

Translating Johanna Kinkel's *Hans Ibeles in London*

by

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## Abstract

The focus of this dissertation is an annotated, academic English translation of Johanna Kinkel's nineteenth-century, semi-autobiographical novel, *Hans Ibeles in London: Ein Familienbild aus dem Flüchtlingsleben*, published posthumously by Cotta in 1860. Kinkel was an advocate for the emancipation of women whose career pursuits ranged from that of musical conductor, concert pianist, composer, pedagogue, and musicologist, to revolutionary and political activist and writer. Her novel, written while she lived in exile in London with her husband, Gottfried, and their four children subsequent to the 1848 revolutionary uprisings in Germany, illuminates the historical and cultural specificities of the revolution's events and its aftermath; it sheds light on the suffering and difficulties of the exilic experience, particularly from the perspective of a woman. In writing this novel, Kinkel sought a specific literary space in which she could process her thoughts and feelings about the reality of displacement and loss. The translation of Kinkel's novel is preceded by a critical introduction that includes an overview of theory as it applies to exile literature and highlights the parallels between the process of translation and the condition of exile, ultimately showing how Kinkel's life becomes a project of translation. In this context, this translation invites reflection on how aspects of the exilic experience relate to the act of translation and in this way adds to the evolving body of critical commentary on Kinkel and her novel—considering it both as an object of translation into English and as a document of the problem of “translation” involved in the experience of exile.

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## I. Introduction

*In silence on a winter's day,  
We exiles stood around,  
A German woman's head to lay  
In England's alien ground*

.....

*Like soldiers in a fight we stand  
To lay a comrade low,  
As if upon this foreign land  
Shot by some cruel foe.  
Our exile is a battle-field,  
And thou the first to fall;  
We have our cause, we cannot yield,  
One hope, one aim, for all!*<sup>1</sup>

The above lines, appearing here in English translation, have been excerpted from the poem entitled “On the Death of Johanna Kinkel,” written by the German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath in November 1858 and read in tribute to this multi-talented woman at her funeral. Freiligrath’s imagery is strongly emotive, representing the exilic existence in terms of a battle-field on which a comrade, a woman no less, has perished in the line of battle fought in the land of an “other.” At the age of only forty-eight Kinkel fell to her death from an upper story window of her home on

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<sup>1</sup> Source: *Poems from the German of Ferdinand Freiligrath*. Ed. Kate Freiligrath-Kroeker. Trans. Adelaide Anne Procter. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1871. 232–35.  
<https://archive.org/stream/poemsfromgerman00freigoog#page/n20/mode/2up/search/232> Accessed June 29, 2016.  
 The above-selected verses appear in the original German poem entitled “Nach Johanna Kinkel’s Begräbnis” as follows: “Zum Winterzeit in Engelland,/ Versprengte Männer, haben/ Wir schweigend in dem fremden Sand/ Die deutsche Frau begraben/ [...] Wir senken in die Gruft dich ein,/ Wie einen Kampfgenossen;/ Du liegst auf diesem fremden Rain, / Wie jäh vom Feind erschossen;/ Ein Schlachtfeld auch ist das Exil –/ Auf dem bist du gefallen,/ Im festen Aug das eine Ziel,/ Das eine mit uns allen.” (These verses excerpted from *Johanna Kinkel: Romantik und Revolution* by Monica Klaus. Cologne: Böhlau, 2008. 327.)

15 November 1858. Controversy ensued concerning the cause of her death, which was discussed extensively among the exile community, as well as in the newspapers in her homeland (Klaus 325). While the coroner's report indicated an accidental death, many, including some of Kinkel's friends, her doctor, and her husband's political opponents, chief among them being Karl Marx, suspected her death to be suicide (Ashton, *Little Germany* 199). This assumption was based on Kinkel's apparent state of depression and jealousy related to her husband's attractiveness to other women and to a possible affair (Ashton, *Little Germany* 196–98). Furthermore, Kinkel's doctor gave her husband a detailed account of his last visit with his patient relating that she had talked of having to endure “mental suffering” and experiencing guilt feelings towards family and other persons “whom she had depicted in her novel” (Ashton, *Little Germany* 199). However, Ruth Whittle and Debbie Pinfeld assert that Kinkel's closest friends, namely Fanny Lewald and Malwida von Meysenbug, believed her husband and “the coroner's explanation of death by misadventure” attributable to her heart condition (121). In spite of the coroner's report, scholars tend to be at variance in relating the circumstances of her death, which remain unclear.

But who was this woman, whose life was tragically cut short and considered by fellow nineteenth-century writer Malwida von Meysenbug to be “the outstanding woman of the emigration” (qtd. in McLaughlin 100) among the exiles living in London after the 1848 uprisings in the German states? Why is her literary work of interest and importance to a twenty-first century readership and more importantly, an English speaking audience? These, among others, are the questions to be addressed in this critical introduction accompanying my English translation—the first to date—of Kinkel's posthumously published novel, *Hans Ibeles in London. Ein Familienbild aus dem Flüchtlingsleben* (published by Cotta, 1860).

Johanna Kinkel, née Mockel (1810–1858), an early German advocate for the emancipation of women, was an individual whose career pursuits ranged from that of conductor, pianist, composer, pedagogue, and musicologist, to revolutionary and political activist and writer. She received her initial musical training from Franz Anton Reiss, the young Beethoven's violin teacher, and was admired by the likes of Mendelssohn and Schumann, and it was her extensive musical output that first attracted the attention of scholars, for example Eva Weissweiler, with the beginning of women's studies and later Linda Siegel and Sigrid Nieberle. However, like many women writers of the nineteenth century, Kinkel has, until recent decades, been accorded relatively little scholarly attention with regard to her life and literary accomplishments, which had been largely neglected.

Kinkel's life, already challenging as a woman seeking recognition in the male-dominated arenas of arts and letters, took a dramatic turn as a result of the 1848 political uprisings in Germany. Her husband Gottfried, a theologian, poet, professor, liberal activist and revolutionary, was forced into exile in London after a daring escape from prison in November 1850. Kinkel and their four children followed several months later; they arrived on the 23 January 1851 in England where Kinkel spent the remainder of her short life (Klaus 247). Kinkel played a prominent role in the German-speaking exile community in London, forced upon her by her tie to Gottfried, whose popularity among the German exile community did not decline after the events of 1848. In London Gottfried became an object of curiosity to the English, his fame as a frontrunner in the revolution and daring escape from prison having preceded him, and a so-called commodity for his fellow exiles, "all hoping either to use his name for support for their political schemes, or to get financial help or a job recommendation, or both" (Ashton, *Little Germany* 188). Many fellow exiles and emigrants such as Carl Schurz and family, Alexander Herzen, Ferdinand Freiligrath,

and Malwida von Meysenbug, as well as other like-minded revolutionaries, all converged on the Kinkel household as a general meeting place and for the purpose of engaging in heated political debates. The situation was much more difficult and stressful even than one might expect, since, according to Herzen, the German exile group distinguished itself from other refugee communities by their “ponderous, prosy and cantankerous nature” (1155). Herzen disparagingly remarks that for the most part the German exiles displayed internally “the same friability as their country did. They had no common plan; their unity was supported by mutual hatred and malicious persecution of each other” (1155).

In the nineteenth century the Germans numbered more than 40,000 in London alone, comprising the second largest group of emigrants to England (Helmer 385). During much of the nineteenth century Britain’s policy of asylum was without exception non-discriminatory, accepting virtually anyone, no matter what their origin, political persuasion, or social background might be, even with a history of criminal activity (Panayi 77; Porter 2). Ulrike Helmer suggests that political exiles were drawn to England, the land of democracy and liberal politics, for reasons such as the promise of civil rights and liberties, freedom of assembly, and the right of political asylum (386). More recent research, however, suggests that it was not just an affinity for England, nor a “deliberate decision based on approval of a particular political system that brought most refugees to the country, but simply a lack of alternatives” (Freitag 2). Sabine Freitag states that the 1840s saw countries such as Belgium, France, and Switzerland, which had previously been very liberal in their policies of asylum, begin to undergo a change in attitude, becoming much more conservative and even hostile towards refugees. This attitude was exemplified by accelerating extradition, by inaugurating more stringent entry requirements, and by discontinuing financial aid programs such as had been instituted in France in the 1830s. The



combination of the likely possibility of deportation, as well as political and financial pressures, resulted in England becoming the only option left available to refugees wanting to remain in Europe (Freitag 2–3).

The situations of exile during the nineteenth century were diverse. Some refugees were exiled by decree; some were deposed kings and royalists; some were remaining members of the revolutionary armies; some had escaped from prison; some had voluntarily left their countries either for reasons of refusing to “obey regimes they disagreed with” or because they felt their lives might become endangered if they remained (Porter 1). Some of the exiled remained in Britain for only a short while before continuing on to America, but those who chose to remain in Britain were exiles who had been more politically active in their respective countries and who therefore chose Britain as their place of refuge because it was less geographically removed from their homelands and because many were of the opinion that their exilic experience would be brief (Porter 1). Whenever their exile might actually end, and for some it never did, the refugees never needed to fear expulsion from Britain. The fact that Britain was the most dependable country in terms of asylum within Europe actually became a source of national pride to the general English population. Porter shares the following quote by the then Conservative Lord Malmesbury:

I can well conceive the pleasure and happiness of a refugee, hunted from his native land, on approaching the shores of England, and the joy with which he first catches sight of them; but they are not greater than the pleasure and happiness every Englishman feels in knowing that his country affords the refugee a home and safety. (1–2)

As the refugees were to experience, however, the reality often proved to be far less agreeable for both the exiles and the host nation. The average middle-class exile often had a difficult time

gaining employment, language being a major barrier as well as competition from large numbers of “underpaid [...] near-starving British proletarians who were overworked and out of work by turns” (Ashton, *Little Germany* 17). Ashton also points out that of all the occupations and professions represented it was hardest for exiles formerly earning a living in the arts to succeed in the host nation, first because of the number of exiled musicians and artists and second, because of what was perceived as an English hostility toward art and music (but not toward literature). Furthermore, the need for an exiled artist or musician to find patrons was highly problematic, as were the rivalry and resentment within the artistic community (*Little Germany* 174–75). Conversely, many Britons displayed an attitude of political and socio-economic hostility toward the German newcomers (McLaughlin 89). As a result, there was a general consensus among them that they felt “neglected, cold-shouldered, unduly and unfeelingly ignored” by the host populace (Porter 23). Herzen, the Russian writer living as an exile in London for several years wrote: “The Englishman has no special love for foreigners, still less for exiles, whom he regards as guilty of poverty, a vice he does not forgive” (1112). As an English republican bitterly commented: “The exile is free to land upon our shores, and free to perish of hunger beneath our inclement skies” (qtd. in Porter 22).

This was the cultural and socio-political climate with which the Kinkels and their fellow exiles were confronted upon arrival in the space of an “other.” However, in contrast to most of the exiled, Kinkel and her husband were fortunate in that they arrived in the host nation having been provided with some financial aid and with the all-important letters of introduction and references. With these, Gottfried was able to acquire and tutor private pupils in German, art, and history and, because of his fame, eventually presented with opportunities to lecture on art history and literature throughout Britain and at various London colleges (Ashton, *Little Germany* 155,

162). Johanna Kinkel, too, actively contributed to the family's finances by giving singing and music lessons to young English dilettantes in her home. Yet Gottfried's fame, in some ways having proved beneficial in easing the difficulties of exile, also brought with it significant strain as he and his wife were inundated with pleas for financial and employment aid by strangers sharing their nationality. When Kinkel's husband left approximately eight months after the family's arrival in London in order to take on fund-raising tours in America to facilitate prospects for renewed revolution efforts in the homeland, she had no choice but to be the sole financial provider for her household. Add to this the continuing and constant intrusions by strangers and revolutionaries alike, even in spite of her husband's absence, and it is for good reason and with a hint of sarcasm that Kinkel labels herself as the "Emigrantenmutter"—the "mother of the emigrants" (Ashton, *Little Germany* 188). The excessive demands by others, the overwhelming workload required to keep the family financially afloat, combined with the illnesses assailing her and the children cause her to become physically and mentally drained and left with no time or energy for creative pursuits. In a letter to her husband dated 2 October 1851 Kinkel writes: "[I] shall probably have to bury my dreams of a more noble artistic occupation as long as I have not even a minute to call my own" (qtd. in Hesse 36).<sup>2</sup> All of the manifold burdens inherent to an exilic existence no doubt contributed to Kinkel's increasingly ill health, which ultimately led to her tragic and untimely death.

Yet in spite of the hardships of exilic existence, Kinkel's years in London "were not a complete artistic loss" (Siegel, "Johanna Kinkel (1810–1858)" 32). While her time in Berlin saw the most prolific output in her musical compositions, the later years spent in exile in London saw the majority of her literary productivity. During this period Kinkel found reprieve in the study of

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<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. German: "[I]ch muß wohl meine Träume von einer höhern künstlerischen Tätigkeit begraben, solange ich keine Minute mein eigen nenne."

music history at the British Museum, and in spite of increasing health issues, writing became her creative outlet (Schulte 110; Siegel, “Johanna Kinkel (1810–1858)” 32). She expresses the reason for her renewed creative impetus as follows: “As long as the children were young, it seemed to me to be my duty to kill all of my intellectual interests that might distract me from the most pressing concerns. That which had lain under a blanket of snow suddenly wants to put forth shoots once again” (qtd. in Schulte 111).<sup>3</sup> During these years she produced various musicology articles and lectures as well as several pedagogical writings, including *Acht Briefe an eine Freundin über Clavierunterricht* (1852), which is a “distillation of her experience as a piano teacher” (Chambers 161). This work was published in an English translation entitled *Piano Playing, Letters to a Friend* in 1943 and the original work reprinted in 1989. The London publishing house, Ward, Lock, and Tyler, published a children’s anthology in 1872 entitled *Mamma’s Stories: Told for her Little Ones with a Century of Characters in Verse [...] by Various Authors*, in which Kinkel contributed “Twelve Stories of Earth, Air, and Water” (Chambers 161). In addition, she completed her one and only novel, *Hans Ibeles in London* shortly prior to her death and also another lesser-known unpublished work “Musikalisches aus London. Auch eine Seite des Londoner Lebens. Betrachtungen einer deutschen Musikantin” (A German Woman Musician Looks at Musical Life in London).<sup>4</sup>

After completing *Hans Ibeles in London* Kinkel revealed to her physician that she felt plagued by a guilty conscience since she had based some of her narrative’s characters on real-life individuals. According to Ashton, Kinkel represented her friend von Meysenbug, for example, in the character of the governess, Meta Braun, and was therefore never in favour of publishing her

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<sup>3</sup> Translation mine. German: “Solange die Kinder klein waren, schien es mir eine Pflicht, alle Neigungen meines Geistes zu töten, die mich von den nächsten Sorgen ablenken möchten. Was unter der Schneedecke gelegen, will nun plötzlich wieder hervorkeimen.”

<sup>4</sup> For an extensive list of Kinkel’s musical and literary work see Linda Siegel’s entry, “Johanna Kinkel (1810–1858)” in *Women Composers: Music Through the Ages*. Vol 8. New York: G.K. Hall, 2006. 34–36.

manuscript. However, contrary to her wishes Kinkel's husband initially serialized her novel in his weekly periodical *Herrmann* in 1859 and then gave permission for it to be published one year later in two volumes by Cotta in Stuttgart (Ashton, *Little Germany* 199).

According to Donal McLaughlin, the most representative of German literary production in the mid-nineteenth century Victorian England was the prose writing of women writing in exile (98). Among them he mentions Kinkel, von Meysenbug, and Amily Bölte, who all produced "memoirs" while working as teachers and governesses. McLaughlin states that with an eye for detail the prose works by these writers "reflect the domestic and working circumstances of the German refugees in England, the customs typical of the natives' lives in Victorian Britain, and, of course, encounters between the two cultures" (100). Kinkel's novel focuses in such detail on the lives of German refugees in London after the 1848 upheavals. The novel does contain flashbacks portraying the 1848 German events in order to provide a past frame of reference with regard to pertinent characters. However, by locating her novel in London in the mid-nineteenth century, she places its main events at a geographical and temporal remove from the historical occurrences that necessitated exile. Consequently the majority of the female characters are apart from "the scene of direct political or revolutionary action" (McNicholl 229). Yet Kinkel does not hesitate to present the reader with political commentary regarding reasons for the failure of the uprising or to illuminate historical and cultural specificities of the revolution's events and its resultant aftermath. In terms of the exilic experience, she reminds the reader of the manifold suffering and diverse difficulties that the exiles are exposed to both collectively and individually. At times she also presents the host nation as the "other," again collectively as well as individually, as seen from the exile's perspective, thus reversing the gaze and allowing a contemporary Briton "in the words of Robert Burns, 'To see oursel's as others see us'" (qtd. in

Chambers 173). Kinkel's novel is distinctive not only in that it presents life in exile from the perspective of a woman but also because its author was unafraid to voice "her more radical political convictions" and issues concerning women's rights (Chambers 173).

In this context, the translation undertaken here invites reflection on how aspects of the exilic experience relate to the act of translation and in this way adds to the evolving body of critical commentary on Kinkel and her novel—considering it both as an object of translation into English and as a document of the problem of "translation" involved in the experience of exile. The earliest known biography of Kinkel was by J. F. Schulte, titled *Johanna Kinkel. Nach ihren Briefen und Erinnerungs-Blättern*, and published in 1908, but it addresses Kinkel's literary work only briefly. Ludwig Geiger in his 1903–04 article and Camille Pitoulet in 1907 did give attention to Kinkel's novel, but they focused, as Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres points out, almost solely on whether the novel "could or should be considered a 'Schlüsselroman'" (188). The 1930s also saw a brief flourish of attention to Kinkel, mainly as a result of the sale of a portion of her literary estate to the University of Bonn's library (Whittle and Pinfold 104). In general, however, Kinkel has most often been mentioned in conjunction with other well-known women writers, specifically Lewald and von Meysenbug, or consigned to the status of "footnote" to her husband Gottfried's literary and political endeavours.

Early admirers of Kinkel's writing, in particular of her posthumously published novel, included J. F. Schulte, who considered *Hans Ibeles in London* to be "one of the most important sources concerning the life of the political refugees of the 1840s" (97).<sup>5</sup> Schulte wrote: "her striving for objectivity in passing judgement is so revealing, and some of her revelations about the political state in general, as well as about the life of refugees in England, the manner of their

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<sup>5</sup> Translation mine. German: "eine der wichtigsten Quellen über das Leben der politischen Flüchtlinge der vierziger Jahre."

activities and politicizing are particularly relevant (97).<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Althaus, a fellow exile and German professor at the University College London, also praised the novel, referring to it as an “extremely vivid and largely accurate picture” of life in exile for the refugees during the mid-nineteenth century (qtd. in McLaughlin 100). Reviews by contemporary critics were overwhelmingly favourable and included such enthusiastic acclaim as: “One might almost think that Goethe would have written like this if he were to have portrayed London life in the last half of the nineteenth century in a novel” (qtd. in Boetcher Joeres 187).<sup>7</sup>

Despite this acclaim, Kinkel the writer and her two-volume novel sank into a state of neglect. Fortunately however, the literary merit of Kinkel’s novel has not completely escaped the eye of twentieth-century feminist scholars. Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres, in her 1976 article “The Triumph of the Woman: Johanna Kinkel’s *Hans Ibeles in London* (1860)” considers the novel to be “a mirror of its age” and, “viewed aesthetically, it is on the whole, marvellously written, in a fluent and vivid manner, with humor and alacrity, providing considerable evidence of its author’s virtuosity” (188). In 1989 Rachel McNicholl discusses Kinkel’s novel in terms of women writers and their “powers of observation” regarding the “outside world of politics.” She concludes that these

writings offer the 20<sup>th</sup> century reader a deeper insight into the political, historical and cultural issues of those eventful years. In particular, they provide insight into women’s involvement in those events and issues from a female perspective, one which is rarely represented in history books or indeed in literary history. (232)

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<sup>6</sup> Translation mine. German: “ihr Streben nach objektivität des Urteils ist so offenbar, und manche ihrer Äußerungen über die politische Lage überhaupt, sowie besonders über das Leben der Flüchtlinge in England, die Art ihres Treibens und Politisierens sind so treffend.”

<sup>7</sup> Translation mine. German: “Fast möchte man meinen, so würde Goethe geschrieben haben, wenn er uns in einem Roman das londoner Leben in der letzten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts zu schildern gehabt hätte.”

McNicholl also makes an appeal for the texts by these women writers of the 1848 revolution to be made more readily available to literary historians in order to facilitate “practical research” (233).

Other more recent scholars—for example Carol Diethe and Whittle and Pinfold—are convinced of Kinkel’s merit. Whittle and Pinfold provide an extensive chapter on the writer in their 2005 monograph. They view Kinkel as an early activist on behalf of women’s emancipation. However, with the exception of a brief synopsis and analysis of Kinkel’s novel, the focus in the Whittle and Pinfold study as well as in Diethe’s chapter is predominantly biographical in nature in its general efforts to bring attention to neglected German women writers of the nineteenth century. Whittle’s 2002 article on Kinkel concentrates on the effects of Kinkel’s displacement in terms of her personal biography by re-examining available archival material. Ulrike Helmer, editor and publisher of the 1991 edition of the novel, refers in her afterword to various archival materials in order to shed light on Kinkel’s life and exile. Helmer focuses mainly on the character portrayals and analyses the various female figures.

Clara G. Ervedosa’s 2002 chapter on Kinkel discusses Kinkel’s novel in greater detail with regard to the question of nineteenth-century women in terms of roles and representation as exemplified by the novel’s female protagonist Dorothea. Ervedosa suggests that the novel provides an example of the voice of a woman on behalf of women during the nineteenth century that brings forward the issue of women’s rights particularly in terms of improvements to education and work opportunities (326). She also argues for further examination of the novel as an important contribution to the history of the emancipation of women (331).

Patricia Howe in her 2010 article approaches the novel, along with other works, from a different perspective. She analyses it in terms of mental mapping, “a concept used by



geographers, sociologists and psychologists, and, more recently, as a representation of writing fiction, allow[ing] London to be treated as subject, setting and process without privileging one function over another” (3). She offers a reading of the city of London in terms of overlapping spaces, namely as “a musical London, a woman’s London, a refugee’s London, and, implicitly, a Londoner’s London” (6) examining how Kinkel presents the city along these lines. She suggests that the principle narrative maps the Ibeles family’s *discovery* of the exilic space through “their excursions into the city and its surroundings, and through disturbing and disruptive incursions into their home by other refugees, neighbours, and tradespeople” (4).

2008 and 2010 were two important anniversary years for Kinkel and they gave rise to projects and publications significant for her growing recognition. The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death occasioned projects in her birth city of Bonn that promise to further the growing interest of a general reading public and of scholars. The Bonn Municipal Museum and University Club organized a gala concert, which took place on 15 November 2008. An exhibition entitled “Johanna Kinkel (1810–1858) and Her Cultural Surroundings in Bonn, Berlin and London”<sup>8</sup> was held at the Ernst Moritz Arndt House in Bonn from the 13 May to the 12 June 2009. It “shed comprehensive light on the life and work of the artist for the first time” (Ayaydin 6). This all coincides with Monica Klaus’s new German biography of Kinkel (2008) based in large part on the Kinkels’ correspondence, which consists of six-hundred and eighty-nine letters. July 2010 saw a book presentation and reading, “Johanna Kinkel: A Selection from the Most Beautiful Texts by Johanna Kinkel,”<sup>9</sup> by the Bonn Municipal Museum for the anniversary of Kinkel’s 200<sup>th</sup> birthday as well as a “Tour on the Trail of Johanna Kinkel in Bonn” in addition to further events (Ayaydin 6–7).

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<sup>8</sup> German: “Johanna Kinkel (1810–1858) und ihr kulturelles Umfeld in Bonn, Berlin und London.”

<sup>9</sup> German: “Johanna Kinkel: Eine Auswahl aus den schönsten Texten von Johanna Kinkel.”

In light of this growing critical interest an English translation is arguably in order, especially with regard to this recognition of her as an early advocate of civil rights and the emancipation of women, particularly with regard to education and marriage, as a “voice of rebellion” (to paraphrase Whittle and Pinfold) against societal norms, and thus an important intellectual figure in the lineage of German nineteenth-century women writers who were early proponents of the women’s movement. Translating Kinkel’s exile narrative in its cultural-historical context not only serves as an important document of achievement by an early voice for women’s rights but also emphasizes to present day readers and scholars the advances that have been made for the cause. It articulates a historical position from which women’s issues have developed. Historical hindsight lends new perspective to the achievements and risks undertaken by women of previous eras. In addition, the translation of Kinkel’s narrative would serve to challenge the status quo, albeit in hindsight, bringing a much-needed balance to the gendered socio-historical discourse surrounding the nineteenth century, as her novel offers insight into the life of post-revolution German exiles in Britain and provides a nineteenth-century social commentary from the perspective of a woman writer. Pertinent works with regard to the German exiles of 1848 by male writers—for example Theodor Fontane and Alexander Herzen, who both recorded their observations and experiences—were translated into English as early as 1939 and 1968 respectively.

Finally, as demonstrated by the variety and focus of scholarly research of the past and in recent years presented above, I suggest that in light of the complexity and wealth of subject matter that Kinkel presents in her novel there is also a corresponding wealth of continuing opportunities for research based on her novel from diverse academic disciplines. The plight of the exile and musician in London, women’s emancipation in the context of the nineteenth

century, the representation of the “other” in exile, the exilic existence of women, women’s literature and the 1848 revolution, aspects of nineteenth-century pedagogy, the political and cultural representation of Victorian England—are all examples of potential and ongoing research that could address Kinkel’s novel in English translation. Disciplines such as history, women’s studies, music, exile studies, cultural studies, and comparative literature can, by including the translation, offer students and researchers a deeper insight into the specific historical, political, cultural, and socio-economic events and issues of this era. Furthermore, in presenting the reader with a female perspective of exile and politics in the nineteenth century, Kinkel’s novel is a relative rarity in literary history. As von Meysenbug stated, Kinkel is:

[a] shining example that a woman, too, can be a fearless fighter for truth and justice and indefatigably active in the highest realm of intellectual creativity, whilst not only fulfilling every obligation of domestic life as a wife and mother in the noblest fashion, but also contributing to the material livelihood of the family. (Ayaydin 1)

## II. Translating a Life in Exile

Kinkel's geographical and cultural displacement necessitated a complete rewriting of her life, and glimpses into the subsequent process of transition and self-translation that she underwent can be found in her semi-autobiographical fictional account of a woman's life in exile. As an exiled woman attempting to continue with her musical and literary activities in the public sphere, Kinkel portrays various translatory occurrences such as crossing borders and boundaries, loss, encountering the foreign or "other," interpretation, mediation, and decision-making in the context of *foreignization* and *domestication* in her exilic narrative. An illumination of the essential themes within her life, as well as in the exilic narrative that relate and invite comparison to the process of translation itself demonstrates that ultimately Kinkel's life as a woman writer in exile becomes a project of translation. This aspect adds to the scholarly perspectives on Kinkel and novel surveyed in the previous section.

The condition of exile has a long history, ranging from the practice of exile or banishment in primitive societies, to that of ancient Greece in, which "exile was inflicted during the Homeric age as a punishment by the authorities for any crime affecting general interests, though it was chiefly known in connection with murder" (Tabori 60), all the way to the mass displacements following the Second World War and continuing on to the present day. Early research in exile or migration studies focuses mainly on general historical surveys as exemplified by Paul Tabori's 1972 monograph *The Anatomy of Exile: A Semantic and Historical Study*. With regard to German emigration, most scholarly studies have focused in particular on twentieth century issues (Lattek 2). However, Rosemary Ashton in her monograph *Little Germany: Exile and Asylum in Victorian England* (1986) did address the more important German exiles of the

1848 revolutions in England in terms of their social and cultural activities, but not politics (Lattek 2), and Christine Lattek focuses her attention on the German mid-nineteenth-century exiles in London, examining their “political activities, organizations and debates” (Lattek 1). Sabine Freitag’s 2003 anthology focuses on “the national peculiarities of various exile communities” of the nineteenth century as well as “their common ground and mutualities, and their interaction—whether active or theoretical—with the host nation” (1). The overall focal point, however, has for the most part been the biographical studies and historical specificities of exiles in the nineteenth century. In terms of theoretical discourse in the analysis following, I have drawn on twentieth- and twenty-first-century writings by scholars such as not only Tabori, but also Edward Said, Nico Israel, and Sophia McLennen. While Tabori often views exiled writers as ensnared in a binary mode of either being in a state of nostalgia for the lost space or outrage at the circumstances behind the exiled condition (Hanne 7), Said addresses exile from a personal perspective, and Israel addresses displacement “as a lived experience in the twentieth century, as a predicament of writing, and as a problem for theory” (ix). Israel looks at the work of three transnational writers representing diverse backgrounds and genres and the writing of McLennen addresses Latin American and Hispanic literatures. Nevertheless, all of these perspectives and analyses of exile exhibit commonalities that are also applicable to nineteenth-century exile. In 2000 Said wrote that the “difference between earlier exiles and those of our own time is, it bears stressing, scale; our age—with its modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers—is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration” (137–38). While the numbers of exiles from the nineteenth century and successive centuries varied greatly, the extent of the psychological effects experienced by exiles throughout

the centuries are invariable and “the imagery employed to express them [is] almost infinite” (Hanne 7).

Before examining Kinkel’s life in exile, both as she lived it and as she depicted it in her novel, I shall provide a brief explanation of some of the distinct translatory acts that can be observed in the process of literary translation in order to illuminate the parallels between the process of translation and the condition of exile. In translation studies various theoretical models have been “derived from other domains and disciplines” and applied to the process of translation (Hermans 155). These models can “range from linguistic and semiotic to literary and sociocultural models” (157), and in each one the emphasis differs according to the focus and objective. No matter the model, there are various translatory acts that occur or can be engaged in at various points in the process of translation.

The etymology of the English word “translation” reveals the idea of *carrying or bringing across* or being “carried from one point to another,” and the German word *Übersetzung* denotes a similar idea of being “carried over” or “set over” (Miller 207). Both terms imply a pre-existing border between texts (source and target) on account of two different languages and cultures, and thus it is the translator who performs the process of “carrying across” with the purpose of breaking down the “function of the border as a boundary” (Pym 453). Crossing linguistic and cultural borders in translation also inherently entails a negotiation between the familiar and the foreign in that the translator is confronted with difference and then given the difficult task of overcoming that difference without causing misunderstanding (Bassnett, *Reflections on Translation* xiii).

By their nature both exile and translation imply contact with the foreign and with the “other.” “[T]he process of translation [...] is an implicit or explicit, voluntary or involuntary, act

of exile from the familiar which may bring about an experience of estrangement and suspension” (Bartoloni 131), carrying the translator into the realm of the new, the unfamiliar, and the foreign, that is: into the territory of the “other.” The “other” is realized in terms not only of language and the process of communication, but also of culture, which encompasses parameters such as historical specificities, social norms and constructs, and even ideologies.

Similar to the state of exile, the act of translation itself carries with it the notion of “some salvaging and some *acceptance of loss*” (Ricoeur 3; emphasis added). Just as the exiled is forced to accept loss that inevitably accompanies his or her new reality, the translator is required to come to grips with the notion that there is no perfect equivalence between languages and hence with the fact that loss, because of the vast diversity between languages and through comparison with the original, is inevitable and occurs on all levels of language, whether that loss is specifically identifiable in terms of morphology, syntax, semantics, text, culture, or some combination of the above. The translator must renounce the idealized notion of a perfect translation (Ricoeur 23) and focus instead on salvaging as much as possible by utilizing various strategies to overcome difference such as explication, annotation, and clarification.

The *act of interpretation* occurs at various points in the process of translation. At the macro level the translator interprets or establishes meaning with the initial reading of the source text, and at the micro level she or he then isolates individual words, phrases, idioms, poetic images, and metaphors, and then must decode them before being able to transfer them into the receiving language. Finally, the entire translation also becomes a reflection of the translator’s creative interpretation of the source text (Bassnett, *Translation Studies* 83).

The translator also engages in the translatory *act of mediation*. The verb “to mediate,” not only denotes the action of an intermediary agent in communication with others but also connotes

the action of reconciling differences. In translation this involves reconciling difference not only in terms of linguistic transfer, but also by acting as the intermediary between two differing cultures and therein attempting to break down cultural barriers by bringing understanding and acceptance of cultural difference (Martínez-Sierra 1).

Finally, the act of translation also involves determining an approach to the work to be translated. Lawrence Venuti has formulated two such approaches, classified as *foreignization* and *domestication* and based on the work of nineteenth-century German theorist Friedrich Schleiermacher. The basic premise of these two approaches revolves around the degree to which the translator attempts to conform the source text to the target culture or the degree to which the translator attempts to signal the differences in the source text even if contrary to the target readership's culture, values, and ideologies.

#### A. Exile Terminology and Context Surrounding Kinkel's Exile

Exile denotes not only banishment, but also devastation and destruction and implies an act that forces an individual to escape or depart from his or her country. Gottfried Kinkel's political activities in the failed revolution of 1848 resulted in his being sentenced to life imprisonment (an earlier death sentence had been rescinded). However, Carl Schurz, a former student of Kinkel, devised a daring plan of escape, which, proving successful, necessitated Gottfried Kinkel's exile to London in 1850 and subsequently his family's as well. While Johanna Kinkel was not compelled to leave her homeland, Amy Kaminsky argues that the term "exile" inherently implies a condition that is "always coerced" and suggests that "voluntary exile" is "an oxymoron that masks the cruelly limited choices imposed on the subject" (9). Said echoes this argument, stating: "Exile is not, after all, a matter of choice: you are born into it, or it happens to you"



(184). However, the discourse surrounding exile studies and writers often represents the condition of exile in terms of binary oppositions as either negative and often with tragic endings or positive and even necessary for creative output. Reason for this can perhaps be perceived from the term's Latin origin. Exile derives from "exilium," in which the "prefix "ex" means "out" and the root "solum" refers to "ground, land, or soil," and the Latin "exilium" is also thought to relate to the Latin verb "salire," [meaning] "to leap or spring"" (McClennen 14). Hence the term's etymology implies the conflicting notions of exile as a "forceful separation" and as a "movement forward" (McClennen 14). In spite of the pain of an exilic existence Said, too, believes that an exile "can foster a scrupulous subjectivity, independence of mind, critical perspective and originality of vision" and make the individual advantageously "attuned to more than one culture" (Barbour 296).

The initial state of the newly exiled person is one of trauma, a confrontation with incalculable losses—of country, community, personal security, and identity. The exiled individual dwells in a space with the constant realization of not being at home since his or her orientation is often towards a distant geographical space of the past, producing the sense that the individual does not belong in or feels "at odds" in the present space (Barbour 293). Johanna Kinkel attempts to articulate this psychological trauma and disorientation of exile in a letter she wrote on 25 September 1851 to Kathinka Zitz, stating: "We are [...] in a condition like that after a great shipwreck; each one of us grabs a plank and entrusts himself to the waves" (qtd. in Ashton, *Little Germany* 21). Kinkel and her family have been "carried across" the English Channel and forced to re-establish their lives in London. The emotive imagery she uses, of being adrift at sea, imparts feelings of loss, insecurity, emptiness, and aimlessness. "Exile was a bleak existence," and it stands to reason that the German term *Elend* (translated in English as "misery")

is “derived etymologically from the term for ‘alien’ or ‘abroad’” (Lattek 1) and that at one time its meaning was “alien land” (Tabori 31). As Tabori argues, “[t]he exile is always an alien at one stage or other of his destiny” (31), which Kinkel vividly depicts in her opening chapter’s description of the Ibeles family’s arrival. In addition, the word “exile” has become increasingly “appropriated as an abstract term by some intellectuals and given an at least partially metaphorical turn” (Hanne 5). However, Hanne asserts that this latter appropriation can have the “effect of devaluing the reality of the terror and the loss experienced” by displaced people (5). The condition of exile forces Kinkel to rewrite a life for herself and her family based on the singular frame of reference of uncertainty. How she actualizes this is in part reflected in *Hans Ibeles in London*. There she processes various cultural concepts such as dislocation, alterity, alienation, marginalization, and acculturation; she sheds light on the many difficulties inherent to the exilic experience, particularly from the perspective of a woman. These cultural concepts, difficulties, and the previously defined translatory acts not only occur in Kinkel’s exilic narrative but also can be seen in Kinkel’s life prior to exile in London. Viewing exile metaphorically in relation to Kinkel’s pre-displacement years will serve to highlight its preparatory role for her exilic experience.

### B. Kinkel’s Pre-Displacement Years

Kinkel’s pre-displacement years reveal specific instances of an exilic existence that can illuminate her later ability to navigate life in exile. As a young woman who was musically gifted and intellectually astute, she developed character traits in response to the innumerable constraints placed upon women in nineteenth-century Germany as a result of the prescribed gender roles and expectations that had become entrenched within its patriarchal society. The will and fortitude to

cross the boundaries of gender and social norms, the inner strength and resolve to work industriously, the persistence needed to follow artistic pursuits, the determination to overcome setbacks—these traits can all be observed in the years prior to her own family’s displacement and later proved to be useful for coping with life in exile.

Growing up in a Catholic family, obedience to those in authority—particularly to one’s parents and the Church—was strongly indoctrinated in Kinkel. But upon reaching maturity she expressed doubt regarding the Church’s teachings. As she explains in a letter to a friend, however, “as my belief in the infallibility of an external authority diminished, the (well-intentioned) tyranny of my parents increased” (qtd. in Whittle 98).<sup>10</sup> Even though there is a natural tendency for an individual to view the boundaries that define “home” as being safe enclosures Said argues that “borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons” (185). While Said is referring to the exile’s native homeland, this can be equally applicable on the much smaller scale of familial space as in the case of Kinkel. In an attempt to escape parental authority, in 1832 Kinkel chose to marry Johann Paul Matthieux, a man from Cologne who met with her parent’s approval. The marriage was short-lived on account of Kinkel discovering the duplicity of her husband’s character. Publicly he operated under a pretense of piety; privately he was emotionally and mentally abusive. Physically ill and psychologically traumatized, Kinkel returned to her parents’ home after only six months. The space in which she had formerly felt imprisoned now became her refuge, and she sought a divorce from Matthieux (eventually finalized in 1840). Kinkel’s willingness to cross the boundaries of nineteenth-century social norms and expectations in spite of the possible

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<sup>10</sup> Translation mine. German: “wie mein Glauben an die Unfehlbarkeit fremder Autorität sich verminderte, wuchs die (wohlgemeinte) Tyrannei der Erziehenden.” Unfortunately, Whittle does not indicate the date of this letter nor to whom specifically it was written.

consequences for her social reputation becomes obvious from the following statement: “My marriage is the story of thousands of women and the requisite outcome of our social status. Countless women perish from similar circumstances, meanwhile out of an entire generation there is hardly one woman who has the courage to break free and save her better self” (qtd. in Ervedosa 333).<sup>11</sup> While she recovered both physically and emotionally in the familiar surroundings of home, Kinkel again felt the burden of parental constraint and realized the limitations of small-town Bonn in offering opportunities to advance her creative talents.

Kinkel decided to move to Berlin in 1836 in order to pursue her musical studies in earnest, marking the beginning of a three-year period of voluntary exile. This self-imposed exile was not only motivated by lack of opportunity, but can also be seen as an externalized form of internal protest against the gender restrictions in nineteenth-century patriarchal society. Her time in Berlin proved to be her most productive musically and, with entry to the foremost salons and homes, also her most intellectually stimulating. Crossing the boundaries of familiarity, in terms of both geography and family, allowed Kinkel’s compositional talent to flourish, as it was during this time that she composed her first lieder, “the form in which she made her greatest contribution to German romantic music” (Siegel, “Johanna Kinkel (1810–1858)” 32).

In the hope of finalizing her divorce from Matthieux, Kinkel returned to Bonn with every intention of going back to Berlin once the legal matter had been settled. Matthieux, however, was not immediately willing to cooperate, and thus “her hopes to return to the place where she felt she belonged faded” (Whittle 100). Nevertheless, fate intervened, and while in Bonn she met Gottfried Kinkel. Over time, through a mutual interest in literature, their relationship took a more romantic turn. Again, circumstances crossed the boundaries of convention and posed a serious

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<sup>11</sup> Translation mine. German: “Meine Heirat ist die Geschichte von tausenden meiner Schwestern und das notwendige Resultat unserer sozialen Zustände. Unzählige Frauen gehen an ähnlichen Verhältnissen zu Grunde, indes von einer ganzen Generation kaum eine den Mut hat, sich loszureißen, und ihr besseres Selbst zu retten.”

threat to their social status, since she was a Catholic and still married, while he was a Protestant and engaged to Sophie Bögehold, his sister's sister-in-law. As a result of their relationship, Gottfried Kinkel later lost his position at the Theological Faculty of Bonn University, and both he and Johanna became estranged from friends, while many of Johanna's music students abandoned her as a teacher (Whittle 100). Once more, Kinkel's willingness to cross the borders of social acceptability becomes apparent, since she continued her relationship with her future husband in spite of its negative consequences and thus became a social outcast. Living as a social exile is an internal variation of the usual context of exile, for one's sense of identity in belonging to a place is also severed, not in the sense of the geographical space, but rather the social space. While external geographic exile is often a result of war or broad political and ideological differences, social exile occurs under the application of a particular group's value judgments, that is, more discrete points of ideology, which in turn are based on socially constructed rules and expected forms of behaviour.

This synopsis of Kinkel's life prior to her years of displacement in London has highlighted semi-metaphorical variations on the condition of exile that had both a negative and a positive impact. These variations by no means minimize the displacement that Kinkel was still to experience. Rather, these various experiences of internal exile played a preparatory role in shaping Kinkel's later ability to process loss in geographical displacement.

### C. The Representation of Exile and Translatory

#### Acts in Kinkel's Exilic Narrative

Although the title and core of the narrative pertain to Hans Ibeles, much of the text is concerned with his wife Dorothea and several other female characters. As mentioned, Kinkel's narrative

contains autobiographical elements, and in shaping her two main characters Kinkel has fragmented her own actual life—that is, on the one hand her life as a wife and mother and on the other as a musical artist—into the wife and husband of her narrative. While her portrayal of Dorothea and Hans Ibeles fictionalizes her relationship to her husband Gottfried, it also reflects her own personal combination as conventional woman and musician. Rachel McNicholl proposes that this strategy is Kinkel’s attempt to “resolv[e] the conflicts and dilemmas she experienced herself by fictionalising them as a conflict between the ‘man’s’ world and the responsibilities of earning money and selling his art and artistic pride and the ‘woman’s’ world of domestic and emotional responsibilities and sacrifices” (231). Thus, Kinkel expresses in Dorothea and Hans not only the struggle that she and Gottfried endured, but also her own personal struggle to preserve and reconcile her aspirations as a professional musician with her obligations as a wife and mother.

Hans is a former composer who became politically engaged in the 1848 uprisings in Germany and as a result of their failure was forced to flee with his wife and seven children to London. Dorothea is the daughter of an aristocrat, and she has willingly married beneath her station in the pursuit of love rather than entering into an arranged marriage of convenience. The novel begins with the arrival of the exiled family at their rented home in London and proceeds to give the readers insight into the initial stress of setting up their new household in a foreign country. Kinkel then highlights the innumerable difficulties the family encounters as a consequence of their displacement. Language barriers, different cultural codes, illness, conflict with the English class system, the difficulty of finding employment, and the resulting financial burdens are just a sampling of the challenges that the exiles encounter. Hans eventually finds employment as a piano teacher and lecturer but becomes more and more disheartened with the

unrelenting drudgery of his unsatisfying career and home life. Drawn to the salon of the Countess Blafoska, a Polish exile, he enjoys there the attention accorded him as a celebrated political figure and musician. While he is able to ward off the countess's romantic overtures, his resolve becomes considerably weakened upon meeting Livia at the countess's salon. In his naïveté, Hans is unaware that this woman has taken on a false identity and in reality is none other than the notorious Lora O'Nalley, who was tried but acquitted for the murder of her husband. Most members of English society, however, still suspect her of murder, and as a result she has faked her own suicide, disguised herself as a liberated American slave, and gone in search of a man trusting enough to offer her protection. Dorothea's husband seems to meet the requirements perfectly. Nonetheless, Livia has not reckoned with the likes of Dorothea, a self-confident woman who understands precisely how to handle the situation in order to turn matters to her advantage. Ultimately, the novel concludes with Hans kneeling at Dorothea's feet in repentance, a move with which Kinkel subverts nineteenth-century gender roles and ideology, and the couple is reconciled, presenting the reader with the message that love triumphs in the end.

Woven into this core narrative is Kinkel's portrayal of the various female characters to instruct her target audience—presumed to be female and occasionally even addressed as such by the narrator. These portrayals caution those readers “against the superficialities of life, against role-playing and the frittering away of time in dilettantish, shallow pursuits, and correspondingly” make “a plea for the meaningful development of one's potential, whatever it may be” (Boetcher Joeres 189). Dorothea embodies this theme perfectly and is depicted in stark contrast to the countess and Livia, as well as to the ladies of the aristocracy, and she is ultimately intended as an ideal role model for women in the nineteenth century. In addition, Kinkel addresses and, in part, reconciles the expected demands placed on the nineteenth-century wife

and mother living in exile with the various resultant internal conflicts. Her own attempts at reconciling her roles of wife and mother with her creative side proved less successful in real life.

Similarly, the narrative's ending is likely Kinkel's projection of how she would have liked her life in exile ultimately to have transpired, for reality proved otherwise. A letter sent by Gottfried to Johanna Kinkel, dated 17 December 1856, alludes to his infidelity and subsequent plea for reconciliation (Whittle 109). Whether their relationship was ever fully restored is unknown. Furthermore, the character traits that Kinkel developed early on in her life were not entirely sufficient to help her overcome the hardships of living in exile. The struggle to keep the family financially afloat—a situation resulting from her husband's often obligatory attention to the political matters of the German Democratic Exile Party (Whittle and Pinfold 167) and its exiled proponents—combined with other burdens inherent to this existence left her with little time to devote to her musical and literary talents. Kinkel voiced the following complaint in a letter to Fanny Lewald: “These days and hours add up to a burden that is destroying my life. I have been buried alive with all of my talents, and remain only an instrument of duty” (qtd. in Whittle 106).<sup>12</sup> Ironically, it was Kinkel's deteriorating health and consequent inability to continue with her multiple responsibilities as wife and mother that afforded her the time she needed to write. According to Ashton, Gottfried Kinkel recorded in his diary that Johanna had completed her novel on 10 November 1858, but only five days later he wrote: ““At twelve minutes past two the horror happened”” (qtd. in *Little Germany* 199). The verdict of the coroner states that Johanna Kinkel died an accidental death as a result of falling from an open second-storey window in her attempt to get air.

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<sup>12</sup> Translation mine. German: “Diese Tage und Stunden summieren sich zu einer Last, die meine Existenz vernichtet. Ich bin mit allen meinen Talenten lebendig begraben, nur noch eine Pflichtmaschine.” Whittle does not provide the date of the letter.



While an early death was the final reality for Kinkel in exile, survival is the overarching theme in her novel. Having crossed geographical borders and barriers, she portrays the state of many German exiles arriving on England's shores:

Every wave that crashed against the English coast since 1848 washed ashore some form of disappointed hope or humiliated self-esteem. Those left at sea by the shipwreck of continental politics either fell onto the drifting sand where they decayed like disgorged seaweed or they were bruised and battered, left bloody and angry on the hard bed of pebbles. Few scaled the embankment of the chalk cliff by which one finds the way onto verdant land. (Translation 79; Original 16)

Kinkel paints a grim picture: many refugees sank into the quicksand of unemployment, poverty, and hunger and subsequently perished—physically or psychologically—their lives amounting to nothing, while others (among them many of the revolutionaries and political exiles), bitter and angry at their own country's betrayal, made no effort to establish a life in exile since they were certain of a quick resolution and subsequent return to their homeland. Kinkel, however, alludes to only one possibility for survival, namely that only the few who choose to face the hardship—captured in the metaphor of scaling the famous white chalk cliffs of southeast England—can hope not only to survive, but to flourish in the land of exile. This group, to which the Ibeles family belongs, met situations in which boundaries such as language, cultural codes, and the English class system were to be overcome, though class boundaries could never be crossed, since the exile would not belong to any identifiable English class and therefore would be forced to live on the periphery, exemplifying exilic *otherness*. The nineteenth-century German writer Theodor Fontane, who spent several years in England after 1848, also observed this cultural difference between Germany and Britain regarding the system of social class: “We have no political

democracy, but rather a social democracy. We have classes, but not a Chinese caste system like the English. We have barriers, but not a deep divide” (qtd. in Ashton, “Search for Liberty” 198).<sup>13</sup> While the newly-exiled did not have the benefit of political liberty in their homeland, they quickly came into contact with a deeply entrenched and impenetrable class system in the host nation.

An exilic existence lived on the periphery was the plight especially of German governesses employed in the homes of the British aristocracy, a subject to which Kinkel devotes a chapter in her narrative. For an exiled and unmarried governess living in nineteenth-century London such as the character of Meta Braun, exile often entailed living on the margins, being forced to change former habits and acquire and practice new social norms or risk humiliation, subversion, misery, or even dismissal and poverty. According to Ashton, Malwida von Meysenbug, upon whom the character of Meta was supposedly based, “described the role of governess in English households as that of a social ‘polyp’” (*Little Germany* 206) and as “something between master and servant, with limited social consideration, the narrowest horizon of pleasures and recreation, and an immoderately long list of tasks and duties” (qtd. in Ashton, *Little Germany* 206). In the character of the independently minded Meta, Kinkel introduces the sole character in her narrative exemplifying an emancipated woman attempting to exercise a certain degree of autonomy in exile, often with disastrous results. In one such instance Meta tells of being dismissed from her position but being left at a loss as to exactly why she was considered deficient. Only much later and from a third party does Meta discover the reasons, which she relates as follows:

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<sup>13</sup> Translation mine. German: “Wir haben keine politische Demokratie aber eine sociale. Wir haben Klassen, aber keinen english-chinesischen Kastengeist; wir haben Schranken aber keine Kluft” (qtd. in Ashton, “Search for Liberty” 198).

I had held the fork in my right hand, had touched the fish with a knife, had heartily bit into some buttered bread instead of tearing off a little piece, I had eaten a fig without bothering to cut it up on the desert plate using a knife and fork, and one time, when the servant, whose hands were full, allowed a large strawberry to fall from an overladen plate, I quickly bent down to pick it up so that he would not squash it into the carpet. These along with a host of other things that had unknowingly signalled my disparity in dress, deportment, and manners from the English women, were seen as offensive, and caused others to conclude that I could not possibly be the daughter of a gentleman. (Kinkel, Translation 229; Original 151)

Kinkel presents Meta's experience in a humorous, light-hearted manner, all the while indicating to her readership the deep social prejudice of the English. In addition, "education" for the daughters of the English upper classes was still comprised far more of lessons in music, drawing, dancing, and deportment designed to attract an eligible suitor. This caused Meta to be considered a less than suitable applicant. As well as the foreign social constraints, religious prejudice also came into play in the selection of a governess. Any deviation from Protestantism was immediately rejected. In essence, the German governess was forced to live her exile life in the interstices of the English social structure, thus suffering from a sense of isolation, as she is continually perceived as "other" by both servant and master.

