THE END OF THE AFFAIR
By Graham Greene

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THE LIVING ROOM
THE END OF THE AFFAIR

GRAHAM GREENE

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“Man has places in his heart which do not yet exist, and into them enters suffering in order that they may have existence.”

Léon Bloy
BOOK ONE

I

A story has no beginning or end: arbitrarily one chooses that moment of experience from which to look back or from which to look ahead. I say "one chooses" with the inaccurate pride of a professional writer who—when he has been seriously noted at all—has been praised for his technical ability, but do I in fact of my own will choose that black wet January night on the Common, in 1946, the sight of Henry Miles slanting across the wide river of rain, or did these images choose me? It is convenient, it is correct according to the rules of my craft to begin just there, but if I had believed then in a God, I could also have believed in a hand, plucking at my elbow, a suggestion, "Speak to him: he hasn't seen you yet."

For why should I have spoken to him? If hate is not too large a term to use in relation to any human being, I hated Henry—I hated his wife Sarah too. And he, I suppose, came soon after the events of that evening to hate me: as he surely at times must have hated his wife and that other, in whom in those days we were lucky enough not to believe. So this is a record of hate far more than of love, and if I come to say anything in favour of Henry and Sarah I can be trusted: I am writing against the bias because it is my professional pride to prefer