curious position between us. For a long time after I began to get well it seemed we were like two wary wrestlers, watching for a hold. Only that sometimes he seemed to drop all reserves, to make an extraordinary *rapprochement*. I might flush, call myself a fool, remember my age, but at these times it would really appear as if Ella had some reason in her madness, as if he had some personal interest in me. At these times I found him nervous, excitable, utterly unlike his professional self. As for me, I had to preserve my equanimity, ignore or rebuff without disturbing my equilibrium. I was fully employed in nursing my new-found strength, swallowing perpetual milk and eggs, lying for hours on a long invalid chair amid the fading gorse, reconstructing, rebuilding, making vows. I had been granted a respite, if not a reprieve, and had to prove my worthiness. The desire for work grew irresistible. When I asked for leave he combated me, combated me strenuously.

"You are not strong enough, not nearly strong