With the introduction of the minor character Madame Gerhard, a once renowned singer in her homeland, who upon her marriage relinquishes her career at the urging of her husband's wealthy aunt, Kinkel depicts another example of the plight of the artist in exile. Madame Gerhard now ekes out a meagre income as a seamstress, and the extent of the psychological effects are exemplified by despondency, depression, melancholy, hopelessness, and bitterness.

She mentions having had sufficient contact in the first few months of the foreign life and with the “other” to produce her resigned mental state (Kinkel, Translation 142; Original 72). With the loss of her status as a singer she chooses not to salvage her lost career in the host nation, in part because she cannot resign herself to a reduced status in the exiled space and to utilizing her talent with only a limited audience, also because her husband believes that their exile will be short lived. The latter argument is based on the expectation held by many political exiles in the aftermath of the events of 1848. They viewed their exiled state as temporary and the space of exile as a “waiting-room.” This waiting reveals that “the exile’s whole being is concentrated on the land he left behind, in memories and hopes” (McCarthy 49). They spent their days in idle conversation at clubs, in salons, or in the homes of other exiles “bemoaning the failed revolution,” strategizing renewed efforts to achieve their political goals, waiting for changes in the political climate in the homeland that would signal a safe return, and hence refusing to find employment to provide for their families.

Madame Gerhard also refers to the dilemma of so many nineteenth-century musicians in exile. Certain lifestyle prerequisites are necessary in order for an artist to function and earn a living in the public sphere, especially in nineteenth-century London society. Not only must Madame Gerhard have a piano, she must also possess an appropriate wardrobe, and employ servants in order to receive society in a respectable dwelling-place, all of which require a great amount of initial capital that the exile does not possess. Marriage and the subsequent life in exile have served to realize a “violation of her former independence as an individual” (Siegel, “Johanna Kinkel’s *Chopin als Komponist* 123).

In the portrayal of Hans, Kinkel shows the male musician forced to come to grips with the loss of the social and professional prestige he enjoyed as a composer and conductor in his

homeland and, by contrast, the professional marginalization he encounters in exile. In London “musical life is stratified and dictated by fashion and commerce” (Howe 7). Thus, in nineteenth-century English society, where music is judged as either an accomplishment or “a social ornament that reflects or raises status” (Howe 7), Hans Ibeles quickly encounters limited options to pursue his career. Forced to meet his family’s financial needs, he must resort to teaching music privately and in a ladies college. Kinkel expounds further on the status of the musician, depicting the English lack of appreciation for the musician and for their overall lack of musicality. For the exiled musician it becomes apparent that relying on or expecting familiar cultural values to be present in the space of the “other” proves futile for “*nothing* is secure” (Said 141) in exile.

The exiles’ alterity and otherness is portrayed even in the opening chapter from the perspective of their English neighbours. Upon the arrival of Hans, Dorothea, and their seven children, their neighbours, Mrs. Beak and her two daughters, Harriet and Lucy, remain behind closed doors, gazing out the window at the new arrivals. In response to the “strange” appearance of the new arrivals Lucy immediately remarks that they must be “foreigners,” whereupon all three heave a deep sigh. It is immediately apparent that they view their world from a perspective that, at best, merely tolerates difference. If the Ibeles family had not been accompanied by a woman whom Mrs. Beak perceived to be a respectable English lady, she would have “feared [her] new neighbours to be gypsies” (Kinkel, Translation 68; Original 7). Mrs. Beak’s remark signals the potential for an immediate categorization of the “other” and an accompanying judgment of inferiority with respect to social class. Any deviation from the social norms is seen as alien. The next morning Dorothea sends her two oldest sons, who have acquired some English, to ask their neighbours for directions to the nearest market. Mrs. Beak is again at her

window behind closed curtains in order to observe the “mysterious strangers” (Kinkel, Translation 75; Original 13) and becomes alarmed when she realizes the young boys are approaching her house. Calling out to her daughters she orders them to instruct the maid to fasten the chain in the lock before opening the door. This humorous depiction exposes the absurdity of how the “other” is automatically perceived with suspicion.

In spite of being geographically displaced, it is natural for the exile to attempt to organize everyday life around the familiar, the known. Yet Dorothea quickly realizes the difficulties of trying to order her life according to the familiar cultural practices of the past. The nineteenth-century English function within a rigid class structure, which in turn dictates fixed cultural practices and norms. In order to live in the space of displacement, the exile has no choice but to reorient him- or herself to the cultural norms and practices of the host nation and make a decision as to which familiar practices are to be forsaken and which might be salvaged. While Dorothea has no choice but to reorient much of her own life in order to function within the new space, she resolves to educate her children in their homeland’s culture and literature so that they do not suffer a complete loss of their language and heritage while residing in the exilic culture. The narrator explains as follows:

Her depiction of the life and customs of their homeland kept the love for their country alive, and even more powerful than a mother’s word were the thousand voices of German writers and musicians who came flowing in from across the sea. From every song the breath of the eternally faithful mother Germania came wafting warm to her young and far-off children. (Kinkel, Translation 350; Original 261)

Cut off from her roots and her country Dorothea desires to nourish her memories and create a bond in her children with their homeland and in doing so attempts to instill in them a sense of

national pride. However, in keeping these memories alive she herself is unconsciously also fostering a sense of loss and subsequently also a continuing sense of alterity within the host nation.

Living in exile means living as “other” in *another*’s space. While first impressions of the foreign space elicit positive comments from Dorothea, this reflects in part the initial euphoria of Hans having been freed from imprisonment. Based on her first impressions Dorothea is also quick to draw a comparison between the space and her homeland and thus criticize her fellow citizens regarding the outcome of the 1848 uprisings. “[P]eople everywhere were actively engaged in their work, as if it were all so easy—for I saw no hectic rushing about, only a calm use of strength—I thought to myself: “See, that is how our homeland could look if our dear fellow countrymen, instead of being so idealistic, would tackle things a little more practically” (Kinkel, Translation 72; Original 11). The composer and musician Hans, however, views the space of exile less enthusiastically, having quickly become aware of the “unrelenting hustle and bustle” (Kinkel, Translation 73, Original 11) and the inherent cosmopolitanism of London, which he compares negatively to the places of his “Heimat.” According to Marc Robinson, “[a] private moment of remembering a favourite site back home, [...] can resonate in political, historical, psychological, and artistic chambers”; this raises a host of questions, such as: “Where will you place your loyalties? What will inspire you? In what culture will you participate?” (xv–xxi). For Hans a nostalgic memory of serenity and creativity, stimulated by a mental image of the Rhine’s peaceful green banks, becomes so visually real to him that he feels enraptured and carried back. But as rapidly as the vision appears it fades, and he finds himself again in the physical space of the other. His positive memory of “Heimat” reinforces both the difference between the otherness of the space of exile and the comforting familiarity of the original home,

as well as the full extent of the loss that has occurred and caused him to question whether an artist can create in this foreign, frenetic space. As a result, the exile mentally constructs the new physical space as one other than home, a space where one feels the full weight of estrangement and marginalization that comes with forced dislocation. In other words, to a certain extent, the exile personally constructs the alterity of the other space. Only with the decision to reflect on and accept the loss that accompanies the exile to the land of displacement, and to appreciate alterity, whether in terms of topography, culture, or language, can the slow process leading to acculturation begin.

The light in which exiles regard their new existence can have a direct correlation to their ability to construct a new sense of home, which “has the connotations of a nest, a shelter, a repository of memory and of dreams” (Howe 4) and conjures up a familial sense of intimacy and privacy. Dorothea, having crossed geographical borders to freedom, immediately places the task of making a *home* before all others. For the exiles, as depicted in the narrative, the initial months in a new space are particularly stressful, for they are confronted with the foreignness of chaotic London. Focusing on home is an attempt to impose some sense of order “inside” to compensate for the chaos of “outside.” Dorothea is well acquainted with functioning in the private sphere and therefore soon engages in all its tasks, acting not just according to the previous patriarchal assumptions, but also more specifically out of a basic sense of survival. By setting up a home, Dorothea hopes to create a safe enclosure intended to provide a private space of stability and familiarity in an otherwise foreign place where the exiles must fend for themselves. She tries to create a familiar semblance of home by attempting to preserve specific cultural features such as German orderliness, the customary discipline of waking early, and “of regulating everything according to how she was accustomed” (Kinkel, Translation 75; Original 13), all with varying



degrees of success. Nevertheless, she is unprepared for the constant swarm of unknown German refugees arriving at her doorstep in expectation of financial aid, assistance in finding employment, or even long-term shelter, all the while she and Hans are living in financial hardship.

In addition, she is ill-prepared for some of the social norms entrenched in Victorian society. One is a particular source of aggravation, namely the practice of making and receiving calls. According to Judith Flanders, writing on domestic life in Victorian England, the maximum length of time for a call was half an hour, although fifteen minutes was considered to be much more polite. If other callers arrived during a current call “it was incumbent on the first visitors to leave shortly thereafter” (Flanders 318). In addition, “[o]nly impersonal conversation was acceptable—light chat that had no possibility of offending anyone” (Flanders 318). Receiving lady visitors for the purpose of idle social conversation or to satisfy English curiosity encroaches on Dorothea’s time and disturbs the domestic order she is trying to maintain. She cannot outrightly defy the expected social norm, so instead she resolves to subvert it as follows.

I cannot be ungracious towards the lady visitors, but instead of furthering the conversation, I intend to cause each topic of conversation to die out. I shall outdo the Mutebell ladies in being dull so that anyone coming to pay us a visit out of sheer curiosity will not deign to come back a second time. (Kinkel, Translation 157; Original 86)

Dorothea’s initial positive impression of London, seen only from an idealistic outsider perspective, also undergoes change as she is now forced to live life in the new foreign space and according to the host society’s social practices. After a day of making calls with Hans she arrives home to deal with an unexpected crisis. The narrator describes her exhausted thought process:

The past rose up in her memory like a light-blue sky, whose boundary they had now crossed into the chaos where all colours, jumbled together, form a colourless dull monotony. In the end, the changing impressions throughout the day left her distinctly conscious of only one thought: “I was not cut out for this way of life. I know how to function within the confined cycle of duties, but I feel lost in the continual interaction of the broad confines of colourful society.” (Kinkel, Translation 156; Original 85)

Struggling with her new life and surroundings, Dorothea undergoes shifts in her outlook, developing revised, critical viewpoints on her new space, looking back nostalgically to old securities. Her initial perception of the manner in which the English collectively function, which Dorothea judged as positive, now shifts to a negative perspective as she herself must function within the foreign space:

Oh, and the feverish haste with which one must run all of one’s errands, given that one cannot have even a quarter of an hour without being disturbed. Where have the summer afternoons gone, where I sat with my work in the clematis arbour and Johannes would stretch out on the grassy area and the children would play round about him? One was not stingy about an hour spent in innocent pleasures. And now all recreation has been taken up with ceremony, and pleasure has become a more difficult scourge than work itself! (Kinkel, Translation 158; Original 87)

Furthermore, the vastness of the new geographical space itself distances individuals from one another and therefore poses another difficulty with respect to establishing important relationships with like-minded individuals who would serve as a mutual system of support in exile. The small provincial German states posed no such obstacle; “neighbourly conviviality” and “close-knit friendships” were a part of the cultural climate (Kinkel, Translation 157; Original 86). But in the

new and foreign space the English convention imposes isolation from one's neighbours (Kinkel, Translation 66; Original 5).

Since Dorothea identifies primarily as a wife and mother, she also places the greatest importance on the preservation of the private familial space as she knew it in the past. In the private space Dorothea strives for autonomy from society. She wants to inject her own familiar order into the private space as a compensatory strategy to alleviate symptoms of loss, shock, and homesickness that inevitably accompany the state of exile and have it function as a retreat from the threatening chaos of life in London. This desire to re-establish familiar order is a search for security. Yet Dorothea has not reckoned with the entrenched English social structure of class, which "influenc[es] daily occupations, routines, social contacts, even the arrangement of space. Dorothea's domestic ideal, derived from her German home, is incompatible" (Howe 7) with this new structure.

Housewife and a lady of the world are two irreconcilable things in London. How often I was on tenterhooks whenever the idle swarm of dressed-up strangers kept me tied to the sofa, leaving me of no use to anyone and in a state of boredom. All the duties that were being left undone weighed heavy on my conscience. With every quarter of an hour that I spent in idle chatter, I saw my household fall into a further state of neglect. The children ran wild and had to be pushed aside because their parents had become fashionable entities in society. (Kinkel, Translation 156; Original 85)

Even though Dorothea manages to "rid her front room of the idle ladies" (Kinkel, Translation 163; Original 92), she is not prepared for the influx of political exiles who, claiming to be democrats, use her home as their meeting place for strategizing and "conspiring among themselves and disdain[ing] to learn English," since they are firmly convinced that their

dislocation is only temporary (Ashton, *Little Germany* 189). The autobiographical origins of this complaint can be traced to a letter Kinkel wrote to a friend on 25 September 1851: “The way we have been plagued by people in the last few days is beyond belief” (qtd. in Diethe 103). Dorothea is also not prepared for the likes of Countess Blafoska, one of the exiles intruding upon her private space, who sees in Hans a potential romantic interlude under the guise of being a candidate to further her own party’s political aims. In time, the private space constructed to be the domain of the nineteenth-century woman becomes usurped by one of her own, and Dorothea’s private space is threatened by the presence of political revolutionaries. Instead of establishing boundaries to protect her private domain from these intruders she retreats to the confines of the kitchen, the least regarded space of the home in Victorian London (Flanders 101), indicating her declining control over her own space. Meanwhile, the countess acts as hostess for the exiles including Hans. At times he even vacates the private space altogether, but all to no avail. His absence does not deter these visits and impositions. “With the fraternal atmosphere that at that time united all the comrades of the great shipwreck, the friends saw nothing presumptuous in ordering Katrinchen to prepare their tea if Dorothea was absent” (Kinkel, Translation 164; Original 92). This continual invasion drastically drains the family’s already meagre financial resources, even with the (by German standards) generous aid sent by Uncle v. Halen, which covers only the family’s basic necessities. While the shared spaces of exile—taverns, inns, reading rooms— should have been the predominant spaces to convene and to “create and maintain a sense of community” (Tóth 170), the Ibeles family’s private domestic space functions as the collective shared space. The networks that should have provided the support of those sharing a common cultural background contribute instead to financial hardship and marital strife. In their stead a small, often anonymous network from the circles of the English

“other” seeks to provide aid to the Ibeles family, yet these efforts encroach on the couple’s independence and pride, a further humiliating effect of exile.

The Ibeles’s inability to establish strict personal boundaries in order to maintain their private familial space stems from a compensatory compulsion. Dorothea feels “ensnared [...] in a net of favours” from the countess “that at first were so inconspicuous that it would have been priggish of [Dorothea] to refuse her.” And as for Hans: “little by little [the countess] turned him from a friend into a confidant (Kinkel, Translation 187; Original 112). In addition, Hans and Dorothea feel obliged to repay their German compatriots and fellow members of the Democratic Party for Hans’s freedom, since many individuals had rallied and protested for his release from imprisonment or risked their lives to assist in his escape. As a result, the couple finds it difficult to determine the point at which their—real or imagined—obligation ceases and their new lives may continue without attachment. The couple’s eventual efforts to set a boundary between their private space and their apparent public obligation results in many of their so-called friends and self-proclaimed supporters abandoning them out of anger or apathy, since Hans’s usefulness for their own political purposes has diminished. Because these former friends operate according to a polarized us-or-them world view, Hans and Dorothea become further marginalized by many of their own compatriots.

Mediation and interpretation become important translatory acts for navigating and negotiating in the space of exile, especially in the initial stages. Upon arrival the exile lives in a state of isolation and alienation, having been separated from an extended family, prior friends, and social circle and community. In order to move about in the exiled space, one is forced to self-mediate in the inevitable intercultural encounters and also to self-interpret cultural codes and norms. Yet Hans and Dorothea show themselves to be unsuccessful self-mediators and self-

interpreters when attempting to pay their first return visits, a social requirement for establishing valuable connections and critical for the exile seeking employment. Hans makes his request for transportation to the cab man as follows: “Mister, will you be so good to far us upon the Queen’s Street, by Mr. Mutebell, in the house Nr. 3,” to which the cab man reacts by turning to another and saying: “This gentleman speaks French, I cannot understand him” (Kinkel, Translation 122; Original 55). Dorothea misinterprets both the cab man’s mocking response and some information regarding the “lower classes” that had previously been given to her by Mrs. Busy, and as a result she incorrectly concludes: “that the lower classes in London do not understand written English very well, which is what educated foreigners speak, and therefore it is necessary to use as few words as possible” (Kinkel, Translation 122; Original 55).

Instead of being driven to a residence in keeping with Mr. Mutebell’s status, they are astonished to arrive at a decrepit house in a visibly impoverished district. With great difficulty the couple are eventually able to discern from their driver that there are twenty-five streets in London called Queen’s Street; they also deduce he had knowingly taken full advantage of their ignorance and poor language skills to earn double the fare. Nothing instills a “stronger sense of Us versus Them than mutual linguistic incomprehension” (Bassnett, *Reflections on Translation* 21), and consequently Hans and Dorothea learn first-hand of the importance of an interpreter and intercultural mediator who not only bridges the language divide for the couple in the initial points of contact with an “other,” but also accurately interprets English cultural conventions and social norms. As a result Mrs Busy is called upon to mediate and interpret when necessary.

The exile’s dilemma with acculturating or remaining foreign finds an analogy in the question within translation studies of foreignization versus domestication. These are ideological approaches in which the translator seeks either to highlight or to greatly minimize linguistic and

cultural differences for the target-text reader. I suggest that the translator's decision to foreignize or domesticate corresponds to the exile's decision to acculturate (domesticate), thereby greatly minimizing many of the foreign elements related to the culture left behind, or to continue to live as the "other" in *another's* land (foreignize). As research in the field of intercultural communication shows (Bennett; Gudykunst and Kim), acculturation does not occur as the result of a single decision, carried out instantaneously, but rather involves various identifiable stages that each contribute to processing loss. Milton Bennett identifies the initial three stages of denial, defence, and minimization—each sub-categorized into individual steps such as isolation and separation—as being necessary in order to reach the later three stages of acceptance, adaptation, and integration (29). In Kinkel's narrative, isolation and separation, the defence of the longed-for place from which she has been separated and the attempts to maintain familiar cultural habits are all clearly identifiable. However, as time passes Dorothea finds that in the last instance she is fighting a losing battle. As the narrator explains:

[W]oe to the German housewife who wants to maintain German arrangements and customs in this country, where everyday life is founded on rigid customs! She will remain in an eternal, futile war with the Londoners' way of life, whose rules are as rigid as if they had been passed as parliamentary laws. (Kinkel, Translation 74; Original 12–13)

Thus, steps toward acculturation or domestication are alluded to as resting upon the demands intrinsic to the culture of the host. Since it is vital for the well-being of the entire family that Hans finds employment, a circumstance greatly dependent upon social connections, Dorothea is also drawn into the equation. Her identity is based on her husband's love for her. She is thus compelled to do anything that promotes his success and personal sense of well-being in the land

of exile. Here, Kinkel depicts how individual human agency was extremely limited for the nineteenth-century woman. Furthermore, the process toward full acculturation is also not achieved, let alone desired, in the novel. While intercultural communication and transcultural awareness do occur, adaptation is engaged in primarily just to survive in the space of the host. But the borders between cultures are preferably kept intact. Thus, Kinkel portrays life for the major characters in exile as a living space in the interstices between acculturation or domestication and alienation or foreignization. However, Kinkel does hint at the potential for assimilation regarding the next generation, exemplified by the family's two oldest sons. In chapter seventeen, she characterizes the Ibeles' children and reveals an illuminating incident alluding to the process by which the two oldest boys become assimilated into the host nation. Hans has been giving them piano lessons in the hope that they will continue in his career footsteps, and he is particularly aggravated in their lackluster playing. In anger he exclaims: "If this continues then you can never become musicians!" (Kinkel, Translation 326; Original 239). He is unprepared for their response. Both reveal that they would rather pursue different occupations, a change of heart arising from their experiences in the host nation's educational system. It is revealed that their peers, the foreign "others," had ridiculed the two sons for wanting to become musicians with the explanation that it was improper for a gentleman to aspire to be a musician (Kinkel, Translation 325; Original 238–39). Again, Kinkel critically reveals the class consciousness of the English and the resultant status of the musician. Hans, after some thought and deliberation, concedes, since the English view music only on a superficial level, whereas in the German homeland music is seen to have the ability to move soul and spirit. Kinkel depicts the two Ibeles sons achieving success as apprentices in a large English industrial firm (Kinkel, Translation 328; Original 241) and thus indicates the process toward acculturation and



assimilation taking place. The two Ibeles sons have accepted the host nation's class prejudice toward the occupation of musician and have adapted instead to the options available and considered appropriate according to the cultural and social constructs of the host nation.

Exile revolves around the journey, the sojourn, and the hope of return. In her narrative, apart from the few chapters that look back to the journey, Kinkel focuses almost entirely on the sojourn. While numerous exiles in her representation succumb to the psychological effects of loss during their time in the exilic space, Kinkel portrays Dorothea in a different light, as having a different mindset, reflecting Nico Israel's suggestion that the word exile has also "accrued a positive resonance [...] bespeaking a sense of tenacity, resistance, and preservation of faith during the worst of circumstances" (2). In spite of all the variant hardships accompanying the exiled state Dorothea applies a steadfast focus on establishing a new life for herself and her family in exile. She resists the hopelessness and subsequent sense of helplessness that Madame Gerhard succumbs to and spurns not only the actions of those exiles who fritter away their time on shallow and meaningless pursuits, but also those of the political exiles who refuse to support themselves financially and instead rely on other exiles for financial aid. Dorothea tenaciously soldiers on in the space of the "other" in spite of disappointments and setbacks, throwing herself into her domestic duties for she "had always viewed work as being the only thing that could save a person from intellectual and physical impoverishment (Kinkel, Translation 265; Original 185). And finally, in spite of the potential threat to her marriage, she does not surrender her dignity during the worst of personal circumstances as another woman might, but remains strong and even distant from her husband, triumphing at the novel's conclusion.

As a nineteenth-century woman writer in exile, Kinkel crossed physical, linguistic, and cultural borders and engaged in various translatory acts, both in her life and in her semi-

autobiographical exilic novel. In addition, she had to negotiate the culturally constructed boundaries restricting every nineteenth-century woman. She was to personally experience the after-effects when at odds with accepted social norms, exemplified in her divorce and second marriage, which defied prevailing expectations of proper conduct for a woman. Yet Kinkel still managed to bridge the gap between familial and societal demands and the needs of her creative self by writing her exilic narrative. With her semi-autobiographical novel, Kinkel imagined a specific literary space for herself in which to process her thoughts and feelings about the reality of displacement and loss yet in spite of some of her personally realized emancipatory efforts, one can perceive only subtle allusions to emancipatory representations in Kinkel's narrative. However, this position of adhering in their works to the gender and social constrictions was not untypical for most women writers of the nineteenth century. As Catherine Stimpson writes in her Foreword to Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres's *Respectability and Deviance* (1998), "even the most deviant of women writers felt the need to represent themselves as at least capable of respectability and decorum" (xvi). This resulted in an often ambiguous literary stance on women's issues on account of the constant tension between the external societal and familial demands of respectability and the internal emancipated self. Therefore it is not surprising that women's writing, Kinkel's included, is "replete with ambiguities, contradictions between endorsements of authority and resistance to it, transgressions against order and reassertions of it, subtle strategies, complexities, and caution" (Stimpson xvi). Among Kinkel's many themes revolving around women's issues—including motherhood, education, women's rights, emancipation—she does introduce and endorse a version of marriage, relatively new to the nineteenth century, in the form of a marriage based on love, and she discredits the traditional construct of a marriage of convenience. In addition she has also sought to address nineteenth-

century political and general social and cultural issues in the original space as well as the exiled space. As Said has stated: “while most people are aware of one culture, one home, or one setting, exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is *contrapuntal*” (148). Ironically, it is this novel about exile, written in exile, in isolation and obscurity, for which Kinkell is now best known at home and abroad.

### III. Notes and Reflections on the Translation of *Hans Ibeles in London*

This translation is based on the edition of Kinkel's 1860 novel published by Ulrike Helmer in 1991. In concluding her afterword, Helmer states that only the work's orthography and typography have been updated to correspond to modern expectations in order to ease readability (401). Her edition is admirably successful in making this transition. Only one undetected error in transcription might confuse German and English readers alike, namely in the title of the eighteenth chapter, where the original's "Albion" is erroneously rendered as "Albino." Another, clearly intentional but unexplained deviation from the original might be seen in the subtitle, and it invites worthwhile reflection. The original's subtitle, *Ein Familienbild aus dem Flüchtlingsleben*, which would be closely translated as *A Family Portrait of Refugee Life*, is altered in Helmer's edition as *Ein Roman aus dem Flüchtlingsleben*, which would translate as *A Novel of the Refugee Life*. An explanation for the revised translation of the title might be hinted at in the first paragraph of Helmer's afterword. She contends that Kinkel's *Hans Ibeles in London* bears much more of a resemblance to an adventure story than simply a portrait of a family living in exile, because as Helmer argues, Kinkel's work encapsulates aspects of contemporary and social history, essays on personal ethics, morals, and culture, music pedagogy, accounts of the 1848 revolution, and even espionage, in addition to portrayals of various female figures that Kinkel depicts as examples in instructing her female readership (384). Considering the scope of the subject matter I suspect that Helmer's decision to amend the subtitle from "family portrait" to "novel" was based on this criterion, in that her text, in addition to having a strong "epic" component by dint of its portrayals of a family's development in response to

historical events, also incorporates several other narrative strands so as to embrace a broad scope of historical events and developments.

The underlying principle in this translation was the resolve to convey as accurately and completely as possible the cultural and historical context of the original text, without major alterations aimed at adapting the work to present-day expectations concerning tone, style, or ideology. Of course, translation is not simply an act of transference with regard to language, but also one of culture. As Lawrence Venuti notes, referencing Antoine Berman, “good translation shows respect for the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by developing a ‘correspondence’ that ‘enlarges, amplifies, and enriches the translating language’” (225). Essentially, the act of translation shines a spotlight on difference, and it is the translator’s task to negotiate the linguistic and cultural differences of the original text. In general, this negotiation becomes a balancing act in which the translator must find ways to “highlight the foreignness” (Bassnett, *Reflections on Translation* 17) of the original, while at the same time making certain that the differences do not cause misunderstanding or complete incomprehension for the reader of the translation (Bassnett, *Reflections on Translation* xiii).

A significant amount of debate has occurred between theoreticians and practitioners of translation with regard to Lawrence Venuti’s concern over the invisibility of translations and translators. This invisibility, according to Venuti, is the result of the tendency of translators to translate into English “fluently,” a strategy that corresponds to the demands and desires of the target culture, i.e. publishers, reviewers, and readers. In conjunction with this notion of “invisibility,” and as briefly mentioned earlier Venuti focuses on the two approaches to translation that go hand in hand: “domestication” and “foreignization.” *Domestication* results in a translation that reads so fluently that it gives the appearance “that the translation is not in fact a

translation, but the ‘original’” and, as a result, contributes to the translator’s being recognized or acknowledged (Venuti 1). It seeks to accommodate the target reader by easing any difficulties related to the source text’s foreign flavour. *Foreignization*, on the other hand, is meant to draw attention to the foreignness of the source text by highlighting rather than erasing the foreign author’s unique voice, and by allowing the foreign cultural elements to remain.

There persists the view among translation theorists such as Venuti that literary translation is well-served by a resolve to retain the work’s foreignness and to avoid “domesticating” the work to suit the tastes and conventions of the target culture. It is important to recognize, however, that both of these approaches to translation are, in Venuti’s mind, ideological in essence (lecture). Certain contradictions arise in the foreignizing approach since it is a “subjective and relative term that still involves some domestication because it translates a [source text] for a target culture and depends on dominant target-culture values to become visible when it departs from them” (Munday 148). Simply stated, *all* translation becomes domesticating in that it is an act of appropriation to the target culture.

According to Venuti, one guiding principle for foreignization is itself the choice of work to be translated. Venuti advocates choosing a text that falls outside of the realm of the target culture’s expectations, for example a text or writer that has been denied entry into a literary canon or history or a text by a writer from outside the literary boundaries of conventional ideas and social expectations of the time. Johanna Kinkel and her novel *Hans Ibeles in London* meet both these criteria. Not only was Kinkel marginalized on account of gender, as was the case for many women writers of the nineteenth century, but also for her involvement with and views on political issues through, for example, her editorship of the *Neue Bonner Zeitung*, which represented the views of the Bonn democrats, or her emancipatory efforts to draw attention to the

situation of women, especially with respect to marriage and education. Kinkel was highly regarded as a writer and artist during her time, but as was the fate of so many other women writers of the nineteenth century, she and her literary works later fell into relative obscurity. Thus, translating her novel is an effort to continue to recover and reclaim her status and literary contribution as a nineteenth-century writer.

Since Kinkel wrote her novel in Britain, I have chosen to use British spellings, for example, neighbour rather than neighbor, which, to a Canadian reader might pass unnoticed, but to an American reader would signal a subtle foreign linguistic difference. Place names as well as forms of address have been for the most part retained according to the German with the exception of widely used English versions of German place names such as Brussels, Vienna, and the Rhine in which case the conventional anglicized versions are used. While retaining the German version for these place names would no doubt have added a simple and further foreignizing element to the translation the decision to use the conventional anglicized versions was based on the presupposition that it would be unnecessarily jarring to the target readership.

In the few instances where a reference was ambiguous with no forthcoming clarification in spite of extensive research, I have chosen to retain the ambiguous element and translate directly rather than omitting it from the target text completely, even if it leaves the reader uncertain as to the specific reference. An example of one such mysterious passage occurs in chapter fourteen, where a singular reference is made to a certain “Hanspeter” in Mr. Chapel’s comments about many great men having perished in a shipwreck and Providence having spared only this “Hanspeter” (Kinkel, Translation 283; Original 200). I remain unable to trace the meaning or origins of this reference and passage. The text contains no reference at all to Mr. Chapel being related in any way to a “Hanspeter,” nor could I locate any idiomatic phrase or

maxim using the term. Being unable to consult with the author, I have elected to translate the passage as closely as possible, note my lack of an explanation, and leave English readers as much in the dark as likely are—and were—readers of the German original.

On occasion Kinkel inserts foreign words or phrases, which for the most part I have chosen to retain rather than translate when they do not present difficulty for the target text reader to flesh out the meaning within the given context. In addition: what would be “foreign” to a reader of the German original—a French phrase—should likewise be “foreign” to the reader of the translation. However I did feel it necessary to provide an English translation in a footnote for the example found in chapter twenty-two, in which Kinkel uses the French motto “être tyrannicide n’est pas être assassin” (Translation 405; Original 311). The French term “tyrannicide” presents some difficulty in translation, since the English language lacks a lexical equivalent for the concept of a “person who kills a tyrant,” and French makes a lexical distinction in meaning between “un tyrannicide” and “un assassin,” and therefore the translation required a short paraphrase, rendered as “to kill a tyrant is not to be an assassin.”

The farther apart the source text is from the target reader in time and space, the more likely the translator will be exposed to issues requiring careful consideration. Such is the case with lexical terms that are now considered to be pejorative and therefore socially and culturally unacceptable. In chapter five Kinkel introduces the figure of Mr. Chapel, a politician who purportedly sponsors artist and to whom the Ibeles couple have been given a letter of introduction. In the course of the conversation, while Mr. Chapel is discussing the pitfalls of the abolishment of slavery in the colonies, both he and Ibeles refer to the black slaves as “negroes” (Translation 137; Original 68). While “black” and “African-American” are now considered the socially accepted terms and “negro” has, since the late 1950s, come to be deemed highly



derogatory, representing a sense of subjugation, the nineteenth century realized no issue with the usage of “negro.” I have intentionally chosen to retain this now-perjorative term. While this was a difficult choice as it would conceivably appear jarring to an American readership my decision was based on the premise of providing an accurate reflection of the source text for the target culture reader, therein highlighting the text’s radically different historical, social, and political specificity of the nineteenth century.

While linguistic choices pose but one difficulty in translation, another common concern is the question of whether or not to insert footnotes in a literary translation so as to offer readers some guidance on a variety of matters, for example, historical background, cultural references, or linguistic differences emerging in the original text. Opinions among practitioners of translation vary. While according to Clifford E. Landers some translators, mostly academics, tend to want to convey as much information as possible for the target-language reader and in doing so “uphold scholarly standards of objectivity and comprehensiveness while affording the opportunity for others to verify their work,” others, like Landers himself, view the addition of footnotes as “a warped reflection” of the original literary text (93). Landers suggests that footnotes nullify the mimetic effect defined as “the attempt by (most) fiction writers to create the illusion that the reader is actually witnessing, if not experiencing, the events described” (93). For Landers, footnotes interrupt the flow of reading, “disturbing the continuity by drawing the eye, albeit briefly, away from the text to a piece of information that, however useful, is still a disrupter of the ‘willing suspension of disbelief’” (93). Landers concedes, however, that the decision to insert or eschew footnotes becomes a personal one for the translator and should be based on the primary purpose of the work being translated (94). Since my translation of Kinkel’s novel is intended to also benefit further research, I have chosen to insert footnotes, but have kept them to

a minimum. Among the numerous themes in Kinkel's text, music "provides the backbone of the novel, not in any abstract sense, but as a central practical and professional concern of the protagonists" (Chambers 165). With this in mind, many of the footnotes have been inserted to provide the reader with a brief explanation concerning references to composers and their corresponding works as well as other unfamiliar musical terms. The remainder of the footnotes deal with obscure references to nineteenth-century literary writings, works of art, or they clarify textual or cultural issues in order to provide the reader with pertinent understanding. This type of information does not lend itself well to explicature, the strategy of inserting additional parenthetical words or phrases for clarification. Furthermore, omitting all explanatory measures is not beneficial to the purposes of this translation, since it leaves the readership in the dark concerning background details with regards to the historical and cultural context. In terms of foreignization, the addition of footnotes immediately signals to the reader that s/he is *not* reading an original text, thereby bringing attention to the text as a translation. If I were to prepare this translation for submission to a publisher specializing in academic translation, I would be inclined to propose that footnotes such as those offered here be converted to endnotes, not marked in the translation's text—e.g. with superscript numerals—and offer pertinent information for terms used on specific page/line numbers of the text to readers inclined to interrupt their reading of the text to seek such information. This format has been successfully used in some literary translations (e.g. Hedwig Dohm, *Werde, die du bist*, trans. Elizabeth Ametsbichler).

A variety of grammatical differences between German and English can also pose problems for the translator. For example, many European languages including German have a dimension of formality/informality within their grammatical systems. In German, informality or familiarity is signalled by the use of the second person singular pronoun "du," which is typically

reserved for speaking to relatives, very close friends, and children. Formality or unfamiliarity indicating politeness and distance is signalled by utilizing the third person plural, but capitalized to indicate the formal version “Sie” when conversation takes place in all other situations, especially among adults who are strangers to each other and among colleagues. Since English, by the mid-nineteenth century, had extensively lost this distinction (“thou/thee” versus “Ye”), a decision had to be reached concerning how to address this issue in translation. Every language has particular forms of address that a translator can use to express politeness, for example in English: “Sir,” “Madam,” “Mr./Mrs.” At times and when deemed contextually appropriate I have inserted a proper surname to signal this dimension of formality. However, in most instances no meaningful shifts from “du” to “Sie” occur in the narration or conversation—shifts indicating that one or both parties of a dialogue are signalling a change of their relationship—and therefore no indicator is employed.

“Word play is traditionally defined as a deliberate communicative strategy, or the result thereof, used with a specific semantic or pragmatic effect in mind” (Delabastita 1–2). Translating puns or word play is often very difficult if not impossible to achieve in practice as it produces linguistic problems based on the fact that languages differ in their modes of assigning meaning and form. In addition, word play often has an inherent element of humour attached to it that can be lost in translation. A salient example of the original text’s use of word play occurs in chapter two in which Kinkel describes the development of Dorothea’s and Johannes’s relationship leading up to their marriage and with it puts forward her emancipatory views on marriage. During the early to mid nineteenth century marriage in general was still not based predominantly on a love relationship between a couple. In the novel, however, Kinkel introduces a marriage based on love between Dorothea and Johannes and challenges the social norm, in German

denoted as a “Vernunftehe” (which translates closely as a “marriage of reason” or even a “marriage of good sense”). Although a “marriage of convenience” is considered to be the official English lexical equivalent of the German term, both of these terms suggest an initial and subtle difference in implicit meaning, and this poses a difficulty in translation. The acquired meanings vary between the two languages even though corresponding lexical terms are accepted equivalents. There is an explicit understanding with both terms that this form of marriage is entered into for economic, social, or political reasons resulting in a family or personal advantage. Yet, the German “Vernunftehe” (literally “marriage of reason”) denotes a sense of reason, sanity, prudence, or sensibility alluding to one’s mental faculties. Meanwhile the accepted English equivalent, a “marriage of convenience” denotes a sense of suitability or agreeableness alluding to a strategic purpose or resulting condition. Kinkel employs a play on words with the term “Vernunftehe” in order to add persuasive power to her argument that the only “sane” marriage is the one based on love. Thus the play on words with the German “Vernunftehe” poses difficulty in translation since the English accepted equivalent does not convey the same implicit meaning. Omitting the wordplay altogether is unacceptable, since it is a significant and important textual and contextual component of the portrayal of the Ibeles’ marriage and of the discussion on marriage that Kinkel introduces in this chapter. Ultimately, modification of the wordplay becomes unavoidable, and thus the strategy utilized was to render it into the target language by expanding and interjecting explanatory elements intended to indicate that Kinkel is “punning” in the German source text, although the actual wordplay of the original cannot be literally reproduced.

Idioms, too, can pose difficulties in translation and can vary. The target language might have no equivalent expression, or the target language may have a partial equivalent, but its usage

in context might vary between the two languages. On the other hand, an idiom might be utilized in both its literal and idiomatic sense in the original text, but in the target language it might only be partially equivalent corresponding to only one of these (Baker 69–70). Translation becomes particularly difficult if the target language lacks an equivalent in both form and meaning. However, even prior to the potential for difficulty in terms of translation, there arises the difficulty from an ability/non-ability to recognize that an expression in the source language is actually an idiomatic expression. Some idioms are fairly transparent in their implied meaning by means of contextual clues such as for example the German expression “die Palme des Abends” (Kinkel, Translation 272; Original 191) referring to a *prima donna* singer engaged as part of the evening’s entertainment among London’s aristocracy. Translated literally the English would read “the palm of the evening,” which is an altogether untypical collocation in English, and therefore the English cultural equivalent “the star of the evening” becomes the more accurate choice. Other idiomatic expressions, however, are not as apparent at first glance, and this poses the danger that the translator either fails to notice or misinterprets the idiom. In chapter twenty-two, as guests at the countess’s salon are invited to take their places for the evening’s entertainment of “table-rocking,” the narrator mentions that several guests had to be excluded from the experimental amusement because of the lack of ladies required “um eine bunte Reihe zu bilden” (Kinkel, Translation 406; Original 312). Taken in the literal sense this translates as “to form a colourful row.” However, “eine bunte Reihe” is a German idiomatic phrase to indicate a boy-girl-boy-girl order for being seated at a table, etc. Since there is no equivalent idiom or fixed expression in English the most suitable solution was to utilize an explicatory strategy by inserting “to continue the man-woman seating order.”

Finally, in spite of Venuti's arguments for a "foreignizing" approach to translation it is important to bear in mind that domestication and foreignization are *not* a binary opposition (Venuti, Lecture), but rather they are intended to be "heuristic concepts ... designed to promote thinking and research" (qtd in Munday 148). In essence, "they possess a contingent variability, such that they can only be defined in the specific cultural situation in which a translation is made and works its effects" (qtd in Munday 148). Thus, these terms might "change meaning across time and location" (Munday 148). However, what remains constant for the translator is the decision concerning to what extent the source text in translation will be conformed to the target language and culture and to what extent it will highlight all its distinctive elements of difference from that of the target language and culture.

Keeping the above in mind I have attempted to be less concerned overall as to whether my translation was emerging along Venuti's "foreignizing" lines, which ultimately involves a deliberate insertion of elements to signal difference in the translated text, than whether the source text accurately reflects as much as possible its historical, political, cultural, and social specificity. In other words, I have chosen to orient the translation and therefore the readership to the source text and culture wherever possible without sacrificing readability. In practical terms this has entailed utilizing strategies such as clarification, expansion, and explication rather than substitution of specific source text cultural references, for example, with target culture references or omission, for as Mona Baker states, "readers of translated text in particular are prepared to accept a great deal of change and a view of the world which is radically different from their own, provided they have a reason for doing so and are prepared for it" (254). Translation proper by its very nature involves exposure to elements of strangeness, to that which is foreign. It is therefore important for the translator to be cognizant of the temptation to overindulge in filling all

knowledge gaps for the reader, thereby not only insulting the intelligence of the reader but also leaving him or her with little to do.

While the decision to retain as much as possible the foreign aspects of the source text was at times difficult, since there is a constant push and pull between the readability of the translated work and the desire to illuminate differences, ultimately I have attempted to defer to the author's voice, for in the end, there are but two overarching strategies in translation proper. As the nineteenth-century theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher has so aptly stated: "either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him" (49).

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## Hans Ibeles in London

### A Novel of the Refugee Life

#### Chapter One

#### Setting up House

At the most north-westerly point of that vast territory known as London, there is a district of the city that has a semi-rural quality about it. In between clusters of trees, blooming gardens surround elegant villas, individual streets appear almost as if a clearing had been hewn in the bush, and here and there one might even come across a majestic old oak or beech tree in the middle of the paved road. Field and forest had obviously prevailed here not that long ago, and no doubt the new suburb had been designed with a certain effort to preserve the veteran vegetation. Nevertheless, the undergrowth of the trees was forced to defer to the gardens, and the ancient tree trunks had to come to terms with the walls and iron railings.

The small, narrow homes on one particular side street betrayed the fact that the public that lived here, albeit genteel, nevertheless occupied a very modest rung on the social ladder of this cosmopolitan city. True, the small balconies were supported by pillars, and some generic statue or a pair of vases decorated the little garden. But everything was on a diminutive scale and had the semblance of economy. From this narrow street one arrived through a trellised gate onto a small square planted with trees that had no other exit and in which only four small houses stood in the background. The residents would have had a very pretty promenade and play area for themselves and their children if they had been inclined to use the green square for such purposes. But the English convention of isolating oneself did not allow for this. The little houses stood in pairs opposite each other, and in front of each one, separated by a low iron gate, a few

geraniums, stones, and shells decorated a path that posed as a “garden” and that led to the roadway. Three of the small houses were occupied. The fourth, advertised seemingly forever as, to use the *terminus technicus*, a “very desirable villa,” was available for rent or for purchase as indicated by the plaque hanging on the trellised gate.

This narrow square, minus an exit and able to accommodate only four families, was an exception from the tone of the metropolis in that the inhabitants, even if only surreptitiously, took notice of their neighbours. While they did not greet each other, they did observe each other from their windows and gardens, and a few inquisitive individuals, showing real interest actually went so far as to make enquiries regarding the social standing and names of their fellow inhabitants of Briar Place.

On a warm June morning in 1848, the long unoccupied villa was unlocked by a real-estate agent. A gentleman and two ladies followed him for a tour. That very afternoon they moved in despite the villa’s unfurnished state. Yes, they brought an entire wagon full of children, as many as and arranged in similar order to the pipes of an organ, yet they were accompanied by only one servant girl, who instead of wearing a hat had on a white bonnet of a style never before seen. A cart piled high with wooden crates, bales, and suitcases followed.

Mrs. Beak, the occupant of No. 1 Briar Place, stood at the window and called for her two daughters: “Just look—Harriet, Lucy, really! No. 4 must be let. What a large family! How can they all possibly fit into that little house?” Lucy took the lorgnette and remarked that they must be foreigners, and this observation was accompanied by a deep sigh from all three ladies. Harriet quickly became convinced that the lady who spoke with the draymen must be the English woman who lived in a lovely country house nearby and whom she often met on her walks. However the lady in question seemed to function only as the interpreter, and once the newcomers

along with their luggage were all under one roof, she drove off. Towards evening she appeared once more, at which point a servant handed down from the wagon sundry equipment and provisions to the young foreign girl wearing the outrageous bonnet; the family waved from the door and windows; words of thanks and cheerful laughter rang out, and then the shutters were closed.

“If it had not been for such a respectable English lady bringing these people to Briar Place, I would have feared our new neighbours to be gypsies!” Mrs. Beak exclaimed, as she let her curtains fall.

The two Beak daughters could not speculate enough about how the foreign family could manage, spending the night in an unfurnished house, and because my lady readers are most likely fostering the same curiosity, we shall quietly steal into the locked house and observe the foreigners and their activity with our own eyes.

The head of the house is occupied, aided by several insufficient tools, with breaking open the crates, which fortunately had been very carelessly nailed shut after being inspected in the customs house, otherwise his delicate hand (as white as that of a woman’s) would scarcely have managed. His stature is more small than medium, although very slim and graceful. His face is distinguished, having a high forehead, curved nose, a fine mouth, slightly hollow cheeks, and dark-blue, deep-set eyes. His fair hair is somewhat longer than most men would tolerate, and his beard, which is not currently the fashion in England, follows the natural contours of his lips and chin. Instead of a knee-length jacket he has thrown on a light grey linen smock coat in which he can hammer and unpack unimpeded, assisted by his older children.

The housewife, who is almost as tall and of the same age as her husband—approximately thirty-six, which makes her appear comparatively taller and older—is just in the process of



energetically cutting through the rope tied around the largest of the accompanying bundles with a pocket knife. Her face is well formed without any obvious irregularities, yet not a trace of poetry speaks from her clear, severe features. Her skin is sunburnt, her cheeks are rosy and fresh, and her brown eyes are swift as those of a hawk, flying in every direction and observing what the children are up to, how her husband is getting on with the pliers, and how Katrinchen, the children's maid, is struggling to unknot one of the cords.

“Come here, Katrinchen. I shall cut it,” she calls out to the maid.

“Oh, but madam, such a beaut' of a cord, it's a shame, could my lady wait just 'nother minit', then I'll have the knot undone.”

But the housewife has already cut through with her pocket knife and, to appease the girl, she makes a point of praising her for her good intentions, but adds: “Tonight every second is valuable because the poor children must be put to bed at a reasonable time. We all have to get up early in the morning because by this time tomorrow the house must be completely furnished, and in three days everything must be in perfect order. Quick, here are the children's night clothes. Stuff each child one after the other into them and make haste so that the little ones are in bed before they are half asleep. Give them some of the milk and zwiebach sent by Mrs. Busy.” Katrinchen, a small but robust young girl of fifteen dressed in Rhenish peasant dress does as she is told, and husband and wife carry on with their work until night falls. The more objects they unpack, the more chaotic the rooms appear, for of course the bureaus and wardrobes in which all the stuff is to be housed are lacking. The housewife is aware of the chaos and therefore refuses to tolerate any further unpacking, since the living conditions appear to be under control for the next several hours. A few of the largest crates are pushed against the wall. Some of the hay and straw that served for wrapping breakable items is thrown in and covered with a white cloth, and this

serves as makeshift cots for the children. The little ones cheer with delight over the novelty of sleeping in suitcases and crates for a change and roll in the hay, all tiredness forgotten, as if it were all a splendid party. Finally five of the “organ pipes” are put to bed singly and in pairs, and the two eldest, Fritz and Karl, two sensible lads aged twelve and eleven, respectively, stay up for another hour to eat supper with their parents.

Instead of a tablecloth, the Prussian state newspaper is spread out over a suitcase—this newspaper being the preferred choice for this purpose as it is the largest. Bread, butter, cheese, and beer are at hand and some substitute is found for whatever is missing in the way of plates, knives, and glasses, thanks to a creative spirit residing within the encamped diners, in particular the young lads, and which ultimately heightens the cheerful mood of the family. At meal’s end the leftovers are put away. Pillows and mattresses are distributed, and an attempt is made using scarves, coats, and other makeshift measures to bring a semblance of comfort to sleeping on the floor.

Thus, I suggest that we could with good reason now retreat, my dear lady readers, for we are at any rate relieved to know that our immigrants have not had to sleep on the hard ground. After a sea voyage and a tedious relocation involving much discomfort, everyone is without a doubt craving rest. But who can be granted rest before midnight in London? The advertising plaque for the desirable villa No. 4 had no sooner been taken down from the entry to Briar place than all the merchants of the adjoining district sprang into action. It is a particular practice that general storeowners throughout all of London observe. The minute that even one carriage deposits new residents in front of a house, the bakers, butchers, and bankers seek to outdo each other in an attempt to nab a potential customer. At the light of dusk an incessant ringing at the rear garden gate of the villa resulted in a pile of cards, flyers, and small brochures being shoved

into the dumbfounded Katrinchen's hands. The two lads, who had already learnt a little English, entertained themselves by thoroughly studying and translating the cards. One of these was designed as a dainty little book, red with gold decoration, that contained an extensive list of all the spices with which a certain spice merchant of the United Kingdom managed to capture their childlike imagination, causing it to travel in every possible direction. There was a card for a milkman, showing him leading a lithographed cow in a wagon, and Fritz found it very strange that in this country a milkman rather than the usual milk maid should do the delivering. Also recommending himself was a "porkman," whom little Karl had translated into German as "pigman." Finally a folio size advertisement appeared, on which the image of a large black beetle was emblazoned on the top as the logo, the actual specimen in its many variations having already frightened Katrinchen downstairs in the kitchen. The advertiser claimed to be able to exterminate this monstrosity known as a "beetle," which was presumably the plague of the entire neighbourhood (a comforting prospect), and in order to strengthen the housewives' confidence in his abilities, he added his royal warrant, the full title reading as follows: Insect exterminator to Her Majesty the Queen and to Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent.

"Here we have the first example of the brazenness of England's freedom of the press!" the housewife exclaimed with a laugh, "but what can you expect in those old palaces?" Night had fallen, but despite their physical fatigue, the couple, as a result of the past events and of the worry about the near future, was much too excited to rest, and as everyone around them lay sleeping, the couple continued to carry on a lively discussion, albeit in whispers.

The husband dwelt upon the first overwhelming impression that London made on him, the foreigner, an impression that is doubly gripping upon the soul of the individual who says to himself, "Here in this enormous world you shall swim and fight alongside others, and make a

name for yourself.” He then asked, “Did you feel as if electricity was coursing through you when the cabin steward called out: ‘We are in England; the ship is just now entering the river Thames!’? For me it was as if I were surrounded by a fresh breath of freedom—as if only at that moment I was sure of my life.”

“Oh yes,” the wife replied. “The last three months have been a strain. Every time the doorbell rang I expected to hear the news: His hiding place has been discovered—they have turned him in!”

The man continued: “And at the end I didn’t have a single peaceful night. Every time I heard footsteps in the distance I said to myself: ‘You’ve been betrayed; now they are surrounding the garden; now you’re doomed!’ And yet! In spite of all the hardship it was an exciting, magnificent time. To witness a Germany for once passionate—a nation, highly imaginative and profound in its thinking, ardent in its passion for the sweet bride of freedom, desiring to possess her with all the strength of its soul!”

The wife was silent for a moment and then said: “Yesterday, as we drew nearer to London, and the miles and miles of buildings that looked like palaces bordering the water’s edge and the magnificent growth of trees caught my eye, and the river appeared as if covered by boats, and people everywhere were actively engaged in their work, as if it were all so easy—for I saw no hectic rushing about, only a calm use of strength—I thought to myself: “See, that is how our homeland could look if our dear fellow countrymen, instead of being so idealistic, would tackle things a little more practically.”

“Just wait,” the husband broke in, “just wait one or two more years and then compare Germany with *any* country in the world. Since we are thorough, we shall also establish the roots of our new state much more securely. Since we are poetic, we shall view not just industrial aims

as the ultimate political goal. And believe me, the imaginary world of a German artist will always be much richer and more boundless than this reality.”

“Well, the reality,” the wife replied, “has made quite a lovely impression on me today, and the spirit responsible for bringing all that we have seen into existence must surely be formidable. I think we have come to the right place, and homesickness will scarcely be an issue for me.”

The husband seemed to feel differently and, as if speaking partly to himself, said: “Even though women are supposedly more emotional than men, still I always carry with me this longing for my homeland like a legacy of love, even though my long-held wish has now been fulfilled. Today when we picked the children up from the hotel and the carriage was forced to stop several times because of the crowds in the city, I compared this unrelenting hustle and bustle, in which I myself was also an impatient atom spurred on by haste, with the moonlit group of trees by the Rhine where I would sit and compose, where the late passing of a barque was an event, and where only the idle talk of a few young sailors disturbed my dreaming. Can a human being ever dream here? How is it possible for a poet or a composer to be able to live in an atmosphere such as this? Between the endless streets, stretching as far as the eye can see, glittering with assorted shops and with buses on them looking like two-story houses and stuffed full of people, there arose before me this ghost-like image of that dearly-loved little spot. I felt the cool night breeze wafting in the tree tops. Yonder the black ruins of Hammerstein stood out against the moon. Tears welled up in my eyes as the vision disappeared and was again superseded by this mad London street carnival.”

In a softer voice the wife said, “It is also my homeland of which you speak, and I shall not forget the many lovely days of my youth roaming around those ruins.”

“Well now,” the husband said, “happy the man who has married his childhood sweetheart. His homeland accompanies him everywhere into the unknown. Give me another kiss, and may this, our new homeland, welcome us once again!”

With the aid of Mrs. Busy, an old acquaintance who often visited the Rhine area, the newcomers were helped considerably in getting through their first few days in London. In this city only a relatively small fraction of its inhabitants were familiar with the idea of a permanent dwelling place. Most of them were constantly on the move—setting up house one day and selling again the next in order to move out to the country, exchanging one area of the city for another, or moving out of a place by the sea into the fully furnished house of a stranger in London, whose family portraits remain hanging on the walls, whose piano, servant, maid, ox, donkey, and everything else belonging to the previous owner is included in the rental agreement, while likewise total strangers romp about in the seaside residence. With circumstances such as this it is not difficult to improvise setting up house, if one wants to ignore a harmonious coming together of objects. One trip to the furniture emporium, or down a business street where everything one would need is available, and the housekeeping machine is under way.

But woe to the German housewife who wants to maintain German arrangements and customs in this country, where everyday life is founded on rigid customs! She will remain in an eternal, futile war with the Londoners’ way of life, whose rules are as rigid as if they had been passed as parliamentary laws. In the houses of the middle-classes, the maids rise after seven in the winter months and after six in the summer. Of course in the houses of the aristocracy, where dinner is served at eight o’clock in the evening and visitors come for tea close to midnight, the rules of the house are also different with regards to the servants. Well, our valiant German housewife had brought Katrinchen along expressly for the purpose of maintaining the exemplary

custom of getting up early, and actually for the express purpose of regulating everything according to how she was accustomed. Early the next morning, all the children were already immaculately dressed and sat at the table waiting for breakfast. But the milkman failed to arrive even though Mrs. Busy had promised that he would be there on time. Finally, after waiting for hours she heard a strange cry from outside, something akin to the hoot of an owl, and little Karl, who had been waiting at the window, announced that a man was standing outside wearing enormous wooden epaulettes that were draped all around with milk pails. A general merriment seized the small party upon hearing this announcement, and young and old feasted freely.

“Now, regarding the agenda!” the father called out after breakfast had ended. “Katrinschen will watch the house and the smallest children until our return, and naturally the door is not to be opened to strangers. Mrs. Busy is to arrive before ten o’clock in order to accompany me to the furniture shop, and you, dear mother, of course had in mind to shop for groceries with the two oldest boys.” “Quite so,” said the housewife. “Boys, just skip next door to the neighbour’s house and ask for directions to the market for me.”

With considerable liveliness Fritz and Karl immediately sprang out the door, full of pride that they would now be allowed to practice the English they had so diligently learned. Mrs. Beak had just lifted her drapes slightly in order to observe the mysterious strangers when she suddenly cried out in fear: “Good God, they are coming to my house—egad, they are ringing at my door—Harriet, Lucy, what could these foreigners want? Quick, tell the maid she is to fasten the chain in the lock before she opens the front door!—Good heavens, I can already hear them in the house!”

With a strange sense of terror that those English who have never lived on the continent feel towards foreigners the three Beak ladies secretly listened to the conversation below with bated breath, leaning over the banister rails. The two lads, as pretty as a picture with their

innocent, honest faces, dressed in light smocks of white and blue plaid linen, stood there and conversed with the maid as best as they could. Friendliness towards children is very much a part of the English character, so that one look at the youngsters' light blue eyes and long flaxen hair worked its magic here.

“Oh what absolutely charming creatures,” Harriet cried out, “please mother, let me go and speak with them!”

Mrs. Beak, being extremely good-natured, could not help but conquer her timidity and forgive, for the sake of their little red cheeks, this break in protocol by the young intruders. Both Miss Beaks, who had had a brief introduction to German grammar, conversed with the young lads for several minutes and bade them good-bye after a rather limited conversation.

“Such nice boys!” Lucy exclaimed. “I understood that they were accompanying their mother in order to go sightseeing at the Covent Garden Market!”

“What an odd idea!” exclaimed Harriet, “perhaps if it was the British Museum or the zoological garden, but what is so extraordinary about the market at Covent Garden?” But Mrs. Beak supposed that it might be quite amusing for children to see the many flower stalls and the heaps of oranges and coconuts that lay stacked in piles.

The two boys, very pleased with themselves, came bounding back to their mother, who was waiting for them, and brought her the following information: The market was three to four miles from here. Omnibuses did not go there, but every cabriolet coachmen or, in abbreviated form, cabman would know the way there.

Mrs. Busy soon came to help the perplexed German housewife—and she was acknowledged as being the expert in all matters relating to housekeeping from this point onward. Everything happened just as Mrs. Busy predicted it would. The merchants arrived between ten



and eleven in the following order. The first, a chap from the bakery galloped up on horseback wearing his circular bread basket fastened around his body by means of the handle so that it crossed the chest and the inverted basket on his back held the bread. In one adept movement that would have been a credit to a juggler he swung the handle over his head without any of the bread falling out and handed the proper portions down to the consumers, all the while still astride his horse, and then hurriedly trotted off. After that an old gentleman arrived wearing a rounded hat pushed far back on his head and a long frock coat, (quite the typical character depiction of an eccentric Englishman that one will find in a German comedy), on each arm carrying a basket with a handle, one filled with potatoes, the other with green vegetables. The butcher would drive up with a tiny little wagon, and then the spice merchant pushing a bin on wheels in front of him.

How fortunate that Mrs. Busy lent the family the most essential cookware, because the process of setting up house was not going nearly as quickly as had been expected. In late spring, the city was still crowded with foreigners, and all the labourers were completely tied up. Days and weeks went by until the house was made reasonably habitable, and one observed the new occupants, in spite of their maid and the workmen, putting their hands to the task and working themselves to death.

Mrs. Beak, who witnessed all this since villa Nr. 4 did not yet have curtains, thus concluded that the new neighbours had to be lowly people, and she was very resentful of the landlord for degrading the neighbourhood rather than leaving the villa to stand empty for another year. But she was extremely astonished when, in the middle of July, a daily stream of elegant visitors arrived at Briar Place and powder-wigged footmen in flaming-red velvet breeches often jumped out of sundry horse-drawn carriages in order to escort stately attired ladies into the nondescript little house at Nr. 4. She could not make heads or tails out of these inconsistencies,

just as on that first evening, until a mocking article appearing in *The Times* shed light on her new neighbours across the way.

## Chapter Two

### A Reluctant Hero of the Day: The Story of His Youth

Every wave that crashed against the English coast since 1848 washed ashore some form of disappointed hope or humiliated self-esteem. Those left at sea by the shipwreck of continental politics either fell onto the drifting sand where they decayed like disgorged seaweed or they were bruised and battered, left bloody and angry on the hard bed of pebbles. Few scaled the embankment of the chalk cliff by which one finds the way onto verdant land.

For a time the distinguished persons amongst the fugitives were the lions of society, and in great naivety the fashionable world unashamedly revealed that it acclaimed all that fell into this category no matter to which party line they adhered. At a brunch the lady of the house, in complete innocence, introduced some former minister who had been sent packing by the people to a socialist who in the following year was being persecuted on account of the reaction to the minister's termination—thus to the very same person who had previously led the caterwauling that drove the former minister to London. Or the ambassador of \_\_\_\_\_ was requested to have the pleasure of escorting to dinner the wife of a compatriot whose reputation had just been destroyed by that ambassador's own government.

For a while, Mr. John Ibeles (pronounced as "Eyebiliss"), the very man who had moved into Briar Place under such unfavourable and humble conditions, was at the forefront of discussions going on in the salons. The good fellow was actually called Johannes Ibeles in German, and in his hometown he had been given the nickname "Hansi Ibbeles" in order to chide him for his indifference to ceremony and stiff formality, a characteristic that was intrinsic to his

inborn artistic nature. In London he was forced to tolerate this quasi reduction of his name, to which he showed the same indifference as he had to the first version. The *Times* and the *Daily News* had dealt with him, Tory and Chartist papers had run him down, naturally from completely opposite points of view, Punch had caricatured him, and the *Illustrated Newspaper* had immortalized in a woodcut the great heroic deed of his life.

The ladies in London were astonished to find that the alleged man of terror bore little resemblance to their preconceived notions, and the verdict of a woman writer, a unanimously acclaimed expert of antiquity, was that Mr. John Ibeles looked like an older version of Endymion. The fact that he was a musician and that his compositions were more melodious than wild in character and that his entire being revealed him as somewhat of an enthusiastic dreamer—these were all inconsistencies that were difficult to reconcile with the way he had been known to act in the past.

We shall cast a fleeting glance on the days of his youth in order to grasp the contrast between his natural aptitudes and his present fate.

Johannes was the son of a Rhenish petit bourgeois, and because of his retiring nature his father determined even when Johannes was still in school that he should go on to further studies. Johannes's beautiful voice and clear intonation caught the attention of his teacher, who directed the school's church choir. He advised the parents to purchase an instrument for Johannes, and he himself felt inclined to offer his services as the boy's instructor.

On the same street there lived a wealthy old bachelor, Herr von Halen, who had a true passion for music. Once a week a quartet gathered at his home, drinking his home-grown wine, eating rolls with veal and Swiss cheese, making music, and chatting until night fell. Johannes made a point of listening from the street below, and his teacher, who played second violin, once

brought him along upstairs. On that particular evening a terrible confusion broke out in the middle of the scherzo of a Beethoven quartet. Each member placed the blame on another and each insisted that they had correctly counted the rests. In the meantime, young Johannes compared the individual parts with the score and subsequently brought to light a printing error, hence one part was missing a full bar's rest. The boy's cleverness, his ability to follow a movement in fugue form after hearing it for the first time, surprised everyone. Herr v. Halen, who had diligently studied Gerber's *Musicians Lexicon*<sup>14</sup>—in which every biographical account began with the following wonderful observation: “This famous musician showed a talent for music even as a child”—was convinced then and there that behind Johannes's dark-blue eyes and prominent eyebrows there lay hidden a future Mozart. He offered the boy his green glass of wine punch, which had the aroma of sweet woodruff and Mosel riesling. The glass was shaped like a small barrel with bands and had three depressions made for placing the fingers. Johannes had no idea how much he gulped down because the golden green bottom of the glass was covered with the grape plant's star-shaped leaf tendrils and the woodruff's white blossoms. However, when his teacher later ordered him to sing the song “On the banks of the Rhine, on the banks of the Rhine, there our vines grow” he sang his version with such passion that Herr v. Halen swore this charming boy would live to see a monument in his honour erected in his own hometown.

For some time the old gentleman had entertained the idea of allocating a portion of his wealth to a scholarship fund from which a genius who lacked financial means would be given the opportunity to study to become a composer. On this particular evening, the jovial atmosphere aided by the wine punch brought him to the point of making a decision. To this end Johannes became destined to be the first to enjoy the benefits of the scholarship fund, and his father, now

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<sup>14</sup> Ernst Ludwig Gerber (1746–1819), was a German composer who authored this comprehensive popular dictionary of musicians.

seeing his son provided for and under the protective care of an esteemed and wealthy man, was satisfied with the change in plans for the boy's life.

Herr v. Halen had placed his protégé in a school in Dessau with a Fr. Schneider and made sure that he stayed in surroundings that did not hinder him from his intended aim. Every year he was required to return home for a few months so that Herr v. Halen could delight in his progress as a musician and in his increased cultivation of areas of general knowledge. The valiant young artist met all his benefactor's expectations, and v. Halen never regretted the capital so enthusiastically dispensed with until a family tragedy directed his sympathies closer to home.

His only sister lost her husband, a distinguished official, who had been deemed to be wealthier than he actually was. After his death it was discovered that his family had lived a much too comfortable life (consistent with the Rhenish manner) and had put little aside in case of an emergency. The widow, a rather indolent and pleasure-seeking woman, incurred a great deal of criticism from her women relatives and friends, those who had up until now been the most eager in helping her spend her husband's money through all the little social gatherings, coffee visits, and country outings. "How is it possible," they wondered, "that Frau von Dewald can no longer lead the lifestyle to which she has become accustomed and must now curb her financial spending? With her own inherited fortune in addition to the hefty remuneration drawn by Herr von Dewald, she surely should have been able to manage. But, despite having only *one* child, she found it necessary to employ three servants, and since she spent her every afternoon paying visits, the three maids lay around idle, doing nothing for hours on end. The daughter also has no concept of housekeeping. She spends half her time engaged in reading books and the other half playing the piano. At our little social circle gatherings she is always the most adept at guessing the correct proverb and playing charades and can chatter twenty words before our daughters have

even opened up their mouths. But whether she knows how to cook soup, well now, whether she has any idea that potatoes are prepared differently than sauerkraut, we doubt that, and justifiably so.”

The persons in question were not spared from hearing these opinions since the old friends had of course to prove that their pulling back from Herr von Dewald’s widow and orphaned child was based only on moral indignation rather than on their now restricted lifestyle, which promised the visitors little pleasure. Herr v. Halen once again proved himself to be a complete gentleman. He extended the invitation for his sister and niece to come live with him and exchanged his uninhibited bachelor life for the concerns of a family.

Dorothea, his niece, was very different in both character and interests from her mother. She had inherited her energetic spirit from her deceased father, and the unfriendly opinions regarding her previous way of living had contributed to her pursuing a strict self-discipline. The undignified way that the so-called cultured girls in her little reading circles and the amateur concerts played around with art and poetry seemed to have too little significance for her to build a life around. Any sensible purpose that required work and self-denial promised to be of more value to her than the applause of idle people who until now had made use of her talents to pleasantly while away their time. Spurred on by her most recent experiences, she cast a careful eye upon her uncle’s household and found that the consumption was out of all proportion to the wastefulness with which the unsupervised servants prepared the simple fare. Her passion was now to work, bring reform to abuses, and redirect the affluence into strict boundaries, and from the eagerness with which she made every effort to put all previous slander to shame, one might almost have concluded that inwardly she had been more angered by such stupid gossip than was warranted. However, we shall not presume to conclude from this that she was overly fault-

finding and sensitive in character. No one knows how much society's disapproval in a small town embitters a life, since one encounters those sharp-tongued people on every street and one cannot, despite one's best efforts, avoid hearing gossip.

She happily formed a closer acquaintance with several English families who spent the summer in her hometown. Evelyn, also an only child, became her close friend, and as a result of their friendship Dorothea acquired a bit of English and was faithful in maintaining the friendship through regular correspondence, since Evelyn, aside from the young Ibeles, was the sole acquaintance with whom she could talk about things beyond the ordinary. Stemming from this time period as well was her acquaintance with Mrs. Busy, although Evelyn and her family had not encountered Mrs. Busy during this same summer in spite of the fact that both families knew each other.

Frau von Dewald sometimes hinted at what a pity it was that her brother had given away such a substantial portion of his fortune for young Ibeles's scholarship fund. But each time Dorothea objected to such comments with warmth and liveliness, and her assertion that the noblest way of disposing of one's capital was to pave the way for someone with talent, demonstrated that despite her concentrated preoccupation with her uncle's household she had not bid farewell to her old inclinations.

By and by her relationship with Johannes grew into one of fond affection, a change that did not go unnoticed, since she was much too self-aware. However, she saw no reason to fight her passion, for she had always quietly believed in a happy outcome. Johannes had admired her when he himself was still considered a callow youth and she, a blossoming lass, was dancing at rustic festivities. When he clambered up the nearby ruins of Hammerstein by himself, he could see her come walking with her fine friends and would listen to how she, her girlfriends, and a



few young gentlemen would jokingly depict young maidens and knights from times of old. Johannes never forgot how on one particular occasion she had introduced him to her father, which subsequently led to his being invited to join in the fun. During his third visit back home he encountered her dressed in mourning clothes, and she had greeted him and lingered in order to talk with him and envied the young man's good fortune of moving out of the little town and into the wide world of freedom, dependent entirely on his own hard work and talent. Johannes, who was forced to endure the envy of those in his small circle to the same extent that she was forced to suffer pity from hers, sought out her company whenever possible. More and more they recognized their like-mindedness, the only difference being the necessity of having to prove their worth in different spheres of life. The later years brought with them an unhindered freedom in their relationship, since Dorothea now lived in her uncle's house, where Johannes was regarded like a son. He had already achieved considerable recognition as a composer, and was now at home writing his first opera, inspired simultaneously by the effects of the enchanting autumn season along the Rhine and his love that was growing into longing and hope. The opera was never performed, but Johannes's teacher, to whom he had sent the work for critique, nominated his best student for a recently available position of conductor. As a result, Johannes received the call to become the new opera and concert conductor in a small German town that had a royal court and where presently a newly married princess, who dabbled in various areas of the arts and sciences, hoped to transform the princely court into an academy.

What potential marriage does not encounter opposition? No sooner had Johannes Ibeles asked Dorothea for her hand in marriage, than everyone saw the marriage as being a misalliance, that is, everyone except her uncle, who immediately extended his blessing. The old dowager found intolerable the knowledge that the old Ibeles and his relatives would from now on count

her as part of their family and treat her as such. Even towards her son-in-law she could not conjure up any affinity despite the fact that while in Dessau, where he was careful to move in the finest circles in society, he had acquired refined manners and an education that superseded any and all that she herself could take pride in. The good lady, born in the country, in Leudesdorf, failed to see how a musician ranked any differently than an acrobat or a conjurer, and Herr v. Halen took great pains to reassure her by showing her Gerber's Musicians Lexicon, in which are noted unusual honours bestowed upon composers, some even elevated to the rank of the nobility. The Philistines in the town could not understand how such a sensible young woman could fall in love with a young Adonis, and they were of the opinion that if she had just waited a little while, a respectable candidate, such as the widowed mayor or the retired lieutenant colonel, now both available suitors, would not have eluded her. The eligible young girls in town lamented with tears in their eyes the appalling fate of the handsome young man, who, first, was getting a wife who was not at all beautiful and who, second, horror of horrors, was surely several years older than he.

Meanwhile the happy couple, the subject of everyone's lamentation, roamed about the magnificent valleys within walking distance of the surrounding area prior to their departure for their future place of residence. Love transforms the barest dwelling into a sunny garden. How glorious the idyllic landscape must have appeared to them with its vine-covered hills, castles, and islands covered in shrubbery, all reflected in their beloved river.

"There is only one misalliance" Dorothea said, "and that is a marriage without love! How excruciating it was for me when my mother referred to such an arrangement as a sane and sensible marriage, using the German term 'Vernunft Ehe,' a 'marriage of reason,' for a marriage of convenience and recommending it as a virtuous and prudent move!"

Johannes replied: “There is only one sane and sensible marriage of convenience and that is a marriage based on love. Are not the marriages normally considered to be marriages of convenience really the most inconvenient in the entire world? Any fortuity such as social class, money, or property that is to be kept intact is taken for something that binds two souls to one another. When age, financial circumstances, and social status are all in agreement, the world considers this to be a suitable combination, never bothering to consider whether the innermost natural inclinations and guiding principles of two particular human beings are in harmony. Good and bad, intelligent and stupid, ingenious and narrow-minded—these are all differences silently ignored when it comes to public opinion about misalliances in marriage. But aren’t we fools for allowing today’s table conversation between mother and uncle to intrude upon the blessed freedom we are enjoying out here.”

The golden days of the engagement passed as if in minutes, and the young couple relocated northeast, to a city its inhabitants proudly considered to be the capital of the small state. This boast did not account for much since, besides the residency, the little state consisted only of small towns and villages. Here our artist met with the same fate that wasted so much German talent. Great intentions perished under a shortfall in funds, and the loveliest and most spiritual in art, requiring no external agent in order to bring joy to a nation, was squandered for the amusement of witless people at court. And so the years passed, and amid the daily hustle and bustle, the artist laboured to establish and broaden his reputation. Dorothea was completely absorbed in taking care of children and household, for she had determined that society and pleasure should never cause her life to crash against the rocks, as it had been in danger of doing in her early youth.

### Chapter Three

#### A Small Residency Receives a Slap in the Face

Twelve unchanging years resembling a walk through a small dense forest had elapsed in our couple's life. All around, the meadows are in bloom, tendrils stretch from tree to tree, and underneath the tightly entwined treetops calmness and twilight reigns. A fat frog clumsily jumping across the path or thorny bushes maliciously inflicting a tear in a new skirt in the shape of the Roman numeral V are perhaps the only terrible events one might encounter in the forest. We might believe that the entire outside world has fallen into the same dreamlike stillness until the distant rolling thunder peals its warning and forces its way in to where we are. In haste we leap up from the grassy bank, hurry towards the illuminated path that leads into the open, and are astonished to find that while we were engrossed with mushrooms and ants, a thunderstorm has rolled in unnoticed, the likes of which the world had never seen. The storm is already starting to bend the tall poplars that shade that castle situated in the lowlands, and it will arrive shortly, the black mass of clouds emptying its contents onto our hiding-place. This is exactly how life unfolded in the small residency. Hans Ibeles had long forgotten the political discussions that were common among the young artists during the time of his stay in Dessau—one of the most stimulating German cities—and put his heart and soul into music and poetry. Dorothea had become such a good mother that she no longer even cared to indulge in reading a newspaper, even though she had in the past become accustomed to zealously discussing politics with her uncle whenever she read him the *Augsburger Allgemeine* during the long winter evenings. It was this still-life picture into which the year of 1848 came crashing so suddenly that our artist could

barely grasp what in actual fact was transpiring in the small territory. At that time the uprisings in each state were decidedly different in character, dependent upon the extent to which the subjects had previously suffered or upon the level of their political education. But everywhere the same symptoms preceded the uprisings—the momentary melding among the classes, who, agitated to form *one* powerful force, later separated—once again, but with even greater hostility than before. An irresistible drive to gravitate towards conviviality seemed to overpower the most industrious and reflective of natures. Every new piece of news fostered a desire for discussion, and one was inclined to gather together many different viewpoints from various sides. Two-thirds of Ibeles’s orchestra consisted of amateurs who were really merchants, a case so prevalent in our state. In addition to their other two occupations in life, a third interest, namely politics, had since February moved to the fore, and never before had the symphonies been as badly rehearsed as now, for the concert rehearsals had been transformed into a political assembly.

“Which symphony are we rehearsing today?” asked the timpanist Butzmann, the baker, a small, fat, frizzy-haired man, who, being inordinately ambitious not only earned his “bread,” but also baked it.

“Beethoven’s No. 7 in A major,” answered the man who blew the organ’s bellows, placing the music on each stand, and then immediately whispered, “Any news?”

“Barricades in Berlin!” the timpanist replied as he leapt over a mountain of violin cases and two double-basses lying on their sides that barred the way to his spot.

“Poco sostenuto, first part!” the conductor called out and lifted the baton, but after barely ten bars he was forced to rap his baton on the podium and said: “Gentlemen, the sixth chords are completely falling apart....”

“Just like the Prussian parliament,” a violinist interrupted.

“Again from the diminuendo in the previous bar—good—pianissimo—dolce, dolce, gentlemen!”

“The masses will not back down,” whispered the clarinetist to his neighbour. “They would rather see the city destroyed than go home without a constitution this time.”

“Where are the clarinets?,” Ibeles called out: “Stop, two beats too late!—“Trop tard,” a few musicians cried out laughing, immediately aware of the now infamous innuendo.<sup>15</sup> Behind every music stand there sat a distracted individual with silent unanswered questions, making observations. The symphony was held together loosely only on account of the string quartet, because the musicians that should have been counting during the long pauses were preoccupied thinking about other things. Even the conductor appeared to be less exacting than usual and finally abandoned giving any further corrections. Once the orchestra was left to its own devices and thundered ahead, the exhilarating effect of Beethoven’s music took over—an effect akin to that heralding the revolution. At the *presto* in the third movement, the musicians raced forward in a dizzying tempo, and in the finale it sounded as if the combativeness of human nature, repressed by civilization, had finally broken loose and sought, in this symbol of victory, to give vent to all its repressed feelings. The conductor’s call for *piano* went unnoticed, since the musicians felt themselves to be free citizens only when they were playing *fortissimo*.

After this performance all reverence for music had vanished, and all the musicians made their way to a nearby tavern, in order to talk politics with the aid of beer and tobacco. There the newspapers were read aloud, and even those who did not normally subscribe to the tavern scene

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<sup>15</sup> This famous phrase refers to the French Revolution of 1848 and the public’s reception to the proclamation issued and posted by Louis Philippe and his new cabinet stating: “Liberty! Order! Union! Reform!” In response, the populace famously cried out: “Il est trop tard!” (It is too late!). Anonymous, *An Historical Sketch of the French Revolution of 1848: From the Reform Banquets to the Election of the National Assembly, and the Establishment of the Republic* (London: Cradock & Co, 1848) 31.

felt tempted to leave their homes around eight o'clock when the mail was delivered to the Schwarzer Adler tavern.

Hans Ibeles, too, now cared little about the opinions of his friends at court regarding his consorting with like-minded democrats at the tavern. Many a tongue, formerly silent out of respect for aristocratic clientele, was now loosed by the revolutionary atmosphere, and for the first time a newcomer understood just how much discontent had accumulated in this small corner of the fatherland. *Freedom!* Amidst sounds of pleasure and extreme pride everyone present respected individual rights and demands. Tyranny seen in the form of one ruling tyrant and many subordinates was abhorred, and everyone applied the physiognomy of his personal oppressors to those figures. While a lively debate over the freedom of trade and free enterprise ensued at one end of the table, Dr. Stern, a scholar who had been dismissed because of his free-thinking points of view, argued with our conductor that the power of the councillors of the consistory needed to be dismantled and research should no longer have any restraints other than the boundary of human knowledge. Ibeles confessed that the imposed taxes on grain and meats produced little more grief personally than that inflicted upon him by the clergy, but his life was made unbearable by the tyranny of the theatre directors, and the arts must be freed from the control of ignorant aristocratic landowners.

After arriving home, his wife poured out her heart to him as well and stated that she hoped the status of women would change in the coming revolution.

“Isn't it contrary to all common sense,” she said, “that the respect a woman enjoys increases according to her pretensions and her idleness and that the more she actually works to achieve something, the less she is valued? Even you intelligent men are impressed by those attributes in a woman that are achieved through idleness, and, strangely enough, when a woman

considers herself to be too refined to ease your path in life and help along, you men reward her pretensions by treating her with awe and respect. Those of us who work are treated with insufferable condescension by these idle ladies at court, as if merely ringing for the servants ennobled a woman's white hand more than doing things herself. Just look at our second-to-last nanny and you will see how this injustice is already taking hold everywhere. At that time I was not able to hire my old nanny, and I was astonished to discover that this total stranger demanded double the wages. She told me: "Madame, the reason is that that nanny is of a lower station. She attends to the child and the new mother and, in addition, helps with the washing and the household chores, but I do not do that. I only supervise. I do not personally lend a helping hand. All actual work must be done by the maids, and I expect to be attended to properly as well. That is the reason I receive double the wage!"

This discussion was interrupted by the arrival of Butzmann, the tympanist, and Stern, the scholar, who had both followed Ibeles from the tavern in order to convey a piece of news from a newly arrived private letter. Dorothea invited them to stay for a small glass of punch, and the small group sat down together at the table.

Dr. Stern had been personally acquainted with the old ruler and could tell many a tale about him. The deceased prince had squandered his time with liaisons and pleasure trips, and his only son, born to his lawful wife, was sent to a hunting lodge accompanied by a chief steward and several junior stewards, where he subsequently became completely countrified until his accession to power. "I myself," Stern disclosed, "was once summoned there for the purpose of giving the young prince instruction in the classical languages, but he had neither the ability nor the desire to learn. The other gentlemen invited me to join them in their vagabond life. They chased about in the forest with their royal charge, caught birds, killed rabbits and deer, and



carried on making all kinds of merry mischief, to which the peasant farmers near and far can attest! I found little pleasure in these activities, and so I applied myself to solitary study, seeing that I could not force the prince to learn Latin and Greek.”

“Even so, he is not a fool,” the timpanist countered, “and the common folk like him much more than they do his educated wife.”

“This couple is quite dissimilar in character,” said Dorothea, “even in appearance they provide an absurd contrast. The stocky prince in his green hunting habit, which he probably tends to wear out of fondness for the associated memories of his youth, along with the leather hood and his brown chubby cheeks, make him look like a forester. I would think that the tall, slim princess with her spectacles and her ash blond kiss-curved hair would break in two like a lily stem if he even once were to embrace her heartily.”

“At the time that this marriage was being contemplated I was still in favour at court,” Dr. Stern said. “The old prince and the noble families with castles in the surrounding area realized that the heir apparent was better suited to being a country gentleman than a ruling prince. ‘For this reason, the prince must bring home a clever princess,’ they all said, ‘in order to avoid bringing shame to our land. A woman who will wear her tiara proudly and who knows how to bring grandeur to her position.’”

The timpanist again joined in and said morosely: “We would have gladly given her the grandeur. For hundreds upon hundreds of years the land has been hoping for the time when the ruling hereditary line finally dies off so that we can be incorporated into a greater state.”

“But,” Ibeles exclaimed, “you lit up the entire city when the little prince was finally born to ensure the independence of your little state for another generation!”

“Oh, how clever you are, sir,” the timpanist retorted. “My little boy was not so smart and just about caused an awkward situation for me. The teacher read a command, handed down from the highest authorities, to the school children. They were to say a special prayer for the well-being of the little hereditary prince. Upon hearing this, my Peter asked: “At home my father said that he wished that the devil would take the little prince, so which prayer should the dear Lord now answer?”

“Ugh, how awful!” Dorothea exclaimed.

Ibeles now spoke and emphasized the princess’s positive strengths. “How,” he asked, “could such a small state as this have risen to even the most modest prominence, if it had not been for the cultivation of the arts, which after all this woman single-handedly established here? I do not deny that there is too much meddling from the court and that even greater things could be accomplished with the same amount of funding if the vanity of those who desire to be seen as the motivating force behind our aesthetic life in this residency were not an issue. But compare the atmosphere of the city, as it is now, with how it must have been in the former times of frivolous rule, and be just towards her character!”

Stern shook his head and said: “As her music teacher, you sir, have had so much contact with her, yet you hardly know her well enough to be able to attribute to her character what is actually only mimicry of the old Weimar? Believe you me, sir, I see through this woman’s pride-warped soul and know too much about her existence before she arrived here than to have any faith in the way she condescends to the world of artists. Back when the emperor of Russia was in Berlin for a visit and all the German regents gathered together there, our princess and her widowed mother also went to this dynastic rendezvous. The unfortunate master of protocol, who was in charge of standards of precedence at the celebrations, was to be pitied! If he took into

account the age of the family tree as his standard, then the young royal houses had to stand behind a royal highness who had one or two more ancestors. Because of this, it was stated that the kings and queens should have precedence, and after the royal highnesses the mere ordinary members of the royal family were to follow, and after that the serene highnesses etc. ... If protocol had been based upon genealogy, then our princess would have been placed immediately behind the royal princesses. But based on the other rules she would have had to enter last, behind every royal ruling house, and so she suddenly departed, even before the festivities started.”

Ibeles said: “I have never found her to be condescending with her bourgeois guests.”

“I believe that,” Stern countered. “She is delighted that you all fulfil your roles so well and that you repeatedly tell her that she is the princess in the kingdom of muses and that a court of geniuses are willing to be her subordinates, while empresses and queens can surpass her only because they own more land and therefore also have many more subjects. Look at her dreadful paintings—this gallery of heroes from Schiller’s tragedies! Would *any* art exhibition world-wide accept such a caricature as that of Thekla in the blue hall, who has the confused eyes of a calf and flowing yellow hair? Do a philologist’s insides not turn over when he reads her verses, where one verse is three-footed like a tripod while the next has more feet than a sow bug? With regards to music I am ignorant, but I would imagine that the parade marches that she composes for our army consist of excellent melodies—”

“Stop right there,” Ibeles exclaimed, putting his hands to his ears. “Sir, say what you like about Thekla and the verses, but do not defend her marches, in which she doubles the leading tone of the third inversion of the seventh chord in the soprano—an atrocity of tyranny that shatters all my loyalty. I begged her for permission to correct the ground bass in this march, but she refused my help, fearing that its originality would be destroyed.”

It had become late, and the company parted for the night after speculating that the violent storms would roar away over the innocent land without even one laurel tree being uprooted from its poetic grove.

But by the next morning the first harbinger of a storm fluttered into this peaceful sanctuary in the guise of a leaflet that had secretly been pushed under the front door before daybreak. The proclamation, published from an undisclosed location, read as follows:

*Citizens!*

*No sooner had our unfortunate land been liberated from its burden—a result of badly managed finances by the former regime—than a new calamity, just as severe as the previous, began to drain us dry. A clique comprised of the most useless people in the world—virtuosos, singers, and musicians—is undermining prosperity in the land. Instead of schools, hospitals, and streets for the citizens who pay the taxes, they are building a new opera house for the indulgence of a pleasure-seeking minority. Citizens! In every state the voice of the people is making itself heard. Let us not lag behind. To those for whom the well-being of this state is dear to their hearts, come to the large hall in the Schwarzer Adler Tavern this afternoon in order to discuss a petition to be directed to the prince of this state.*

“This seems to be aimed at us,” Ibeles said as he handed Dorothea the leaflet. “That explains the many grim faces I saw as I walked through the narrow streets behind the residency. I would never have dreamed that I, raised in Dessau’s liberalism, would now be counted as one of the people’s enemies.”

“The world must really have taken on a different colour since the year of 1830,” Dorothea said and skimmed over the leaflet once more before putting it away and saying: “Let us have a tranquil breakfast, and then we shall possess a collected frame of mind better suited to

pondering this matter, rather than feeling angry and going over to the wrong side. A person is bound to have the most intelligent ideas after a cup of warm coffee and a hefty slice of buttered bread.”

Having said this she gave the children their breakfast, and seeing them feasting without a care in the world caused her eyes to well up with tears as she thought of how soon they might be without food. During times of revolution few suffer as acutely as the families of performing artists. They are the intellectually elite proletariat who are the first to be without work when the aristocracy’s wealth is threatened. Long before the textile factories producing satin and velvet and the purveyors of fine foods start to lose business, elegant society has already economized with regard to the luxuries of the soul. Even during times of war individuals are in need of skirts and shoes, but paintings and books sell best primarily in times of peace, and who wishes to go to concerts and listen to violins and flutes when the canon outside echoes the roll of the kettle drum.

Ibeles did not feel like eating. In silence he smoked his cigarette, drank his coffee, and abandoned himself to a train of thought from which we shall now extract a few of the main points.

“If this embittered human being, the author of this proclamation, simply had even a little bit of inspired insight with regard to material issues, he would know that art is not a luxury, but rather a necessity for the human soul. Only when a people or an individual has conquered life’s necessities does it then add the abundant foliage of luxury and then last of all art as the crowning glory.

“Why does this proclamation use words that during times of darkness have made me feel guilty and that have, like a continual discordant note, hindered my joy in my work? Did I not think more often than not that I was wasting half my life on trivial things? Did I not sometimes

envy the bricklayer apprentice, who upon laying down stone after stone would at long last see the building completed? He can take pride in work recognized by the public as being useful, whereas I reproach my own calling, one that is seemingly like that of the Danaides.<sup>16</sup> But do the people really despise the arts? Look at the craftsman. He will joyfully give up an hour earning his bread and butter in order to sing in the choir of a music society! Do not hundreds of people stop and listen when they have the opportunity to hear a composition played in the open air that is actually good and uplifting? Therefore it is not art itself that people are attacking, but rather the exclusive circles to which it is relegated.

“Did your own common sense not object when you were forced to waste time giving the lazy, idle daughters of the rich aristocracy music lessons, time that might have turned the organ blower’s children into great artists? Your fees were necessary in order to earn a living, without which you would have been forced to abandon your own composing. Your students have been and will remain incompetent even though you poured all your passion into the task of teaching them, and the real potential prodigies amidst the common people are abandoned to their own fate because, of course, the people are not able to provide the money you need to feed your seven children.

“Stop! This is exactly the point! The nation, because it always desires what is great and true, should provide for the artist rather than having temperamental and tasteless people at court do so. For whom do these virtuosos, these brilliant singers, and all these parasitic plants in our poetic grove provide pleasure other than an eccentric and spineless minority? Art that is magnificent and that reaches the central crux of human nature would ensure that everyone partakes. Everyone could relish in it and appreciate it.”

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<sup>16</sup> The Danaids or the fifty daughters of Danaus in Greek mythology were condemned to spend eternity in the fruitless task of carrying water in sieves.

In the meantime, Dorothea had mulled over the situation in less theoretical terms, and after breakfast had been cleared she revealed her opinion: “It would certainly be annoying if nothing came of the opera house that we have so eagerly anticipated. But I cannot blame the people in these parts for not wanting to have anything to do with it. The former castle warden informed the princess directly of the fact that this small land was too poor to finance such a grand arts institute. He told her in advance that this would breed ill will if petitions to build bridges and streets were disregarded. Thousands of people are forced to wade through the overflowing river in the winter, but the handful of public officials and landed gentry that go to the theatre here cannot even fill a dozen of the boxes. The castle warden is a jovial man and his entire family passionately love music and comedy, but he told her highness that if she could not finance an opera from her personal funds then she would have to deny herself. Because of this the honest elderly gentleman fell out of favour with her, and the present castle warden was offered the position. You know that taxes on food have been raised in order to produce the opera. Is there any justice in that? I feel the need to walk with downcast eyes when I see the poor barefoot children on the streets and then think about our increase in salary.”

“Oh do hush,” Ibeles said. “What a horrible idea to suggest that with every bow drawn across the strings, a poor worm will be stripped of a pair of socks.”

At this, Butzmann, the tympanist, arrived and somewhat awkwardly announced to his director that he was considering signing the petition concerning restricting her highness’s musical expenditures and hoped that Ibeles would not harbour any animosity towards him. He continued: “Half of the orchestra is on our side. We have spent a lifetime playing and singing together and have derived much pleasure from it without needing all the added frippery, which the citizens are now supposed to finance. It is merely the highest form of vanity that has carried

this matter to extremes so that news about our own princely court theater and chamber music ensemble appears in the newspapers. Her Highness is aware that the most beautiful symphony does not garner as much attention as the announcement that Herr v. Trommeler, the great pianist or the singer, Frau Dudelina, have been invited to Princess Rosalinda's court. Moreover, we all know that the worst music is the most costly."

Other acquaintances also dropped in and it was strange to see Dorothea's busy little sitting room transformed into the conference room of a political club. The whole city, to a greater or lesser extent, was in an uproar by the prospect of a political gathering, an event unprecedented in living memory, deterring all from fully engaging in their usual activities.

As we leave the narrow, angular streets of the city with its small, three-storey, overhanging gabled houses, we also want to pass by the Schwarzer Adler Tavern, which graces the edge of the market place, and continue on towards the street that goes uphill, a street that is a terror for all carriages and that leads to a side gate of the castle. For the residency lies situated partway in a valley, and the later addition extends upwards alongside the hill. Both parts are joined together with poorly cobbled alleyways, the only exception to this being the wide approach that leads towards the center. The castle itself commands a view over the small city, but stands above the marketplace at a height of little more than that of a moderate building. The uneven terrain, which forces streets to extend up- and downhill, gives the whole thing more the appearance of a market town as found in remote mountainous regions, rather than of a city that can boast of having a royal seat. The castle is built of large, irregular, red sandstone. Each dynasty that resided here differed in its ways of life, which resulted in various additions leaving the exact style of the edifice indecipherable. Quite a lovely garden surrounded by a park with



magnificent beech trees extends to the right, and to the left an avenue of chestnut trees leads towards the new opera house, which, like the castle, stands on the hill.

In the oldest and central block of the castle there is a room that is similar in appearance to the drinking halls found in the old castles of the robber knights and that is now still designated as the dining hall. This room has only two windows, but they are of colossal proportions. The walls are so thick that each of the window openings seems to form a small side room in which a dozen people could reasonably carry on a debate without disturbing a similar gathering in the other.

On the morning that the proclamation first appeared, several of the royal couple's officials and courtiers had gathered in this particular room. They had been immediately summoned to receive this *mot d'ordre*. Two main groups were automatically formed, the one was comprised of the prince's strong, like-minded associates and the other of Princess Rosalind's aesthetically inclined courtiers, and each occupied a window opening. In the middle of the hall several lower-ranking officials stood waiting and ready in case they might be needed.

“So, shoemaker and tailor and such other riff-raff are involved?” the commissariat officer asked, “and at the forefront we have that fool of a baker, who plays the kettle drums in the court concerts?”

“Yes, sir,” old Colonel von Radnagel replied. “that is the one. I know him, because he often provided me with great amusement. During Beethoven's boring symphonies I would have fallen asleep if it had not been for this tympanist. How hilarious it was to watch this serious bullheaded man count on his fingers, as if this were a financial operation, and then at the conclusion joyfully jump in and whack his tympani. Those priceless and grotesque faces that he made—while counting he would make a long face and his lip would hang loose and while

whirling around his cheeks would inflate—I have to laugh when I envisage that the masses that sent Louis Philippe packing consist of men such as this.”

“The French are a more dangerous people than our countrymen!” the commissariat officer exclaimed.

“Tailors are dangerous no matter where!” a Herr v. Braunstabel countered. “For all intents and purposes they do women’s work, sit around a lot, and chatter incessantly. Hence, they have acquired some of the inherent stubbornness found in women.”

“So it is a good sign,” the commissariat officer said, “that the chief agitator is our tympani-playing baker, a harmless individual.”

This statement reached the other window, where Blumich the privy councillor had positioned himself far enough forward in the hall so that he would be able to eavesdrop on the other group. This presented him with an opportunity to categorize, which he did not let pass. He cleared his throat and began to share one of the observations he had gathered and that seemed fitting for the present occasion. “Bakers,” he began to lecture, “are a very peculiar type of people and are not capable of a religious feeling, as is the shoemaker. Bakers concern themselves with speculative thoughts –”

“Bakers are capable of thinking, you say? That is outrageous!” Herr v. Braunstabel added.

“Of course bakers think,” the privy councillor continued. “The way I see this strange occurrence is as follows: When they are waiting for the bread to rise during the night and have nothing else to do but to ensure that the oven remains at a constant temperature, the solitude of the night has a strange effect upon these people, who, by virtue of their labour, are forced to be idle. They speculate over all kinds of matters such as the origin of mankind and of nations and

trace a link between past and present. The fact that Herr Butzmann spent so much of his life devoted to music already indicates that he was dissatisfied with his commercial activity. Playing the tympani demonstrates great strength of character. Much self-control is required in order to calmly endure forty-nine bars of rest! However, would you all like to hear another recent discovery I made? I wanted to borrow a book from Dr. Stern –”

“Dr. Stern!” the commissariat official started, “the devil take him—in the past he gave us more trouble than any other earthly human being!”

Herr v. Braunstabel laughed: “That is His Highness’s Homeric-nagging nuisance of a birdwatcher.<sup>17</sup>

“I know,” the privy councillor earnestly said. “That is the one who purchases various philosophical writings. I wanted to glance at Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation*, which my own library was lacking. Having obtained the book from Stern, I discovered all kinds of comments in the book’s margins written by someone else. Upon enquiring I found out that not only did our baker Butzmann write these comments, which were often quite astute, but he had also thoroughly studied half of the said Stern’s library. I also know from others that he is a dangerous man. His son apparently made a statement in school that, to put it mildly, revealed an appalling lack of loyalty in this man’s household!”

Pondering, the commissariat officer said: “So he is probably responsible for writing the proclamation.”

“I don’t think so,” the privy councillor replied. “This proclamation points to something completely different than what it states. The princess’s spending is a pretext to conceal much deeper plans. We are familiar with this. First you are presented with innocent petitions to rectify

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<sup>17</sup> Herr v. Braunstabel is referring to the opening pages of Homer’s *Iliad*, where the priest Calchas, who augurs by bird-watching, nags King Agamemnon to take action. While English translations of the *Iliad* refer to Calchas as an “augur,” the German translation uses the term “Vogelschauer” or “birdwatcher.”

alleged abuses, next come freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, and do you gentlemen all know what is lurking in the background? Any guesses my dear sirs? A republic—that's right, a republic.”

Hearing this, the group gathered in the other window opening also broke up and listened with horror. Up until now all had only indulged in speculation as to which path Her Highness, Princess Rosalinde, would take, defiance or compliance. A general flurry now erupted, and all those present outdid each other with loud cries, expressing the extent of their loathing towards that vile concept—a republic.

Herr v. Braunstabel, a tall, lean bon vivant affirmed that he hated the republic even more than sin itself, and Colonel v. Radnagel swore that even the name gave him a headache, the kind associated with too much drinking. All were of the opinion that a republic was the horror of all horrors with the exception of the privy councillor, who insisted that this form of government did not quite exceed the utmost boundaries of human madness. Behind it still lurked the much darker shadow of communism.

“Communism—what is that?” Herr v. Braunstabel asked.

“Well, or also socialism, the question currently being raised by the proletariat,” the privy councillor continued.

“Proletariat?” several asked. “I've never even heard of that term!”—“I haven't either!” could be heard from multiple corners.

The privy councillor did not have the time to elaborate, because he and the colonel, along with a few other officials, were called to the cabinet, a small windowed side room, where the royal couple, their ministers, and their inner-most circle had come to a decision. The briefing, recognizable as having Princess Rosalind's own stamp upon it, read as follows: “The assembly is

to be banned. Any attempts to resist are to be crushed by firing several shots in the air. This action carries no risk because the people are much too good-natured and overly accustomed to paying reverence than to attempt an assault against our royalty, even if worse should come to worst. In the event of street fighting only commoners in the guise of soldiers die, thus we shall take our chances. If the people *triumph* we do not have to yield immediately.”

After this the events unfolded in quick succession, and even if one were to liken these days to being “much ado about nothing,” the issues that provoked the storm nevertheless remained the same, whether endorsed by a few hundred living in the small state of a minor prince or by hundreds of thousands living in a large state. The military power en miniature that was to prevent the open meeting called by the citizens was positioned in the marketplace. It was dispersed by the throwing of rocks. The masses gained entry into the large hall of the Schwarzer Adler by way of force, and now all manner of suggestions proliferated, oozing out and incited by the smell of freedom, without any logical consideration given to the possibility of a successful execution. Before long they became weary of the fatuous confusion, and several sensible citizens suggested that all would be better served by having an organized discussion, when a willful act of the royal court brought about the tragicomical conflict that transformed our man, Hans Ibeles, from a renowned figure in the musical world to a political celebrity. At Colonel v. Radnagel’s orders, both rusted canons, which dated back to the wars of liberation, were aimed at the Schwarzer Adler. This measure was meant only to instill fear, but instead produced a tumultuous reaction of insubordination. Those among the citizens with any strength of character, namely Ibeles, Stern, and our philosophically minded baker, Butzmann, explained that it was everyone’s duty to close ranks at once and proceed fearlessly towards the soldiers, disarm them and take control of the canons. This was to be the means of achieving victory. Only cowardliness would

hinder the path to freedom. They were prepared to die in the front line rather than carry a lifetime of shame because they reneged on their convictions, uttered with great gusto that very morning, when faced with a loaded rifle aimed in their direction.

The majority were opposed to this heroic decision, because they were not interested in foregoing the pleasure of building a barricade. The barricade had at one time become famous and was representative of revolution just as a throne represented the monarchy. Particularly the youth and the fanatics, constituting both genders, chose to follow popular inclination and pay homage to the goddess of freedom. It was in vain that the aforementioned three men, empowered by a momentary opportunity and therefore imagining themselves as the leaders, warned that no time be wasted and pointed out the fact that every house in the narrow, winding streets would serve as a natural barricade. The voice of the people, bestowing upon itself the voice of God, decided in favour of the barricade.

## Chapter Four

### It is Best Not to Play with Fire

The uprising now assumed an air of gaiety as the barricade building began, since the women and the boys on the street joined in with a vengeance. It was not difficult to tear up the cobbled streets since they were already riddled with holes and in need of repair. A tailor's apprentice, who at one time had worked in Paris and who was at least familiar with the traditional structure of such temporary construction methods, recommended that the stones be brought up onto the rooftops in order to bombard the troops from there, and that it would be better to use old items of furniture for the barricades. Division had already broken out between several patriotic young women and some more conservative little grandmothers concerning the selection of furnishings most suitable for this purpose, when Reffbaum, an athletically built carpenter with bushy, reddish side whiskers and rolled up shirtsleeves, appeared on the main street accompanied by four assistants and a whole procession of boys who had tagged along. With a powerful voice he shouted: "My fellow countrymen, do not be fools by removing the contents of your own homes. Why not take the Parisian furniture commissioned by the aristocracy, who consider our local craftsmen to be lacking in skill?"

This suggestion spread throughout the city with the speed of a telegraphic dispatch. In no time at all, the nearby houses of the commissariat officer, Colonel v. Radnagel, Herr v. Braunstabel, and their clique had been stormed. The ladies of the households were directed to the alley past the market where, despite their mortal fear of loaded canons, they were to remain under the protection of the armed masses, and now began the organization of materials to

produce one of the most grandiose barricades ever witnessed in those heady days of 1848. The foundation was formed of a red velvet canopy and twelve matching chairs taken from the state room of His Excellency, the minister. A Viennese grand piano proved to be very difficult to relocate, but after unscrewing and removing its legs they hoisted the piano out of the window on the ground floor and propped it upright against a sand bath, and the two together were to serve as a makeshift buttress. Precisely for the sake of derision, a mirror recently purchased by the minister's wife that measured six feet in height and four feet in width, its charming gold-ornamented frame having aroused admiration from every lady who had visited, had been purposefully jammed into the center of the barricade. The mirror had been maliciously placed with its reflective surface facing towards the market—the direction, it was surmised, from which the first lowered bayonets would be approaching. This barricade was named the minister's barricade, but there was also a Braunstabel's barricade and a Radnagel's barricade, neither of which was less worthy looking than the first.

The humour of the masses was most evident at the Braundstabel barricade, since a sister of that courtier, now well known to the reader, was by coincidence one of the most unpopular ladies of the residency. This somewhat older Fräulein was just as tall and lean as her brother and wore her blackish hair in somewhat unkempt curls in the style à l'enfant, so that her hair looked like a spider's head. Her main obsession was to dazzle everyone with her external appearance. Since she had a nose akin to the beak of a parrot and small beady eyes, her features, when combined, provoked from others more mirth than veneration, and as a result she often had to suffer the humiliation of being laughed at by her lower-class subjects and usually in precisely those moments when she had wanted to crush them with the full force of grandeur. By and by hostility had developed between her and the public, which had in the ensuing years given rise to



vicious teasing. Everything she did in her attempt to cultivate a regal appearance proved futile and only strengthened the public's image of her as being strange. Because she was so insignificant she was unable to endure ridicule, and thus she became filled with bitterness and sought every opportunity to churn up mischief. Several evil tricks, alleged to be her doing, had been aimed at citizens whose wives or children had become guilty of uttering some disrespectful remark towards her.

During the past week the male members of the public were given further reason to oppose Fräulein v. Braunstabel. It had long been suspected that the high and noble lady was economizing by avoiding payment of food and slaughter taxes, since for no apparent reason she was often driven out to the country, courtesy of her brother's equipage, each time returning with sacks or baskets. Household consumption could not possibly have been as low as her accounts with the city butchers and bakers indicated. The wagoneers, perpetually bothered by these visits, protested loudly as to why the gracious Fräulein's equipage was never inspected, despite the general suspicion that she was smuggling goods. All to no avail. The lady enjoyed a position of privilege with the highest public authorities, and, furthermore, the private equipages of well-known dignitaries were never subjected to the same vexation as carriages of the working-class. One day in this time of greatest political uproar, just as a junior customs official who had his hat drawn down low was about to let the lady's carriage pass through, disaster struck when a wheel suddenly broke. Several men on the road sprang into action ready to help. One held the horses' reins, another helped the lady down from the carriage, a third and a fourth both tried to support the axle of the broken wheel. As a result of these efforts to be of assistance, a sack of flour, which had been stowed under the carriage seat, rolled down and burst open, its contents ominously spilling onto the threshold of the customs house. Despite the unfortunate junior

official's bafflement, he was forced to record this act of fraud. And to make matters worse, the cheeky citizens, under the guise of wanting to be helpful, also dug up a ham, which they quite deliberately shoved through the sliding window of the custom's house.

Fräulein v. Braunstabel, dressed in a green cape bedecked with imitation ermine and an extremely conspicuous red hat with a white quill feather, was forced to watch this comical scene, which continued to have an effect even on the horrific night on which the barricades were constructed. A butcher's assistant, who was among those invading the Braunstabel house, had come across the Fräulein's aforementioned feathered hat and consequently affixed it onto a broom, which he then carried triumphantly across the street in the guise of a freedom banner. An assemblage of her little knick-knacks was thrown out of the window, but that act still proved insufficient in satisfying the people's revenge against this unpopular individual. The Fräulein was known to be completely enamored with cats. Hence, her three cats were caught and locked up in a meat larder, which was subsequently wedged into the middle of the Braunstabel barricade alongside a cage housing a cockatoo, whose shrill screech pierced the air.

This inevitable and excessive rabble-rousing, which the men who could sense the gravity of impending danger tried in vain to squelch, eventually came to an end at the sound of real shots being fired. Among the hundreds present, hardly anyone believed that the public authorities would go so far as to shed blood, and even now the false notion was spread that the canons were not really loaded and that the guns contained only loose powder. But as a cry of rage erupted over the death of a woman and a small boy and an additional six people who were believed to have been injured, even the most serene temperaments lost control, and those that had at most angrily laughed with derision at the mockery going on during the last fifteen minutes were now spurred on by tremors of hatred and revenge. For one moment there was a stifling silence, and

then the brave ones reached for the closest object that could function as a weapon, and those that were afraid took cover in their homes. Initially the crowds and all the uproar made it difficult indeed to execute a plan of action in which all were united, but one thing was ascertained—the small military force would not be able to hold its own against the majority if all access to the market was cut off by means of barricades. As if by mutual agreement this did indeed take place and by nightfall it seemed as if the fate of the trapped soldiers depended solely upon the citizens, who had in the meantime gathered together quite a number of guns and were returning shot for shot from the windows.

Dorothea had not seen her husband since noon, and since she had to summon up every effort to keep her young boys at home, the most she could gather about the state of the situation was from a passerby hurrying past her open window. Towards evening she heard shots ring out, and soon screaming people were seen beating a hasty retreat and thronging into the side street where her family lived. There was talk of people having been killed and others injured, and the possibility that her husband could be among them caused her to lose consciousness for a short while. She sat down and every limb in her body felt ice-cold, but because of the dull fear that coursed through her, she felt the urge to do something to help. Still trembling she stood up and ordered the maid to put the children to bed half-clothed so that, in the eventuality that they needed to escape, the children could quickly be whisked out of danger. After this was accomplished and not without some resistance from the older boys, Dorothea readied herself to go out and search for her husband, wherever that might take her, and having found him she was determined to stay at his side.

Then the doorbell rang, and she heard her husband's voice as well as another familiar voice. In an instant he stood before her, healthy and whole, accompanied by Dr. Stern and

Butzmann. No matter how fulfilled a woman might feel in general, she will not be able to breathe freely until her immediate concern for the welfare of her beloved husband is alleviated. With a cry of joy Dorothea flung her arms around her husband's neck, after which she pulled him to the furthest little corner of the room, as if assuming that he might be safer here than close to the window. She was hardly aware that his comrades had followed behind. She was alarmed to hear Johannes tell her that he needed to leave again almost immediately.

“We have received news that a town on the border of the adjacent state has been seized,” Stern said. “If we do not gain victory today, all will be lost!”

“And if you are victorious,” Dorothea cried out, “of what use will your victory be? What weight does this city carry in all of Germany?”

Ibeles replied: “Who was it that only two days ago stated that the movement in Germany would fail because each city would wait for another to act first?”

Dorothea fell silent, and Butzmann now continued: “Dear Frau Director, you must realize how important your husband's presence really is. No other citizen's participation carries as much weight concerning justice in this matter, since his personal interests are, if he were to consider them, of course linked to the royal court.”

“But if he were to die—Oh God, I cannot even imagine such a possibility!” Dorothea exclaimed and pressed both hands to her eyes.

With naive frankness, the tympanist remarked: “If that were to happen the people's fury against the court would really be unleashed.”

Despite Ibeles's critical situation, he almost let out a laugh on hearing this friendly remark thoughtlessly spilling from his fellow partisan's mouth, but the doorbell was ringing urgently again, and several members of the hastily formed alliance urged Ibeles to hurry. He in

turn took the key to the side-door of the opera house, which led to the orchestra, and then took hold of Dorothea's hand and said quietly: "I assure you that I shall not foolishly put my life in danger; on the other hand, I shall not be a coward and flee from danger if *one* brave decision can be the salvation of a principle. You can rest assured of that, for you yourself would not respect me if I acted in such a manner."

The men left, and after Dorothea had securely locked the door to the house she threw herself onto the bed, still fully clothed. The pandemonium that filled the city's center could be heard in muffled tones in her street, even though it was far off. The shooting had subsided, causing Dorothea to imagine that a peaceful reprieve between the delegation and those petitioning had now set in. Exhausted from the frightful day's events, she closed her eyes, and despite fighting to stay awake, she eventually succumbed to a state of semi-sleep. Was she actually dreaming when brightness as if from a glowing fire shone through the curtains of the garden window and fell upon her eyelids? She could see herself fleeing with all her children; the locomotive entered a burning city; the endless row of passenger cars, one of which she and her children were also occupying, was mercilessly dragged along—a shrill scream outside—she awoke with a start—and sure enough, there was a fire—a towering red blaze crackled on the hill over near the new opera house.

"Oh no, what about the scores that my poor husband had arranged to be delivered there just last week! His life depends on them!" This was her first thought as she was startled out of her sleep. After a terrifying experience most anyone will very likely awaken with a heavy heart and in that initial moment have no idea as to why. This was Dorothea's state as well: while she was not yet fully awake, the usual worries clamored for attention first, and then the following thought pierced through her like a knife: "My husband is not here. There is a revolution going

on—one street over and people are killing each other! How can you think of something so inconsequential?”

The cries heard outside on the street confirmed her suspicion that the opera house was on fire. It was situated far enough from the city, ensuring that no houses on this side were in any danger. In an instant everyone in the neighbourhood appeared on the street, and Dorothea quietly opened a window in order to overhear the conversation of those passing by.

“Those accursed soldiers and their guns are responsible for this!” an old woman said.

“Bravo, bravo,” a retired captain, who lived next door and was loyal to the court, called out from his window, clapping his hands. “Our brave warriors will soon show you rebels what it means to mock the highest of authorities. You are to be destroyed by fire and sword!” Someone else cried out: “The soldiers did not set the opera house on fire—the citizens themselves are responsible for the fire.”

“The citizens are responsible for the fire?” the stunned old captain echoed. “Ha! Those rabble-rousing incendiaries, those disgraceful scoundrels!” he exclaimed and slammed his window shut.

From the distant words exchanged outside, Dorothea ascertained that the small band of soldiers had made a sudden sortie from the market with the intention of reaching the opera house situated high up on the hill and entrenching themselves there until the anticipated relief forces arrived. The citizens, who were aware of the importance of having a secure bastion that protected the castle and towered over the city, anticipated the soldiers’ move. The seizure of this improvised stronghold would be of little help to the political party if they lacked ammunition. But the opera house in the hands of the military could mean damage to the point of total destruction for the city. At least this is what they believed. What do people fighting in the streets

know about strategy? One word has an effect akin to a bomb: "This or that must occur!" Without a moment's hesitation or without pausing to consider whether an action is necessary, indeed, whether its execution is even prudent, the mere belief in the heroism of the deed drives people to carry it out.

Morning broke, the bone of contention was burning, the soldiers retreated to the lower rooms of the castle and remained there, consigned to occupy it. The royal court explained the shooting, according to the then *terminus technicus*, as a misunderstanding. A militia comprised of the citizens was organized, the outside troops that had been called in turned back half-way because in the mean time civil unrest had broken out in their own city, whereas here the uprisings had been put down, etc....

The wave caused by the liberation movement that rose and fell throughout all of Germany also affected the fate of this city and the few citizens who had been at the head of the uprisings during that period of impassioned behaviour. For several months the court remained passive, and the people felt a restless striving to move forward. The absence of a well-organized body proved the downfall of the people's political party, and the reactionary minority triumphed everywhere because it was unified in its course of action and because the masses, over which *the minority* had control, were accustomed to blindly obeying orders.

To the same degree that the debate in the peoples' assemblies about how they ranked relative to each other caused divisions among those who at all cost should have held together against a common enemy. That same enemy gained the courage to exterminate one by one those who were a danger to them.

On the first morning after the so-called misunderstanding, the prince promised amnesty for all who had not committed any common crime during the uprising. Little by little the

ambiguity in this assurance was exposed, for an individual who had invaded only one home in order to illegally seize possessions for the purpose of building the barricade could be regarded as a thief. Fortunately, three-quarters of the populace were instantly guilty of this offence, and subsequently there were not enough prisons to accommodate all these criminals. But an individual who later gained popularity as a speaker and who was well-suited to take on a leadership role could be sure of facing legal prosecution.

The lives of four individuals hung in the balance since the opera house was burned to the ground—these being Stern, Butzmann, Ibeles, and the madcap carpenter, Reffbaum, who had suggested using the nobility's fine furniture to build the barricades, which admittedly was hardly a pardonable crime. The most serious of all the offences was and remained the incitement to set fire to the opera house. Of all the many witnesses questioned, all were in agreement that this deed had been committed on sudden impulse. It was purportedly neither preconceived nor discussed in advance. Yet the hands responsible for setting the blaze could surely be ascertained. Ibeles could hardly be considered a suspect, since his personality was considered to be too placid and calm to have dared to undertake such a fanatical deed. But he did have the key to the orchestra entrance, and the library room was situated close to where the flammable set decorations were stored, and it was in that room's window that observers from the castle saw the first light of the fire. Yet the idea of Ibeles purposefully destroying the scores seemed insane. Still, how could one then explain the fact that he did not return to his home the next morning, that no one knew where he was, even though he had been seen after the fire had started in the opera house, fighting in the ranks to defeat the advancing army?

Dorothea's behaviour was observed for clues as to her husband's whereabouts. She was calm and collected, and to all questioning she repeatedly stated that they had made plans to



emigrate to America and that her husband had travelled on ahead. This was considered to be an alibi, and after weeks had passed and there had been no sign of Ibeles, countless implausible fabrications concerning his fate proliferated. According to some he was languishing in a subterranean dungeon in the castle; or he was in Dresden, in Vienna, in Baden, others suggested, or in other places where revolts had taken place; he had apparently been seen wearing a pirate's hat and shirt with daggers and pistols attached to his waist belt; then he had apparently been arrested, and on top of that even killed. The newspapers that were printing such stories were suddenly brought to Dorothea by espionage-minded people who hoped to discover whether any truth lay in the reports based upon her alarmed reaction. But her countenance remained unchanged, and instead, with a tone of indifference she said: "I have long since received news that he has left Europe." She was known to be honest by nature, although some said that a woman could hardly be blamed if her husband's freedom and very life were at stake and she preferred to lie to her best friends rather than confide in them regarding a dangerous secret such as this.

Everyone should be wary of keeping unnecessary secrets, for they demoralize the best of human natures. A person who desires always to be honest will not be able to keep any secret that cunning people are keen to uncover, since a refusal to answer either yes or no is instantly taken to mean an admission. But when an individual finds himself forced to keep a secret, then his willful allusion to the fact that he "has a secret to keep" amounts to betrayal. In this regard this woman put all the men to shame, for while she, with sorrowful heart and deep inner reluctance, faithfully kept up the pretence, Ibeles's friends could not resist boasting that they were privy to the secret. For a few weeks those who witnessed exactly what he had done were careful to guard the secret, but the passing of time soon loosened tongues. That bad habit that most people

practice—that is, keeping quiet only about the most recent of events—now came to the forefront. It had been so long since someone had set fire to the opera house, and no one had been arrested. The main perpetrator was safe, and thus discretion had been maintained for long enough. Soon the whole world knew all the circumstances regarding this incident. The people's political party hailed Ibeles as a hero, and the police released wanted posters of the criminal. Whether he had managed to get to America was being disputed, and the back and forth speculation in local newspapers as well as assorted articles in the English papers regarding his mysterious disappearance, turned our rebellious music director into a full-fledged mythical figure. Unfortunately those who had prided themselves in being accomplices had to suffer imprisonment because of their own carelessness.

Dorothea was fearful that soon everything, including Ibeles's whereabouts, could be exposed, since the enemy already knew so much. As dangerous as it was for him to leave his hiding place in this moment of general watchfulness, the attempt still had to be made. Letters were forged and made to look as if they had come from America, this to divert attention, and Dorothea, who had long stopped making any attempts to see her husband, sold off the family's belongings with the exception of easily transportable items and traveled with her children to her Uncle v. Halen's home on the Rhine. She spent a few more weeks there, tortured by her own anxiety over the state of her beloved husband and by her mother's sorrowful reproaches, until she was finally certain that Ibeles, in his desperate flight from one hiding place to the next, had escaped German soil.

Now poorer than at the start of their marriage twelve years earlier, the couple, with their seven children, were reunited on the ship that sailed from Ostende to London. Their prospects

were not exactly rosy, but after having suffered such extreme fear, the family was overjoyed to be reunited and to start rebuilding their lives.

## Chapter Five

### A Day of Making Calls

Herr v. Halen, loyal uncle and patron, had provided the emigrants with a small amount of money, which he had assumed would be sufficient to pay for furnishings and the like, as well as tide them over during the initial period that Ibeles was without employment. That the period of unemployment could prove to be lengthy was not a concern for the parties involved simply because so many influential people were eager to initiate contact even before the couple had sought an acquaintanceship and this was assumed to be an excellent sign.

Anyone acquainted with London's so-called dead season—late summer, in which it is customary to leave the city behind, or if funds are lacking, at least close their shutters so as to give the illusion of being away on a journey—would never naively draw such a conclusion. The month prior to this dead season has an effect akin to a feverish attack of frenzy in Londoners. Attempts are made during this time to squeeze all the parties, balls, and concerts that failed to materialize earlier into the few remaining weeks prior to the departure en masse. All the many late nights have caused people to become weary and exhausted, and any conversation at receptions dwindles down to nothing in July because all the topics encouraged for discussion in the salons have by this time long been exhausted. Even the humour magazine *Punch* loses its energy, and its most tasteless issues always come out in July. But just as the weakest components of the physical body are most in need of fresh sustenance, so too, the most exhausted among the salon attendees are hungry for new topics of conversation. Towards the middle of July there ensues such a running around by the privileged people paying visits that it borders on madness.

Woe to the one who fills the bill as celebrity-come-lately! Anyone looking for a bit of excitement rushes over and steals a few minutes from him. Of the hundred visitors that came to assure our artist's family of their support, there were not even ten that were interested in anything beyond satisfying their own curiosity. Most were never seen again, since the merely fashionable people enter into fleeting acquaintanceships purely for the season and value an individual according to whether one is in or out of favour. However, the people who are exceptions—the ones that offer genuine friendship, either because they share similar views or because their sincere dispositions urge them to do so—are of inestimable worth in England. Unfortunately, there is no way for the foreigner to determine at first glance whether expressed friendliness is genuine or not on the basis of physiognomy alone, and so he must trust chance if he wants to gather together a close circle of friends from the vast mass of people.

When Ibeles and his wife, whose day-to-day routine had fallen into hopeless confusion on account of the many visits, were finally able to catch a breath, they considered it only fitting that they should now pay visits in return. They were both in agreement that they first needed to contact those to whom their German letters of recommendation were addressed before they could pay attention to the unsolicited acquaintances. The introduction upon which they placed the highest value was addressed to Mr. Richard Mutebell, a literary celebrity, of whose works they had already read several novellas in translation. After Mr. Mutebell, Dorothea had a great desire to look up Evelyn, the friend from her youth, who according to Mrs. Busy was still unmarried and lived at her brother's house in London.

Midmorning, close to eleven o'clock, the couple stood dressed and ready to make their calls. Ibeles was attired in a black tailcoat in accordance with German custom, and Dorothea wore her best mauve silk dress, a black mantilla, and a white satin hat. They walked to the

nearest cab station, where they were assailed with calls of: “Cab, Sir? Cab, Sir?,” and with much ado and confusion engaged a cabman to take them to Nr. 3, Queen’s Street. The cabman asked several unintelligible questions, which Ibeles interpreted as questions regarding choice of route, namely, would they like to be driven through the park or through the streets. He therefore repeated himself, this time with brevity: “Number 3, Queen’s Street” and intimated in broken English that the most direct route would be preferable.

The cabmen, a half-dozen idly standing around, nodded knowingly to one another, and just as Dorothea was about to step into the carriage, she heard a suppressed laughter erupting. This startled her and she now dared to put into practice her long forgotten English and asked the cabman whether he was actually certain of how to get to Queen’s Street. He replied in the affirmative, adding that he would undoubtedly know the way to his own street since his wife owned a shop on Queen’s Street. Hearing this had a calming effect on Dorothea, and Ibeles was certain that it was his pronunciation that caused the cabmen’s laughter. One of them, of whom Ibeles had asked the following in quite proper English: “Mister, will you be so good to far us upon the Queen’s Street, by Mr. Mutebell, in the house Nr. 3,” had turned around to another cabman and said: “This gentleman speaks French, I cannot understand him.”

Dorothea replied: “Mrs. Busy already impressed upon me the fact that the lower classes in London do not understand written English very well, which is what educated foreigners speak, and therefore it is necessary to use as few words as possible. ‘Sir, might you like to drive us here or there’ is already too much; it is too confusing for such a cabman.”

“Quite right,” Ibeles said, “an Englishman would simply have said: ‘3 Queen’s Street,’ and with that the cabman would have replied ‘All right,’ and would have driven off. However, I find the speech used by the working classes so inhumane! I would think that a polite introductory

phrase given prior to one's request such as: 'Would you be so kind, sir!' or 'Sir, kindly drive' would be a matter of simple courtesy!"

Dorothea teasingly replied: "According to this principle a conductor would have to express himself as follows: 'I am sorry, my dear gentlemen in the second violin section, but I must take the liberty to comment that you have inadvertently played a *d*, and would request that perhaps henceforth you would all do me the honour to play c-sharp at this point!'"

"Fine," Ibeles said, "I will assume the monarchical tone that I employed while directing the orchestra in order to become a true Englishman."

The couple had not yet seen much of London, and so the drive through the colourful chaos became quite a celebratory event for them. Few cities offer such diversity of contrast as this one, in which each district has its own distinct character. From a street on which an array of luxury stores was located, where goldsmiths, Indian fabrics, and luxury goods of every conceivable manner dazzled their eyes, they suddenly found themselves transported into a park where sheep and cows grazed, but where the palaces and towers that encircled the park outshone the park's idyllic greenery. The cabman drove merrily past tall columns topped with statues, past theatres, churches, jails, green spaces, museums, and glass-enclosed merchandise halls. He had long since left the alleys congested with a tangle of carriages and the roar of the city behind and now turned into an abysmal-looking, smoke-blackened district of the city. Ibeles and Dorothea, who until this moment had been chatting away and calling each other's attention to sundry unusual sights, now started to wonder that Queen's Street was still nowhere in sight. Having glanced at the time and subsequently realizing that they had already been travelling for an hour and a half, Ibeles could not resist calling out to the cabman and reminding him again of their desired destination—Nr. 3 Queen's Street. Instead of offering a reply, the cabman simply pointed

with his whip handle toward a street corner on which the passengers were greatly relieved to read the name, Queen's Street.

"How strange this area looks," Dorothea said. "I would never have imagined that Mr. Richard Mutebell could live in such a remote location. In comparison to these small, one-windowed, one-story houses our villa is quite a noble dwelling. Just look at the dirty general stores and the unkempt people carrying on around here!"

To this Ibeles replied: "The poets living in London are probably no better off than those in Germany, where a poet sings: "'Take thence the world!" call'd Zeus from his high summit.'<sup>18</sup> The aristocrats reading Mutebell's novellas in their palaces would not dare dream that this great man lives here in a small garret."

The cabman stopped at Nr. 3, and with a smirk on his face opened the carriage door for his adorned cargo. The house was a so-called oil shop of the lowest sort. Small barrels containing yellow pasty soap, tallow candles, and oily goods of that kind were displayed in front of the entry door, and brooms, mops, and hoops were affixed to cords that dangled down on either side of the entrance. Ibeles asked whether Mr. Mutebell lived on the first or the second story, whereupon the woman in the shop assured him that no person by that name lived here or in the entire neighbourhood. Ibeles confirmed afresh the address appearing on the letter and once again compared it to the house number and the street sign until Dorothea had the idea that perhaps there might be another Queen's Street in London or perhaps the address was incorrect and instead should have been Queen's Place or something like that. As they both managed, with combined effort, to make this question coherent to the woman with the broom and the cabman, the latter said with the most foolish innocent air that the foreign lady was quite right in thinking

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<sup>18</sup> Quote from Friedrich Schiller's poem *The Division of the World*, translation by William F. Wertz, Jr. <[www.schillerinstitute.org](http://www.schillerinstitute.org)>



there was more than one Queen's Street. In fact there were twenty-five Queen's Streets, fifteen Queen's Roads, twelve Queen's Terraces, and if one were to add to these the well-known Queen's Squares and Queen's Places and any other addresses whose name began with "Queen," then he currently had seventy-three listed on his register, not taking into account the less well-known little lanes.

It is very difficult to berate a coachman in a foreign language, and therefore let us excuse Ibeles for hurling several German expletives at the cabman, as the latter charged them one guinea for the trip including the return journey. The only thing that somewhat eased his anger at this fraudulent act was his increasing assumption that his guinea had magically produced a momentary ray of sunshine upon the face of a pathetic-looking woman with a child at her breast, clearly living in squalor, and at whose door the cabman had stopped on pretense.

The couple realized that a few more visits undertaken in this manner would ruin any proletarian form of housekeeping. Considering that it is connections that secure a life for an artist living in London, they had to think of how they might contact the aforementioned persons with less personal expenditure of money and time. Helped by their guardian Mrs. Busy, all addresses were subsequently confirmed with the Royal Bluebook and a proper horse-drawn coach used for visiting, referred to as a "fly," with a somewhat more civilized driver in comparison to the cabmen, and the expedition was repeated on the following day, but this time with an improved plan of execution.

The Queen's Street on which Mr. Richard Mutebell lived was somewhere in Mayfair, one of the most elegant areas in the city, and the entryway into the hall of the famous writer in no way compared to the oil and soap stuff of the Queen's Street situated in the city's east end. A mosaic floor welcomed the visitors, and pedestals standing on either side displayed statues of

Greek gods. Extremely anachronous was the sight of two servants with their hair powdered white, wearing ostentatious satin knee breeches of a vivid red colour and coats in a pale lilac. Resting beside Apollo and Antinous, and opposite a niche housing Zeus, there stood the arch-backed chair of the old porter, who held out his stick with its heavy gold knob in direct symmetry to the scepter held by the god of thunder. Heavy velvety carpets decorated the steps, and on the first landing an abundant garden of unfamiliar flowers housed in magnificent vessels scented the air. The room in which the visitors were received, referred to as the drawing room, was furnished in a manner consistent with a dignified London residence. However, since our Germans were still unfamiliar with the concepts that the English relate to matters of comfort and luxury, the author's salon appeared to them to far surpass the rooms of Princess Rosalinde at home in terms of pure luxury, never mind that of the Braunstables and the Radnagels.

Perhaps it would be helpful for my readers, specifically those women who have never visited London, if I described the room that plays such an important role in all English narratives, namely the drawing room. The main features, as far as the room's location on the first floor, its furnishings, and the arrangement thereof are concerned, vary little from the bourgeois house to that of the higher nobility. The difference is that wood and wool in the former become marble, gilding, velvet, and satin in the latter. While the bourgeois displays a few shells, some glassware, or family portraits that serve as tasteless embellishments above the fireplace and on tables, the well-bred man delights guests' eyes with precious curiosities from distant parts of the world, valuable works of art, and books. Mr. Richard Mutebell's drawing room fell precisely in the middle of the two and can therefore serve as a typical example for us.

His wife seemed to have adhered to convention, namely by seeing to it that all decorative efforts were to be lavished upon the windows and the fireplace in order to make a dazzling

impression upon the visitor. Behind the dark-red satin damask drapes, which were attached at the top to gilded vine garlands, hung lightweight lace curtains in white. The draperies were tied back with heavy gold tassels, the transparent curtains underneath were drawn, allowing the air to waft in through the open balcony window. The mantelpiece, the term given to the shelf above the fireplace, was carved of white marble, and although it could be considered a work of art in and of itself, its lovely bas-relief work scarcely commanded any attention in comparison to the masterpieces arrayed upon it. A row of exquisite statues and groupings stood on the marble slab in front of the mirror, which, unfortunately, was flanked on either side by the inevitable crystal candelabras shaped like egg-baskets with glistening prisms. This tasteless decorative element is in all probability always present because the colourful play of light upon the dangling glass decorations seems to be absolutely essential to counter the gloomy English climate.

It is true that one yearns for the German tiled stove during the wet-cold days in London, but the question is: would we find the chimney sweep a pleasing sight on one of those foggy November days? Even if the fire that is happily flickering in the fireplace leaves one side of the body chilled, at least one's innermost being is warmed by the fire's loving red glow. It is the vital adornment that graces every room during winter, and by way of a most peculiar embellishment the English also seek to honour the sacred site of the fireplace during the summer. In the homes of the middle-classes artificial flowers made from crinkled paper bedeck the fireplace grating, as if to tease that retired friend with the signs of spring. Or white or coloured shavings looking like a mix of gold and silver thin threads shaped like fluffy clouds are used to disguise the wintry task of the site. Boring business folk are satisfied with simple serrated packing paper stuck around the grate giving it the appearance of a crown. But women possessing tasteless elegance prefer the just-mentioned decoration, which is manufactured of pink and white silk and decorated with

bows and flowers and conjures up for the viewer an image of a lady who, dressed in her ball gown, has just crawled up the chimney with only the last gathered flounce of that garment still visible.

The Mutebell fireplace was not profaned with such vulgar decorations, but rather was completely filled with fresh-blooming camellias. On the small side tables there stood displayed a great many delicate Indian and Chinese carvings of ivory, stands featuring hummingbirds, and vessels made from huge sea shells, these being the finest examples, sent to London from the distant colonies. The large, round table standing in the middle of the room was covered with deluxe copies of the leading poets and exquisite illustrations, placed there in order to save visitors facing a lengthy wait from being at a loss as to how they might graciously spend their time.

Before Dorothea even had a moment to admire the luxurious carpets and the diverse selection of sofas and chairs chosen specifically for the utmost comfort they provided, and likewise Ibeles had hardly finished admiring the examples of art hanging on the walls, the door opened and the gentleman of the house stepped into the room accompanied by his wife, two adult daughters, and teenage son.

No one would have presumed this rather ordinary-looking man to be a famous author, since neither his eyes nor his bearing bespoke genius. He was polite, but not cordial; neither was he cool, or observant, or engaging. He sat quietly and reticently across from his visitors, leaving it to them to carry the conversation. He understood a little German, and spoke fairly incomprehensible French. His wife, a large, fat, very friendly, but somewhat stupid-looking blonde, was proficient only in her mother tongue, and since she could not understand the foreign guests on account of their rather poor pronunciation, she encouraged her daughters to exercise

their knowledge of German and French. The daughters must have been somewhat uncommunicative, for one was able to elicit little more from them than “Ja” and “Ich weiß nicht” or “Ganz so.” Ibeles and his wife would have believed they had come at an inopportune time if it had not been for the extraordinary friendliness of Mrs. Mutebell, who, by constantly smiling back at Dorothea, dispelled this worry. After topics such as the difficulty of the English language and the length of time they had now been in London and how they liked England had been exhausted, the visitors took their leave in order to pay their next visit.

In the carriage Dorothea could not help but express her surprise that an aesthete could appear altogether as if he were a man attached to a business enterprise. She said: “I won’t mention the bookkeeper expression, the slick hair, the small upright collar covering the shaved chin and the strange little close-cropped sideburns, but did you even once notice a sparkle in his eyes, or did *one* remark emanate from his mouth that a lad working in a store could not have made just as well?”

Ibeles blamed the disinterest Mutebell displayed during their first meeting on the fact that they were all virtual strangers to each other and on the generally reserved nature of the English.

“But,” Dorothea argued, “we know that our friend who had recommended this man to us had written to Mutebell about you. You could have appeared important enough for him to want to form his own opinion of you, and, really, shouldn’t people possessing distinctive character prove of interest to an author?”

To this Ibeles replied: “What impact does just another face from amongst London’s sea of people have on a famous man? And who would expect that such a man should deign to share his most profound thoughts with a stranger? He is wiser to conserve those thoughts if he must write a lot.”

Several years later, as the topic of Mr. Mutebell's assumed boredom once again came up in our couple's conversation, they had discovered the answer to the contradiction found in the author's captivatingly amusing writings and the dullness of his character when in society. We would like at this point to reveal Ibeles's opinion regarding the matter, which he later explained to a German acquaintance.

"One hardly needs even a mediocre writing talent to write such novels as these in London, which to us in Germany, even in translation, appear to be the utmost of titillating fabrications. The entire essence of this city is a weaving together of material suitable for a novel. Its localities provide the background for the gothic tale and the idyllic, for court and state occasions, as for the theatre, and every day the first edition of the best newspaper publishes scenes from public life that, with a little blending together, provide a veritable flood of the tragic and the comic. A German director converting foreign pieces for the theatre possesses about the same amount of genius that Mutebell has for stringing together the reality behind all of London's inhabitants. Many a 'penny-a-liner'<sup>19</sup> could write such three-volume novels, fraught with Australian, Canadian, and Indic insights with more natural wit if he had the funds. However, in order to publish multi-volume works one must be a capitalist. The exceptions are few and far between.

"Anyone living in a village in isolated circumstances who manages to write the simplest of novellas possesses a greater measure of creative genius necessary to bring characters to life and to develop a story line than the writer who has the luxury of daily watching the world's passions being played out here in the west end and in the city. To be sure, we know that Mutebell's novels are more colourfully enigmatic and carry the reader away more forcefully than the German story

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<sup>19</sup> The "penny-a-liner" is an old derogatory expression denoting a writer or journalist being paid for a specific length of text and harking back to a time when payment was one penny per line.

of village life, but we should not draw a conclusion as to the fantasy and poetic feeling of either author.

“In London the novel and the newspaper supplement each other and only after one has had several years of proximate opportunity to draw a comparison between depictions of public life in both can one clearly determine what the English novelist owes to his own creative genius and what material comes to him complements of the newspaper.

“Mutebell is simply a businessman dealing in nice literature, and hence the impression he makes upon all German visitors who expect him to display the mind of a poet.”

We return now to the day that our couple, suffering from the same illusion, left Mutebell's residence for the first time. Their next stop was in front of a small house in Kensington where the exiled Polish Countess Blafoska lived. This lady had initially come to the Ibeles home to pay a visit, thinking they were bound together on the basis of their joint misfortune. But finding only Dorothea at home, the countess had made a fervent appeal for both their friendship and a prompt return visit. Rather than displaying merely an air of condescension, the countess treated the simple middle-class woman with remarkable warmth and, without any prompting from Dorothea, had hastily disclosed the situation that had brought her to London several months ago. She had allegedly been compromised as a result of ties to relatives from Posen and fled to London in order to escape being transported to Siberia.

A well-dressed butler sporting a hefty mustache and a military bearing opened the small garden gate and brought notice of their arrival up to the countess. Dorothea believed she had seen the countess's face momentarily peek out from behind the drapery only to quickly disappear. However, this could not have been the case since the butler returned to announce that

despite the countess feeling indisposed, she would nevertheless receive her foreign visitors from her daybed.

They were invited to wait in a room on the ground level, where a German governess sat reading with the countess's oldest daughter. A French lady-in-waiting was occupied removing the curl papers from the hair of two younger boys, unfurling long curls onto their little blue velvet jackets. The drawing room upstairs was elegant but quite untidy. The piano served as a repository for masses of newspapers strewn around upon it, between which traces of refreshments just recently enjoyed were visible. The table weighed down with writing materials and books would have betrayed the presence of an educated woman if it had not been for the embroidery frame leaning against it and a chaotic tangle of Berlin wool mixed in with the other objects, which left one in no doubt where the lady's real passionate interest lay.

The lady herself lay on the sofa and was somewhat unkempt in appearance: her black hair, almost completely undone, hung loosely across her pale face, and a blue silk shawl was thrown over a white embroidered morning negligee. She stretched out her hand towards the new arrivals and apologized for her recumbent position as being on account of a severe nervous headache. The couple repeatedly suggested they could leave, but she insisted they stay, as it was her desire to be with likeminded people with whom she could have a mutual heart-to-heart talk.

If the conversation in the previous home had remained stilted despite the couple's best efforts, here they could hardly get a word in edgeways. The Polish woman, who was approximately twenty-eight years old and whose pretty facial features were contorted with restlessness, seized Dorothea's hand, pulled her down to a seat beside her, and never let go of her again. Even during her passionate account she used the hand of her friend, who had been taken completely by storm, to gesture involuntarily, or she would press the latter's hand upon her



surging heart or cling to it as if wanting to wrestle a sense of sympathy from it. The mustached butler, in obedience to the countess's unspoken order, had arranged an armchair for Ibeles across from the countess, so that he was literally face to face with her, the result being that the countess intently directed the ensuing conversation towards him.

Her story, which she had previously recounted to Dorothea in haste, she now repeated in more detail and with an excitement of such vehemence that twice she was forced to stop her account as she broke down in compulsive sobbing. Dorothea wanted to ring for her maid, but the countess did not allow this. She assured her that no medicine would be of any help, since her sickness was of the soul, and promised from now on to keep her composure. Ibeles, who had never before experienced such a scene, sat looking shocked and embarrassed and with his expressive blue eyes looked earnestly into the wildly flashing black eyes of the Polish woman. She remained silent for a time and then said to him: "Your gaze has something in it—a magnetic quality that soothes me. So—I can continue with my story."

She placed Dorothea's hand upon her breast and said to her: "Oh my German sister, you are a fortunate woman and will be sensitive to my circumstance! I could produce letters, letters from my husband, who in Petersburg courts the favour of the oppressor, while I would spill my last drop of blood for the freedom of my fatherland. I will show you these letters, because I have absolute confidence in you. I feel that a deep sympathy draws me to you both. In these letters he heaps reproach after reproach upon me, yes, using even terms of abuse, because I gave financial support to my revolutionary-minded relations.

Ibeles intervened asking whether the count was not himself Polish?

"On his father's side he is Polish," the countess continued, "but he spent his life under the influence of the Russian court. I sacrificed my youth in order to win him over to the cause of the

fatherland. My marriage to this man, whom I did not love, a man who is old enough to be my father, was a patriotic deed, pure and simple. At that time I had not yet loved anyone. Despite this, I knew that I was bringing the greatest sacrifice that an inspired woman could possibly bring and placing it on the altar for the fatherland. My country's young nobility worshipped me as if I were a saint, because I had vowed to bring the powerful and wealthy Count Blafoski back into the patriotic ranks. Oh, how futile that all was! Blafoski clings to that Russian tyrant more than ever! And I mourn over my wasted life!"

She covered her face with her hand and with part of her black luxurious hair, but then said in self-admonishment, tossing back her head: "But I will show those in Petersburg what the determined and fundamental convictions of just one woman can achieve! I want to honour the representative's of freedom. My life is to be devoted to the heroes of freedom, and my home's threshold is to serve as their asylum. I will seek to advance every conspiracy, and my very last ruble is to be spent on the acquisition of weapons!"

Dorothea could not help but be moved at the sound of the poor woman's voice, as she choked back her tears. Ibeles too, even though at first her behaviour struck him as somewhat overwrought and theatrical, became somewhat carried away by the fervour of her account, which had all of the signs of being genuine. Her cheeks burned feverishly, and as she raised her hand, which was pale as a ghost's, and swept back the wild curls that hung over her forehead, one might almost have considered her to be beautiful. In any case, for him there was something strangely attractive about the way in which this woman recklessly gave way to her mood—this after his weeks of having encountered only well-mannered people who never lost their composure. In order to calm her down, he sought to initiate a conversation about general political ideas, and for a short time actually managed to divert her attention away from personal matters.

It was difficult to get away, but in view of the list of calls still needing to be made on this day, they finally managed to take their leave with the promise that they would soon come again and return often.

At many of the residences that followed, the couple was able to make a quick escape by leaving a calling card, since the inhabitants had gone out or had already left for the seaside. Our newcomers were not yet cognisant of the popular saying that one would have London entirely to oneself, if one should decide to remain in the city during the months of August and September. As a result they were very puzzled by the fact that some of the streets through which they drove appeared to be completely empty of any sign of life, as all the window shutters were closed.

The sister-in-law of Evelyn—Dorothea's friend from her youth—was the next to receive the couple, and she formally excused herself for not having gone away, her reason for this being the extreme inconvenience of having to attend a wedding and therefore having to remain in London this month, as if it were scandalous to defy the rules of convention. Dorothea only now found out that it was Evelyn who had just recently married. Dorothea had written her maiden name for the servant, prior to his presenting her, because she expected this to be the only name that the family would recognize. This really was the case, and considering the weakness that liberal England has for the institution of the nobility, it was not unthinkable that the *von* placed in front of Dorothea's maiden name, *v. Dewald*, had made her name even more memorable than the qualities pertaining to her character. At any rate, the sister-in-law, who treated Dorothea with great respect, reassured her that Evelyn had always set a high value on her close friendship with the Baroness de Wald: this was how the unassuming country girl *v. Dewald* was referred to here. Evelyn was at this moment away travelling with her new husband, whom one could hardly characterize as being a young husband, since he was over sixty years old. But the sister-in-law

emphatically remarked that the marriage was one based on love, although Evelyn had fallen in love more with her husband's political views than with any external feature. At the same time, he reportedly was still a very robust and healthy looking gentleman, had an immense fortune, and was altogether a suitable match for Evelyn.

The visit to Mr. Chapel still remained, and this one could surely not be postponed, because the gentleman purportedly sponsored artists. Both he and his wife had not yet departed and quite cordially received the foreigners, who had sent a letter of introduction in advance. The old gentleman spoke German fairly fluently, and between him and Ibeles a conversation unfolded about the movement taking place on the continent.

It soon became apparent that Mr. Chapel was not all too enlightened regarding the reports coming in from Germany and France in recent months. He stated that his business associate from Germany, who had recommended Ibeles, had assured him that Ibeles, despite his revolutionary aberration, was reportedly a good man, but hoped that Ibeles would not take offence if an old and experienced politician, who had been the chairman of countless meetings, were to prove to him that the revolution was a work of the devil.

Ibeles made a move to get up, thinking the remark was meant as a personal insult, but since the old gentleman continued quite comfortably with his lecture, Ibeles realized that insult had not been his intention.

Mr. Chapel said: "God saw fit to give several nations a constitution; other nations he made subject to their kings; and the black race he created for slavery. It is a sin to oppose the divine order. England tasted the consequences of this when it abolished slavery in the West Indian colonies and a great many of the most devout families found their income to be decreased to a tenth of what it had been."

Ibeles argued that the negroes were likely of the opinion that the good Lord had ordained freedom for them.

To this the know-it-all Mr. Chapel replied: "Two of my sisters, who were married to West Indian planters, now live with their children in London and have first-hand experience of this consequence. I can cite from the Bible countless passages that have until this time been obscure and now through their symbolism suddenly bring clarity by revealing to us the correlation between the question concerning the negroes and the June massacre."

Having said this he stood up and took a leaflet from the table, which he offered Ibeles for his admonishment. It was a tract that sought to provide evidence for the interpretation just mentioned from the Book of Revelation.

With a good-natured manner he went on: "Sir, you will have heard that I have more than a million at my disposal. I am accustomed to every luxury of life, keep company with the best in society, and am greatly respected within the city of London. But if I, instead of the housemaid, were appointed in the name of Jesus Christ to brush this carpet and to scour the fireplace grate, I would not be ashamed to do so. Likewise, England has been chosen to hold a high position among the nations, and your Germany Sir, has been allotted a lower one. It is best not to go against the Saviour's divine will!"

With a wry smile Ibeles said: "What if God's intention now were to ennoble Germany, which has been politically degraded for so long, and for once finally allow those that are last to be first?"

Mr. Chapel interrupted saying: "Sir, allow me to prove to you that this is not the case. More and more, republicanism is coming to the fore in your country, and that is the work of the devil, because at most God employs absolutism in order to chastise sinful nations."

Shrugging his shoulders, Ibeles said: “For the time being we will certainly have to accept that God’s chosen nation in the modern world is England with its constitution.”

The two women had kept silent during this discussion. The Englishwoman looked on with approval at her husband, whose unctuous sententious phrases she only half understood, and Dorothea had difficulty holding back her laughter. In order to collect herself, she studied several, rather good biblically inspired paintings, which hung directly across from where she sat. Three, hanging side by side, depicted the Madonna painted by various old masters, and in addition to these there was one of the crucifixion, an Ecce Homo, as well as several smaller martyrdom scenes. She thought to herself: How wrong it is to decorate the same wall with more than *one* Madonna? By doing so it would have to follow that one deliberately wanted to remember that this lovely group, in all its diversity, is marked, once and for all, as being a product of the imagination. However, the most callous act of which sanctimonious aristocrats are capable is that of hanging paintings depicting the Saviour wearing His crown of thorns in their ornately decorated ballrooms where all of society gathers for its dinners and dances. How can people in a spirit of merriment clink their champagne glasses in response to an amusing toast, when the precious pale forehead with its drops of blood is visible behind the host’s cheeks flushed red from wine and the reproachful eyes of the former follow them at all times? And in spite of the paintings of martyrs, filled with blood and agony, they dance the quadrille.

Ibeles had now broken off the conversation. Dorothea calmed her mind with regard to the decoration of the ballroom, for occasionally the drawing room serves this purpose as well, and the two now took their leave. It was past five o’clock. The large bell rung for meals had already pealed (signalling the start of the next phase of the day for the so-called morning visitors), and indicated to them that calling cards could no longer be left at any house in London if they had

any sense of propriety. They then remembered that their short trip home took them into close proximity to a German couple that they had resolved to visit.

These were refugees who had arrived only weeks before Ibeles and Dorothea and were in similar circumstances. The man, who at first supported his republican views through the pen and then with weapons, had been forced to flee to London from the region of Baden. His wife was an old acquaintance of Ibeles, who had often heard her sing during the height of her glory. While travelling and giving concerts she had captivated her current husband, Gerhard, who at the time wrote reviews for a newspaper in Mannheim, and after her marriage and in deference to her husband's rich aunt she gave up performing on stage. Her pleasant personality, her talent, and her impeccable deportment had opened for her the doors to more refined social circles in the various cities where, after her marriage, she had by turns taken up residence. The financial responsibility of only two children had never proved a hindrance to furthering her talents as a singer, considering the substantial income of her husband, who later became the owner of a popular newspaper.

Ibeles, who prior to entering Madame Gerhard's abode had given Dorothea a description of his acquaintance's personality, did not doubt for a minute that she and her husband were doing well in London, since they were both in possession of all those qualities that a person needs in order to find success in the cosmopolitan city.

They now came to a standstill in one of the sinister-looking streets that stretch along behind Covent Gardens. A young, unkempt servant girl, who was at the most thirteen years old, opened the door of the house, which was blackened from smoke, and since they were incapable of being understood by this useless wastrel of a girl, the woman who lived in the lower level was called upon. She directed them to go up the stairs. Meanwhile the young servant girl, dressed in a

faded yellowish-green merino wool dress, cut very low at the neckline, and wearing tattered shoes, ran up ahead. Dorothea commented that besides their own, this was the first house in London they had visited in which the stairs were devoid of carpeting. Mrs. Busy had said that the absence of such decoration was an atrocity and an impossibility. Dorothea, however, had declared such carpeting to be impractical and unnecessary when considering their many children and limited income. Upon reaching the second story, the servant girl tore open the door without any prior announcement and shouted: "Ma'm, you are wanted," a phrase usually reserved only when a servant addresses another who is summoned.

Madame Gerhard sat sewing by the window and was dressed in an old house frock, an old apron tied around her, and with nothing white around her neck, all giving the appearance of how a housewife would comfortably dress if she personally intended to clean up the dusty junk room and therefore would not permit an outsider entry into the house. Shocked, she reached for a wrap that hung on the back of the chair, and with a partial glare looked first at the servant girl and then at Dorothea, a stranger to her. She had as much trouble recognizing Ibeles, who when last she saw him was young and not sporting a beard, as he had difficulty in drawing a connection between this figure and the brilliant phenomenon whom he regularly accompanied in the chamber concerts at court.

After the initial awkwardness that results from such recognition under such circumstances had been overcome, both parties soon engaged in uninhibited chatter. Dorothea's character was so forthright and clearly harmless that the singer could not even for a moment feel that she was being put down by her visitor. At the beginning, Ibeles enquired only after the father of the family and in doing so most helped to smooth the awkwardness caused by the very upset woman's apology for her surroundings.



She said: “My husband has taken the children out to show them the zoological garden. I did not want to go along because so much unfinished work needed my attention. I wanted to concentrate on all the darning and mending, which is necessary when one does not have a maid.”

Ibeles gazed at the performer in astonishment, who although having aged somewhat, nevertheless still possessed the charm and decorum a cosmopolitan woman required to demand more of life than to waste away in this dark parlour surrounded by mending. He said to her: “I do not fear that you have become completely wrapped up in the throes of domesticity, although your words threaten to suggest otherwise, but I do not see a piano in your room. Is it permissible to allow a voice such as yours to become rusty for even just a few months?”

“My voice is no longer what it once was!” Madame Gerhard replied, “and even if, on request by people in society, I have on occasion sung here and there, my joy of music died when I stopped performing on stage. I need to sing in front of a large audience, otherwise it is hardly worth the effort to apply myself. The smaller the auditorium was, the worse I always sang, which you, Herr Ibeles, remember from Dessau.”

Ibeles interrupted her saying: “Do not judge yourself too harshly, dear Madame Gerhard. Instead it would be better for you to recount that the larger the auditorium, the more glorious and richer your recital became. I have never construed this as vanity on your part, because I know how a large audience lifts and carries a performer who is accustomed to a public. Everyone’s pulse seems to be one with our own, and our soul expands and houses every listener’s soul within!”

“But what is it that keeps you from restarting your career as a performer here?” Dorothea asked, already knowing that Gerhard, through his activity, lost not only his position in society, but also all chances of retaining his rich aunt’s support. “I would not for a moment object,” she

continued amiably, “to bravely helping to support my husband here in exile, if only I possessed the necessary talents.”

The singer sighed and said: “In the few months that we have been here I have discovered so much about London that every step required to work my way out of these living quarters sickens me. Moreover, I know from former artistic peers what is necessary in order to succeed, and I would rather perish than accept an inferior position in the public eye.”

“But do you not realize what you owe your loved ones?” Dorothea asked and was instantly alarmed at her boldness in stepping in to give this unknown woman advice. “Please forgive me,” she continued and clutched the hand of the ill-humoured performer, “if I, an old housewife by profession, voice my objection of this manual work that you are doing. It is the most unprofitable thing that you can do when you sit for hours doing such woman’s work, saving pennies when you could be earning pounds.”

Ibeles attacked the singer’s despondency from another angle. He opined that if her voice had indeed lost some of its vigour, he could not blame her for not wanting to take on minor roles, appearing alongside famous singers of the highest quality. But he encouraged her to advertise herself as a voice teacher, a profession that was regarded as being highly profitable.

“Not for anything in the world,” Madame Gerhard replied. “First of all, I have no patience with beginners, and in addition I do not play any instrument well enough to be able to accompany the singing. For me this would be the most tedious, intolerable form of penance. I could not even instruct my own children in music. I wanted to try, but I was beside myself whenever I heard a wrong note, so much so that even my husband finally asked me to spare myself from completely wearing myself out. At best, the only thing that I could resort to would

be to become a concert singer. I have already had an offer in this regard from a music director here who organizes performances of sacred music.”

“Oh, that is wonderful, excellent!” Ibeles and Dorothea exclaimed in unison.

Laughing bitterly, the singer went on: “I turned the offer down. But to prevent you from thinking that I had wanted my talent to go to waste and that I had created difficulties where there were none, please hear me out. True, I would receive ten guineas for that evening’s performance, but can you even imagine the amount of my own money I would have to spend prior to earning these ten guineas?—As soon as I begin to sing in concerts and in society, I must be prepared for the fact that people will want to pay me visits, and in order to receive them with proper decorum, we would have to increase our standard of living by six times. I would have to have a piano, appear before my public in a choice wardrobe, keep servants—in fact, our entire lifestyle would have to be tuned to a much higher key. Even if we could manage to gather together the capital that would make such a speculative offer possible, it would be worth the effort only if we expected to live out the rest of our lives in London. But my husband is convinced that in less than six months his political party will gain control in all of Germany. So it is essential for us to economize and submit to this temporary existence as best we can. In any case, I would rather busy myself with work meant for maids in this room than enter London’s artistic world.”

Dorothea did not quite know whether she should agree or disagree with the lady. By nature, she herself possessed a drive to overcome external circumstances, and because of this she could not quite condone the despondency to which Madame Gerhard abandoned herself. Moreover, the variety in domestic affairs that filled her life had always kept her cheerful, whereas Madame Gerhard, upon being torn from her own occupation, merely sat at her sewing table all day and as a result succumbed to brooding and losing all zest for life.

The time had come to take their leave, and once they were alone, husband and wife were surprised at their emotional exhaustion.

“We did not really undertake anything in particular, and yet we are far more tired than if we had worked extremely hard!” they said to one another. “That’s quite natural,” Dorothea declared, “even without taking into account the miles of travelling about through this noisy city. At home, when visiting any half-dozen acquaintances you could almost count on the same news providing the topic for conversation in every house. Here, in every house you witness a different sphere of life, requiring your brain to function on a whole new level of comprehension when you call on totally unknown people.”

They had finally arrived at the entrance to Briar Place, and in astonishment observed a cluster of people, among them also some policemen, standing in front of their dwelling.

“Oh dear! Something must be wrong!” Ibeles exclaimed. “I hope nothing terrible has happened to the children!” Dorothea said, turning pale.

## Chapter Six

### The Initial Sufferings in Exile

Alighting from the carriage they heard one woman say to another: "The parents have arrived home!" With great haste Dorothea made her way through the throng, which quietly parted. Meanwhile a policeman addressed Ibeles and calmly informed him that the child that had fallen out of the window was *not* dead. Katrinchen was on her knees in the front hall, crying loudly and wringing her hands, and when she caught sight of her employers she covered her face with her apron and acted all the more distraught, as if hoping, through her excessive demonstration of sorrow, to deflect all scolding from the outset. One of the Misses Beak from next door stood next to her and tried in vain to get her to compose herself. The older children, who until now had stood around feeling helpless and frightened, ran to their mother and in unison tried to tell her of the incident. Cillchen, the youngest daughter, was lying in the lap of the neighbour, Mrs. Beak. A surgeon and the other Miss Beak were devoting their attention to the child.

After the surgeon had said a few reassuring words to Ibeles, the latter's first priority was to remove the curious onlookers from his small garden, a task in which he was aided by the policemen in their quietly persuasive manner (a trait typical of these guardian angels of London). Mrs. Beak found it necessary to apologize for becoming involved, since she had not yet formally met her neighbours, but a hand squeeze and a heartfelt look of gratitude was the only reply the distressed mother could offer in the moment.

The child, who up until then had lain unconscious, now began to whimper and turned in great pain when any attempt was made to lift her up and place her in her mother's arms. The

doctor ordered her not to move for a while longer, and Mrs. Beak was quite happy to stay in the position she was in for as long as required. Dorothea, who had not eaten since her tiring drive and had become overwhelmed by the scare, was just about to faint when Miss Harriet Beak quickly tried to support her and help her to a chair. Mrs. Beak now revealed her natural helpfulness. Without altering her position in order not to jolt the child, she ordered her other daughter, Lucy, to go home and bring back a few home remedies as well as a bottle of strong spirits used to aid recovery in the case of fainting. Everything was carried out with the greatest of calm and promptness, and after Lucy had complied and Harriet had emptied the room of the disturbing throng of remaining children, hoping to occupy them in the small garden, the others were able to regain sufficient sense to ascertain how the situation had unfolded.

There was no talking sense with Katrinchen. She had completely lost her head and only brought forth the following, amidst sobbing: “I want to stay with the poor child—now I would rather not leave—I want to confess everything”—statements that made no sense to Ibeles and that he simply attributed to the stupid young girl’s bewilderment.

According to the account given by the Beak ladies, it emerged that they had observed the youngest children throwing their toys with glee from the lower window out onto the area of the courtyard, surrounding the basement. Other objects soon followed the toys, and finally all the cushions from the sofa, a footstool and, in order to complete the tower, its growing height eliciting loud laughter from the children, they dragged out the bedding from the nursery. After this, Cillchen wanted to see if she could reach the tower with a stick, and leaned further and further out of the window.

Seeing this, Mrs. Beak could no longer restrain herself, and no matter how unseemly it might be to concern oneself with the affairs of strangers, she nevertheless, as a mother, felt that

the heart speaks louder than such other considerations. She opened her window hoping to catch the attention of Katrinchen, whom she could see busy in the garret. She had left the children unattended the entire afternoon, and at that moment appeared to be packing something. In spite of Mrs. Beak's calling out and waving, Katrinchen seemed unaware, and so Mrs. Beak decided to go over and ring the doorbell. She had just arrived at the door leading to the small garden, when she saw the accident she had wanted to prevent. Cillchen tumbled down head first onto the tower of pillows, and although the layer of bedding broke her fall, the impact to her head must have knocked the child unconscious. The shouts from Katrinchen and the other children, who all initially thought she was dead, attracted the attention of passersby and the police. Mrs. Beak and her daughters, who knew that the parents of the poor little worm were not at home, had taken it upon themselves to contact the nearest doctor and were prepared to lend a helping hand.

During the course of this report, Cillchen slowly regained consciousness and started babbling: "It hurts, my little arm hurts a lot!" The child's voice revived father and mother more than any tonic could have managed, and with delight they saw, through the sweet tears of their darling, that the gaze from her dear little eyes was healthy and thus that her brain had not been injured. The doctor, once the child's complaint had been translated to him, examined her little arm and concluded that it had only been dislocated, not broken. Several streaks of blood, the trickling of which the parents had first noted with horror, stemmed from the roughness of the wall, which had grazed the child's forehead fairly deeply, but not dangerously so.

In light of the potential for much greater harm to which she could have succumbed, the parents had to accept the anguish of the ensuing days. Mrs. Beak, with whom a relationship had now been forged, forgot all about her dread of the strangers and their accompanying divergent customs and showed herself to possess the most benevolent kind-hearted nature. Thereafter, her

daughters gathered a few of the older children to go out for a walk in order to provide Mrs. Ibeles the calm needed for the care of the young patient. Then they presented the little one with playthings that they had until now kept in memory of their own childhood. During the time that Cillchen had to remain in her little bed, Mrs. Beak brought over all kinds of delicacies from her supply of homemade preserves, showed her picture books and offered her services in a great many ways. Not until one experiences the small sufferings in life that come without personal fault does one witness just how good people are. Henceforth Mrs. Beak and her daughters took such an active interest in the German family, as if feeling obliged through their doubled efforts at friendliness to make amends for all the mistrust they nurtured towards the family before this sad accident broke through the wall of reserve.

On the evening of the accident, after the little one had been bandaged up and lay sleeping and the doctor and the neighbours had taken their leave, Ibeles demanded an explanation from Katrinchen regarding her intimation of having a confession to make. Now that the accident had turned out to be less serious than she had initially thought, she seemed to have become regretful and did not want to talk about it. Dorothea had impressed upon her most urgently that she was not to leave the children unattended for even a moment, and now she gave the most inane excuse as to why she had confined herself upstairs. For weeks already, the housewife had noticed that the young girl was more distracted than usual and had attributed this to homesickness. She imagined herself in this poor creature's situation, having no one to associate and chat with in this foreign land other than the children, and she would have liked to speak an encouraging word to her here and there. But the endless stream of visitors had tested even her own coping skills, and during the quiet times in the day there was so much needing to be organized and settled, leaving her no time to inquire after the young nursemaid's state of mind. Dorothea even now would have



left the matter to rest, since worry over Cillchen's fall absorbed all her attention, if one of the young boys had not innocently asked why Katrinchen had hidden so much luggage behind the woodpile this afternoon. The young girl turned completely red in the face, and the housewife, who until now had never had the slightest doubts regarding this innocent country girl's honesty, was so amazed at the girl's stammering and all her mysterious behaviour that her thoughts came to a complete standstill. She could hardly dare to believe that this girl's round face, with her mouth distorted with weeping like a chastised child, was capable of something such as guile and deceit. To Dorothea, Katrinchen seemed almost too stupid for even the slightest stealth. Dorothea stared at her for a moment and then said: "Come upstairs with me. I want to speak with you in private."

Once mistress and maid were alone, the girl started sobbing and finally began to talk: "I know that madame is good and does not want to stand in the way of my happiness, and if she puts in a good word with the master, he also will not object."

"If you are homesick, you are free to tell me. You were happy to come along with us, and no one attempted to persuade you otherwise. Now that our child has had an accident on account of your negligence, you can appreciate that it is up to you to remain with us until the worst has passed. As soon as I am able, I will try to find someone to replace you, as I would rather pay for your return journey home than have to be a witness to your unhappiness, no matter how much annoyance this may cause me."

Oh no, I am not homesick, and I do not want to go home. Yesterday someone persuaded me, and if I had not been so attached to the children, I would already have left fourteen days ago—"

“What? Leave without saying a word to us?—To whom would you have gone? For heaven’s sake, who besides us do you even know here?”

The girl replied: “I’ll tell you everything, as if I were in confession. I can see that you wants what is best for me and do not want to force me. While the many elegant peopl’ came callin’, and while you had to stay seated on the sofa the whole afternoon, a person who spoke German came to see me ‘round back at the kitchen window. He was a very decent person, I can see that, dresst well, and he speaks high-German like our master. He started by asking me how much I was bein’ paid, and I told him, and he said that here in London, the girls got four times as much. And then he said—but I feel ashamed—”

“Well? Out with it. You can see that I am not becoming angry.”

“He said that such a pretty girl like me was much too good for this tough job. He would be able to get me a job where, for good money, I would not have to do anything other than wait on fancy ladies, and where I, too, would wear silk dresses and have curled hair. I did not want to believe it, but he swore up and down that it was all true.”

“Katrinnen! Katrinnen! That does not appear to be completely above board. An honest person does not go behind the backs of the employers to steal away a servant girl. Why ever did you keep this acquaintanceship such a secret? Did you not promise to obey me as you obeyed your mother if I were to take you along?”

“I wanted to tell ya everything right away, but Herr Fritzler forbade me. He said this to me: ‘Little lady, your mistress is happy to have a girl for next to nothing, who works like a horse, and the madame will not willingly let you go. This same thing happened to me. My first master also brought me to London for an apple and a slice of bread, because I was a stupid country boy. If I had not run away, I would never have amounted to anything. But now I am a different

fellow,' he said, and he pulled a handful of gold from his pocket, as if it were pennies, and he showed me his gold watch with its thick gold chain that dripped with baubles, and a signet ring with a carnelian stone.”

“What you are telling me shows me that you have received bad advice. You are naïve, and I fear that a corrupt person wants to take advantage of your naivety.”

“Oh no, Madame, I’m definitely not as simple minded as you might think. I’ve also read about temptation in my prayer book, and I don’t let men sweet-talk me. He could say whatever he wanted. I kept sayin’ that I would not believe that he knew of such a position for me unless I actually saw the master and mistress for myself. So today, while you were out with the master, the mistresses themselves came to see me. Two ladies dressed in rich silk clothes with hats and veils, I can tell you that no countess could have looked more beautiful, only I thought that their faces were painted too heavily. The one spoke German as well as I, and with very persuasive words told me that I should go along with them right then. I said I did not like leaving the children alone and that I wanted to wait until my mistress came back home. I had to swear to her that I wouldn’t give anything away, and then we decided that she herself was gonna come and pick me up in her carriage t’night.”

“So you really wanted to entrust yourself into the hands of complete strangers, and you never considered into what kind of disgrace and misery they could entice you?”

“I’m sure that they truly meant well. They even gave me money as a token of their good-faith, a piece of gold worth six thaler and twenty cents. Look!”

Dorothea soon realized that the dishonorable agent had not only succeeded in concealing his motives from the foolish Katrinchen, which prompted Dorothea’s suspicions, but had also made an impression upon the young girl’s little heart. The young, fresh-looking country girl was

completely convinced in her heart that Herr Fritzler was concerned only for her well-being and that her madame spoke only out of self-interest. Had she not been at fault for the child's accident by being preoccupied with preparations for her secret escape, she would have been more defiant. But instead this accident appeared to her as a punishment sent from heaven. Instead of minding the children, she had stood in front of the mirror, tidying herself up for the commencement of more genteel employment conditions. Now she wanted to atone faithfully for her sin by doubling her labour as long as poor Cillchen lay sick. Beyond that, she felt she owed no further obligation to her mistress, and since the dear Lord had so miraculously led her to London, where she could earn more than a hundred thaler in a year scrubbing and sweeping, she would be foolish to throw away her good fortune.

These were roughly the thoughts that swirled around in her mind while Dorothea left to relate the story to her husband. Ibeles became so irate at the audacity with which this vice dared to approach the threshold of virtuous parents that, outraged, he grabbed for a stick in order to inflict a beating upon both women and Herr Fritzler if they dared even to show their faces at the kitchen window. The two boys, who from their mother's elusive story were able to understand only that someone wanted to carry Katrinchen off to prison, displayed an excitement of militant proportions, carrying in a blowpipe and bow and asking if they might erect a barricade.

The night passed with considerable disquiet. Dorothea and Katrinchen watched over the child, who required cold compresses and had started to run a high temperature. Ibeles waited for the reprobate wretches in order to banish their desire to entrap decent German country girls. A club, a pail of cold water, and the one pound note, the latter having been retrieved from Katrinchen and which he intended to throw in their faces, rested behind the kitchen door, which he had left ajar. He wanted to listen for the sound of carriage wheels in order to be ready to

avenge his house's honour. But carriage after carriage went by, and as silence began to fall upon Briar Place, one could still hear the roar from distant streets as if it were the sound of perpetual thunder. Finally, as the hour neared eleven-thirty, it seemed to him as if a carriage stopped close to the fence that separated Briar Place from the main streets. All was quiet once more—then the sound of a man's footsteps nearing the villa became audible. Right, Ibeles thought, that will be the rogue, as he heard him quietly sneak around the house and approach the kitchen door. Then, from outside, a hand carefully tested the door to ascertain whether it was open—at this point Ibeles could no longer contain himself. With a flood of German expletives, he sprang from his hiding place like a lion and let his intruder have a mighty blow with his stick. But in the next moment this same man had grabbed him by the neck, at which point Ibeles mixed English curses and expletives with his own German as he felt a strong arm drag him out of his own house and into the bright light of a gas lantern.

As soon as the light fell on the features of both the wrestling men, perplexed, they relinquished their hold on one another, stared at each other and then outdid each other in offering up apologies for their mutual error. Ibeles recognized the good-natured policeman's face, the one who, just several hours ago, had told him that his child was *not* dead and then with kind politeness had helped him empty the square in front of the house of the mob of people that had gathered. Ibeles had given him two shillings as a tip and the man now mistreated him on his own doorstep! What was he to make of the English law and justice system!

The policeman, after realizing that he had violated the Habeas Corpus Act against the homeowner, apologized with the following simple explanation: "It is one of our duties each night to inspect and ensure that all doors and window shutters have been properly locked in the district in which we make our nightly inspection. From the broad shadow of the entry way I could

already tell that your kitchen door was not closed, and since the scare with the child had occurred today I felt it was understandable if your housemaid had failed to fulfill her duty. Besides, one of my comrades had seen a suspicious character lurking about here both yesterday and today and whom we would have already arrested if the personal description that our superior had given us had been more accurate. When I was attacked in such a murderous manner, I was convinced that thieves had taken cover in your kitchen and were making an attack on your home.”

Ibeles now divulged to the policeman why *he* had so recklessly struck at him, and again declared his heartfelt regret over the error. However, the policeman, upon receiving further enlightenment regarding the existing circumstances, did not appear to share the same religious zeal of the German gentleman and asked him: “Do you really want to make me believe that you had wanted to thrash these ladies?”

“You refer to these evil people as ladies?” Ibeles asked with astonishment.

“Certainly,” the police man earnestly replied, “if they are dressed and speak in the manner of a lady, they are entitled to our protection just like every other lady. You can summon them to court because they wanted to tempt your maid to leave your employment or to ensnare her in wicked practices, but if you take it upon yourself to chase them away by beating them, then I am required by law to arrest *you*.”

At this moment one could hear the other policeman, who was close by, cranking his rattle to get the other policeman’s attention.<sup>20</sup> The policeman who had spoken quickly left Ibeles to come to the aid of his comrade, who was on the other side of the fence where the carriage had come to a stop. Out of a sense of personal excitement fed more or less by curiosity and also to just once witness the goings-on at night in London, Ibeles followed him after he had pulled the

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<sup>20</sup> “Rattle” refers to the hand-held noise-making device used by nineteenth-century British policemen to call for assistance.

door shut behind him and put the key in his pocket. He arrived just in time to witness none other than that suspicious character, Herr Fritzler, being arrested, who on account of a small inaccuracy in his personal description had up until now managed to lead the police astray. The policeman who had arrived on the square first had called out for help so forcibly because Fritzler's accomplices, the two ladies, were clawing at his face. Ibeles was given the satisfaction of seeing the policeman who had come to the aid of the other and who was the guardian angel of Briar Place taking this opportunity to pull out his billy club, that awful weapon accorded to his post, and with little consideration to them set about giving the petticoats of the ladies a bit of a whacking with it.

Relieved to see that he had, as in a bourgeois tragedy, witnessed vice being given its due punishment, even though morality came out of the action with a bit of a black eye, Ibeles went inside and reported the outcome of the situation, which resulted in his wife's victory and Katrinchen's contrition. After this he went to his ailing child's bedside once more, placed his calming hand on the feverish little head, and told a few little jokes just to witness her little smile. In order that my lady readers now also realize that this virtue was duly rewarded, I shall reveal that Ibeles while upstairs, poured himself a substantial glass of wine and, his appetite being renewed, helped himself to some superb cold roast beef with pickles, both of which he could not have touched earlier because of his distress. Having eaten, he lit a good cigar, sat down at the open window and looked out at the night sky over London, which, now that all the smoke had cleared, was particularly bright and sparkled beautifully. His intention was to stay awake until day had almost broken, so that if the need should arise he could summon the doctor. However, nothing that might be cause for alarm took place, and since his sweet little daughter was restored to him, he felt a renewed courage to face all the less important worries with a smile.

Dorothea's perspective regarding the day's events was more dismal. To her the incident did not signal a one-time event, but rather a continuous condition of the soul. A long sleepless night spent at the sickbed undoubtedly gives rise to a bleak outlook. And how much the more so in the case where the dismal outlook seems to stretch out over a lifetime. The past rose up in her memory like a light-blue sky whose boundary they had now crossed into the chaos where all colours, jumbled together, form a colourless dull monotony. In the end, the changing impressions throughout the day left her distinctly conscious of only one thought: "I was not cut out for this way of life. I know how to function within the confined cycle of duties, but I feel lost in the continual interaction of the broad confines of colourful society."

Katrinchen was so drowsy that her mistress could no longer depend on her assistance. She continued with the poultices herself, and as morning rose and Cillchen's fever was gone and she had fallen asleep, Dorothea, fully dressed, stretched out on the sofa, where she could hear the child breathing beside her, and gave herself over to her thoughts for a good while. We shall follow her silent soliloquy and its preoccupation with first one point and then another.

"Housewife and a lady of the world are two irreconcilable things in London. How often I was on tenterhooks whenever the idle swarm of dressed-up strangers kept me tied to the sofa, leaving me of no use to anyone and in a state of boredom. All the duties that were being left undone weighed heavy on my conscience. With every quarter of an hour that I spent in idle chatter, I saw my household fall into a further state of neglect. The children ran wild and had to be pushed aside because their parents had become fashionable entities in society. If the poor children happened to appear and display boisterous behaviour in the presence of guests, their appearance unkempt and wild, then I, their mother, was met with disapproving looks from snippy ladies. Yet I could never say to someone's face: *'The children are naughty and dirty*



*simply because you are all here!* If you get up and leave, I shall have the time to raise them properly and put things in order.’ And even now, on the first day in which I satisfy my social duties and pay the required return visits, my child tumbles out of the window and my young housemaid is lured astray, despite my having given her old father my personal assurance of her conduct.

“I am in the same situation for which, back home, I condemned the wives of the fawning courtiers. There, every disaster came about by confusing the verbs *can* and *must*. Frau von A. stated: ‘I *cannot* concern myself with my children, because I *must* attend the balls.’ Frau von B. stated: ‘We *cannot* take care of our debts, because we *must* lead an extravagant life.’ Frau von C. stated: ‘I *must* deceive my husband, because I *cannot* spurn Lieutenant D.,’ and so forth, when all that is required is simply stating the opposite: I *must* do this and therefore I *cannot* do that. What hinders me from giving the following explanation: ‘I *cannot* live a life devoted to making calls, because I *must* fulfill my duties as a mother and as a housewife, and because I *want* to do so.’

“No doubt Johannes will again warn me of the danger of keeping myself so closely confined, of perishing in the petty details of domestic life, of cutting off all paths to creativity—but if it *must* now be this way?—What right do I have to demand a way of life that Madame Gerhard must renounce? She could at least earn an income—I can make my husband’s life easier only by managing the household and by being thrifty.

“I cannot be ungracious towards the lady visitors, but instead of furthering the conversation, I intend to cause each topic of conversation to die out. I shall outdo the Mutebell ladies in being dull so that anyone coming to pay us a visit out of sheer curiosity will not deign to come back a second time.

“The neighbourly conviviality and close-knit friendships with like-minded people, as it is cultivated in Germany, is in any case not possible here, where one is separated by such great distances. This deprivation will not even be the greatest difficulty we shall encounter. I have already seen that even family life, to the degree that all the middle classes enjoy it in Germany, becomes a luxury here, where only the privileged classes are able to afford such an indulgence.

“It seems to me almost as if that idyllic time in our marriage became an irretrievable thing of the past when we set foot on this soil. How easy it was to acquire what we needed for our modest lifestyle at home. After only a few short hours our time of separation was over. If Johannes was away from home, then my eyes knew where to look in expectation of seeing a beloved sign of him. In this monstrous city I feel as if my loved ones would be devoured by a sea of sand if they set foot in the next street.

“Oh, and the feverish haste with which one must run all of one’s errands, given that one cannot have even a quarter of an hour without being disturbed. Where have the summer afternoons gone, where I sat with my work in the clematis arbour and Johannes would stretch out on the grassy area and the children would play round about him? One was not stingy about an hour spent in innocent pleasures. And now all recreation has been taken up with ceremony, and pleasure has become a more difficult scourge than work itself!”

A period of calm now ensued, without any assistance from Dorothea, as the dead social season followed on the heels of months of merry-making. As pleasant as this break is for a soul yearning for solitude, it is a bleak and desperate time for the artist, particularly the musician, who, newly arrived in London, must endeavour to earn a living.

## Chapter Seven

### The Elite Proletarians

In the writings from before and after the Revolution of '48 that discussed the proletarian issue, we have seen that the poorest sector of society was further divided into two tiers. Below the proletariat proper, as the working class called itself, stood yet another group called the "lumpenproletariat," these being the unemployed beggars and vagabonds. A third, more superior tier that I suggest calling the artistic-intellectual elite proletariat was not accounted for, and even though this is one of the most industrious and at the same time most harassed class of people, its members were shown very little respect by the theoretical revolutionaries, since they were regarded more as an appendage to the aristocracy.

In Germany, a great many officials make up the elite proletariat. But swelling its ranks, most notably, is that cross-section of the nation that is rich in ideas, namely the scholars, poets, and artists. A sense of mistrust prevails among the members of the working class against this last group, in particular against musicians, as if it were unimaginable that these could form an alliance and work towards *one* common goal. The working class cried out: "Your occupation services only the upper classes. Your work cannot be called work, but simply a musical mechanism, an intellectual indulgence that benefits only the aristocracy and not the nation. How are we to believe that you could identify with us! How can you demand that we consider you to be one of our own!"

The elite proletarian might well answer as follows: "Which class do the weavers of velvet and silk serve, or the labourers that produce carpets and wallpaper? The public pays just as little

attention to sumptuous carpets as they do to compositions for the piano. The same people that pay for our paintings, compositions, and poetry also purchase your wares. We all serve the same hand that feeds us, whether we are humble working proletarians or elite intellectual proletarians: that is to say, we all serve the aristocracy of birth and of money.”

The labourer, who is the recognized proletarian, has at least one advantage over his genteel brother, namely that he endures none of the demands that embitter the other’s daily life. The so-called expenditures for public and charitable functions on behalf of the poor labourers continually place demands on his meagre purse, and all those other proletarians want his individual patronage, even though he himself is more in need than they of patronage.

What would the unmarried labourer earning just enough to provide for his livelihood with his ten hours of manual labour say if the same demands were made upon him that have become duty for the elite proletarian, whose difficult work requires utilizing the mind, and if, with a six-fold income, he were obliged to provide for a family of six, therefore being the elite proletarian’s complete equal. On the street, the manual labourer’s crude-looking jacket guards him from the pleas of the poverty-stricken. The artist or musician, on the other hand, who *must* dress in a refined manner if he wants to find employment at all, is deemed to be rich and hard-hearted by all the beggars based on his coat’s appearance. And this coat is more often than not the only extravagance that differentiates his life from the lower-class proletarian, for neither can indulge in anything beyond their daily sustenance.

The lists of victims of floods and disasters, for contributions to charities both popular and unpopular, all bypass the proletarian involved in manual labour and proceed directly to the home of his elite brother. The painter who contributes a painting for a draw or the musician who

organizes a concert in aid of the poor is often all too familiar with the very same hardships that he is asked to help remedy!

The upper classes, who provide for the elite proletarian's bread and butter, demand that the home in which they visit him be furnished with a sense of decorum. It does not matter whether he finds delicate wallpapers and drapes to be a necessity or whether he would rather eat from crockery and dress in sackcloth in order to prevent selling his soul for the sake of material baubles—he *must* comply, for the outward appearance of this small bit of luxury is the same to him as the mirrored pane of the display window is to the craftsman displaying his goods. These unavoidable expenditures, which his brothers do not require in their more crude form of work, they impute to him as an outward sign of his income. The greater the portion of his resources that are swallowed up by his house, studio, library, or orchestra, the more he is expected to give to charitable causes.

The *famous* proletarian is a particular anomaly for whom the described hardships of the class just mentioned are even greater. Every kindness society has shown him he is expected to repay one-hundred fold. While thousands have with ease united together to raise an individual to the level of public attention or admiration, it becomes inexpressibly difficult for that individual to pay back the thousands in kind. And yet this is such an unbending demand placed upon famous proletarians that when this expectation is not met, they are painted as being disdainfully ungrateful.

The individual who reveres glory over money will find that fame does indeed follow him, but poverty comes right along with it. If he is a scholar or an artist, he neither writes nor creates what prevailing taste would pay him for. Instead he goes where his genius drives him. The higher his genius takes flight, the smaller his financial success will be during his lifetime. But long

before he gathers the fruit of his labour, while he is still in the midst of his struggle, his name has already become so widely renowned so as to gather around him those who want to utilize his abilities for their own advantage. The more influential the pen of the writer, the more the helpless demand that it be set in motion in behalf of *their* own interests; the more talent a teacher possesses, the more his poor artistic disciples demand that he sacrifice his own time; and if he really is a poet, he is expected all the more to strew a blossom of genius on the grave of stillborn journals. The work that the public expects one famous proletarian alone to complete would more than suffice to occupy the entire office of a senior official or of a large trading house, and the requests for money from the remainder of the proletariat exceed his yearly income in a matter of a few weeks.

The position of the elite proletarian who migrates to London with his public persona brings to a climax everything that, all over the world, causes this honorable class to succumb to despair. Therefore, one can hardly blame anyone in this city for seeking safety from these storms in the harbour of the bourgeoisie as soon as possible.

The first few years that Ibeles spent in this state in London resemble the state of a skilled swimmer to whose limbs a mass of drowning people cling. As easy as it would have been to reach the shore if he had had the freedom to do so, he nevertheless would have sunk hopelessly into the deepest poverty if it had not been for the financial aid sent by his good old Uncle v. Halen, which temporarily kept him and his family from the brink of disaster.

By German standards this amount was inordinately generous, but in London the amount was, even with the utmost of thrift, sufficient only to satisfy the basic necessities of life. The unawareness of the complex relationships, illness, and other small misfortunes, and above all the uncertainty of the near future made the first dead season and the following winter in the

cosmopolitan city one of the hardest experiences that our refugee couple had ever previously endured.

While in Germany countless small democratic newspapers kept alive the confident belief that freedom would ultimately triumph, the refugee thrown into London quickly saw all such hopes vanish. The English papers, already unfavourable to any progress in Germany, had only derision or abuse for the violent uprising, which Frankfurt's parliament wanted to salvage in 1849. Strangely enough, in London the prevailing point of view regarding the circumstances was in stark contrast to the elation of every expelled arrival fresh from the battlefield, who from the start carried with him the conviction that the opposition had prevailed only momentarily and that the triumphant German nation would, overnight, call for their return. Many of the refugees argued amongst themselves even now about the positions they wanted to occupy after their victorious return to a fatherland purged of all its princes, and they harshly criticized those who tried to stave off poverty from crossing their threshold as being renegades and lukewarm moderates.

In the beginning, Ibeles stood fairly unchallenged between the factions that formed within the party, which, first and foremost, should have remained united. Everyone knew that he was not interested in any personal gain, that he considered everyone who stood for freedom and against oppression to be a comrade, but that his artistic career had never allowed him the time to immerse himself in social and political theories. Thus, his house functioned as neutral ground and became the refugees' meeting place. After Dorothea had rid her front room of the idle ladies, with the exception of the Countess Blafoska, the gentlemen now filled it, spending half their days there smoking cigars and sitting in front of the fireplace.

When men no longer feel chained to their occupation, they surpass even the worst female member of the so-called coffee-klatsch group in terms of running around and wasting time. Instead of personal gossip, they prattle on solely about politics, and wherever one finds a lot of talk that does not lead to action, one will find that the ability to act falters as well.

Dorothea easily found an excuse to distance herself from the assembly of men and preferred the self-imposed discomfort of busying herself and the children in the kitchen or in the bedrooms when her only spacious parlour was occupied. Ibeles had either to resist or to vacate the house in good time so that the first visitor would not catch him at home. His absence did not even disturb his political friends, who with the greatest naivety used his house as a gathering place. With the fraternal atmosphere that at that time united all the comrades of the great shipwreck, the friends saw nothing presumptuous in ordering Katrinchen to prepare their tea if Dorothea was absent.

The money sent by the uncle was being depleted faster and faster, and often a crisis arose when the last penny was used up before relief arrived. Foreigners can borrow money only up to a given point, and even if their credit had been greater Dorothea would not have had the nerve to take advantage of this benefit. It was embarrassing for her to go past the house of a vendor if that week's bill had not been paid. She would rather deny herself a necessity than incur debt to pay for it, and when, out of love for her family, she did disregard this principle in order not to deny *them* something essential, her naturally cheerful disposition vanished. A letter of reminder regarding an outstanding bill could make her melancholy. She would remain grim and out of sorts until she had cleansed her middle-class honesty of the large stain, that is to say—the debt of half a crown—by means of repayment.



With utmost sensitivity Mrs. Busy and other trustworthy acquaintances, who no doubt clearly understood the family's need, offered to provide the family with loans, but these were all decisively turned down. Ibeles wanted to preserve his independence, and it would have been unbearable for him to be obligated to an Englishman without being able to return the service in kind, simply from a sense of national pride. He knew that the appearance of helplessness is the greatest obstacle for one seeking a circle of professional influence in London, so he gritted his teeth and decided to wait until he had such a circle.

But the inherent kindness of the English acquaintances refused to be deterred by his reserved bearing. On one occasion, a gift of venison and fish arrived, allegedly from the country, one that, the giver assured, could not be consumed by that individual's family, and therefore it seemed only proper that Ibeles's seven children should help eat it up. On another occasion a large quantity of surplus woolen fabric arrived from the district mills, allegedly having been sent by mistake, whereupon it was once again counted as a favour from Mrs. Ibeles if she would allow the cloth to be tailored into little skirts and coats for her small brood. Despite the well-meaning kindness behind these gifts, they still tore at the hearts of their recipients. Every gift of this kind the German likens to the insult of receiving alms. In England one gives and receives with much less inhibition, since, in accordance with the country's custom, the gift is not seen as a humiliation.

Ibeles, who had tried in vain to find a suitable position as a conductor, found himself, after more than a year of waiting, to be so tightly bound up in poverty and with worry that he decided to take any work offered to him in his field, no matter how far below his standards it might be. He hoped to escape the tyranny of his visitors, who up until this point were either not aware of his troubles or chose to disregard them, by means of taking on any permanent

occupational obligations. Even when he set aside a fixed time that was to be devoted to composing and an acquaintance would come by, the latter took offence if Ibeles did not stop working. Despite the distances being equally far for everyone in London, each visitor always believed he had the right to interrupt Ibeles from his most important duties if he were to protest: “I have travelled such a great distance, and now I am not allowed to speak to Mr. Ibeles, even though he is at home?” All this ended when Ibeles made the decision to give lessons. It proved a difficult decision for this creative artist and was three times as difficult in England, where giving lessons is often considered futile work, akin to that of the daughters of Danaus, to instil musicality in individuals who possess neither ear nor rhythm for it. In the meantime, if his time was no longer to be his own, he wanted at least to sell it in return for this first step towards finding freedom.

This decision was the result of several experiences that had a profound effect on him. Even during the first dead season, while his wife was preoccupied with nursing little Cillchen, he took many steps towards testing the musical terrain and placing himself advantageously.

Naively, he believed that there was room for all talent in such an enormous city without encroaching upon the territory of one’s neighbour, and so he had trustingly turned to his artistic comrades. Those who were honest bluntly told him that they were not happy to see him residing in London. One in particular explained how things stood, as follows: “It has taken years of arduous struggle to lift ourselves to the position that we now occupy. Every competitor cries out to us: ‘ôte-toi de là, que je m’y mette!’<sup>21</sup> We have been given limited time to ensure a harvest for our old-age before we are no longer considered *au courant*. The permanent positions at the now large, historical institutions have long been occupied, and we are all prepared to engage in an all-out life and death struggle with our rivals, should a position become available!”

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<sup>21</sup> English translation: “get out of the way so that I can take your place!”

The dishonest personalities among Ibeles's artistic comrades were more polite in their reception. They promised to do everything in their power to help him; they asked about his plans and prospects and then undermined them. Much has been said of the intrigue that supposedly dominates the artistic world everywhere, and legend has it that London is a capital city not only of the world, but also of the musical cabals. I find it regrettable to have to confirm this reputation.

Among the singers and composers, the small-minded always insist that it is the work of widespread intrigue if they or their works do not earn a place of prominence on the stage. The ability of an artist to accomplish something great is usually connected to the disposition of the soul that remains unaffected by the cabal, because, from its elevated position, that higher soul remains unaware of the cabal's existence.

Ibeles ranked among those happy individuals who by nature were rarely bothered by petty schemes because they did not possess the ability to understand them. Should they so obviously set their snares to trap him, he would simply step out of the way and give the schemer a wide berth without saying a word about him. Even speaking about such conspiracies brings disgrace to the individual. But enough said, and let me not offer details from which bad musicians might gain some insights to help them.

At that time, Sir Harry, the most well-known among the native English musicians, was still alive. Ibeles held his compositions in high regard for their unpretentious purity and for their gentle warmth of emotion. Ibeles paid a visit to this man, one of the leading public figures in the capital city, and believed the best introduction would be if he were to present his famous English artistic peer the gift of one of his own major works. He had heard that every season Sir Harry

organized a concert in which the best singers participated, attended by members of the court and the highest nobility.

Ibeles was surprised that this artist, who had risen to the ranks of the nobility and whose reputation had been established half-a-lifetime ago, lived in even more humble circumstances than he himself, a poor refugee. The carpets in the parlour to which he had been shown might well have been valuable and gorgeous at one time, but now they were worn and threadbare. The table was topped with a faded, green blanket covered in ink spots, and all the furniture and appointments were extremely worn. In order for something to have caught Ibeles's attention, it would have had to be quite striking indeed since, in accordance with the musician's nature, he was generally more introspective and less aware of his surroundings. The thought crossed his mind that perhaps he might have stepped into the wrong home again, as he had done before when he called on the famous Mutebell at the oil shop, just as Sir Harry entered the room.

He was a tall, slim man with prematurely grey hair and stern features, and his character betrayed a sense of reticent sadness. Perhaps he had been in the middle of some creative work and, interrupted by this visit, now found it difficult to emerge from that inner world of musical tones and return to the mundane world of conversation. He ran through the pages of the score of the important symphony that Ibeles had presented to him with apparent interest, but one could see that his tired pale blue eyes were complying out of compulsion, and with a polite, but cool word of thanks he soon laid the score aside. The answers that came forth from his thin, compressed lips were sparse, and when Ibeles spoke to him of his own plans and requested that the latter put in a good word for him, he bowed stiffly, without any visible change in his countenance. The German did not know whether the coldness of the man stemmed from disdain or indifference. The fact that it was not out of jealousy was self-evident: Sir Harry's position was

such that this kind of petty emotion must surely be far removed from him. Ibeles very nearly felt offended that this man, who could surely judge his worth, did not offer him one word of encouragement. After his similarly futile attempts to engage him in a more animated discussion about general artistic interests failed, Ibeles turned to take his leave.

Returning home, Ibeles found Dorothea in tears. He knew that as of yesterday all their available cash had been reduced to just a few shillings, and he assumed that some sort of difficulty or humiliation must have caused her to lose her composure. And so it was. Instead of receiving the finances from home, which she had been awaiting with longing, she was visited by an unknown gentleman, who arrived with a letter of introduction in hand. He was a German virtuoso who had arrived in London from Paris, no longer able to support himself there since the February uprisings. He had inquired after Ibeles's address at a tavern where German refugees tended to gather, and since Ibeles was not acquainted with him, he had requested a letter of introduction from a Herr Wildemann, a friend of Ibeles's. He asked Dorothea, in Ibeles's absence, to read the letter since it was extremely urgent.

She knew from daily personal experience what this meant, and, aware of her family's personal financial difficulties, she felt a blistering heat envelop her. It could still take several days before the distressed plea for help sent to her uncle could meet with a response, and therefore the few remaining shillings needed to be saved for any potential emergency situations that might still arise. However, because the young man's appearance was so respectable, so proud and distinguished, she decided to at least skim through the letter, before giving him an explanation.

The letter was in a style typical of the year 1849. While the tone of such letters had become more unassertive over the years, it had reverted now more to the earlier style of such petitions. It read in its original form as follows:

*Citizens!*

*You must lend immediate aid to the bearer of this letter. He is a member of our party. I am sending him to you, since I no longer have any available funds with which to help him.*

*Wildemann.*

The letter had been written by a man for whom Ibeles had great respect, because he had honestly dedicated his life to the ultimate principles that he honoured as a revolutionary. Dorothea, even though she often suffered from his inconsiderateness, respected him for this as well, more so than some of the other party comrades whose character she did not necessarily deem to be trustworthy. She shied away from refusing a man whom Wildemann recommended, since she knew all too well that he himself had really given his last remaining money to the poorer party comrades. Admittedly, living life as a bachelor, he did not think anything of seeking accommodations with acquaintances as soon as his purse was empty. He did not need to be concerned about external appearances, for he no longer had either an office or a business.

After short deliberation, Dorothea decided to offer the stranger one of the few shillings she had saved, even if her husband and children were to suffer as a result. Her face became red from embarrassment and anxiety, thinking of the possible consequences of her accommodating gesture towards the pale and distressed looking young man, but no sooner had he taken the shilling from her, than that he forcefully threw it with rage at her feet.

“Do you take me for a beggar,” he cried, “that you should offer me such a useless gift? What help is one shilling to me? With that I can’t even pay for my fare here and back. The very

least that the party expects from people such as yourselves is that you pay the bill for my accommodation at the inn, which amounts to two pounds sterling.”

Dorothea was shocked and at the same time peeved. She lost all patience, and as embarrassing as it must be for a woman to expose the state of her finances, nevertheless that is exactly what she did, as the stranger, mumbling angrily, slammed the door shut and hurried away.

As she gave her husband an account of the scene upon his return, vexation over a succession of similar experiences broke out afresh. Ibeles, who was just as perturbed about the reticence of his higher-ranking colleague as his wife was at the rudeness of the man in need, saw his position from a state of despair. People not only demanded money of him, which he did not have, they also robbed him of his time, the only thing that remained in order for him to be saved from this abyss of poverty.

Dorothea lost no time in uttering an unfriendly word regarding the cold behaviour of Sir Harry, who, in her opinion, from his well-established position could easily have helped his colleague get ahead, just as her husband had lent a helping hand to his struggling artistic peers during his times of prosperity. But a remark from Ibeles concerning the humble dwelling of the famous man caused her to muse reflectively.

“Are we perhaps not just as deceived regarding Sir Harry’s circumstances,” she said, “as our acquaintances are about ours? Who knows if any gesture that he is expected to perform out of a sense of collegial courtesy in order to help one of his peers in the arts obtain a better position might not impose upon him just as great a sacrifice as does the shilling that we are expected to share with a competitor?”

Ibeles felt this to be impossible for a man who apparently held such a secure position.

Dorothea went on: “I beg to differ: Could the man deny his own pride so much to gain the public’s trust? Do *we* do this in our position? When a half dozen visitors have no qualms about coming to visit us every evening because we don’t make a fuss about it, can we bring ourselves to offer the following explanation: ‘Even our simple gesture of hospitality, the simplest possible, is ruining us’? On the contrary, our friends draw a conclusion regarding our wealth based on the steady conviviality that surrounds us. Who is going to be preoccupied with the bills pertaining to our livelihood in a place where the most important issues concerning the human race are being thoroughly discussed! One always sees artists existing only in a world of beauty, and one doesn’t think of the fact that the world of necessity surrounds them just as it does everyone else.”

Since we shall never again encounter Sir Harry in this story, as he never paid a return visit to his German artistic associate, we wish to insert even at this point that Dorothea’s supposition was soon confirmed. The universally loved composer had been highly celebrated by the nobility in his youth and had then fallen out of fashion. His compositions, once the most popular, no longer sold as they once did. The big annual concert, Ibeles having been told of the very large revenue that it brought in, was indeed still organized out of a sense of reverence by his loyal supporters, but its profits had to suffice for an entire year’s worth of expenses. It was only when Sir Harry fell ill this last time and the concert had to be put on by strangers that a cry for help for the starving artist first appeared in the papers. His admirers collected the necessary finances needed for his final nursing care, since his proud lips remained sealed, just as they had remained mute all the years in which he had been presumed to be successful and rich. Even Ibeles was deeply shocked to hear of his death, resulting from years of poverty and misery, and it gave him a more accurate picture of London’s elite proletariat. He now realized how the man



must have felt during his first visit when, despite having sunk into oblivion, he was asked to wrest another man out of the darkness. How much suffering he must have secretly endured before the world bothered to glance at the gruesome hardships that caused his ultimate demise.

## Chapter Eight

### “Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts”

One afternoon an acquaintance came by and persuaded Ibeles and his wife to go for a walk on Hampstead Heath. They took along the older children, who sprang merrily before them over the gorgeous meadows through which the path leads to Hampstead Hill and from where one enjoys a wonderful vista. The city of London with its towers and palaces lies interminably stretched out along the misty horizon, and when one turns one's back to this vista, one is greeted by a rolling countryside with forests, valleys in which pinewood and gorse shrubs, as if overflowing with shimmery gold, provide a sharp contrast with the blue-green background. The softest lavender colours the outline of the most distant hills and has an effect that sets at rest the soul of the observer who flees here in order to escape from dirty London, where the motley play of shadows never comes to a standstill.

How long had our Germans gone without the sight of nature, and how their hearts ached as they sat down in the shade of a grove of trees. The awareness that fails to surface in the unending maelstrom of London life forces itself upon them, namely, that their situation is an unhappy one. Moments given over to collecting one's self and to quiet personal indulgence were scarce. If such a moment arose, then it elicited tears, and the world seemed a bleak workhouse through whose barred windows one can only glimpse the treetop that bears witness to the bliss of the woodland.

The wanderers had intended to make their way back home before dusk, but their acquaintance insisted that they linger until dark in order to enjoy the view of London from afar

and illuminated at night. It was indeed an enchanting sight, as at first, over the outline of the nearby shrubbery, individual lights began to twinkle and then all across the horizon a path of light came to life across the city.

While the soft colours of the distant meadow had previously produced a tender sorrow of the soul, the red lights that fluttered around the black contours of the modern-day Nineveh had an almost intoxicating effect. London exerted its magic spell, and whether one loves this city or hates it, no one can deny that it is the magnet for the iron of the human spirit. Out of love for what is grand, even outrageous, the human heart will ultimately willingly sacrifice its ease and contentment purely so that it might be allowed to beat in the centre of the world.

As they returned from their excursion and stepped into their villa it became clear to them why they had been so urgently coaxed to step out together. During their absence a happy surprise had been prepared for them. In the place of the awful rented, old square piano with which Ibeles had until now made do there stood an excellent upright piano that completely filled the small room, which could have been designed expressly for the purpose of housing such an instrument in the small house.

The youngest children and Katrinchen did not know who was responsible for the gift. The people who had delivered the piano said they had orders to return the old one to its owner, a piano tuner who lived in the neighbourhood, which Katrinchen was only too happy to allow, once she saw how much nicer the new one was. It featured a lot of gilding, and a light-red silk shimmered from underneath the wood carvings on its front. Ibeles played a few chords and found the quality of the sound, which was all that mattered to him, to be very mellifluous and as strong as possible for an upright piano to produce. He would have been happy if he had personally

purchased the instrument, or if he could at least have known from whom such a valuable gift could have come.

Dorothea, although forced to overcome a feeling of embarrassment, was delighted that her husband no longer lacked the one intrinsic necessity of a composer. She suspected that either the rich families to whom they had been recommended or several artist friends in the capital city had jointly purchased the instrument, which, according to the enclosed note written in English, the famous exiled composer was now to regard as his personal property. Ibeles disagreed with his wife's assumptions, emphasizing the improbability of sundry strangers, unknown to one another, collectively purchasing this gift. The matter remained a puzzle to him until several days had passed and the usual number of visitors to his house had increased in great number.

All the visitors made some comment regarding the new piano, the only exception to this being the Countess Blafoska, who set her scarf and hat upon it and pretended smilingly that she was not at all aware of the obvious change of instruments. Ibeles turned red as he observed several significant nods passing between the friend who had urged him to go on the excursion to Hampstead and the countess, and Dorothea felt simultaneously hot and cold as the possibility dawned on her that the countess might be the donor of the otherwise much desired gift.

From no other person could a favour of this kind be more unwelcome than from the countess, who had long since ceased to observe propriety in terms of visitations. She called on the couple three or four times a week, staying for half of the day and talking about politics or chatting about personal issues, and when Dorothea, true to her resolve, placed her domestic duties above her obligations to be courteous to a visitor, the countess chose all the more to monopolize the attention of the man of the house. In the end she even ignored adherence to conventional politeness of asking for the lady of the house and instead, without further ado and

unannounced, entered the study of her friend and fellow exile—this being her preferred manner for any reference to Ibeles.

To the same degree that the man of the house endeavoured to regain periods of leisure and solitude, the countess went to similarly great lengths to hold together the community that, out of force of habit, convened at the villa. When guests arrived she behaved as if she was the lady of the house, and she was always royally amused when strangers actually believed this. Dorothea found herself in an unenviable position after one such instance, being forced to appear before a distinguished stranger wearing a calico print house dress, and the graceful, always outwardly elegant countess took the opportunity to single-handedly give one of her most tender performances of friendship. Towards Dorothea, who had been called from the nursery, she played the naive young girl, recounted to her, in front of all present, the comical mix-up, and then took on a tone of respect towards her, in order to show, with her exaggerated considerateness, that she was trying out of kindness to conceal Dorothea's awkward position from her husband and his friends.

And now the chain that until now had been worn purely as an act of courtesy was to be made indissoluble out of a sense of gratitude! Ibeles felt as if a yoke had been placed around his neck, and Dorothea almost broke out in tears of resentment. The couple remained withdrawn and embarrassed for the entire evening. The countess, as usual, sought to introduce a topic for discussion that would lend itself to her active participation, and the acquaintances present enjoyed themselves, not noticing that their hosts were as if walking on hot coals.

When everyone had gone home Ibeles said: "Do I really possess such an ungrateful nature that the goodness of this woman provokes within me more pain than pleasure? Ever since I was young, I have been accustomed to receiving from others, and in the presence of our uncle,

to whom I owe all my education, I never felt oppressed. But then I worked hard to earn his generosity. In this case, however, I am to show my gratitude by being nothing but idle. That goes against my very nature!”

Dorothea would have preferred that the gift be removed from the house immediately if only such an action would not have been considered a fatal insult. It was agonizing for her knowing that one was expected to repay a gift’s monetary value with one’s life, and yet this is the inescapable lot of the elite poor, no matter how wary one might be or how much one might resist.

The piano was now here and Ibeles was forced to play it if he, akin to Scaevola,<sup>22</sup> did not want to burn his hand in the fire. To reject the countess was difficult in any case because her mood was one either of complaining or of playfulness or of overt enthusiasm, but always contrary to the mood of the person with whom she was conversing. If Dorothea steered the conversation toward everyday matters, the countess would then enthusiastically talk about the martyrdom associated with obtaining freedom. If from Ibeles, by way of his clever irony, she sensed that her illogical statements were putting him in a humorous mood, then a sudden outburst of tears would follow, the explanation for her confusion being that some unidentifiable emotion had filled her heart to overflowing. If the couple resolved to treat her with stiff formality in order to curtail her behaviour, they would have to be prepared for the eventuality that she would involve some other third individual in her pranks and thereby cause all those present to succumb to a devil-may-care attitude.

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<sup>22</sup> Legend has it that Gaius Mucius Scaevola, a young Roman hero, tries to assassinate the Etruscan king Porsenna, but instead mistakenly kills the king’s secretary. When brought before Porsenna, the youth “shows his contempt for torture and pain by voluntarily placing his right hand in a fire.” Seeing the youth’s bravery, the king releases him. Mucius is later surnamed “Scaevola” meaning “left hand.” < <http://www.livius.org/articles/person/mucius-scaevola/>>

The worst was that these escapades were most palpable when any English were in attendance. The conduct within this nation is congruent with those of every civilized society on the continent, but the countess was of the belief that a disregard for a country's customs in all circumstances was most ingenious.

Total animosity had developed between the countess and Mrs. Beak, and when this lady and her daughters were together with the countess, the other guests were indeed provided with great amusement, but their hostess was placed in a difficult position.

Who is not aware of the incalculable worth of having good neighbours! In our homeland, surrounded by our family and friends, we certainly view having a friendly relationship with our closest neighbours as being a favourable stroke of fate. How much more happiness is provided for the one who, amongst a vast sea of strange faces, is greeted daily with a friendly nod by a good-natured face from the opposite window. The Beak ladies were not musically inclined and therefore did not possess that awful torturous device with which amateurish female neighbours filled a composer's gentle soul with poisonous hatred. The only offense they were guilty of was that they once asked him to play one of his own polkas for them, and upon his confession that he had never composed such a piece, they had asked in astonishment: What purpose did music have if one did not compose any polkas!? They had made amends for insulting his dignity as a composer a thousand times over to him personally, by exercising the unassuming courtesy that arises simultaneously out of respect for their friend and from an innate goodness.

In terms of Dorothea's needs, a house like Mrs. Beak's was a perfect choice, for here she could relax for a leisurely hour without losing sight of her children. The neighbour ladies lived in similar financial circumstances. They were hard working and simple, and thus shared many similarities with Dorothea. When they socialized they did not need to force themselves to be

something that they were not, nor did they expect the impossible from one another, and for this reason their relationship was truly refreshing.

The complete opposite characterized the relationship with the countess. As was the case for all rich ladies of leisure, she possessed absolutely no yardstick by which to measure what was feasible in a middle-class household. Unabashed, she would invite herself at a time of day in which it was completely impossible for her friends to do something to improve their hospitality. Often, she also brought along fellow countrymen or other friends, whom she insisted on presenting to her friend and fellow exile, assuring him that no extra measures concerning hospitality were necessary, as these gentlemen, in order to remain at her side, would rather make do than return to their hotel.

On such occasions, not only suitable food was found to be lacking in the exiles' household, but also dishes, utensils, and everything else. Dorothea, who sought as much as possible to preserve an outward sense of decorum, then postponed the meal for an hour later and worked together with Katrinchen at the stove, trembling from haste and exertion. At the very moment when the table needed to be set, it undoubtedly occurred to the countess that she needed Katrinchen to run quickly to the closest newsagent in order to fetch a newspaper in which there was an article that she wanted to read to all those present. While Dorothea let her objections be known, the countess had already pressed half a crown into Katrinchen's hand, whereupon the girl quickly ran off, assuring that she could be back in two minutes. Meanwhile Dorothea was forced to carry the youngest child in her arms, keep watch over the pots on the stove, open the door to the house when someone rang, and finally, after all these worries and fears, preside over the table with a cheerful countenance.



The countess, in her naivety, perceived none of this. Since her youth a profusion of servants had been at her disposal, and when an unusual situation occurred, a request for a few dishes was sent to the nearest hotel. She gave the order, and things happened because she was rich and extravagant. The simple life that the Ibeles family led appealed to her because of the contrast it offered to her earlier practices, and she was captivated by some of the makeshift remedies, in the same way that spoiled children living in the city enter the humble abode of a peasant in order to indulge with delight in black bread and sour milk while sitting on wooden benches. If she, by way of a sudden interruption to the household organization, had made it impossible for Dorothea to serve a reasonably good meal in little time, then she, at most, made the assumption that Mrs. Ibeles must essentially be an inept housewife if she failed in her ability to offer such simple hospitality.

Sometimes Mrs. Mutebell and her daughters, who from time to time visited the German family who had presented them with a letter of introduction, were there at the same time as the countess, and then these taciturn ladies became the background for the latter's eloquence. In instances such as this, Ibeles always inwardly made peace with the countess, whose entrance he perceived to be like a fresh breeze blowing in after a dead calm in the air. The Mutebells were boring and well-behaved, and if they brought one to the point of exasperation on account of the first quality, one was constrained by that virtue of respectfulness that they possessed from encountering them with incivility. Here the inconsiderateness of the countess came to the conductor's aid. She would do all the talking and, in a delightful manner, sometimes tease the prim Mutebell daughters.

She had sensed that Ibeles felt a bit of malicious joy on such occasions, and now she believed all English ladies setting foot in the villa to be at her mercy. With a successful tactical

approach she had made Harriet and Lucy Beak look like fools in the presence of the men who visited the villa, and now she worked on spoiling the ground for old Mrs. Beak. The countess found it intolerable that whenever she was about to speak about herself with the host, the neighbour lady would come over and converse about his wife. But whenever she tried to direct her personal contempt towards Mrs Beak, Ibeles would silently reprimand her by immediately and with utmost respect directing his conversation towards the old lady. On one such occasion, Mrs. Busy had gone to the nursery, where Dorothea was attending to a little patient, while the countess stayed behind with Ibeles in the room used for receiving visitors. No sooner had the countess found herself alone with her fellow exile, than she gave vent to the following:

“How can you treat these boring Beaks with such mercy? If these mediocre young women and the reserved old lady don’t sense that they don’t belong in our circle then one must make them understand this. If you would allow me, my dear friend, I would get rid of them for you without any resultant compromise to your reputation.”

Ibeles replied with a frown: “I respect these ladies, and my wife considers them to be worthy and dear friends. I would never want to see them offended in my house, for we owe them a debt of gratitude in multiple ways.”

The countess interrupted him with a fervour, saying: “So from these people you accept kindness and feel tied to them, and I, who consider myself to be as a sister to you, place my entire fortune at your disposal, and you spurn my every attempt to help you. If your dear wife enjoys keeping company with Mrs. Beak, then that is quite understandable. They will have things to discuss regarding housekeeping, as is the tendency among neighbour ladies. But you, the brilliant artist, the patriot! what are such creatures to you that you would waste one word on

them? These rooms, where heroes gather who have changed the course of world history, should in no way be profaned by nobodies!”

Ibeles replied: “Without getting into the other points you raise, I shall herewith speak as a chivalrous champion of the Beak ladies. I admit that none of them are in possession of a superior mind, but all three possess superiority through their honest characters. The daughters’ field of vision is indeed still very narrow, but within these bounds both are explicitly aware of what they want. The mother possesses good common sense and, despite her national prejudices and a few small absurdities, has a lot of heart. The brave woman has never touched the wheel of world history with one fingertip, but she has achieved what only a few of our heroes have only attempted!”

“And what is that?” the countess asked.

“She has put her house in order!”

“You are speaking like such a Philistine!” the countess said with a laugh. “How happy the reactionary bourgeoisie of your fatherland would be if they were aware that the wild music director had been tamed so quickly!”

“Do not purposefully misunderstand me! When I highlight the completely common middle-class virtues of this woman, I would like it to be known only that she has always accomplished what was befitting of her status and importance. She was not called to take great risks. When her husband died, it was her duty to be both father and mother to her children. By working, she achieved a comfortable domesticity with very limited resources. She gave her daughters a good upbringing, and *we* have found out that she does not confine her sense of duty only to her immediate family. If a man full of youthful vigour and having an expansive world view and an exceptional intellect does not want to restrict himself to such narrow occupational

confines because the path to a higher calling is open to him, then that is fair. But before I idly twiddle my thumbs because the wheel of world history rolls along a different track from one on which I can become involved, I would rather turn the spinning wheel.”

“Is that meant to be a reference to the vocation of women?”

“By no means, because great moments in history intrude into a woman’s calling just as well as into that of others. I admired that patriotic contessa in Sicily who allowed her pianoforte to be thrown from the balcony at the advancing Swiss soldiers. I laud the women who, during the fight for freedom, hand fresh cartridges to their brothers and help to defend the barricade. The small considerations concerning gender cease as a result of the enthusiasm found during a critical time. But I loathe dabbling in the revolution as much as I do dabbling in the arts. The horrific storm of world history, where in its wake death rips one heart from other hearts and roars with devastation over civilization and over everything that is considered sacred by the human spirit, is no plaything with which to spice up the conversation around the tea table. I can die for the cause of freedom, but I can’t abide unproductive conversation about the subject.”

Just then Wildemann arrived and was happy to find the countess present, as he wanted to give her a message. But she appeared reluctant to linger and invited him to accompany her home, since she was happy to walk home in the beautiful moonlit sky—an invitation that he gladly accepted.

While Ibeles was so chivalrously defending Mrs. Beak, she was sitting upstairs with Dorothea and giving vent to her disapproval of the countess. To the credit of English women in general, it must be pointed out that they vilify others to a much lesser extent than do the continental ladies. However, the countess’s behaviour was so provocative for the English women

accustomed to extreme reticence that we shall perhaps have to forgive Mrs. Beak for giving expression to her criticism.

“How very different the manners must be on the continent,” she began. “Here in England one would find it to be very conspicuous if a lady were to behave as intimately with men as the countess does.”

Dorothea replied: “The revolution has caused confusion in people’s disposition, and this also expresses itself in social contacts.”

Mrs. Beak said: “But it would be unfortunate if the revolution also influenced the good manners attributed to women.”

“Believe you me, the German women adhere just as strictly to that view as the English women do. The tone with which this Polish woman acts would indeed stand out, but it would not be as offensive, since we are accustomed to animated gestures.”

Mrs. Beak continued: “But would you use gestures and poses like this with men you do not know?” And with that, the portly Mrs. Beak struck one of the soulful poses that so flattered the slim figure of the raven-haired Polish countess. She raised her snub nose, with her spectacles still perched upon it, up in the air as if in ecstasy and rolled her little grey eyes. It was clear that she had observed just as closely how the countess was able to bat her black eyes and lashes much as other ladies might use a fan, as well as how she was wont to suddenly seize the hands of an individual during the heat of conversation. But with the elderly, clumsy lady’s imitation, the coquetry had such a grotesque effect that Dorothea could not help but laugh heartily.

Well-intentioned and in all seriousness, Mrs. Beak continued: “It would behove you not to laugh, and believe me when I say from experience that such ladies are the instigators of much mischief and should not be tolerated in a Christian family. I have no doubt that your dear

husband is a gentleman of inestimable worth, but the more polite a man is, the more defenceless he is against the schemes of such cunning ladies.”

“But do you really consider the countess to be deliberate in her actions? I think that she’s just eccentric and doesn’t think about what she does!”

“She doesn’t think about what she does? If a fourteen-year-old girl behaved in such a manner one might well excuse it on account of her age. But a married woman with children does not naively lean against the shoulders of a strange man and brush her cheeks across his beard while whispering to him. I find it abhorrent and would not wish my daughters to witness this.”

Dorothea quickly sent her own young daughters down to the small garden, not because she was fearful regarding the example of the countess and her behaviour, for the girls still played with dolls, but rather on the principle that a malicious opinion concerning others should never be uttered in the presence of children. The youngest lad, who lay sick in bed, played with his clown and understood nothing of the conversation.

Dorothea confessed to her neighbour that she too felt the atmosphere that the Polish woman had brought into her home was deadly. She said: “The woman would certainly be outraged if I were to impose as law my manner and my way in her salon. What right does she think she has giving herself permission to encroach upon *my* property? In every house a particular style of conviviality is established by the heads of the family, which attracts pleasant, like-minded individuals and which banishes any strange factions that disturb the peace within those four walls. Before we could even determine a fitting atmosphere for our household in this new life, this woman has now, in our stead, imposed *her* own ways upon my parlour, thereby making us virtually quite homeless.”

“Then why do you tolerate it, and why does your husband tolerate this abuse of his wife?”

“You know why I must tolerate it from previous conversations we have had. She has ensnared me in a net of favours that at first were so inconspicuous that it would have been priggish of me to refuse her. And as for my husband, little by little she turned him from a friend into a confidant. A virtuous husband can certainly rebuff a flirtatious lady by way of incivility, but with what measures is he to keep a so-called lady friend under control?”

Sighing, Mrs. Beak rolled her eyes upwards and said: “My blessed husband often told me the very same thing! He was also a very fine gentleman and a doctor of medicine! Oh, what stories I could tell you! The *ailing* ladies didn’t disturb our sleep half as much as those who were well!”

“A noble confession,” Dorothea cried out, “which reveals that it was not only the ladies from the continent that angered you. I hope that the late doctor returned home victorious from every temptation.”

“He was a man of principles, and when he did not quite trust the pulse rate of his lady patients, he would prescribe quite a bitter medicine for them.”

The discussion now turned into one of harmless jesting and then progressed to household matters, just as the countess downstairs had predicted.

When Dorothea was alone a very embarrassing feeling overpowered her. For so long she had restrained herself from giving voice to her resentment of the Polish woman, and now she had been carried away to make a comment after all. She felt that it was not until this point that the relationship had become unbearable, because she had voiced her innermost views on the matter. She would no longer have been able to utter a friendly greeting to the countess in the presence of

her neighbour, for this would have struck her as wrong. When in our soul we feel that the purity of our relationship to good friends is tarnished even when we simply make judgemental statements about them to a third party, then we feel our consciences even more tormented when we talk about people we do not like behind their backs. We quickly attempt to right the wrong done to a friend. Yet our honesty leads us to turning the unliked person into an enemy.

Dorothea heard Wildemann enter the house and soon thereafter heard him leave with the countess. "Well today," she thought, "we shall actually have an evening to ourselves!" Ibeles was already on his way upstairs when once again the sound of someone pulling the doorbell could be heard, a sound that for some time now had served to fray the nerves of the residents in need of rest. "Oh dear, another late visitor!" both thought, but an old, well-known voice asking if the music conductor, Herr Ibeles, lived here, provided them with a happy surprise.

"Could it be! Is it you, dearest Stern! Where did you come from? You are free! What a joy!" With these words Ibeles and his old friend, whom he had not seen since the night of the barricade and who, according to the latest reports, was still being held in prolonged custody, embraced.

A faithful friend from the homeland was a guest also welcomed by Dorothea, and the new arrival was inundated with questions regarding the situation back home and old friends, although he knew even less of the outside world than his hosts. He had been under close watch during his imprisonment, and while being transported to a neighbouring state, where he was to have appeared before a court of law along with another political defendant, he had successfully managed to escape. After a light evening meal he told his friends the story of how he escaped, which, using his own words, we shall share with you in the next chapter.



## Chapter Nine

### Dr. Stern Gives his Account

As you both know, I sat imprisoned, on account of seditious tendencies, in that dreadful tower with a view overlooking the high city wall and a few sentry boxes, where Colonel v. Radnagel's most trusted soldiers guarded me. Any correspondence with my relatives passed through the hands of the head guard and was restricted solely to the communication of permitted information. My cousins and aunts are not very ingenious, and even if they had been, I was being too carefully guarded from any possibility of having secret contact with the outside world. Any bread or other food that my old aunt arranged to have delivered to me was crumbled up and sifted through, so as to assure the authorities that no file had been inserted prior to baking. Besides that, I knew that my relatives were much too cowardly to have allowed politically-minded friends to smuggle secrets concealed in the letters I was allowed to receive.

I have since regretted a hundred times the choice I made, out of a fear of scheming women, to remain a bachelor, for if I had had a wife, she would surely have found a cunning way of helping me to escape from the tower.

In vain I requested permission to pursue my usual studies while awaiting trial. I received neither philosophical nor historical works, and instead of newspapers I was given missionary reports and tracts. I became so angry at that nonsense that I treated the cleric who visited me with the cruelest scorn and was no longer friendly towards my jailor. My obstinate nature did not serve to improve my situation, and later I often regretted that I was not so clever as to attempt to be on better terms with the minions assigned to guard me. Being deprived of a smiling face is as

unbearable as the lack of sunlight, and even a friendly glance from the grouchy priest would have shed a ray of light upon this dead wasteland. But *he*, with his pretentious proselytizing had sparked my logical objections, and if I was not allowed to fight for a united Germany, then I at least wanted to become a martyr on behalf of the truth—that two times two equals four.

Then the big political trial in the neighbouring state drew near, and I was supposed to be questioned in order to provide conclusive evidence against another defendant whom they were determined to bring to ruin. There was no way of escape from the situation, and with horror I imagined the cross-examination by my interrogator. Elicitation of either a yes or a no in answer to a question that appears to be quite inconsequential could carry with it a confirmation of the charge or a denial by the defense and make me an unknowing informant against a fellow party member.

I saw through all the malice in the reactionaries who had chosen me precisely as the instrument with which to divert the revenge of the people's party from themselves and onto one of the staunchest liberals. And they very nearly succeeded.

Don't look at me with such horror, dear friends. Not everyone who puts his accomplices into danger in court is a defector. Since I knew that I would be summoned, I deliberated on my situation *ad infinitum*, and I realized with astonishment the extent to which the solitary brooding over so many months had transformed me. My convictions with regard to eternal truths had not faltered, but my partisan feelings had diminished.

The individual who spends day and night alone in the end feels he has no other friend but himself. To be at peace with one's conscience seems to him to be the highest priority for saving the honour of his character. During my long imprisonment I could not have endured my own presence if I had emerged from the trial as a convicted liar.

During the revolution it always seemed to me that the most difficult thing was the party system's undeniable demoralization of us as human beings. A form of honour and virtue is demanded of a party member that, just like honour in the military, is not consistent with the abstract concept of this word. It is a disgrace to confess the truth if with it one puts the interests of the party in danger. Devious cunning becomes a virtue, lying an obligation.

It is easy to come to terms with a conflict such as this when one lives in the midst of the warring parties, when the necessity of the moment pressures us and when the outcome is justified. But woe to him who is forced to live in isolation after having sacrificed the purity of his character for some distant cause when all the while he has been aware only of his inmost true self.

But besides this bleak aspect, my journey also had a brighter side to it. I was to enjoy the splendour of summer, even if only for a few hours. I was to encounter people. A fresh swell of the sea's waves was to break into my stagnant life in prison. I actually contemplated the possibility of escaping, yet that seemed to me to be my imagination playing with me, and I banished all such plans as being foolhardy and hopeless.

The day of my departure drew near. Before daybreak I was escorted by two gendarmes and transported in an ordinary carriage to the nearest train station, on the line that skirts the border of our little state. My two guards put me in the middle so that I would not be able to get away from them on the platform.

It was strange that even in this situation I felt as if some incredible luck had breathed upon me. For so long I had not seen any colours, and now I was delighted even by the painted carriages of the train. The locomotive seemed to catch a wild breath and boast of its merry chase through the lands of sundry rulers. What captured my gaze for the longest time and moved me to

tears was the signalman's little cottage, situated close to the train's platform, which was surrounded by honeysuckle and beside it, on a narrow patch of ground, the man had planted cress so as to spell out the town's name. A woman holding a child in her arm stood at the front door. The simple good signalman pointed towards our group, and she looked with pity over towards the prisoner.

Another station attendant was busy the whole time near where I was standing. He then placed the oil can that he was supposed to use to oil the wheels behind my seat, then he got it out again, causing even the gendarmes to remark that this man must be incredibly stupid, because in the whole expanse of the railroad station he had chosen to place his oil can precisely on the one spot where it would bother the strangers.

When the time for the departure came, we were given our own compartment. The first gendarme climbed aboard; I was to follow. Then the man with the oil can pushed up against the door of the compartment, and at the same time I heard one of the attendants offering a cigar to one of the gendarmes behind me. He angrily rejected the offer, yet for one second his attention had been diverted, and during this exact moment the oil man, abruptly pushing me back, thrust a piece of paper into my hand and addressed me in a grumbling tone of voice: "Be careful where you step. If you slip, you will fall between the wheels of the carriage and knock over my oil can."

The sudden alertness that flashed through me brought about such a fierce trembling that I really did miss the carriage step. Swearing, the gendarme standing behind me pushed back the oil can with his foot, shoved me into the compartment first, following close behind. The carriage doors were slammed shut from the outside, and now it was off into the splendid morning air, at first slowly, then ever faster.

I clung desperately to the piece of paper in my left hand and dared not move it for fear that even the least sound of crinkling paper might reveal my secret treasure. But everything went well. I calmed myself down even though my heart was still pounding. The gendarmes made sure that the carriage doors were locked and then fell asleep. Since they had been roused from their sleep so early, they must have been happy indeed to at last have their prisoner in such a secure place—one from which no man could escape who did not know how to transform himself into a bird.

In the beginning they instinctively opened their eyes periodically as if they felt the need to make certain that I was still there. My gaze was always carefully directed towards them, and this seemed to unsettle them. Then I pretended to be sleeping, letting my head fall onto the shoulders of my travel companions, first to the right, then to the left, to their great annoyance and inconvenience.

One of them now stretched out on the empty bench opposite us, which gave me a corner seat. I pretended to be snoring, and, to my triumph, heard how the gendarmes started to snore along with me. As soon as I was convinced that they were fast asleep, I began to unfold the piece of paper and read. At the top were written the following words:

*“The key that was placed in your coat pocket at the train station opens the compartment door facing east. If you reach through the window, the key-hole will be towards the left; the key must be turned towards the right ....”*

At this moment the shrill whistle of the locomotive rang out and both gendarmes awoke suddenly and rubbed their eyes. Before their eyes could seek me out I had already crumpled up and concealed the piece of paper. I imitated their exact gestures, as if the whistle had also caused me to awaken, and then I leaned back in my corner seat and closed my eyes. We halted at a way

station, and despite my snoring, both my escorts took the precaution of occupying the seat at each compartment door.

“What good is the key?” I thought to myself. “When the train comes to a stop my accursed pursuers will not let me out of their sight, and attempting to jump out while the train is in motion will most likely cost me my life.”

The locomotive let out another whistle, and, steaming and rattling, it went through a tunnel. I made use of the darkness to reach into my pocket—yes, there was the key. It must have been shoved into my pocket unawares while we had been sitting on the bench close to the signal man’s little garden, and now I realized why the oil man had placed his can behind me.

If only I could have read further! But when we emerged from the tunnel, the gendarmes remained wide awake and began to discuss the towns that flew by us to the left and to the right. All interest in the fields and woods, in which only yesterday I had taken such pleasure, was gone, and in despair I turned over and over in my mind how I might read through the piece of paper unnoticed.

The sun had risen high and now its blinding rays shone through the window where I sat. My eyes, accustomed to long periods of dim light, hurt, so I took out a brown silk handkerchief and placed it over my face. One of the gendarmes offered me a seat in the shade, but I did not want to move away from the east-facing door where chance had so conveniently positioned me. All of a sudden I had a lucky thought and silently scolded myself that it had not immediately occurred to me. I took off my hat and fastened the handkerchief to it like a veil so that it hung down from the front. Then I pretended once again to be sleeping. While I could clearly see the gendarmes, illuminated by the sun, through the brown silk, my own face remained impenetrably veiled from their sight.

Then I slowly manoeuvred the paper underneath the handkerchief and I was able to read its entire contents without risk. After I had memorized it all, I hid it away. The plan of escape read as follows:

*Between the station at Weidenkrönchen and the city of Gallenheim the train travels over a considerable distance of inclining terrain, and at this point the engineer tends to slow down, so that one can jump off without risk. Soon after you have passed the Weidenkrönchen station you will see from the west window heavy smoke billowing up from the red roof of a summer house. You will be able to see the house from the distance. It is recognizable by an alley of tall poplar trees that stretch behind it and up to the railroad fence. Draw the attention of your gendarmes towards the summer house and the heavy smoke.*

*It is at this point that you must attempt the jump from the east door. Make sure to jump in the same direction in which the train is moving in order to lessen the intensity of your fall. The railroad workers are all democrats and will grant you every bit of assistance. Immediately run across the tracks towards the open field. There is only a small ditch between you and the field. Across from the field you will see a watchman's hut and people standing in front of it dressed in blue smocks. Run towards them, for they are your friends and will help you. Take courage!*

The plan looks quite good, I thought to myself, but the people who have come up with it would hardly dare to put their own healthy limbs to the test. I tore the handkerchief from my eyes and looked down at the bushes flying by, looking only like one long thin green line drawn along the yellowish sand. The locomotive snorted and rattled along its metal rails like a wild beast, and a stone that one of our wheels might have struck by chance was enough to give us a painful jolt as we sat on our wooden seats. From time to time trains going in the opposite direction rolled past us on the adjacent tracks, which I was supposed to run across as soon as I

had jumped. I pondered the huge danger of failure, telling myself as I did so that I wasn't risking my life to save my life but that I might become crippled just to avoid a few miserable years in prison. Then again I felt ashamed of my cowardice in not seizing the chance of rescue offered to me.

It was a gloriously beautiful day. Large white clouds floated in the blue sky, chased by an east wind. The corn waved, the tree branches swayed, and everything seemed to mock me for wanting to return to my cage. "I'll take the risk, I'm going to jump!" I said to myself.

There were still a few stations left before we arrived at the village of Weidenkrönchen. Once the gendarmes allowed me to get off for some fresh air, but they never left my side, and only when the train was travelling at full speed did they rest. The closer we came to the designated place, the harder my heart would beat, but now I turned my attention to the necessity of starting up a conversation with the gendarmes in order not to appear too obvious with my comment about the smoke coming from the summer house. However, my attempts at congeniality were not very warmly received.

"Weidenkrönchen station!" the conductor shouted, and I felt as if an electric shock went through me. Once more I saw the name of the station, written in capital letters, appearing on a sign that stood adjacent to the building so I knew that I had not heard incorrectly. A gendarme officer was standing on the platform. My guards greeted their superior, he stepped to the window, cast a glance my way and asked: "Petty thief?" "No, democrat! At your service, sir!" they answered, whereupon he replied: "even worse," and then boarded a compartment close to ours.

The longed-for whistle sounded, and I peered out at the surrounding countryside, first to the right, then to the left. The speed decreased noticeably as we ascended, and at a curve in the



tracks the poplar trees mentioned in the note came into view. I leaned forward and said: "Good heavens, there's a fire over there!"

"Where?" asked the gendarme.

"Hey! Can't you see the cloud of smoke over the red roof over there? The flames are already shooting out of the window."

"I don't see any fire!"

The other gendarme pushed himself in front of me and said: "Well, damn me, it's true. Thick smoke is billowing out of all of the windows."

Both now stretched their heads out the window and looked intently at the roof so they could see the flames, which were not visible as the smoke rose with increasing intensity. The last words I heard were: "Well, that can turn into a blazing fire with that strong wind. It's a good thing the house is isolated."

In the meantime I had quietly opened the opposite car door and prepared myself for the jump. Beside me I heard the cry of "What the devil!" and saw the head of the officer from earlier, who, from the adjacent window, had suddenly become aware of what I was up to. The alarm signal he was trying to sound spurred on my boldness, and despite the fact that it seemed as if our slowly ascending locomotive was still going faster than a four-in-hand carriage in full gallop, I jumped down.

I managed to keep running a few steps, but then I tripped over the tracks and fell. I had enough presence of mind to roll down into the ditch so that, in case of pursuit, I would momentarily be hidden from the sight of my pursuers. But the train did not stop, and as I recovered from the initial shock I heard the train's whistle a considerable distance away.

In front of the field warden's small hut I was received with handshakes and jubilant signs of joy. "Do you still remember me, Herr Doktor?" a young man called out. "I was a servant at the Schwarzer Adler when you held the public gathering there. I brought you, Ibeles the conductor, and Butzmann the baker a bottle of Bavarian beer. Do you still remember that?"

An elderly man interrupted him: "There is no time to lose. We took you along because you are the only one amongst us that would be able to recognize the doctor. Now don't keep us waiting. From here to the station at Gallenheim isn't even a half hour, and as soon as the train arrives there the gendarmerie on horseback will be on our backs.—Kindly come and change your clothes, Herr Doktor. Everything is ready for you here in the hut."

I was given a full set of peasant clothes, and while I was changing, probably some twenty people congregated around the little hut, causing me to believe I was doomed. But my unidentified companion calmed my fears, saying: "They are people from the workers' organization who have taken turns to patrol all the country lanes in order to ward off any unwanted disturbance. Well, I'm glad that everything has gone so wonderfully. Here is a topographical map. Here are a few addresses of democrats living in the villages around here who will guide you on. You need to walk because a wagon is too conspicuous in this area and would be searched. No one will notice you going on foot. Here, my servant will take you to a field path that leads back between the fields of tall corn to Weidenkrönchen. There you'll find a hiding place prepared for you. Wait, where's the cap?"

"Who has the cap?" several voices rang out in unison.

"Give me any cap," I said, "so that I can leave. I am itching to get away."

“That would be great!” the man said, “without any money you could not even go three miles before the police arrested you as a vagabond. Sewn into the cap are two-hundred thaler, which the party has collected for you. Now, who has the cap? Is it here?” he cried out again.

Out of breath, a man in a tattered jacket came running up, took off his old cloth cap and put it on my head. The cap looked no different than a dozen others I had seen worn by the workers standing around. “That’s the right one,” he said, “I recognize it by the blue cloth in the lining.” Everyone urged me to get going. The servant, who, like me, was dressed as an ordinary field worker, led me through the tall cornfields up to the hedges and orchards of Weidenkrönchen, and from the vantage point of a hill I turned back and still saw how my swarm of rescuers was scattering off on the various country lanes, and how in the distance the white cloud of steam confirmed the arrival of the train in Gallenheim.

“What a strange idea,” I said to the servant, “sewing the money into the cap! Why was it not put in a wallet?”

“That I can tell you, Herr Doktor! We didn’t know exactly which train you were to be transported on, and for that reason the people from the worker’s organization took turns with keeping watch here in the field. For four days, the cap has been going from head to head, because a wallet filled with a lot of money would not be as easy to slip safely to someone on the run in the street as would putting a cap on someone’s head. We needed to be prepared for the fact that you would be pursued, and then we could all do nothing but run after you, as if we wanted to help to capture you! The cap was safe, since of course we all knew what was inside it!”

In the meantime we had come through a gap in the hedge and arrived at the back of a farm. The owner was shoveling manure onto a cart, and his son, a fifteen year old lad, was helping him. My escort gave the old man a piece of paper and signalled him with a wink of the

eye. With a straight face the farmer said: "Tell your master, it's good. No reply is necessary." Then turning to his son he ordered him to carry on with the work and added: "I still have to do an errand. Tell your mother that I will not return before evening." With no further ado, he took me across the street through the house, yard, and orchard of a neighbour, across country lanes and through bushes, far from the high road of a remote village. From quite a distance we could see the alley of poplars and the little summer house with its red roof glistening in the sun, completely intact. The smoke had stopped.

The next man who was given the responsibility of conveying me further was a land owner, who had a carriage. He himself drove me towards the mountain that we could see on the horizon, shrouded in forest. At this point the innkeeper in a small locality gave me accommodation, and I was allowed to rest for a night. Despite the fear of being pursued and the strain of the day, the trip was a thoroughly happy one, because the discussions of my guides showed me how deeply democratic ideas had penetrated among the people and become a conviction for them.

As a result of all the new impressions, I had forgotten all about the secret hidden in the cap, but when I was alone in my bedroom, my heart grew heavy at the realization of how many unchecked hands had been in possession of the cap during the last four days. I caught myself falling into that old habit of mistrust against people with tattered coats that had been instilled in us from childhood. I could no longer resist curiosity and began to tear open the threads with which the blue cloth had been sewn to the lining. A Prussian twenty-five thaler banknote was the first to appear and underneath it, as a precaution, the cap had been completely lined with banknotes of varying denominations. I counted the money and found the entire two-hundred thaler in the cap.

For many days during my wandering I encountered minimum difficulty. I was even given the clothing of a land surveyor, and with the help of my topographical map I was sometimes even allowed to take the chance and go on without a guide. But in the meantime a wanted poster had been released, and I was now drawing nearer to a border. My last host, the innkeeper had recommended a doctor who lived on this side of the border.

This brave man showed me the hospitality due a friend, but as he clearly comprehended my situation, he pointed out to me the difficulties standing in my way concerning getting into the neighbouring region. He showed me a reactionary newspaper in which a malicious article commenting on my liberation had been printed. It insisted that the Democratic Party had, with all its might, supported my escape only because its members had feared that, in the forthcoming trial, my testimony would compromise a large number of people who at this time were still free.

The doctor said: "You can imagine the zeal with which the search for you is being conducted. It is necessary that you hide here in my house a while longer until we can find a good opportunity to get you across the border." So once again I was confined and was not allowed to leave my back room because the neighbours might then have surmised that a guest who had not been registered at the police station was being given accommodations in the doctor's house.

My escape had to be delayed until the doctor received a call to examine a patient in the neighbouring state. He had quite a busy practice in this region, since his place of residence was only a half hour from the border. The wife of the mayor there was so kind as to choose my protector to be called in the worst of medical circumstances, and her husband sent along a certificate stating that, for God's sake, the border authorities should not delay the doctor with the formalities of examining passports.

It was the middle of the night when a two-horse carriage drove up to the house and the bell was ringing as if the house were in flames. The mayor had expressly chosen to dispatch a police servant, who did not cease ringing the bell, befitting the urgency of the situation that the highest authorities had entrusted to him. When the doctor looked out the window and saw the tunic of the local constabulary, he thought we had been betrayed. But the policeman explained in a few words that the happy family event had made its appearance earlier than expected, and that *he*, in order to avoid any delay, was to accompany the doctor across the border.

“Hmmm, Hmmm!” the doctor said, “that is a remarkable coincidence. I am to attend a *concilium medicum* in Dingskirchen tomorrow morning regarding a dangerous operation—I cannot fail to be there—you can see that—hmm, hmm, hmm—what should be done?”

“But keep in mind in this case, doctor, it’s the mayor’s wife! That still takes priority over everything else!”

That sly doctor again gave the appearance of being doubtful and then said: “I know what to do. I am going to awaken my colleague, the medical health officer, who is staying with me, so that he can go with me to the council. He can lend aid to the mayor’s wife, and I shall then use this carriage to drive on.”

The policeman protested and said that the mayor’s wife did not entrust herself to anyone but to him, the trusted doctor, and might it not be better if the medical officer drove to the council meeting by himself. Once the doctor finally agreed with the plan, the policeman presented no further difficulties and sat down quietly until the doctor was dressed.

I had been awakened from my sleep because of the noise, and no sooner had I understood what was happening while I stood in the dark listening breathlessly at the top of the stair railing than I too prepared myself for the journey. I played the part of the medical officer with dignity

and arrived on the other side of the border with the help of the certificate from one of the most reactionary mayors and the certification of the police in person, and was even conveyed a good distance further in the mayor's own carriage.

Unfortunately, our fatherland is criss-crossed by many borders and so the melding of ingenuity and coincidence was needed repeatedly to help me across each one. It took several weeks before I arrived at the Belgian border, and it was this one, the decisive one, that was guarded the most stringently but was also the easiest to cross. In a Rhenish city I was quite openly informed by a waiter at a guesthouse that the demand for false passports had become so excessive in the last year that they were being sold by subordinates in the passport office for twenty-five thaler. Not a soul knew who I was, and so I took the chance, feeling secure in the success I had encountered thus far, and had the waiter pick up a new passport for me for twenty-five thaler under the pretense that I had lost mine. You can see that the exit from the monastic seclusion of my cell and the re-entry into the world's struggles has caused my conscientiousness to suffer shipwreck. It seemed to me as if a police state was only a robber's den from which I was permitted to free myself at all costs.

With the exception of making a strange acquaintance on the train yesterday between Brussels and Ostende and which involved a minor adventure I encountered nothing else that was out of the ordinary until my arrival today in London, where I think I shall stay for the time being.

## Chapter Ten

### A New *jeu d'esprit* and the Green Man

Dr. Stern had been interrupted only occasionally with an exclamation or a question from his friends. Now, after he had finished his account, Ibeles suggested that they drink to the health of those brave people who had been so unflinching in helping his friend. After this sensible suggestion had been completed Dorothea asked about what sort of adventure Dr. Stern had had on his journey to London. She hoped that it was of a romantic kind, which might have converted the confirmed bachelor to think better of the opposite sex in the future.

“Oh no,” Dr. Stern said laughing, “I would hardly call it an adventure, and I would already have forgotten all about it if my wallet had not served as a reminder. As I said: in the train compartment between Brussels and Ostende I met a distinguished Russian, who conversed with me regarding the revolution and who wasn’t even such an extreme absolutist as we would imagine a person from his nation to be. He told me about the social constitution they have in the provinces there, which is in certain aspects much more liberal than our own. He sneered at the anti-Russian attitude that he saw to be prevalent among the intellectuals in Germany and that makes us slaves of our petit states, whereas we could become a great nation only through a direct connection with Russia. He scoffed at the pressure that the powers that be in the German states put up with just to remain *German*, whereas all the while German scholarly achievement was nowhere valued and celebrated more than in Russia. He pointed out to me that the expulsions to Siberia were predominantly directed towards the aristocracy, which was outraged at the vast influence of just this German spirit at the court in Petersburg. I was astonished at the patriotism



expressed by this man, because I would not have considered it at all possible that a thinking man could be filled with enthusiasm for Russia.

“Purely because it was so remarkable, I would have liked to continue our conversation when I met him again, after crossing the channel, in Dover, but waiting for him at the dock was a man with a mustache, with whom he presumably had business dealings to discuss. The Russian avoided entering the same compartment with me, and it would have been presumptuous of me at that point to strike up a conversation with him again. So I stepped into an adjacent compartment below his, in which I remained the sole occupant, and since I had been seasick, I quietly lay down in my corner.

“There must have been a gap beneath the cloth partition, because I heard the conversation in the adjacent compartment as if there were no walls separating us. At first I had neither interest nor intention to eavesdrop, and the voices sounded like no more than a low drone with the loud rattling of our train, but when the train came to a halt I heard random sentences, from which I was clearly able to distinguish between the familiar voice of the Russian and that of the man with the mustache.

“At one station the two spoke about women and at another about politics, and these conversational fragments, strung together, had roughly the effect that we as a jolly group of lads enjoyed when we would read horizontally across the columns of a newspaper, jumping over the column gaps to produce a jumble of phrases. I amused myself by noting down a few sentences, because when one has neither reading material nor company one resorts to practically any strange way of passing the time.”

Stern leafed through his wallet and read the following two-actor drama:

Folkestone Station.

Stranger's voice: -- --

*always worked against us throwing our funds away on insignificant characters. Only the leaders are of some value to us.*

Russian's voice: *Still, it can't hurt. How else can we approach the leaders? We are in need of popularity. The connection with these people gives us credence with the leaders at the very top.*

Stranger's voice: *Very tedious. Very little means.*

Russian's voice: *The best provinces were won over with the same tedious work and the same means. Everything has to work in tandem, diplomacy and the sword, intrigue and—*

Locomotive: Hooeee, Rrrrrr.——

Chorus of train conductors: *Ashford junction, Ashford junction, Ashford junction. (fading away)*

Russian's voice: *So, another love affair already!*

Stranger's voice: *I'm not completely certain but it appears that way.*

Russian's voice: *A handsome man?*

Stranger's voice: *The countess says so.—Ladies' moods!—There is definitely nothing that speaks of the military in his manner. He's an educated man as well. Fortunately, he's married.*

Russian's voice: *What's his wife like? Is she pleasant or unpleasant?*

Stranger's voice: *Actually, she's neither one nor the other. A mere nothing.*

Russian's voice: *So, she'll offer no resistance. To begin with, we have to—*

Locomotive: Hooeee, Rrrrrr.——

Chorus as above: *Staplehurst, Staplehurst, Staplehurst.*

Stranger's voice:—— *obviously contrary to the imperial commands. If I am to continue in the*

*humiliating role that has been assigned to me, I need to have partners who are more adept. We won't attain any result if we operate the way we have been during the last six months.*

Russian's voice: *Even so, let us patiently pursue the same policy that we implemented in Vienna and Paris. As long as things are brewing, watch quietly, investigate the central ideas, observe the principal people. The neutral elements can then be removed; the most important players we must win over to our side.*

Stranger's voice: *Unfortunately, they are incorruptible.*

Russian's voice: *Perhaps with regards to money. One can distract and divert them through other interests. First, one implicates them in affairs, and then one helps them get amnesty. There are also factions that can be used, in order—*

Locomotive: *Hooeee, Rrrrrr.——*

Chorus as above: *Tunbridge, Tunbridge, Tunbridge.*

Stranger's voice: *— already declared it to be useless in my last letter.*

Russian's voice: *Trust my experience. We need this uninhibited enthusiasm that believes in itself. No calculated shrewdness on our part could work better than this.*

Stranger's voice: *Have you forgotten how she compromised us in Vienna?*

Russian's voice: *At that time it was the diplomats who got all the secrets out of her. Your fears are needless when it comes to the inexperienced, gullible politicians of the revolution. After a few years of apprenticeship—*

Locomotive: *Hooeee, Rrrrrr.——*

Chorus as above: *Reigate, Reigate, Reigate.*

Russian's voice: *Quite right. Now I remember the girl. She was the governess of the English*

*family in the hotel in Brussels.—what's the name of it? And my sister-in-law took her along from there.*

Stranger's voice: *That's the one.*

Russian's voice: *I considered her to be quite harmless. But if you think she's watching you then she needs to be dismissed.*

"Is that all?" Dorothea asked, as Stern pocketed his wallet.

"Yes," he replied. "At the station where I last wrote something down, a family with children climbed aboard, and they caused such a disturbance that I could hear nothing more. But, we can't forget that it's late and I still have a long journey back. When shall we meet again? I hope it's soon, because I need advice and the help of friends so that I can build a life here. Above all, I'm counting on you, because you have now been here for over a year and as assimilated Londoners you can surely instruct me regarding the conditions here."

Ibeles did not want to treat his friend indifferently and appear to be uncooperative, so he refrained from commenting that a year of becoming assimilated in London was equal to about a month in Germany. Dorothea came to his aid with the suggestion that Stern should come to their home for a meal the day after tomorrow, on Sunday, and afterwards they would all enjoy an outing.

"Wonderful!" Ibeles exclaimed. "I've long promised my little sons and daughters that I would go with them to the Green Man, and mother will also take some time off and come along with us."

"To the Green Man?" Stern said, "that sounds fabulous. Is that a forest hermit?"

"No, just the name of a beer garden," Ibeles informed him. Stern accepted the invitation, and Dorothea, like a child, looked forward to a day of merriment and relaxation in the open air.

On Sunday morning grey clouds gathered, and Dorothea thought anxiously of the little dresses and little shoes that would be ruined in order to keep the promise. Cancelling the outing was out of the question as long as it did not rain torrents. "A person is bound by so many things, should he also allow himself to be dictated to by the weather?" Ibeles was wont to say. Fritz and Karl along with their little sisters Milla and Nanna, who were allowed to come along while the younger children had to stay at home, wore themselves out with assurances that it would clear up, and their father attested to the fact that in London the weather tended to vary throughout the course of the day. When a heavy rain began to fall around nine o'clock in the morning, the prospects of having a lovely afternoon were good.

Hope did not disappoint. Even while the table was being set, the sky cleared more and more. Their friend Stern arrived with a cheerful face and was greeted happily by the children.

"Come, let's sit down at the table and eat quickly," mother urged, "so that we can make the most of a longer afternoon."

The family sat down at the table, and Ibeles began to carve the Sunday roast. Just then a cab rolled up to the door, and out stepped the three children of Countess Blafoska, along with the German governess and the French housemaid. The latter handed Dorothea a little note, which read as follows:

*Dear friend!*

*My brother-in-law has arrived unexpectedly, and I have much to discuss with him. We wish to be alone and undisturbed, and for this reason I am sending my children and au pairs for a visit with you, since my children could be in no better hands than yours. With fondest trust in your usual kindness,*

*Yours truly, Julia*

Miss Braun, the governess cordially said: “Don’t be alarmed; we’ve brought provisions along, just like a picnic. This basket holds two bottles of champagne, a serving of garden strawberries and more sweets than we could ever finish. The countess thought that if we provided the desert, we might, without embarrassment, put paid to the cost of the ordinary meal. So, forgive us for taking this liberty.”

The governess looked both innocent and embarrassed, and Dorothea could not bring herself to let the woman see the inconvenience of their invasion. On Sundays, every shop in London is closed, and a baker would sooner let a client starve to death than sell him a loaf of bread. So a large quantity of rolls along with milk and butter would have been ten times more desirable for Dorothea on this day than champagne and desert. Even so, she had to make accommodation for the inconvenience.

While the housemaid tidied up hair, face, and hands of the little countess and little boys, and Ibeles arranged for the plates and chairs to be moved closer together and for some of the children to be seated at the so-called children’s table—an order assumed to be undeserved punishment that provoked little Celia to loud crying—Dorothea pulled the four oldest children out of the room and promised them an extra large portion of strawberries and sweets if they were to abstain from eating their bread and vegetables this one time. This promise was such an unprecedented contradiction to their mother’s usual rules that the children, in fact, failed to understand her, but nevertheless promised to polish off the sweets in blind obedience to her. Fritz countered with only one comment, namely that the children should then also be allowed a small glass of champagne as a reward.

The meal ended without mishap, but Dorothea could tell that she would have to forgo the outing. The countess’s children were not accustomed to going for long walks and appeared to be

very disgruntled when they heard that their little playmates, whom they had looked forward to being with, would be gone the entire afternoon. The oldest, the little countess, said that she did not want to play with the younger children if Milla and Nanna did not stay at home. But Dorothea was firm in her resolve, not wanting the four oldest to have to trade some healthy exercise in the fresh air for vigorous play in an overheated room.

In private, Ibeles again encouraged her to leave the housemaid and the children to fend for themselves and not allow her afternoon, which they had all anticipated with such pleasure, to be spoiled. But that would not work because of the many small obstacles. It was necessary for a diligent authoritative eye to be present in the house in order to compensate for the missing necessities. The French housemaid had received permission from her mistress to have the afternoon off, and as soon as the meal had ended, she had left the table informing Katrinchen that she would pick the children up at nine o'clock. Sending the German governess home with the little Blafoska children would have been cruel, since the countess planned to drive to Richmond with her brother-in-law after their dinner, so it was quite possible that the house would be locked up.

Stern now got involved and said: "Your Katrinchen and the other German woman should no doubt be able to control six children without you having to stay at home." But Dorothea replied: "I don't know the young woman, and so I can't shift my responsibility onto her. She could pick up a book and start to read, or she could sit and chat with Katrinchen, and then no one is watching the children. I wouldn't have any peace of mind on the outing thinking about what the obstinate little Poles could instigate in my absence. If *they* could be controlled by the governess, their mother would not have sent them here."

The plan stayed as is, and in a disgruntled mood the family went their separate ways.

The Green Man is located on the way to Harrow, a place that has become dear to us Germans because of Lord Byron's stay there. This region is one of delightful and charming beauty, and Stern could not restrain himself from soundly berating the Londoners when he heard that countless well-bred members of society never came this way.

"Is it possible," he exclaimed, "that the entire continent raves about English travellers, who subject themselves to countless discomforts in order to gaze raptly here and there at a mediocre region when they have such beautiful places available so close at hand? No one has ever told me that such idyllic charms surround London. At home one pictured this city as being only a forest of palaces and department stores. I've never seen such green meadows, such majestic trees!"

Ibeles replied: "The things that are disturbing will soon become apparent to you. Even the countryside here strikes me as the artificial result of massive fortunes. Only the controlling land tenures could turn such a broad expanse of farmland into a garden, conserve such colossal wooded areas to remain untouched. Look at how the hedges cut straight through the plain, how all the shrubbery is enclosed by preserves. Every step that one takes on this ground reminds one that it is the property of a genteel person.

"Rambling around in fields and bush, ascending to the top of a hill in order to find a heavenly little spot; that is all in vain here. The highroad that the public is required to follow is precisely mapped out. Only the green meadow allows for such extravagance because it's not necessary to carefully preserve such abundant growth as it is in our climate.

"It would be preferable if the parks were laid out less artistically so that the people could wander through them freely! However, they are a forbidden paradise for everyone who doesn't use favours to get in. There are exquisite floral areas and rare plantings behind these wooden



fences that one naturally wants to protect, and so if our road is hemmed in on both sides, for miles we often see only treetops.

“And have you already noticed, that not one field flower has the slightest scent? And look at how the grey blends into the distance!”

“What a discontented person you’ve become,” Stern said, “that a shortcoming would disturb you amidst such beauty. I don’t even recognize you. Have we reversed roles? London appears to me as being so full of hope, and that’s why I find everything delightful!”

Ibeles then confided in his friend, telling him some things regarding his personal situation, the difficulty of his position, which he had not yet mastered, and finally they talked again about the visitors that had robbed Dorothea of her outing. Stern could not understand how his friends had become so bound up in social considerations that they were not even masters in their own home.

“If we wanted to comply with the moods of the aristocracy,” he said, “we wouldn’t even have to live in exile. Is this why we have left our homeland and taken sides with the people against the noble house that once fed us, all just to come here and be treated as underlings by some aristocratic lady? Ibeles, Ibeles, why do take such a yoke upon yourself?”

Ibeles emphasized the solidarity that had persisted up until then among his political circle of friends, and he assured Stern that even Wildemann and his comrades, who after all ranked among the staunchest of democrats, set a high value on connection with the patriotic Polish woman.

Stern had always been prejudiced against emancipated women. He now gave vent to these views in an attack against this particular woman. He cried out:

“All females who merely joined the revolution have been a detriment to our cause because they brought frivolity or empty enthusiasm into our ranks and exposed us to ridicule by the opposing party.”

Ibeles replied: “I have to contradict you there. The women who now help the defeated party by nursing the wounded and who attempt to free the prisoners are also on our side.”

“Well yes, one can let them fulfill the function of compassionate nurses, but when they come along with us in battle, they hinder our ability to act freely, and in cases where they even co-conspire all is doomed from the outset!”

“Now the inveterate misogynist in you is speaking again. You will see that we will not be able to evade the emancipation of women, and the fact that a woman wants to be free does not make her more of a danger to us. It all depends on how she intends to exercise her freedom. Up until this time we were appalled at the emancipated ones because only those who hankered to act without restraint in accordance with their personal whimsy asserted themselves. When they are all emancipated, then the serious ones who aspire to something higher in their duties will come to the fore.”

“And is your Polish woman one of those?”

“With regards to aspirations, perhaps, yes. But she lacks competence. She is dying to take a hand in this, to have a say, but I fear that she also would not be able to—hold her tongue.”

“Then she will ruin you all!”

The children had gone bounding ahead of the speakers and now came running back at full speed in order to announce that there, at the end of the ravine, was a signboard on which were printed the words “The Green Man.” The men once again directed their attention to the nearby surroundings and were surprised at the sight of a group of gypsies who were sitting around a fire

beside their wagon. For quite some distance black scorch marks in the grass had appeared from time to time, and stemmed from such a family on the move.

Stern exclaimed: "Gypsies in an open field, a few miles out of London! Ibeles, if this is not a romantic land, then you can eat my hat!"

The homeless riffraff had stretched cloth over a carriage, which served as their sole accommodation, in order to be ready to move on in the event that some landowner were to drive them off his property. A skinny horse nibbled on the hedges, upon which separate pieces of straw and bunches of hay had been scattered here and there. A tinker's gadget and several remnants of ripped blankets lay on the ground, and a few dark-skinned children with wild, loosely hanging hair stretched out their little hands begging for alms. Whatever the older people were roasting over the fire, for which they gathered up fallen brushwood, could not be determined. In any case the aroma was not very inviting. The physiognomy of the small number of brown folk did not instantly conjure up images out of C. M. v. Weber's opera *Preciosa*, instead Ibeles understood why the owner of the adjacent park carefully maintained his wood fencing.

At the entrance of the garden leading to the Green Man a host of small coaches that had just passed them were parked, filled with dressed-up ladies. Astonished, Stern noticed that the names and addresses of the owners, written in gold letters, were clearly legible on the outside of every coach.

"I have always heard the Germans complaining of the insularity of English family life and the difficulty of gaining access to the ladies!" he said. "How can a father do better than to publicly announce family name and address when taking his wife and daughters out for an excursion?"

Ibeles laughed at him heartily and explained: “In spite of the silk dresses and the private equipage, by no means is this representative of London’s fine society. These are the same coaches with which butchers and spice traders and all the other petit bourgeoisie deliver their goods to clients during the week. On Sundays they take their wives and daughters on outings in them. See, here under the name you also have the title: milk- and butter man, cheesemonger, bread- and biscuit baker. By this you know in advance the class of the young ladies if you want to introduce yourself to them and avoid being deceived, unlike in Berlin’s Kolosseum,<sup>23</sup> where a tailor’s daughter masquerades as the daughter of a privy counsellor. Hold on. As we speak some pretty young women are stepping down from their carriage. Let’s see what name identifies them!”

“Fresh pastries, good bacon,” little Karl started to read what was written on the carriage that had brought the lovely ladies. Delicacies were also listed in addition to these first two items, as well as an endorsement that everything was guaranteed to be authentic.

They entered the garden, where a gay party of people was scattered about in the arbours and on the lawns. The gaudy colours that the lower classes in London loved to wear created an unbelievably cheerful scene. These people seem to feel that the hazy grey sky was in need of brightening through the use of this amazing decoration. Colours that would have overwhelmed us if we were to allow our eyes to alight upon them—pink with blazing red—we have to tolerate in the flowerbeds if a rose decides to flourish amidst neighbouring geraniums. The English women belonging to the uneducated lower classes dress with the same innocence, and as long as

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<sup>23</sup> The Berlin “Kolosseum” (variously also “Colosseum”) was one of the most elegant dance halls in Berlin during the early nineteenth century attracting the cream of society, but in time started to attract a much more mixed crowd. Young ladies of the lower classes would dress up and were easily mistaken for upper class ladies. The Kolosseum was destroyed by fire in 1843.

this type of woman was not wearing every colour in existence at one time, she would hardly consider herself to be fully adorned.

Out past the tulip field of glittering silk dresses, the soothing vista opens up to Harrow's Hill with its shady churchyard and blue-green pastures. The atmosphere that rests over this broad lovely region is so pleasant that one is reluctant to turn one's glance back to the immediate everyday surroundings.

The enchantment was broken by the innkeeper, who, in one accord with Ibeles's children, urged ordering some bodily refreshment. After the innkeeper poured Ibeles a foaming ale, Ibeles asked him about the gypsies outside. "Oh," he said, "in this day and age, where everything has deteriorated, real gypsies no longer exist either. These tramps, descended from the old race, have declined in character to such a degree that they don't even know how to steal chickens anymore. They pass themselves off as tinkers and stay put begging alongside a road until the neighbours have them driven off. Then they travel on throughout the country, which no police can keep them from doing, until they've again sniffed out a suitable little spot. There they stay until the scorch marks in the grass cause their detection, and, once again, they're forced to journey on."

The innkeeper returned to his work, and the friends looked at the garden, bursting into laughter over its decorative elements. The inventive innkeeper had made a grotto from oyster shells that he had collected little by little and had used the necks from bottles that had broken off over time in order to form a makeshift triumphal arch. These green bottle necks had been plastered into the wall so that they stood upright like tower battlements atop the ogee apex of the garden's triumphal arch.

On a large lawn in the middle of the garden, groups of children were playing. A family relaxed at tables that had been set up under shady trees, and one part of the garden had been

expressly partitioned off into a cluster of tiny arbours, each of which seemed intended for a romantic couple. And sure enough, in the middle of each green enclosure, there sat a young miss and a respectable bachelor, the two taking the occasional sip from a glass of beer. Yet to the external passerby this garden outing had the appearance of a wax-figure exhibit, since the Sunday solemnity permitted only muted emotions.

“Well, we’ve seen a touch of national life in England,” Ibeles remarked, “which the educated people in London never bother to take in. Only the petit bourgeois indulges in a Sunday excursion to the surrounding beer gardens—an inappropriate place to be seen for the likes of us. But I enjoy going here so much because this garden leading to the Green Man reminds me of German village taverns more so than any other place around here.”

Meanwhile, the children had discovered a swing, which the inn keeper had had erected for the amusement of the young people. Soon, several boys and girls arrived, who, strictly speaking, could no longer be considered children, and in all unfairness to their younger playmates, took to monopolizing the swing. The little ones had no sooner uttered a complaint regarding this, than a young man from among the bystanders stepped forward and stood in defense of the “babies” against the older youth. Acting upon his suggestion, a single line was immediately formed, and the swinging proceeded according to arranged order as is befitting of citizens who are from childhood accustomed to laws and self-government.

On the way home, already late in the day, Ibeles once again felt sorry for his dear wife, who would have thoroughly enjoyed herself. He expected to find her feeling exhausted and harassed, but that was not the case. The foreign visitors had just then departed the house when the strolling party returned home from their excursion, and Dorothea still had some refreshments

left over for them. She reported that she found the German governess to be a very nice young girl and that she had found her easy to get along with.

“Just think,” she said to Ibeles, “as the children were having their evening meal, this girl, Meta Braun, informed me of a sphere of life that was completely new for me. She told me from personal experience and that of strangers about the life of German governesses in London—things I could never have imagined. I told her that it was definitely worth the effort to write such stories down, and she replied that she had already done so. She carried her manuscript along with her because she wanted to add to it if an opportune moment presented itself. I asked her if she would entrust me with it in order to share some of it with you. She was happy to comply, so if you’re not too tired, we can read through it together this evening so that I can return it to her as soon as possible. That poor girl must have to steal any available minute in order to write one line.”

As soon as the children were in bed and Stern had taken his leave, the couple sat down on the sofa and leafed through Meta Braun’s manuscript together.

## Chapter Eleven

### The German Governess (Manuscript)

My four brothers had been so expensive to raise that by the time I arrived, ten years after the youngest boy, the household finances had already been somewhat depleted. However, to my parents' great fortune, I was a girl and, as such, did not require much for the time being. When I was growing up, my father would often say that it was a shame that I was a girl because I had more of an aptitude for learning than all my brothers. Some of them had only reluctantly applied themselves to their studies and would have rather pursued a trade, but my father's pride in having an education did not make allowances for this. He would much rather have seen his sons become stupid professors than clever tradesmen.

After I had received a very inadequate education for girls at school, I was encouraged to pursue female activities. These I found by nature to be abhorrent, and I sought escape by secretly reading my father's books. My parents forbade this and argued that an educated woman fell short of her innate purpose. I was then given to read Campe's paternal book of advice for his daughter and other such educational publications for girls,<sup>24</sup> which for a time I took to heart until the course of my own life's destiny showed me that it is hugely arrogant of men to dictate to us our calling merely from their own perspective.

At first my good sense bristled against the dictates concerning a woman's work. It is my belief that no work is specifically designed for men or for women, but rather that there is either physical work or work involving the intellect. If one were to take into account gender strength or

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<sup>24</sup> Johachim Heinrich Campe (1746–1818) was a German writer and educator who wrote *Väterlicher Rat für meine Tochter* (*Fatherly Advice for My Daughter*), published in 1787, which became a highly popular advice book for girls in Germany during the early nineteenth century.



weakness, then strong men should not be allowed to become tailors and weak women should not be conscripted to working in the house and fields. I saw no solid reason for why boys were forced to study and girls were prevented from doing so.

My father said: “A woman is born to become a wife and a mother.” He too had written essays on the duties of a wife and was an active supporter of institutions in which the over-education of women was to be thwarted. As a result of this avocation, which absorbed all of his spare time, he unfortunately failed in the role of being the father of a household. Yet it never occurred to my mother to work on ensuring that the boys would be raised to become better fathers. She was in all modesty a wife and mother, just as Campe’s book stipulated, but she never thought to reform the other sex.

I was impertinent enough to raise the question as to whether the primary occupation for boys was also to be husbands and fathers. It seemed fair to me that the duties pertaining to men towards us should not be completely ignored, if we were to be raised only in preparation for our relationship with *them*. Since I became an adult, my personal experience within our circle of friends showed me that the number of excellent mothers still outweighed that of exemplary husbands. I also discovered that the young girls who were raised to fulfill their natural calling were not more loved and sought after in marriage than those who pleased men even with opposing character traits. Out of twenty young girls remaining unmarried, no doubt there were nineteen who would have become capable housewives. So how can a status be considered a woman’s natural calling when it is not in her own power to assume it?

I became the victim of this male arrogance that dictates a woman’s calling. Being neither pretty nor well-off, I was not successful in asserting those characteristics that lay hidden in my soul and that might have enabled me to find love.

After my parents died, I was left, with a very limited education, to provide for myself. My brothers were all struggling with domestic difficulties and could not help me. I decided to go to London as a governess, an undertaking that had been described to me as very lucrative and agreeable.

It has been only a few years since I left Germany, but it seems as if it has been twice as long, owing to the many different circumstances that I have seen first-hand and to the painful disappointments that I have experienced.

When a respectable young German girl is seen being introduced to her female compatriots at a gathering in London's society and an hour later finds herself alone and ignored, one can surmise that, newly arrived from Germany, she is looking for a position as a governess. The title of governess provokes an involuntary flight because every woman in the know foresees the trouble that such a relationship brings with it. At the time I did not grasp the meaning behind the shocked faces of the ladies who, upon being introduced, initially responded with friendliness towards me and who immediately withdrew to another corner of the room when they understood that I hoped they would come to my aid by giving me a referral in order to obtain a position. The difficulties that they presented to me I saw only as an excuse to get rid of me, and I was astounded at such rudeness and lack of generosity.

I had been warned about the agents and the newspaper advertisements, and the few people for whom I had letters of introduction assured me that it would be much better if I found a position in a respectable home by way of personal acquaintanceships. I was told ghastly stories of how naive foreign young girls had been lured into dens of iniquity under the pretext of finding a position as a teacher, and since I still had sufficient money for the time being, I decided to wait until a truly splendid prospect presented itself.

This soon transpired in a way beyond even my wildest dreams. A duchess was seeking a German governess for her very young child, and when I presented myself to her she immediately promised to hire me. She said that she was about to go to Paris for fourteen days and could not formalize our contract until after her return. Even before this time had ended, I was given a new offer from another lady of the high nobility who wanted to take me along to Canada because of an appointment awarded her husband that prompted their move for several years. This last offer greatly appealed to me. Visiting a different continent as a family member of an important statesman was a prospect that I turned down with much sorrow.

To be certain, I went once more to the ducal residence and was told that Her Grace intended to prolong her stay in Paris for another week, but had given instructions, should I inquire, that I be reassured that our agreement still stood. Not until after the family of the statesman had sailed for Canada did I receive a short letter stating that the duchess had changed her mind and was thinking of journeying on to Italy. The child was to travel with her, and since she did not intend to return to her country estate for several months, she was releasing me from all obligations.

I was outraged at this turn of events because I had informed her in writing of the offer for Canada, and she had retained me with her assertions for as long as it suited her, and now she just dropped me with neither an apology nor compensation. But how little one concerns oneself with German teachers in London was something that I was still to experience every now and again.

Once again I heard of a position in an aristocratic household, and I was given notice of a day on which I could speak with the lady. A very disagreeable lady-in-waiting received me with orders that I had to wait until four other German “persons,” who had arrived before me, had been admitted and seen. It turned out the lady had appointed this day for a general inspection of

available German governesses from whom she intended to pick out the most skilled and at the same time the most inexpensive to hire. The maid was already tired of the arrivals and received each new candidate with greater rudeness. My face went red as I saw a few more of my compatriots arrive, while those having arrived before me came downstairs one after the other and departed.

Unfortunately, we are not a *beautiful* nation, and in England, where outward appearance is everything, this circumstance contributes greatly to our being left in the shadows. As I looked over our group of young German women, most relatively short, looking quite worn out and very plainly dressed, and then compared them to the maids, looking elegant and acting distinguished, I understood why the powdered-wig-wearing ox of a liveried servant treated us as if we were servants of the lowest kind in the house. Just then the bell rang again, and this time it was a very pretty young lady who was inquiring about the position. Her clothes were drenched from a rain shower, and she seemed to be shivering. The maid condescendingly extended an invitation for her to come along to the kitchen in order to dry herself off, all the while addressing her with “my dear” as if she was one of her own.

In all fairness to the lady of the house, she greeted me with far more decency than her maid. However, I was not granted the position since I was not proficient in teaching music, drawing, dancing, and Italian in addition to several other subjects other than German and French.

This occurred repeatedly in similar fashion, so that I lowered my demands more and more. My acquaintances told me that it would be much easier for me to find a position once I had lived with an English family for a year, and that is why I finally seized the opportunity to become an unpaid governess.

Nevertheless, before even taking a rather onerous position I was subjected to all manner of conditions. As usual, the first question concerned my religion, the second whether I came from a good family. Since I disclosed my religion as protestant, stated my father's profession, and could provide references from both a banker in the city and a "reverend," I felt certain of finally finding the desired employment.

The family lived in the country, was rich in daughters, and for a modest cost wished to provide them with an education befitting one available in the city. About the middle of summer, when schools were closed for summer-vacation time and elegant society took to travelling, the mother was in the habit of picking a young woman who came with a fairly high recommendation from among the throng of dismissed governesses, and inviting her as a guest until the following season. Anyone who is acquainted with the English system no doubt knows enough to appreciate such an offer, and many a one would have considered herself lucky to be in my position. I however, was still a newcomer and brought with me the expectation, as all new arrivals of my profession tend to do, of finding a comfortable position with few duties, a lot of free time, and all at the highest possible wages. Unfortunately, the opposite viewpoint prevails among the English ladies: namely, making the most extensive demands on their governesses with regard to excellence and time that is all-consuming for the lowest wage possible. Now since our numbers disproportionately exceed that of those looking to hire, these ladies can naturally prevail with *their* demands.

In my case I was indeed treated with the same consideration given to a guest, since I was unpaid, but it went without saying that I was kept busy reading out loud, teaching, correcting exercises, and supervising the younger children for the entire day. If I would have received monetary compensation, my duties would have been outlined in the form of a command. But this

way I was politely asked whether I would do one favour from nine until ten, another favour from ten until eleven, and so on. The entire day was spent doing various favours. However, in the evenings I took part in the family's social gatherings, which would not have happened had I received remuneration. Tea time in the country was *not* very pleasant, but the nursery, from which I was freed on account of my respectable status with the ladies of the house, would have been very dreary.

On the first evening, the host had invited me to sing and play the piano, and when I apologized for not having any musical abilities, he asked with amazement: "But aren't you a German?" That is how deeply rooted the notion has become in the minds of the English that we are apparently an entire nation of musicians. Further inquiries, for example with regard to sketching, led me to also have to reply negatively, and with shame I realized that there were more things that I had *not* learned than those of which I had knowledge. But the people maintained a gracious and friendly attitude towards me, only taking full advantage of my few skills upon discovering them. Thus, in addition to the German, I had to teach a few small boys the basics in French, and the hostess felt it would be desirable to also give her daughters a thorough understanding of the "feminine skills." She was candid in saying that she did indeed place more value on those skills that a young lady could display in society, but that she would be understanding for the duration of my stay and make do with the situation.

I was mindful of doing more than was required in order to repay my hosts for their hospitality. From morning to night I laboured, was careful not to disturb anyone, and yet I felt as if I was not quite respected—the family was somewhat reserved towards me, and even the servants treated me with disregard. As a result I often became quite melancholy, and in order to lift my spirits I wrote long letters home or to the new friends I had made in London.

The lady of the house, to whom I owed my present position, was the friendliest towards me. I was aware that she had received me very warmly, and even later, when I wrote her a letter expressing my gratitude, she was not slow in responding and giving me some good advice. Among other things, she advised that I use my time residing with a respectable family to learn the English language and the prevailing customs with the greatest zeal and not to miss any opportunity where I might be able to form a connection with English ladies. Since she had taken such interest in me, I regarded her as a long-standing friend. After all, it is invaluable to experience the helping hand of one's fellow countrywomen in a foreign country, and the heart gravitates towards those who speak one's mother tongue. But the lady's replies became more and more brief and distant until at last they stopped arriving altogether.

I recognized her handwriting on a letter addressed to the English woman at whose home I resided, and since soon thereafter I received the notice of termination from the hitherto existing position, I mistakenly imagined that these two occurrences might be linked. We German women who come from small towns immediately assume that slanderous schemes have been undertaken behind our backs. I wept in secret about the misjudgement of my character and finally decided, knowing that I was innocent, to write a formal letter to the friend in London and to take her to task about her breaking off all correspondence with me.

This time I received a formal reply, and I am keeping it as a documented reminder for my sisters who share in my fate. Here it is:

*My dear Miss Braun!*

*One has neither slandered you nor do I callously decline the warm friendship you have offered me. Far too many young ladies who find themselves in circumstances similar to yours take advantage of the sympathy I extended towards you, as if I could enter into a continual*

*correspondence or even a life-long friendship with each one. Every business acquaintance from Germany sends those he is recommending with letters of introduction to widely known business establishments in the city such as ours. With every passing month my list of German governesses looking for employment increases, and had I, as a rule, taken length of service into account in my efforts, many years would likely have passed before you would have been considered. It is only because I was impressed with your character and because you had been recommended to me by some especially well-respected friends from the homeland that I set aside my most pressing duties in order to act on your behalf. No doubt, you do not have the slightest idea that it took fourteen letters, to be exact, in order to procure your position, which you find so dissatisfactory. I do not count the latter as a sign of your ingratitude, since everyone who benevolently acts as an intermediary between ladies and governesses knows from experience that in nine cases out of ten, such relationships result in mutual dissatisfaction. We, acting as amateur agents, are forced to swallow the accusations coming from both sides regarding disappointed expectations. In spite of this, I am the only one in my entire circle who is just weak enough to repeat my past mistake for every touching case that presents itself. However, I limit myself to helping my charges to take the first step towards appropriate employment. Those that are not capable of taking the second step are of no use to England. Using the reference you were given from your previous position, you must seek out your next position on your own. Again I remind you that skills and devotion to duty alone do not help to advance anyone if they do not take into consideration the customs of a country. Your devotion to duty has been met in complete fairness in the house in which you were received.*

*With highest regards.*



How I would have loved to reply requesting an explanation of the obscure insinuation at the conclusion of the letter! Obviously there must have been a complaint lodged against me. But I could not fathom where I might have violated the customs. Only after a long time had passed did I find out from a third party how much I had unwittingly offended my English hosts. I had held the fork in my right hand, had touched the fish with a knife, had heartily bit into some buttered bread instead of tearing off a little piece, I had eaten a fig without bothering to cut it up on the desert plate using a knife and fork, and one time, when the servant, whose hands were full, allowed a large strawberry to fall from an overladen plate, I quickly bent down to pick it up so that he would not squash it into the carpet. These along with a host of other things that had unknowingly signalled my disparity in dress, deportment, and manners from the English women, were seen as offensive, and caused others to conclude that I could not possibly be the daughter of a gentleman. Complaints lodged against me were conveyed in a letter to my protectress in London, and she was seen as committing a serious offense by having smuggled into her house, which welcomed members of society, a person who was not a lady.

My unassuming manner still often resulted in my personal harm, and I realize that I would have benefitted from directing all my attention to the imitation of pretentious manners and form instead of increasing my knowledge through studying. Above all else, the English women are slaves to the comedy that they call lady-like behaviour. On a later occasion another person who could not spell correctly and who, when speaking, confused *me* with *myself* was given preference over me because she was considered to be a perfect lady. She had been a maid for the wife of a Prussian colonel and had copied her typical grand air of giving orders.

Even though I was given notice from my first position, the reference I carried with me at least allowed me admittance to a so-called institution for governesses. In these public institutions

only governesses who have already had a previous position in England are accepted, and they have to verify this with a recommendation from the family that gave them their notice, directed to the institute's administration. For a small price one is able to obtain protection and shelter here for a time, but one must commit a specific amount of one's wages to the institution, should it be instrumental in the procurement of a position. The institute is a charitable establishment and actually offers the simplest way of securing a position, since the place is a public agency that the ladies come to visit and are able to view the host of governesses available. Nevertheless, there are some of us who use the institute only as a desperate last resort. Each one of us individually believes she will obtain something better along the way by means of a favour and persuasion than if she is on display, lined up in a row together with her competitors as if at a slave market.

There were quite a number of us together, and we told each other our stories during the weeks of waiting and hoping. We were frequently offered positions at schools for girls, but for these positions most of us were too astute. They always said: "*Anything*, even a char woman, but not a German governess in an English girl's school!" Apparently the circumstances are pure slavery, and the German governess is expected to deal with all the mental rubbish that no male teacher in the school is willing to sweep away. Perhaps this opinion is exaggerated, but the exceptions are probably very rare.

Among the anecdotes that my comrades told me about, I find the following to be indicative enough to save.

Fräulein v. Wilkens, an officer's daughter from Schlesien, was given a reprimand at her first governess position because she pulled the bell for the house on the right, and the lady of the house indicated to her that the governess must use the servant's bell on the left.

After I had hoped for an offer for some weeks, an elderly lady arrived and suggested that I take on the responsibility of caring for, supervising, and instructing all her daughters, the older ones as well as the young ones. The pay was approximately equivalent to that of a cook, but she asserted that my position came with a special benefit, namely that she herself was willing to give the governess lessons in Hebrew free of charge, should the young woman be found worthy of this honour. I rejected the offer, which seemed completely insane to me, but the matron of the institute shook her head over my imprudence and assured me that knowledge of Hebrew had at times in the past been required of governesses. I found this claim to be verified, since some English ladies place value on having read the Bible in the original language.

Of all those who had joined the institution with me, I remained without a position the longest, since I lacked musical ability. Finally, my day of salvation came as well. A high Anglican priest was seeking a German companion for his daughters, and his one and only concern was: that I might not secretly be Catholic.

Luckily I still possessed my personal confession of faith, below which the pastor who had confirmed me had written a few words and which proved that I was a staunch protestant. Generally, I possessed a strong ability for protest. Now, because of having had to wait a long time and because of hardship and humiliation, I had become broken enough in spirit not to let some conflict ruin my chance of obtaining the position offered by this gentleman of the clergy.

I did my part with his daughters and really went to great pains to instil in these young ladies, who were worldly beyond measure, an appreciation for serious subjects. Going to church and the times devoted to prayer went against my grain, but I regarded this as a part of the self-sacrifices that I had taken upon myself.

Six months later the son came back from Cambridge to spend his holidays in the country. He was much brighter than the rest of the family and thus had acquired some inner doubts about beliefs in authority. But just let German reason trust English doubt and see what happens! The Cambridge fellow had no sooner got wind of the fact than he coerced me into controversial debates during walks and on other occasions. I didn't understand that he used his doubts only in order to demonstrate the power of rebuttal and instead believed that he was really seeking after truth. For such a person it would have been a sin not to question, and considering that I was chilled through and through from all the drenching my brain had received from sermons and prayer times, I warmed myself by debating with him during a long afternoon on which we were both alone in the house.

The consequence was that the student's earlier skepticism suddenly reversed and he felt it his duty to convert me. His sense of boredom from being in the country during a particularly rainy summer may have contributed to his attempts, along with the exciting allure that the secrecy of our mutual relationship held for us both. He wrote me a letter the length of a dissertation in which he admitted to areas of doubt in order to salvage his common sense from my opinion, but in the end he was really looking to salvage the flimsy wall of biblical belief that he had erected, with which a young English person is walled off from the world of the intellect. I unfortunately allowed myself to be tempted to answer him, which led to one letter after the other until finally the family discovered our correspondence.

Even today, I do not believe that the young man, who seemed to possess an otherwise innocent and respectable character, was intent on condemning me to his family's revenge. Our secret letters and our long discussions had probably made us suspected of having a love affair. In order to clear me of wrong-doing and himself of the ridicule of a supposed intrigue, Peter naively

produced my essays in letter form, which however no longer breathed the same spirit of my confirmation days. The result was that I was immediately sent packing without compensation by the enraged father and was even denied the considerable amount of money owing me in arrears.

My situation would have been more desperate than ever before if I had not made substantial progress in my knowledge of the country's language and laws. All social ills and prejudices in this country can be redressed by means of the public eye and the freedom of the press. Countless times during meals I had heard the following statement: "I will write a letter to the *Times*," whenever a wrong had been committed somewhere in which neither the police nor the municipal authorities felt an inclination to intervene. I knew that my employer had often made himself unpopular because of his severe disciplinary actions towards poor transgressors, and so on one occasion I also wrote a letter to the *Times*.

My situation came just at the right moment for a political party, and I received assurance from a rich revolutionary that I would be legally represented in court. The clergyman was extremely astonished that the poor governess would dare to bring a suit against him. He brought a copy of my confirmation essay and my letters addressed to his son in order to use the discrepancies therein to provide evidence that I had obtained the position using deceit. He accused me of the crime of "having attempted to obtain money under false pretenses," and therefore denied being guilty of a breach of contract.

To counter this accusation, my solicitor brought in evidence obtained from the institute for governesses, which verified that the dignified clergyman had ascertained, prior to my employment in his home, only that I was a protestant and not a catholic. Moreover, the plea in my defense brought forth the argument that my opinions were completely in accordance with Protestantism in Germany—a claim that seemed to instill a sense of horror in a few of those in

attendance—and that one could not expect any foreign woman to have been raised in the Anglican church. I received a substantial amount in damages since the justice people obviously wished me well, and the next week I had the satisfaction of seeing a caricature of my religious adversary portrayed in *Punch*.

The revolutionary who had funded my court appearance procured for me quite an enjoyable position as a lady's companion for relatives who had lived in Germany for a long time. This time I hoped to be employed by people who were completely free of prejudices, but that, to a certain degree, was the case only with respect to religion, whereas the endeavour to display the utmost gentility in every aspect here also engendered a distressing restriction of freedom in deportment.

The sister of the head of the house, to whom I was assigned to be a constant companion, appeared to be well past the early adolescent years, even though she was pretty and not yet past the bloom of youth. Evelyn, my mature pupil, was good-natured and had a far less inhibited capacity for affection than English women are accustomed to expressing. Her teachers were all women. There was not one man among them, which surprised me, since I had often heard strong prejudicial remarks uttered by English mothers against women teaching. Even on the brochures of some of London's schools, prices are listed as follows: piano lessons from a master teacher, one guinea per hour, from a lady, only five shillings. At an opportune time I asked whether it wouldn't seem funny if a female singer, like Grisi or Malibran, were assessed according to the same standards and considered below any old Mr. John Smith because he was a genuine artist and the former were merely *songstresses*. But the lady affirmed once and for all that a man was better at giving lessons than a woman.

With regard to music, I have strong doubts whether this general opinion is true. I cannot believe that in the nineteenth century a man with a superior intellect would want to stoop to being a piano teacher. Men who are content with amateur singing and plunking the piano cannot possibly sense an inner ability to pursue a great purpose in life. By contrast, for a woman outside of marriage no other sphere of influence is left open to her than that of performer or teacher. Therefore, I think that in this domain strong female minds contend with those of the weaker male. But since I have no musical ability, perhaps I do not appreciate the seriousness and the importance of plonking on the piano.

When I shared this opinion with Evelyn's sister-in-law, she shrugged her shoulders and intimated that completely different reasons had prompted all male tutors to be banned from her family's house. During an hour long tête-à-tête she told me that I would probably find quite justified the strictness of her husband—who, after the death of the parents, had to preserve the family honour—when I heard what shame Evelyn's older sister had brought upon his house.

I lowered my eyes expecting to hear something terrible. The lady pulled out her handkerchief, dried her eyes and said, her lips quivering with pain: "My sister-in-law married her piano teacher!"

I averted my face in order to conceal my laughter, and the lady continued: "Nevertheless, she is still welcome in my home, and we also treat her husband politely, albeit with a proper measure of reserve. However, it is still a huge embarrassment for us, having to limit our company during times of such visits to only close friends in order to avoid the humiliation of having to introduce our brother-in-law to a stranger. With regard to Evelyn, we have taken double the precautionary measures since that time, since she has, while on the continent, soaked up views that are somewhat too liberal. She has even told us of a bosom friend, a Baroness

Dorothea de Wald, who had also married her piano teacher and, despite this, was not ostracized from society in the residency. But who can compare the status of the aristocracy on the continent with the English gentry?! It remains a misalliance.”

It seemed strange that Miss Evelyn complied with her brother and sister-in-law’s tyranny, but I soon realized that the system that holds together English society is as powerful as that which binds together the European states. No bureaucracy is more tightly organized than the clique that comprises the family and that has protected itself from the demands of one individual through a whole chain of prejudices.

Even so, my days spent within this circle were quite pleasant, and Miss Evelyn had become so dear to me that her German friend, Dorothea, could very well have become jealous if she had not been a member of the aristocracy. But in this regard Evelyn revealed herself in all her weakness. Whenever she spoke to a German foreigner, her every third word announced her intimate relationship with the Baroness de Wald. Through more detailed inquiries into the background of Evelyn’s friend I was able to ascertain that at most she was only a very simple daughter of a country squire, who could never have claimed the title of a baroness.

We spent the winter in Brussels and met some old family acquaintances. A very rich, elderly gentleman, who had always had a fondness for Evelyn, struck up a noticeably closer relationship with her, and I perceived that a marriage was being planned. I suspect that the desire for uninhibited privacy led, by way of a simple excuse, to the sudden cessation of German lessons. Moreover, the dissolution of our relationship was carried out with as much consideration for me as was possible, and I am indirectly indebted to the references provided by Miss Evelyn’s putative groom for my current position.



The Countess Blafoska's household is the most unusual and most mysterious that I have ever been in. The lady professes boundless love for her children, but can never spare them a moment's time. She says that she lives and acts only for political interests, and from her activity no one can predict which main political principle she actually espouses. She purports to be the mainspring of a broad interlocking clockwork, but when asked about the reason for her perpetual unrest, she is able to provide clear information regarding neither her aims nor her methods.

It is difficult to comprehend the nature of the relationship that she has with her servant, whom she refers to in public as Iwan, and one would think evil thoughts of his control over the countess, if they didn't have such fierce arguments in Russian. To me it often appears as if this Iwan is of a higher social rank than he professes and that he is being bribed by the countess's family to monitor her. However, I cannot decipher why she doesn't get rid of him, since his mentorship is an obvious annoyance to her. Iwan and I watch one another, even though we attempt to conceal the fact *that* we are watching one another. What will the outcome of this be? I fear that my stay in this tense atmosphere will not be a long one, and I have already spread wide the wings of my soul.

## Chapter Twelve

### An Unteachable Lady Diplomat

Dorothea had stopped reading the manuscript, uttering a loud cry, when on its pages her own name appeared unexpectedly, and Ibeles considered it to be fortunate that the much discussed friend Evelyn was not presently in London. “Good thing that I have discovered this in time,” he burst out. “No amount of pressure shall pull me into a circle that treats artists so poorly.”

In an instant his regard for the Countess Blafoska increased, because at least she had never displayed pride in her noble birth. He referred to the writer of the manuscript as being calculating in character, whereas his wife defended Meta Braun with somewhat of a bias.

On the same Sunday that Ibeles had gone to the very bourgeois teahouse and garden, The Green Man, with his children and Dr. Stern, the countess had spent the afternoon with her brother-in-law at the finest hotel in Richmond. Iwan was on patrol, making sure that no unwanted acquaintances disturbed the tête à tête, and wandered up and down between the loggia where people were dining and the adjoining corridors. He was dressed as a private citizen and appeared to be deeply engrossed in a book whenever strangers came near.

Count Blafoski, the countess’s brother-in-law, was a tall, well-built man, his quite attractive facial features marred only by fat cheeks and eyes that were a bit too small. He treated the countess with a tenderness befitting a father and countered her restless nature with greatest of patience and a refined gallantry. He had taken on the character of an aging Frenchman, and instead of shouting down the countess’s torrent of words in the typical Russian manner he finally

silenced her and made her listen by shaming her with his abrupt silence each time she interrupted him.

At great length she had told him of the seductive attempts to which she had been exposed from various sides, and she had just described how she had shattered Wildemann the communist with notable indignation yesterday when he had become carried away with an overly ardent declaration of love.

With a cunning smile the brother-in-law asked her whether she had not, as a cunning strategy, intentionally made the honest Wildemann the victim of his own anger in order that he would not detect the point at which her heart was most exposed to danger.

“I know whom you mean,” the countess hastily replied. “That is not a matter of the heart, but rather one of honour. That this man does not succumb to compromise for my sake is rude and damaging to my reputation as being an irresistible woman.”

“Better to abandon this game, dearest Julie! In the long run, you could seriously obscure your vision with these intentions, and the importance of this man is not worth that to us. Anyhow, you should keep in mind that for a lady diplomat passion can never be the end in itself, but rather only act as leverage. I fear that your heart has become involved, as much as you might want to deny it.”

“And if I did have a heart, would I be less amiable because of it?”

“Certainly not, but then I must ask in the interest of your husband and your children that you maintain the blessings of your home’s comfortable ambience. You are aware of the conditions under which we grant you the freedom to travel.”

“I should sacrifice myself for the comfortable boredom of everyday life, even though I have the innate urge to achieve something great? Either way, I want my name to be recorded in the world’s history books.”

“We recognize your great enthusiasm, dearest Julie, but the court in Petersburg is not the place for it. We could find no outlet for your ambitions there, because other more discreet women surpassed you in terms of vigilance. You could have been of unspeakable benefit to us in Germany, if you had known how to keep a tight rein on your heart. But how can we rely on you if you fall in love with the person that you are to have an influence upon? That is the predicament with female diplomats. There would be nothing to criticize regarding the subtlety of your female schemes if you all did not always stop because of a scrupulous conscience and expose the threads that you intended to spin around the one you love.”

“You talk as if love has never played a trick on a male diplomat. Should I remind you of your own stay in Vienna, of which I know much more than you might suspect?”

“Scoff all you want at my adventures. They have never taken me off course. Quite the contrary, they have advanced my tsar’s goals. Do you think that I don’t recognize the moving force of passion? It is one of the greatest impulses that we must utilize in order to attain great results. The secrets a woman would never reveal, those are the very ones she reveals to the man who knows how to awaken her excitement. Passion produces energy in the lethargic women and dreaminess in those normally astute observers. Therefore, we must use love or at least the pretense of love in order to render the wives of our opponents to be either useful or harmless. However, we men involved in politics know how far we can go and at which point we need to stop so that the result is not put at risk. I have never incited passion without knowing how it could be useful, and I have never made the slightest change to a plan for the sake of a love story.

“If that is how you were able to play with passion then you have never known the joy of passionate feelings. I could not live at all without this smouldering gleam that colours my daily life with enchantment. How grey and dull the few weeks between intrigues dragged on! A society of apathetic people, the dry diplomatic reports, the menial degrading assignment involving secretly watching and conveying information, the chore of tying up and ripping apart a thousand futile threads, all of it nauseates me, and then I find myself almost envying that creature, the German housewife. How different when a new passionate love again conjures up that sweet magic and everything that one does has meaning.”

“Aren’t you tired of this useless game yet? We thought that you had long had your fill of raving about our illusions. Your experience has shown you how blasé all the people later appear to you who at one time prompted in you so much emotional energy or vice versa.”

“Love never changes, even if the objects of love change. Anyone who can awaken this exalted and unique feeling cannot be some insignificant person.”

“Your logic, beautiful Julie, would leave me in doubt whether you have been called to the great arena in which you desire to be effective. You cannot seriously think to assess people and events according to the emotions that they incite in you instead of utilizing those passions according to their making world history. What is love? It is a drunkenness of the mind that causes insignificant people to appear to be exceptions of humanity and the most ordinary of situations to appear enormously important. And in order to achieve this type of sentiment, which one knows in advance shall pass, a woman of your mind wants to lose sight of the goal upon which generations have been working?”

“If I cannot overcome the resistance of human will, then how am I to break the resistance of an entire nation?”

“The latter is easier, because you have allies. Pan-slavism versus Germanism! The young giant versus a decrepit old man who has roused himself for the last time in this amazing year of ’48 and who takes on the appearance of rejuvenation. The worthy assignment that you, my dear friend, should live for is not to hitch up *one* stupid German to her victory wagon, but rather to give a death blow to the lie regarding unity for the entire nation.”

“I confess that I no longer consider the zeal for German unity to be a mere lie. There are men among these German refugees who would be willing to die for it.”

“That does not prove anything. A confused mind would die for any cause!”

“Perhaps! Let us ignore the confused minds that immediately take up arms. Incidentally, those are the most charming. There is one type of German who has no desire whatsoever to become a soldier, but I find his fondness for forming opinions through reading rather than experience strangely impressive. Indeed, I have held to the strategy of never allowing an intellectual to get in a word edgewise, but my own way of thinking has still been shaken by some things that have assailed my feelings against my will.

“You were warned about the professorial eloquence: You swore that all the parliaments could not cause you to waver.”

“The German parliaments have treated us Poles with more respect than the court at Petersburg.”

“And do you all believe that the Germans, who have been pervaded by the madness of equality among all classes, would ever help to restore the old Polish nobility’s household, about which your nurses sang the perpetual little song to you in your cradle? *Those* Germans who want unity are the ones that want to enthrone middle-class virtues, industriousness, and boring, comfortable informality. My friend, my proud Julie, no more of this perpetual dithering from one

point of view to the other depending on the atmosphere or how your fondness for a person moves you. You must either persist with the role you have undertaken or return home.”

At hearing this the countess broke down in tears, but quickly composed herself and explained to her brother-in-law that she hoped *never* to go back to Petersburg. The passionate outcries against her relatives back in Petersburg were followed by a sympathetic appeal on behalf of our music conductor, whom she described as the ideal of openness and honesty, to which her brother-in-law replied coldly that modern despotism is quite happy to see the common man hold to bourgeois virtues. We shall omit the countess’s long speech in which she explained the impression made on her by the imaginative circle of exiles who were zealous for their idea of freedom in its contrast to the impression the diplomats made on her. “To you diplomats, I, with my ardent heart, have always been little more than a tool,” she exclaimed, “but to the democrats I am an object of amazement and admiration!” She concluded with the following complaint: “I feel miserable fettered with the chain that my circumstances impose upon me, and I blush with shame when there is talk in my presence of Jesuitism in politics or of Tartuffes,<sup>25</sup> those hypocrites, and spies.”

Smiling, the count said: “Words, mere words, which must not alarm you. The political agent who affects minds with the gentle influence of her character and who opens her salon for discussions between the parties stands above the spy just as the archbishop is higher than the common priest. Yet apart from that, the spy is useful and often even a person worthy of praise. In times of war he is a hero, risking his life for his party, more so than the soldiers marching in formation. Alfred, the English king who, with his zither, paid a visit to the enemy’s camp, showed no disdain for the role of the spy. It is only when a political agent serves two parties that

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<sup>25</sup> “Tartuffe” refers to the title figure in a theatrical comedy written by Molière in 1664. The term “Tartuffe” is typically used to denote a hypocrite, especially with regards to religion.

his actions become reprehensible. There is *one* pretense of character that all parties find reprehensible and that is the Tartuffe. Yet this character is not to be confused with that of the pure Jesuits, because the Tartuffe stands by his egotism, he stands alone against all others, and in turn, all others conspire against *his* mask, whereas Jesuitism has become an overall principle in our day and age. As much as your idealists might like to slander the name Jesuit. Jesuitism, although different in form, pervades the opposing party just as much as it does our own. They call the spy an emissary, and the communist is their Jesuit.

“How paradoxical,” the countess exclaimed. “You cannot defend the latter statement!”

“Let’s consider some examples,” the count said. “Anyone for whom one principle excludes the validity of all others, becomes a Jesuit. The covert Catholic who entices the daughter of his protestant benefactor to enter a convent does not have an ungrateful, evil heart. He is convinced that he is doing a good thing. The duty to his religion is of higher importance than the friendship and trust of another human being. At times, a great writer will systematically ruin the character of a woman closest to him in order to study the agony of pain that he wishes to portray in his immortal drama. He might love her, but poetry means more to him than a woman. You yourself, my friend, do not despise playing the role of an intimate friend with a woman to whom you are indifferent and perhaps even hate if it means that you might have an influence on her husband. Why do you want to recoil from the means that you use for a mere dalliance? Now let’s talk about the communists, who support the extremes of democracy exactly the way that Jesuitism supports the ultimate consequences of Christianity. A communist considers every method permissible that would aid his utopian dream of achieving victory. Which party sends out the most poisonous stings against those dreaming of unity in Germany, the so-called reactionaries or those from the communist party?”



The countess was inclined to agree with this, and even offered additional proof, with which Wildemann had entrusted her. He had wanted to send an emissary to Berlin, just as Mrs. Mutebell, in the absence of her husband, approached Ibeles in order to inquire about contracting a German private tutor who was to accompany her oldest son on his travels. Ibeles had naively selected one from among his acquaintances who was not politically biased and who possessed the essential attributes necessary to protect an Englishman from any troublesome situations while travelling on the continent during the awkward adolescent years. But Wildemann pushed the music director not to miss this crucial opportunity to smuggle into the country, with a false passport, his emissary, a tailor who was a communist. Ibeles resolutely refused because he had given Mrs. Mutebell his word to find a quiet, respectable man who could practice Latin and mathematics with the lad during his free time. Wildemann considered it absurd that the interests pertaining to mama's little boy should have priority over party matters, and he had a falling out with the musician for some time because of the following assertion: "The man who refuses to lie for the sake of the party is a traitor, and we have no use for him."

"You are witnessing Jesuitism at its finest," the count said.

But again, the countess pointed out that Ibeles was an exception for why those women who played roles their entire lives always set their hearts with the utmost of warmth on completely genuine types of men. She complained how she herself had felt as if she were a phantom as long as the political ideas had merely coursed through her being, so to speak, and how she only just now could again sense her connectivity to nature and the human heart, since she was lovingly able to feel affection for another human being. On the drive back home many names of people belonging to the circle of refugees came up, and their political leanings were

examined in detail. Finally, as they arrived back at the house, the countess hastily asked: “So, how is my husband?”

To this the brother-in-law replied: “The French woman is still living in the palace.”

“Well then he is in good hands!” the countess exclaimed with a laugh.

“From that I realized for the first time that you have a large heart,” the count said, “by the fact that the petty emotion of jealousy is foreign to you. In time you will also gain mastery over other ineffectual feelings, and you will accede to the control of the head over the heart. You haven’t yet told me what type of woman your German friend married.”

The countess’s face darkened. She attempted to control herself, but the telltale sign was the muscle of her upper lip that began to twitch to the side. Without a moment’s hesitation she said: “You know that I have always had a dislike for insignificant women. I have nothing in particular against *this* one, because she is harmless.”

“So she arouses just as little jealousy in you as the French woman?” the brother-in-law asked.

The countess cut him off saying, “Why should every deprecatory emotion of one woman towards another be given this odious label? I only feel pity for my friend, and I wish for him to have greater creative happiness than being relegated to domesticity and parenting. But enough of that. Miss Meta and the children are returning home. I have to find out how they spent their day in Briar Place.”

Count Blafoski detained his sister-in-law further and asked that she give him an opportunity to test the governess’s convictions. He said he could not be lackadaisical concerning the type of person with whom his sister-in-law kept company since he was responsible if wrong

influences had an effect on his brother's children. The countess rang for Miss Meta and ordered that tea be served as soon as it was time.

Upstairs, Meta Braun helped to undress the oldest lad, which wasn't actually her duty, but the French housemaid was always good at requiring the governess to do a portion of *her* duties. The other lad was already lying in his little bed and threw a small book bound in Russian leather at the little countess.

"Isn't that the prayer book that the Madam Countess spent so much time looking for this morning?" Meta exclaimed. "Give it to me!"

"That isn't a prayer book," the little countess replied. "It is full of all kinds of strange little pieces." And with this she took the little book and began to read a sentence in Russian.

"What a strange language," Meta said, "all I hear is: wutschi, wutschi, wutschi! Can you understand it?"

"I have forgotten a lot since my Russian nurse left. When we arrived in Germany I spoke only Russian and French. Now I would rather speak German."

"Please say a few words in Russian for me so I can hear how it sounds!"

"I don't know any."

"Don't be so lazy! Translate 'Good morning' for me or else the first words that come to mind."

Instead of doing as asked, the little countess read an entire page of the supposed little prayer book and then began to translate it into broken German.

"This perfume is blend-ed with the white makeup, and its fragrance has a sweet intoxicating ef-fect on all stand-ing close by, like a magnet-ic—"

"Oh enough, enough!" Meta exclaimed. "What stupid rubbish!"

At that moment the French housemaid came into the room and quickly snatched the book from the little girl's hand, as she exclaimed: "Vous savez que maman vous a defendu de prendre quelque chose de sa toilette; elle a cherchée partout son petit brévier!"<sup>26</sup> Then she turned to Meta and explained to her that this book was a rare treasure. These were secrets pertaining to a lady's toilette, the recipes obtained from a close lady-in waiting to the Empress Katharina, and very few copies of this little book had fallen into the hands of the highest aristocracy. The French woman greatly bemoaned the fact that she did not understand enough Russian to study the entire book thoroughly.

Meta laughed at her and said that seemed as if one should believe in magic potions, the kind that one might find in old tales of witchcraft. But the argument could not be continued because it was time for tea and Meta had been summoned to the drawing room.

Steam was rising from the tea urn there, and the governess tended to her duty while the count smoked a cigar on the balcony (its doors to the room open) and the countess lay reclining in the easy chair by the fire. Meta had to give a report of how the afternoon had been spent, and the countess felt sorry that her children had been bored because they had found that only Ibeles's three youngest children were there to play with at Briar Place. Meta made the comment that it was a shame that the count's children had been indulged with exciting amusements from a young age because the French housemaid had taken them on daily excursions alternating between the bazaar, then the museums, then the coliseum or Vauxhall, and now it had become practically impossible to satisfy them with ordinary games. She described the undemanding nature of the children at Briar Place, who knew how to turn the discovery of every little stone or stick into a game for themselves and for whom fruit and bread served on little dolls' dishes seemed like a

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<sup>26</sup> English translation: "You know that mama forbade you to take anything from her dressing table; she was looking everywhere for her little guidebook."

feast fit for a king. The countess inquired whether her children were not more advanced in intellectual knowledge than Ibeles's children, since these poor creatures had seen so little of the world, and without housemaids and governesses they were limited to the minimal education that their own mother could afford to give them.

Meta Braun was at a loss as to how best to answer, because the count's children were as lethargic towards their studies as they were noisy and boisterous while playing. She had leafed through the notebooks of Ibeles' children and found the latter to be more advanced than her pupils. She attempted to break this to her mistress as gently as possible by saying: "It would be ill befitting of me to cast suspicion upon my predecessors, but if your children are not by nature loath to learn, then they must have been neglected by those whose responsibility it was to awaken the children's understanding. They have difficulty comprehending concepts and are not interested in applying themselves. However, Madame Countess, you can be assured that because of this I am contemplating how I can make the lessons more enjoyable for your dear children. I have observed that capturing the children's attention with *one* subject is the most difficult to maintain when they are accustomed to distraction. That is why I have made it a rule to skip immediately to another subject the moment my pupils begin to yawn."

This was literally the truth, except that Meta concealed the fact that this condition took place every ten minutes. Like the imagery of the pelican piercing its breast in order to revive its young with its own blood, so the poor governess sacrificed her life trying to make reading, writing, and arithmetic interesting for the children, who had become jaded by an early indulgence in luxury. Out of boredom, the little countess's pale head hung limp like a mayflower, and the young little counts displayed passive defiance in opposition to all methods directed at making them learn.

The countess assured Miss Braun that she believed her to be trying her hardest, but that up until this point only indifferent governesses who cared solely about money had been with the children. She admitted that it was unfortunate that her many connections and the demands of life did not allow her to be the affectionate mother that she no doubt wanted to be. Nevertheless, it seemed to her unfathomable how Frau Ibeles, who did the housekeeping herself, could still find time to concern herself with the children.

Meta's explanation for this was that the children of commoners did not grow up as separated from their mothers, in contrast to higher social circles that separated the nursery from the salon. She said: "It isn't an early education that produces intelligent children, but rather that their development takes place in a constant intellectual atmosphere. No matter what her household task might be, the director's wife always ensures that the youngest children are with her and she gives answers to all their queries. She has cultivated in them a knack for observation, which in turn has generated intellectual curiosity. Learning is enjoyable and the greatest attraction in life for those children who live a simple life and have little in the way of playthings. The older siblings, who have gone to school, are already helping their mother in training the younger ones, because unfortunately she is often prevented from—"

At this point Meta faltered, in order not to let on that Frau Ibeles had complained about the disorder into which her family life had fallen since her house had been turned into a meeting place. After a moment's hesitation she continued and mentioned that the director's wife had said that she often had a great desire to read something that was more age appropriate than mere school books, but that she realized a woman with many children was obligated to sacrifice her own desires for the sake of the next generation and that every bit of instruction that she could

give the little ones would have a greater benefit for the world at large than if she furthered her own knowledge.

The count, who in the meantime had finished smoking his cigar, now came back into the room and said with a sneer: "Ah, the person you are talking about seems to be a true example of renunciation!" Whereupon the countess replied: "For all that, it seems to me that when a person does one's part, it is simply a more subtle form of egotism. In my opinion, the highest degree of nobleness is reached when one actually renounces the joy of doing one's duty and forgoes doing one's duty with a feeling of painful sacrifice in order to act on behalf of higher ideas. How can one spur others on to achieve great deeds if one seeks only to live self-sufficiently at peace with one's conscience! *Great* human beings do not have *personal* responsibilities; rather, they are aware only of *universal* responsibilities."

This reasoning, which incidentally did not originate with the countess, but rather emanated from the influence of Wildemann, seemed even to the count to be too far a stretch to warrant a reply. He dropped the topic and asked the governess her opinion on the current conditions in Germany. She, however, declined to give her own opinion by remarking that she had already been absent from her homeland for several years and had actually never really taken an interest in politics. The evening passed with trivial back and forth conversation, without Meta being tempted to make any further utterance that could place her position in jeopardy.

## Chapter Thirteen

### The Division of Labour

Once again, winter had arrived. Not what one would call winter in Germany, but rather an exceptional state, the likes of which are not seen anywhere else in the world other than in London. Ibeles's children looked out in vain to see trees covered in frost, which at home would have stretched their silvery branches into the cold clear blue of the sky and waited with longing for snow and the merry ringing of bells on the sleighs. Instead, the fog came, its thickness palpable, its colour yellow brown, enveloping all, producing a feeling of near suffocation on one's respiratory system in the closed-off parlour. Whenever such a hazy mantle descended upon the earth, bringing down in its descent all the smoke from roughly a million chimneys, then Ibeles began to sing the chorus from Handel's biblical oratorio *Israel in Egypt*: "He sent a thick darkness over all the land!" and Dorothea would respond with Hayden's *The Creation*: "Let there be light, and there was light!" At this signal, Katrinchen already knew that she was to light several little tallow candles, with which they managed until outside an enormous beet-red moon penetrated through the foggy veil, of which even little gullible Cillchen could not be convinced that it was pretending to be England's sun. On some days even this comforter failed to appear, and the air was as thick as paste, forcing all carriages and wagons, by police order, to a standstill. Any person forced to venture outside of the home for unavoidable business carried a burning torch in the one hand and a huge stick in the other in order to cross the street. On such occasions all the business people become desperate, not knowing what to do, the exception being the



estimated twenty-thousand professional thieves, who bring in the most marvelous bounty when the city suddenly darkens.

In addition to the temporary darkness occurring around the noon hour, an even more uncomfortable surprise awaits the Germans, that being the discovery that the solid-looking houses fail to bestow protection against the draughty air from outside and that the wind rose could not bloom any more beautifully offshore than in any free-standing villa. England's peculiar legalities concerning property ownership are to blame for the fact that only a few owners can enclose their four walls with solid masonry. The land belongs to the nobility and the building standing upon it belongs to the entrepreneur. The owner lends his property with the condition that the streets constructed upon the land fall to his ownership after several years. As a result, the entrepreneur builds as cheaply as possible and squeezes as much rent out of his ephemeral property as he can, so that the buildings most often return into the hands of the land owner in a state of decay. Thus, it is the tenants in such a house of cards who are forced to pay the price for this agreement.

From the outset, Fritzchen and Karlchen had quickly discovered that the two columns and the balustrade, which appeared to be built of a heavy cut stone, consisted of nothing more, or even less, than a mixture of water and clay with street dirt. With a little bit of chipping away, the small fingers of the curious lads soon got down to the bottom layer of the pretentious buildings, which, similarly disguised, constituted many a street that travelers would admire as palatial. The underlying construction of the pillars was of the most common brick. The balustrades of the terraces and gardens were supported on the inside only by small bricks or by potting ware that had been kiln-fired like brick and then covered with those fine original components mentioned above, dust and water. When Katrinchen tried to drive a nail into a wall in the parlour on the

uppermost storey, the plaster underneath the wallpaper immediately fell away, revealing a wild meshwork of twigs beneath the crack. Alarmed, she ran to her mistress, in order to notify her that the top floor was apparently not the work of the mason, but rather that of the basket maker.

The stonework of the lower floors also allowed the November storms to blow through some of the gaps and into the rooms, as was apparent from the flickering lights and the constant movement of the curtains. If a lady sat near the window, the ribbons of her hat fluttered about like flags on a ship. The unbearable chill that ascended from the cracks of the floor had already taught Mrs. Ibeles in the previous year that in this damp climate carpeting was not a luxury, but a necessity. In spite of the carpet being tacked to the floor, the heavy wool Kidderminster<sup>27</sup> carpet could be seen to surge upwards in a wave-like formation from heavy gusts of wind as if wanting to demonstrate against all continental claims that England had nothing in common with the mainland and that its only alliance was with the rolling sea vessel.

All these things caused our exiles to feel more and more uncomfortable in the country that had invented comfort. The various illnesses did not cease, and the consequences of lengthy unemployment, which one cannot give in full detail without adding to the misery, had reached a high point.

Ibeles had secretly set New Year's Day, 1850, as his deadline to come to a definitive decision. He realized from the developing circumstances in Germany that any immediate return was unthinkable. He had given up the hope of establishing himself as a composer or conductor, and so on this day he surprised his friends with his official announcement that he was going to give music lessons. His English acquaintances, who had long advised this, found his decision to be completely reasonable. Stern, who had taken a position as an assistant schoolmaster in a large school for boys and, in addition, gave private lessons in German, also congratulated Dorothea for

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<sup>27</sup> The English town of Kidderminster was known since the late eighteenth century for manufacturing carpets.

the fact that the interim arrangement was now to come to an end, and he expected good success. But Wildemann, who considered this occupation to be a compromise with the aristocracy, besieged his friend with criticism and quickly ran to meet with the Countess Blafoska, in order to ponder how one might undo this step the music director was taking.

Wildeman, as it turns out, had been let in on a secret plan of the countess, the implementation of which would conflict with the music director's announcement. Soon after the departure of Count Blafoska, the countess had rented a large house, the furnishing of which necessitated continual meetings with Wildemann. She wanted to establish a type of small-scale cooperative society—her admirer, who was zealous for communism's objectives, had initially given her the idea. When she had mentioned this plan to her brother-in-law, Blafoski, he had surprised her with his response that he was far from inclined to hinder her plan and, quite the contrary, happy to place the necessary funds at her disposal, since no one, even in Paris, could have come up with a better way to embarrass the Democratic Party.

Of course, Wildemann observed the countess's deepening resolve with delight. Her decision to put his ideas into practice marked her as being an ideal woman, and he was now happy in the belief that, according to her intimations, a sense of duty rather than aversion was guiding her when she reined in his ardent fervour. Only one thing was fatal for him: the fact that the countess wanted above all to include Ibeles as one of the members in her cooperative society. Wildemann objected, stating that the workers and not the artists should experience the initial blessings of communism. However, the tradespeople of his party, whose more advanced inclinations he guaranteed, did not appeal to the countess, and she declared that her condition was the admission of her friend Ibeles, without whom she would abandon the entire idea.

For this reason, Wildemann was not loathe to see the musician's growing dilemma, and the countess was in complete agreement with Dorothea's pronouncement upon the occasion of three of her children lying ill in bed at the same time: in the end, every housewife had to become a socialist, since there were always occasions in which she alone could neither fulfill her obligatory duties nor satisfy all the family's needs in her own home. What Wildemann had said about the division of labour and the greater ease of acquiring resources as an association probably made sense to her. Only the disruption of family life, which she considered to be an inevitable reality, evoked in her the utmost dread.

The countess now saw that the moment had come to take Dorothea at her word. When Wildemann presented the countess with Ibeles's notice in the *Times*, she immediately hurried back with him to Briar Place, where, in Ibeles's absence, she intended to take his wife by surprise with her plan for an association. It had been quite some time since she had confronted the solemn Dorothea with such rapturous affection. Dorothea was too astonished to utter an instantaneous comment, either positive or negative. Instead, she sought first to regain her inner composure by allowing the countess to set out her proposal without interruption.

After the aristocratic proselyte had outlined the arrangement and assignment of rooms for the purposes of the small-scale cooperative society, she emphasized the points that were intended to gain Dorothea's overwhelming acquiescence of the plan.

"Everyone will be assigned work," she said, "that best corresponds to his or her strengths and aptitudes. You will be in charge of the kitchen and the nursery, and I shall provide for the intellectual and emotional needs of the men in the salon. You will represent the position of the housewife par excellence on a large scale, which until now you have fulfilled most worthily in your small sphere. You will assign the wives of the tradesmen joining the association their tasks,

because you have exactly the energy and the practical touch necessary to manage such people. I shall be in charge of the reading circle, where political discussions must also take place. I hope that the gentle hand of a continual presence of fine-mannered femininity will counter the all too severe clashes of the parties. If, at times, I have treated your usual motherly prudence with derision, it was only because you confined it solely to your own household. What a shame, I thought to myself, that Frau Ibeles can take only seven rather than twenty-seven children under her wings! For of course nature itself teaches us that little chicks of the emancipated fowl are pushed under the wing of the brooding hen, the symbol of all motherliness. I, too, shall not hesitate a moment in entrusting *my* children to you and will place at your disposal the services of the French parlour maid (for the sake of elegant outward appearances) and the German governess (to provide basic instruction) as your helpmates. As far as I can tell by the number of residents of the cooperative society to date, there will be at most nineteen children present including yours and mine.”

At this point Wildemann chimed in and said: “It’s true that this is a small beginning, but this cause will grow to boundless proportions. Perhaps it will be the first seed of a movement that will draw the entire German contingent in London into communism.”

The countess interrupted him: “The example of the Germans will irresistibly pull all of England with it. A chartist has reassured me that the British people have long been ready for this change, and if we provide the initial momentum—”

“Then the social revolution will not stop at England,” Wildemann exclaimed. “Europe will follow suit; the whole world—”

Dorothea, who had been on tenterhooks, fearing that the discussion threatened to waste the entire afternoon, tried to get a word in edgewise and said meekly that her family’s acceptance

of or absence from such a great endeavour could not carry any weight. Wildemann immediately burst out to say that precisely this was *conditio sine qua non*. That the countess had already arranged everything giving her special consideration and that she had only wanted to surprise her with the news that the cooperative society was a *fait accompli*. Ibeles's advertisement in the *Times* had come like a bolt from the sky, for with his apparent aversion to dilettantism the party would never have suspected him of so suddenly reverting to Philistinism.

Dorothea said: "The party would not possibly want to control my husband's profession?"

The countess chimed in: "We are aware of how long your husband resisted taking a position beneath him. He is doing this only on account of his family, and if you love him, you cannot accept such a sacrifice. If the society provides for his children, he will immediately give his consent. We shall personally assign him to the artistic sphere of influence that music of the future will open for the composer."

Wildemann read something in Dorothea's features that did not appear to be meek resignation. He planted himself directly in front of her, looked at her menacingly, and said in a formal and ceremonial tone of voice: "Citizen, I expect you not to plead any family exclusivity when it comes to achieving political alliance of the party. Instead of making difficulties, you should be persuading your husband."

"Why should that be necessary at all?" the countess added. "You have long acknowledged that the division of labour is a sound principle. I want to apply that principle with total consistency. Ibeles will feel blissfully happy if both housewife and friend, each operating in the sphere in which she belongs, acts on his behalf and that of the entire cause. You do understand your rank beside me and my friend, and you won't advise Ibeles against this, will you?"

Dorothea divulged the following: “My husband is free to make his own decision, but I *shall* advise him against this.”

“Even if I were to consider this to be a breach of my friendship?” the countess, burning with anger, asked.

“Yes.”

After this one sharp and impetuously spoken word, Dorothea did not allow herself to utter a second. Wildemann had flown into a rage and would perhaps have made a rude remark if the countess, who did not want their relationship with the family irrevocably ruined, had not put pressure on him to leave. After their departure Dorothea sighed with relief because she now hoped for deliverance from many afflictions. But after mulling things over her heart grew heavy, not knowing whether she might really still be as certain of her husband’s concurrence in every case as in the past when they always functioned as one heart and one soul. They had long been forced into separate spheres of life, and it seemed almost certain to her that this situation could not remain without any influence on their inmost feelings. For years now Ibeles had born witness to the fight for principles and opinions quite different from those they had shared for half a lifetime, and they had his undivided attention, while *she* had retreated into the narrow confines of her household duties. The countess’s proposal was an indicator of how she was seen, what significance she had in these circles. In the beginning this family friend pretended to be only the third corner of the triangle. Now she wanted to be first. When she spoke about Ibeles, she referred to him only as *he*, as if everyone would be bound to presume that their relationship was special and an exception. If she said *we*, then she meant herself and her friend, as was understood, and his wife was mentioned only as a third party. Had Johannes given the countess justification to use this tone or not? This was the vital issue for Dorothea at this moment.

He was unusually late coming home on this particular evening, and she already feared that Wildemann had waylaid him and won him over to the countess's proposal before *she* had spoken to him. However, this was not the case, because he had been out hunting for students, as he jokingly told his boys, and after a series of visits he had been detained by Mrs. Mutebell for luncheon. He came home in a cheerful mood after having enjoyed an abundance of haute sauterne and told them that he had been offered his first girl pupils. "That is a good omen," he exclaimed, "that promises success beyond measure: to immediately gain two pupils on the day the advertisement was published!"

It was Mutebell's daughters, who had quite nice voices and played the piano reasonably well, who were to become his pupils. Their mother had asked him to test them, and only after he acknowledged their talent did she respectfully ask him whether he would consider them worthy to become his pupils. The good lady had promised to work on his behalf within the larger circles of society and had assured him that people simply had not had the courage to offer beginning students to such a great master as himself. Now she gave him hope that the hierarchical ladder, which no artist taking up residence in England was spared from considering, would quickly be set right. One could normally count on three years of the word getting around before a teacher was well-known. In this case half the time period was ample because society had been avid in its desire to attract this man to the vocation of teaching even before he himself had cared to stoop to this pursuit.

Dorothea stoked the fire in the grate once more, pushed an armchair close and asked Ibeles to make himself comfortable prior to her telling him of the afternoon's incident. He preferred stretching out on the rug in front of the fire and resting his head upon her knee, while she took a seat in the armchair. They had not paused to rest together in a long time, and it



reminded them of their homeland, where they had often tended to while away the cherished twilight hours in this way.

First of all, Dorothea simply reported the facts without uttering whether she was for or against the proposal, because she wanted to be clear about her husband's viewpoint. Ibeles broke out with a hearty laugh and said: "No extravagance should come as a surprise anymore if it originates with the Countess Blafoska, but this new madness is really too lofty. Of all the people in the world, she would be the least able to direct an undertaking that requires tremendous perseverance and self-denial."

"So you're not thinking of entertaining the proposition?"

"Not under any circumstances. Or are *you* interested?"

At this point Dorothea relayed in full the details of the discussion—the allocation of roles in accordance with the countess's plan, and the breach of friendship with the countess and Wildemann brought about by her negative answer. A weight fell off her chest when Johannes declared himself to be in agreement with her, explaining his opinion in this way: "Believe me, my faithful one, when I say that I do not wish to have a dearer friend than *you*. A wife is always a husband's best friend, because she is the only one who shares mutual interests. This woman wants to become famous, and this wild notion of hers offers her everything—a reputation and wealth, a home and children. No one denies that a woman's quest for fame sometimes also generates some good, but that never outweighs the disaster that women incite in order to create a sensation. The game that she is now playing with that tamed bear Wildemann is proof. I do not believe that she is doing it only in order to lure others. It is this: she finds only a life filled with changes to be enchanting. In life, we are happy only if we can create a well-rounded work of art from it. Her theory about the division of labour is completely absurd, since she is leaving *you* to

the dregs and she reaps the sweet reward. All of her activity centers on the manifestation of her emotions and moods, and I cannot consider these to be work.”

“Your point of view,” Dorothea said, “eases my conscience. For your sake and that of my family I assumed every responsibility and cut off my artistic training in mid-life. Believe me—I really don’t desire turning myself into Cinderella. I refuse to allow myself to be talked out of the belief that a woman who is consigned to bear all sacrifice and trouble in a marriage should not also enjoy the artistic side of it.”

It was not the first time that outside intrusion had tried to disrupt the harmony in this artist’s house, but the deep love and the unshakable trust that bound husband and wife together had always triumphed. At court, Ibeles had developed shrewdness and been wary of traps, no matter what form they took. Now, after the most recent experience of the passing day, the couple reviewed many a tragicomical story of their former life. If a writer of comedy had eavesdropped in on them, he might have said how foolish it was to close the last act at the point at which the lovers wed, since the most interesting drama did not occur until after marriage. Indeed, if the women among his devoted followers, who no doubt had at times flattered themselves for having caused his heart anxiety, had been listening in unseen, they would have been ashamed to see that no evil spell could retain its power in the home of a good, prudent wife. Dorothea was her husband’s trusted friend, not simply because she was the mother of his children, but because the ties forged at home had, in this foreign place, wound themselves even tighter around their souls. They spoke the same dialect, they shared memories of their youth, and no relationship would have brought him enjoyment if he could not have discussed it with his wife.

We shall not chronicle the record of those idolatrous ladies at court, who, unbeknownst to Dorothea, attempted to ruin her domestic harmony prior to the Countess Blafoska. Instead, for

the benefit and assistance of all honest wives, we shall reflect in general on something that ties in with the intimate conversation of the married couple, who have just now retired to their respectable place of rest in mutual harmony.

The key note and the major third produce a pure and very pleasant harmony, and the augmented second thinks how nice it would be to join in. But harmony prevails only as long as dissonance is kept at bay. It is much the same for a couple living in an atmosphere of love and peace. An individual of unusual views who feels unfulfilled wrongly believes that by crowding in between a couple he or she will be part of their harmony, but instead everything is turned into discord.

Fortunately, the male family friend of a famous woman has fallen out of fashion in the nineteenth century, but in this present day another gender threatens to become the curse of famous men and their wives, and these are the female family friends.

When an upright woman marries an artist who has not yet attained his due recognition, she gladly denies herself all higher entitlements in order not to place any burden on the genius of her beloved. She clears his path of all prosaic matters, failing to consider that by doing so she might be placing her own future in jeopardy. The charm of her appearance fades, since her hardworking hands are not always at disposal to playfully smooth out the curls of her beloved husband when he is in one of his lethargic moods. What she loses in *her* imagination as a result of her daily uninspiring activity benefits *him* by providing the leisure needed to produce artistic works. The world is unaware of this and is amazed only that the brilliant man has such a prosaic wife.

This is the stage at which unsatisfied women from near and far foist their friendship onto the wife in order, by way of their relationship to her, to become intimately connected with the famous man.

The female family friend is in most cases a fairly platonic entity, or at least claims to be so. She desires simply to supplement the wife's shortcomings in the intellectual domain. Everything pertaining to transcribing, translating, hunting down quotations, and any other odd job that artists, authors, and politicians require a willing person to do—this is where the female friend forces herself in, since, while presiding over the cooking and the laundry department, the housewife cannot find any spare time for such tasks. Ultimately, if a woman such as this has, step by step, made herself indispensable to the family, then, as compensation she will insist, at the very least, on gaining access to her male friend's soul.

This is just as great an insult for the wife as is a so-called impure relationship, because her fall is so deep when her husband's soul has become unfaithful to her! And is such concubinage of the mind any less wearying for a male's nature than a fleeting escapade? If famous artists used the time devoted to their idolizing female admirers to pulling those nearest and dearest up to their level, then their wives would not as frequently succumb to intellectual ruin on account of their lowly preoccupation, and their children might not become intellectually dull or ill-bred.

For this reason let us declare war on every emancipated woman who seeks out another domestic sphere other than her own. In the case where one woman begins a game of chess such as this with another woman, she is also trying to checkmate the king. Let the emancipated women be fulfilled in their freedom, but let them entrust to their sisters who have humbly and

obediently accepted the yoke of marriage with humility the love and *whole* heart of their husbands.

We return to Briar Place, where a new life began the next morning. Work went on smoothly for a few days. Then a gloomy cloud settled upon the brow of the man of the house. The change had arrived too suddenly for him not to have sensed the emptiness. His political friends, with the exception of a few, all stayed away, and a vague feeling of cold avoidance settled upon the house. Wildemann was angry with Dorothea, and the countess waited in vain for Ibeles to come and repudiate his wife. A rather sizeable group was influenced by this ill-feeling, and there began an unspoken conspiracy to make life miserable from now on for the music director and his wife.

The poorer party comrades, who had heard a vague rumour of an alliance intended to end their hardship, were provoked by Wildemann to turn against both Ibeles and his few remaining loyal friends under the false pretense that Ibeles was to blame for the division on account of his preference for the bourgeoisie. Every idle person about town became outraged that the obstinacy of *one* family barred them from such a gold mine as the bottomless purse of the extravagant countess. They feared that the countess's break with their friend would also bring about her complete alienation from his adherents. At least her insinuation was that London had now become boring and she would probably be relocating to Paris. Thus, everyone went to great lengths to give the poor Ibeles household at Briar Place, whose hospitality they had taken advantage of for such a long time, another humiliating rebuff in order to ingratiate themselves with the countess by doing so.

Dorothea had always viewed work as being the only thing that could save a person from intellectual and physical impoverishment, and she endeavoured to steer every mutually

shipwrecked comrade in this direction. However, once the countess extended within her circle a charitable hand, the energy to help oneself on the part of most of the refugees waned. At the end of the year, when Ibeles and Dorothea went through their letters, at least one dozen of these began with the stereotypical phrase: "Despite my best intentions it was impossible to provide you with the promised work!" And it was with such people that *she* was supposed to associate, even though people could say of her that she was afflicted not with an addiction to pleasure, but rather more with an extreme addiction to work.

When frivolous bachelors seek to persuade an honest married man to participate in a stupid prank, they threaten him with having the reputation of a henpecked husband if he does not join in. Similarly, a woman is pressed to do the most devious things by being accused of jealousy. Countess Blafoska and her minions adhered to this tactic and by doing so at least caused Ibeles and Dorothea to lose the former naturalness of their public behaviour. What foolishness married couples have committed in order to avoid ridicule that comes with such mockery! And yet, when a man shows the same sincere consideration towards his wife that, without sounding churlish, he could not refuse to show a lady, it is, above all, indicative of a civilized soul. It is equally shameful when a woman is forced to defend herself against an accusation of jealousy. Every man and every woman who have a loving relationship within marriage jealously guard the exclusivity of this most sacred sentiment, and only the extreme expression of this feeling, as it does every natural feeling, makes it into a caricature.

Dr. Stern, who had been the artist's friend for many years and therefore did not allow himself to be misled with regard to his friend's character and who held Dorothea in high esteem, was one of the few refugees to have remained a loyal friend to the couple. Since his first appearance in the countess's salon, where Ibeles had introduced him, he had lost popularity with

all the followers of that emancipated lady, and this was completely understandable when one noted the contrast between his nature and that of the lady's clique.

Among the revolutionaries there is one type that not by way of thinking but rather from a mere lack of restraint arrives at the conclusion that the existing barriers should be either lowered or pulled down completely. This particular breed filled the countess's salon and called Dr. Stern, who always took matters seriously, a pedant. A highly amusing dispute occurred between Dr. Stern and Wildemann. Wildemann, through his constant association with the workers, had appropriated a kind of popular eloquence, which to Stern was just as much of an abomination as academic speech was to Wildemann. Stern was not going to stand for Wildemann's use of slogans and phrases as arguments against logical statements. Hereupon Wildemann, in a seething speech, swore that just as soon as he was made the dictator of the worker's community, he would have all doctrinaires and professors beheaded. He closed his speech with the following: "Believe you me, I shall pursue my principle through thick and thin, and you will see that you will have as much chance of convincing anyone with all your professorial knowledge as I would of coaxing a dog out from behind a warm oven on a stormy night!"

Stern straightened his glasses and calmly replied: "It is by no means my inclination to entice dogs from behind a warm oven. But I would like to know: what do you understand when you say through thick and thin?"

Iwan, who had brought in some refreshments and paused to stand beside the buffet, had previously attracted Stern's attention. Stern's interest in Iwan increased when he heard him speak a few words to the countess, and he made mention to Ibeles that Iwan's physique and voice seemed familiar to him, although he could not recall where he had encountered this person.

The following day the countess had secretly whispered to Ibeles that she believed Stern to be a spy, a suspicion that Ibeles vehemently denied. Nevertheless, he was glad when Stern spared him the trouble of further clarification with his declaration that he had no desire to repeat his visit to the countess. He said: "The entire mood in the countess's salon is a contradiction to democracy, and if the refugees want to become fawning courtiers, then there was no need for them to go into exile. Is that the reason we set fire to Princess Rosalinde's theatre, so that now we could become the marionettes of a vain lady? Wildemann's communism and the diplomacy of the Polish woman are a misalliance of madness. Never trust anyone who, having an aristocratic tradition, becomes affiliated with the workers' party!"



## Chapter Fourteen

### The Atrocities Committed by Dilettantes

Among musicians there are pedagogical types who feel truly content with the profession of music teacher and who view the battle against wrong notes just as seriously as a pastor views the battle against the sins of the world. Ibeles was not among these, and he found the menial profession of teaching piano to be thoroughly abhorrent. Like all serious composers, he was easily irritated, and his musical ear was so sensitive that shrill notes and flawed harmonies brought on physical pain, which escalated to attacks of illness when the torment to his ears continued on at length. Only the absolute necessity imposed upon him by his circumstances could bring him to choose this branch of the artist's profession.

Stern teasingly said that it was quite understandable that his friend was not entrusted with a conducting position at a public institution of the arts, because the English would fear that he might like to blow up Drurylane and Covent Garden together with Her Majesty's Theatre. But he seemed to think that a genius such as Ibeles must surely be able to earn a living as a composer. Ibeles countered that a reputation established in Germany would always have to be newly established in London and that the publishers here did not appear to recognize his compositions. They did not want to count him as belonging among the classicists, and he had no desire to stoop so low as to compose fashionable nonsense. He knew full well that every line that he composed he could sell in Germany, but it was impossible to work for German remuneration if one had to pay for one's needs according to the costs in London. Teaching and composing were not compatible with one another here, he pointed out, because the one who creates requires quietness

and solitude, while the teacher is in need of an enormous social network if he desires to swim along in the sea of London's competition.

A few days after this discussion Stern arrived triumphantly carrying a music book, upon which a brightly coloured portrait had been emblazoned. "Do you recognize this?" he exclaimed. "Look at this. You have made your fortune." In bafflement Ibeles looked at the title of the music book, which described the contents as the most current fashionable favourite, and at the portrait of the prima donna who apparently had sung it with enormous acclaim at more than one hundred concerts. How astonished he was when he recognized one of his own arias, which he had dedicated to the singer at the court, Madame Gerhard, the same one who now lived in London. It was one of his compositions from his youth, one which he did not consider to be of great merit and which was being sold here in its English translation without any acknowledgement that it was his composition.

"I can take what's mine wherever I find it," he said. "I am well aware of the fact that under the current laws I can't go after the one reproducing my work, but who can prevent me from distributing the song, which was apparently bringing in enormous sales, using my own resources?"

No sooner said than done. One of the refugees who was a lithographer at once produced several hundred copies, and Ibeles happily put all the money that he could gather together into this speculative venture. No sooner had the authentic copies appeared in the display window of a well-known German music store, than the commissioning agent, lithographer, and composer received a court summons with regards to the reprint. Ibeles, feeling confident that he had acted within his rights, proudly appeared before the judge, who sat before him with even more pride, wearing a long white horsehair wig. Ibeles explained the circumstances and identified himself to

be the composer of this aria, which had been popular in Germany ten years ago, Stern and Herr Gerhard substantiating his claim. Nevertheless, he was ordered to pay the damages and legal expenses, the judge giving the following explanation:

“The contentious property, regarding which the gentlemen have appeared here, consists only in monetary value in the form of paper, plates, and print. The person who made up the dudeldeedos is of no concern to us. Anyone can do that, but the capital is something tangible that a man invests in such a venture. The first vendor of the song has brought about its popularity with the conspicuous vignette and through advertisements and has paid his patent to do so. He has proved to us that he will incur an estimated loss of fifty pounds sterling a year if you, sir, also sell the piece.”

Ibeles could have gnashed his teeth, yet he was grateful to the reprint publisher, who suggested an arrangement and assumed the remaining copies from his commission agent.

Mrs. Mutebell had made a different suggestion for a way to bring Ibeles relief from the necessity of engaging himself solely with the instruction of dilettantes. She told him about the concerts that the upper nobility sponsored during the major festivals. They brought in famous artists, who made more money in one evening than they did for a whole week of giving lessons. Through her husband she could obtain for Ibeles the patronage of three influential duchesses, and were he to appear there as director of the musical entertainment, the aristocratic patrons would follow of their own accord.

“No, no!” exclaimed Ibeles and Dorothea with one voice at this suggestion, which for a German is so humiliating that the Englishman who idolizes his aristocracy cannot even comprehend.

At this opportunity Mr. Mutebell brought up an anecdote about what he had experienced many years ago as a guest in one of the highest aristocratic circles. A lord had organized a large festival at his country estate near London and, in order to enhance the pleasure for his guests, he had engaged those singers, male and female, who were just then at the height of popularity. At that time one particular world-famous female singer was in her prime, and he offered her a large sum of money to commit herself to singing three arias. As was the custom, a decorative barrier had been erected, behind which the musicians and singers took their seats.

After every musician and singer had given a divine performance and the prima donna had emerged as the star of the evening, the aristocratic guests sat down for dinner, and the group of artists was allocated to a dreary-looking room with rather dim lighting in the lower part of the house where some refreshments had been set out for them. The vivacious prima donna called out to her artistic companions: "Why should we suffer from boredom here without playing some kind of clever prank?" The others said they would be happy with whatever the prima donna suggested. At this, she called in one of the servants and explained to him her request:

"Dear friend, we musicians are together with each other all too often and would like to have some lively company. How would it be if we came and joined the help downstairs in the kitchen? We would be happy to repay you for your hospitality with some songs."

At first the stiff powdered servant did not quite know how he should respond to this charming request, but he did not want to turn down the elegant-looking singer. He replied with an invitation for the ladies and gentlemen of the grand opera to come to the "servant's hall," if they would feel more comfortable there, and consequently the entire company migrated en masse to the servants' quarters downstairs.

It was a fine kitchen, for the rich Englishman takes pride in treating his servants very well. A mighty fire flickered in the hearth, and a light evening meal, a row of bottles, in addition to a sampling of all the delicacies that had been served to the company upstairs, had been laid out on a clean, freshly set table. One could see that the servants did not lack for anything and that the cellar master honoured the maxim that “he who has the pantry key serves himself first.”

The cooks and parlour maids were already feeling sufficiently excited from the wine, of which they had taken a little sip here and there, to excuse the breach of etiquette and willingly made room for the unexpected guests. The latter behaved in a very friendly and jovial manner towards their liveried hosts, and after the parties had made reciprocal toasts to each other’s health the prima donna suggested they stage a scene from an opera. Those present formed a circle, and there began a chorus, whose soprano part carried by the crystalline notes of the incomparable singer, resounded through every hall of the manor house.

“What is that? Where are these sounds coming from?” asked the guests, who were eating their supper upstairs in silent solemnity. One after the other, the servants had vanished from the dining room and now stood in the kitchen looking agape at the unusual spectacle, the ladies and gentlemen and all else forgotten. Several of the younger guests, enticed by the enchanting sounds, followed suit, and eventually even the host appeared on the scene, smiled very graciously and suggested that he would be quite happy if the musicians wanted to finish the lovely piece upstairs in the parlour. The prima donna would have none of it, and with clever excuses she carried on incessantly until the noble company, yielding to her teasing ploys, made their way down to the kitchen as well.

This extraordinary story, however much it had unfolded to the glory of the brilliant singer, nevertheless had a deterring effect upon our musician and even more so upon his wife. “I

would not be able to bear it,” she said once they were alone, “if I were to think of *you* playing music to earn money in the salon of an aristocrat, cordoned off behind the barrier, while the other guests were chatting with their backs turned to you. Promise me that no amount of financial need will ever bring you to the point of assuming such a humiliating minstrel role.”

Ibeles said sadly: “Who knows what hardship will drive a father of a family to do! After all, a man loves his wife and children and must also provide additional things besides just food. I myself also ask why being paid to play music for the amusement of society in private should be more humiliating than conducting a public concert or teaching music. You know that I don’t care for the vague expression ‘I don’t feel like doing this or that!’”

“That may well be!” Dorothea said. “Why did you recently make your feelings known when I was hesitant as to whether I should sell the diamond heart with the real pearl, which was your gift of love to me at the birth of our eldest son? We are also not aware of any reason why we don’t want to let go of this talisman of our marital happiness, and yet jewelry is now of less use to me than money for our rent.”

“Don’t talk to me about this; you know how much it upsets me,” Ibeles said. “It may well be that an artist’s pride is such a talisman, which keeps him from sinking into the vulgarity of mere money-making. As the leader of the orchestra, I felt that I was like a priest who imparted artistic beauty to the public. As a teacher I can honorably associate on equal terms if I want to be effective within the middle-classes and renounce any relations to the aristocracy. But to imagine myself playing the ‘maitre de plaisir’ amidst the chatter and clatter of plates and dishes and the running about of the servants, I must admit, makes me go red in the face.”

“So in that case, give me your word,” Dorothea repeated her plea, “that under no circumstances will you ever cause *me* and *yourself* the embarrassment of such a situation.”

“You have my word,” Ibeles said, “and if you ever hear me playing music for money in an aristocratic salon, then you can give away the diamond heart with the pearl.”

After several months, our artist was fully immersed in his new profession, whether willingly or unwillingly, and instead of bringing to life the rich harmonious world of the orchestra with a mere swinging of his conductor’s baton as he had in the past, he studied for methods by which the lovely beings, whose tendency it was to constantly forget their sharps and flats, could be transformed from robots into thinking creatures. Czerny’s etudes have ruled English piano lessons for decades, and their acclaim is the result of their similarity to a music box. A young lady who studies this composer exclusively during her period of study develops into a living barrel organ. Czerny’s so-called *School of Velocity*<sup>28</sup> drives every ounce of musical feeling out of the female pupil’s soul leaving in its wake only fleet and agile fingers. Ibeles wanted to introduce the study of the basso continuo as an antidote, but teaching counterpoint to a young London lady during the season is an undertaking similar to one wanting to build a cathedral with bed feathers during a whirlwind.

There was Miss Dull, who had danced every night until two o’clock, fluttering about daydreaming, regularly confusing the bass clef with the treble clef and so tired that during her vocalizing she lacked the energy to enunciate *fa* and *mi*. She had no desire to make the tedious effort to compress her lovely open lips, an essential necessity for enunciating *m* or *f*, and so, laughing indolently, she was content to leave it at *wiwa* no matter how often Ibeles demonstrated the *mi* and the *fa*.

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<sup>28</sup> Carl Czerny (1791–1857), an Austrian composer, pianist, and teacher, is particularly well-known for his large repertoire of pedagogical studies for the piano. *The School of Velocity*, opus 299, features forty intermediate piano studies intended to develop finger dexterity and rapid passage work. They are still used in the contemporary study of the piano.

The young lady's mama was one of those practical ladies who have the instrumental parts of a trio all bound together so that they're all nicely located together in one place. For half of her lifetime she had practiced only Rossini and Bellini, and she now wanted to understand the philosophical spirit of German art in a few hours because the classicists just happened to be in style. She attempted to sing a lovely, simple aria by Gluck and immediately changed it to include trills and embellishments because her quivering voice could not hold the sustained notes. The young miss, who was listening, commented on how wonderful it was to see what one could do with such simple music when one understood the art of embellishment as well as her mama did.

Mother and daughter sometimes also sang duets, and since they both possessed high voices they chose pieces intended for a soprano and tenor voice, in which, naturally, both voices constantly turned somersaults. In vain Ibeles tried to convince them that by transposing the tenor line to a higher octave all the fourth intervals become fifths and that every characteristic contour of the melody would be lost if the parts were alternating between transposing from the upper voice to the lower.

The master had strange experiences with the pedagogical practices of the musical authorities in the cosmopolitan city. Among these, the ones who were thorough concentrated primarily on constructing the scaffolding instead of the building itself, and there were talented girls who had spent the majority of their instruction time on playing scales and practicing with Kalkbrenner's "hand guides,"<sup>29</sup> on phonation (articulating speech sounds) and solfège.<sup>30</sup> The

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<sup>29</sup> Fridrich Kalkbrenner (1785–1849) was a German-born pianist, composer, and teacher. While living in London, he came into contact with John Bernard Logier, who had invented the "chiroplast," a mechanical device for the piano intended to aid in perfecting hand position. Kalkbrenner later went on to develop the "hand guide," a derivative of Logier's chiroplast, which became extremely popular in Paris during the 1830s.  
<[http://www.nikstechnique.com/index\\_files/handguidedevices.htm](http://www.nikstechnique.com/index_files/handguidedevices.htm)> April 5/16.

<sup>30</sup> Solfège [Fr.] or solfeggio [It.] is a term for a "method of sight-reading or vocal exercise in which names of the notes are used," for example, "do for C, sol for G." The French term "is also used to cover all rudimentary music instruction." *Oxford Dictionary of Music*. 6th ed., Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012. p. 796.



same preparatory work necessary for training the fingers and throat for a professional virtuoso or opera singer had been imposed upon dilettantes who were never required to project their voice in a large room and who in the end, as a result of this enormous waste of time, had, by the time they were married off, learned only a few salon pieces.

The incompetent teachers had resorted to the other extreme. In cases where one had ostentatiously asked only for the most expensive teacher rather than for the best one, the former type of fashionable virtuoso lolled beside the piano, asked to be served port wine and almond cake, nibbled on the cake while letting his pupil choke out his own compositions and, at best, played a few passages for her, without taking the trouble to explain.

Our conscientious German master was such a newcomer in this domain that he felt obligated to act as the reformer. After all, art was his religion, and he believed in its healing power if one worshipped it in spirit and in truth. He was still astonished that there were people who would hold a pistol to one's head in attempts to coerce one to give an honest artistic opinion and then feel terribly hurt when a personal opinion was given. The official English reviews consisting of lists of works performed and quoted comments certainly do not offend anyone, but every dilettante hates being told that one's musical ear is lacking.

Because of Ibeles's current occupation, he now came into more frequent contact with the pious Mr. Chapel. Aside from promoting the singing of hymns in schools run by charity and obtaining the artist's advice on this matter, Mr. Chapel sometimes had a musical "job" for the artist. "Job" is a word without a German equivalent, designating a piece of work that, by chance, is assigned to an expert, but is not part of his regular activity. Examples will best serve to illuminate the matter.

#### FIRST JOB

Mr. Chapel was in charge of the sale of a rectorate in the country that was supposed to be so profitable that he would have gladly procured it for his own brother. However, the squire and his numerous relatives were in complete agreement that they would elect only the candidate who was both an avid hunter and a good singer. It had been specified that among the rectorate's particular benefits one was its location in very pleasant environs, and it promised to offer the shepherd of souls many a social pleasure. In return, the squire, who was responsible for making the selection, wanted an amusing hunting companion and his ladies wanted a candidate who possessed a good singing voice.

Now the younger Mr Chapel had indeed distinguished himself more at hunting fox than in the study of the holy church fathers, but he could not read music and had no real knowledge whether he even possessed a singing voice of any merit. Mr. Ibeles's job was to ascertain the latter, and in the event that Ibeles managed to drum a few arias into the hopeful young man so that, by singing them, he would be able to secure the position from his patron, an agreeable honorarium had been promised to Ibeles.

Ibeles went to work. The young Englishman could manage a few rough bass notes, and if one accompanied him loudly enough, he managed to stay on pitch reasonably well. After several weeks he was able to sing "God save the Queen" fairly well. Ibeles next suggested the popular melody: "O Sanctissima" also known as "The Mariner's Hymn," but in no way did the candidate, being a good protestant, want to sing about the holy virgin and asked for Sarastro's aria: "O Isis and Osiris, what bliss!" Ibeles was so malicious as to ask him why he was not ashamed to call on the Egyptian deities, which he surely believed in as little as he did in the myth of the Virgin Mary.

The young man obtained the position and our music director received a ...

## SECOND JOB.

Early one morning a carriage stopped at Briar Place, and an old chambermaid asked to speak to the German music director. She asked whether he had a few available hours today, and when he replied that he was free only until noon, she requested that he immediately come with her in order to give her mistress some music lessons. She mentioned that Mr. Chapel had recommended him and showed Ibeles the address that had been written in Mr. Chapel's own hand. Ibeles would hardly have consented otherwise, since this person, who displayed such unexplainable haste, raised his suspicions. She requested that he get ready as quickly as possible, since the lady who was waiting for him had to leave London today.

The children watched with astonishment as their father was suddenly taken away from his half-eaten breakfast. The carriage rolled off, straight across London, over one of the Thames's bridges, until it finally stopped in front of an elegant house in the southernmost district. On the way, the old lady, who appeared to have a very intimate position with her mistress, had conveyed to her companion that her ladyship had been visiting her mother-in-law for several months. She had brought her children to be educated in London, as was the custom in all distinguished families, and was now returning to the Madras Presidency,<sup>31</sup> where her house was one of the finest.

Ibeles was ushered into a large, grandly furnished room, where the lady whom he was to instruct was sitting in an armchair dressed in an amazing costume while a painter stood in front of an easel and painted her portrait. Her appearance, though interesting, showed that she was very much past her youth, and her speech and behaviour were very abrupt. Upon his entry into

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<sup>31</sup> The Madras Presidency or the Presidency of Fort St. George was a province of British India established by the East India Company beginning in the seventeenth century.

the room, instead of a greeting, she at once held out to him a musical score she had in her hand and asked him: "Have you ever seen this piece?"

Without stopping to think Ibeles, who recognized the well-known notes from a distance of three steps away, replied, "That is the overture from *Fidelio*." The lady looked around and gave a triumphant nod in the direction of her sisters, daughters, and nieces, who were all very beautiful.

Her second question was: "Can you play this piece?"

"Of course," Ibeles said, and since the ladies had quickly assumed a clipped tone of voice, he also, without asking for permission, went to the open grand piano that he saw in the adjoining room. Amid energetic applause, he played the overture from memory for the ladies, and, as far as he understood from the discussion that followed, they had tried in vain to make sense of the strange piece yesterday. In the end the players had thrown it aside after labelling it a cursed piece of humbug, and their cousin, Mr Chapel, had assured them that he would send them the right man to decipher such bizarre music.

In the meantime, Ibeles had surveyed his surroundings and had seen even more easels with half-completed paintings, in which he recognized the portraits of the ladies in attendance. The very same faces had already caught his eye downstairs in a splendidly decorated dining room, into which he had peered as he set his hat down. There they had all been painted as saints against a gold background, whereas here they were being portrayed with animated gestures and fancy dress. "They seem to have expressly hired an artist," Ibeles thought, "who will render their beauty in every conceivable form for posterity's sake. Well, it's well worth the effort."

Meanwhile, the elderly lady had stood up, and after she had concurred with the artist as to

where he should place the easel so that he would not be interrupted from his work during the piano lesson, she said to Ibeles: “Teach me to play this piece.”

Ibeles gave a small preamble: “I presume that you already know other pieces by Beethoven, otherwise you would encounter great difficulty in sight-reading this overture—all the more, since this piece is written for orchestra rather than piano.”

Now the lady suddenly became as talkative as she had previously been laconic. She burst out: “It is precisely for this reason that I sent for you, because Mr. Chapel assured me that you were the right man, for whom nothing of this nature was too difficult. When I went to India twenty years ago, I had never heard of Sebastian Botsch or Lewis Bihthoven, about both of whom so much fuss is now made. I could play two pieces: the one was by Herz and the other by Czerny. They were both the most fashionable pieces of the day, variations on ‘Di tanti palpiti’ and a medley from *The Italian Girl in Algiers*.<sup>32</sup> These are wonderful pieces, by far more brilliant than that other one. However, given that I have not played anything else for twenty years, I would really like to take something new back to India. But do understand: it must be the most magnificent that there is. Mr. Chapel told me that no other genius was talked about more than this Bihthoven. Apparently this composer was not understood during his lifetime, and it was only after his death that he was to become fashionable. That would certainly show that he must be very exceptional. So I made enquiries as to which piece might be considered this composer’s most superb piece, and I was told it was *Fidelio*. It is this overture that I now want to learn to play and nothing else. Because I explicitly came here from India, I also want to take back everything that London has to offer that is the most beautiful, the best, and the most fashionable.”

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<sup>32</sup> *L’italiana in Algeri* is a comic opera in two acts by Rossini, first produced in Venice in 1813, then in London in 1819. *Oxford Dictionary of Music*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012. p. 425.

We shall pass in silence over the effect of the ensuing two hours upon Ibeles's ears. The mere notion will give all musically inclined readers goose bumps when they remember that the overture in question ominously calls for a fourth sharp. The most astonishing thing with this was that the lady declared herself to be satisfied with the progress she had made in two hours and affirmed that she would now be able to manage practicing the difficult passages herself as soon as she arrived back in Madras, if only she did not forget about the fourth sharp during the long sea voyage.

When Ibeles next encountered Mr. Chapel he was questioned by him about the musical talents of his cousin. The musician slipped out of this captious question with the liveness of an eel and spoke instead of the many extremely beautiful things at which he had marvelled in the house.

“Naught but food for worms, food for worms!” replied Mr. Chapel, casting his gaze upward to the heavens.

In spite of the habit of this pious gentleman to treat everything worldly in this manner, Ibeles remained in good standing with him, because one commonality always brought them together, and that was the old church music. A genuine love of art balances out all parties and is always a universal element in reconciliation between the most diverse people. In Rome it is Raphael's madonnas that reconcile the protestant painter with Catholicism. In London it is Handel's cult following that keeps the German free thinker tolerant towards the ecclesiastical party. When Mr. Chapel brought up his proof of providential wisdom using his own completely pious logic—for example: “the godless never prosper; that is godly justice” or: “the godless are often well off whereas the godly are not; that is the way of an unjust world, and the Lord chastises those He loves!”—or when for the one-hundredth time he reported the following fact:

“When so many great men perished in that shipwreck, then Providence watching over my house saved only Hanspeter”—Ibeles then once remarked in mocking tones: “Yes, eternal wisdom and goodness also gave the little stork frogs to eat, but what do the poor frogs say to that?” But then performances were given in Exeter Hall, where one heard Handel performed like nowhere else in the world. There were rare manuscripts to see in the British Museum that shed light on the dark periods of music history. There was the Bach Society and also many hidden fonts that satisfied one’s thirst for knowledge, to which Mr. Chapel with unfailing benevolence provided admission for the poor artist.

One day the old gentleman appeared overjoyed because he had procured a teaching position for the artist at a large college for ladies. This was no ordinary “job.” Instead, it was a real life saver for the family because a position such as this provided a continual income year in year out. Ibeles should no doubt have been grateful for this outside connection, even though he had to sacrifice the artistic for a middle-class sense of honour.

In the hours given over to musical instruction in the institute, it seemed as if every dissonance of hell had been released. In one room young ladies sang scales, in an adjacent room, separated only by a thin door, someone accompanied with the flute a harp tuned a quarter tone too low. Meanwhile, from the lowest floor the sound of sundry chords emanated upwards. All the school’s remaining pianos were occupied by pupil’s practicing etudes, one after the other, until it was their turn to be presented to Mr. Ibeles. Here as well, the prevailing rule, introduced out of economic concerns in many of London’s educational institutions, was that musically inclined governesses supervised the students’ practice time for a small salary and that a male teacher of the highest rank evaluated the pupil’s progress and issued instructions to the governesses. Ibeles was greatly astonished when, after fifteen minutes in which he had barely

become acquainted with his new pupil, she stood up and made room for another young lady. Five hours later he had seen twenty black-, blonde-, and brown-haired exasperating young ladies, whose identities swam about in his memory like the colours in a field of tulips. Fortunately, among them were some pure voices and several advanced piano players, with whom the fifteen minutes passed quite pleasantly, if only it had been possible to drown out the simultaneous music-making in every key from the adjoining rooms.

The custom of hearing overlapping musical pieces of varying styles had destroyed the young ladies' rhythmic sensitivity. When they tried to sing together, the choir gave the impression of a blurred photograph in which the subject had not succeeded in sitting still.

In ancient times one recognized a slave by his awkward unrhythmic gait. It is strange that the modern race with the most freedom, the English, is said not to possess any rhythm in its blood. In this country an attempt is made to remedy this lack of rhythm with loud and truly fanatic counting. But that only compounds the problem. Ibeles had trouble keeping a straight face when, in the last fifteen minutes, twin sisters could not manage to play a simple little piece for four hands and, with faces crimson from despair, counted louder and louder: "*One, two, three, four! One, two, three, four!*" The governess, whose honour as the guardian spirit of practicing was at stake, joined in with a high nasal voice: "*One, two, three, four! One, two, three, four!*" whereupon the institute's principal, who had also in vain contributed in her bass-sounding contralto voice to the reinforcement of the one, two, three, four, asked Mr. Ibeles to be so kind as to count along.

He decided, first of all, to direct his plans for musical reform against this irrational practice, and he horrified all those present with his pronouncement that he intended to do away with the counting lock, stock, and barrel.



If he had disposed of the piano playing as an unimportant accompaniment to the one, two, three, and four and retained the mere counting, the governesses would not have stood there as paralyzed as they did in response to his outrageous change. Ibeles could read in each face that his position was at stake, and in order not to appear completely paradox, he was prudent enough to give the following explanation, which contained a form of compromise:

“Counting is sometimes a good aid for complicated passages in order to determine the timing once and for all. It is also useful during long pauses in order to avoid coming in too soon. But as a continual accompaniment to a consistent rhythm of about four quarter notes, which indicate the beat by themselves, it is completely unnecessary. No person will be able to maintain the correct tempo by counting themselves, because one can just as easily count out of rhythm as play out of rhythm. The young ladies have just demonstrated the evidence against the usefulness of counting by stopping every time they came to a syncopated passage where they were in doubt as to where the notes fell in between the one, two, three, four. Thus, in those spots where it could serve as a guideline at best, the counting always stops, but as soon as the four quarter notes reappear in their simple orderly fashion, the girls automatically tend to resume with the loud counting.

“If, as you all want to assure me, it were an imperative necessity, without which no one could learn to play music, then how do you suppose singers and those playing wind instruments cope?

“The teacher counts for the beginner in the same way one gives a child lined paper for the first time, so that the child can print in a straight line. But just as it wouldn't help the child to draw crooked and slanting lines under its letters, there's no help, dear ladies, in your counting, sometimes too fast, sometimes too slow. Actually, it is also detrimental in another respect, since

rapid, intense piano playing in any case places a strain on the chest and your breathless speaking in between will utterly ruin your voices.”

This last consideration proved to be effective, and the institute’s otherwise agreeable principal promised to grant Mr. Ibeles’s new system a trial period. He described his method as follows: “Maintaining a steady rhythm requires an alert ear, and that can be taught and learned, just as one develops visual judgement through observation. What the symmetrical arrangement of space is to the eyes, the rhythmical arrangement of time is to the ear. Striking a note and pausing are acts involving decisions and self-control. Therefore, rather than operating according to the physical constraints of a metronome, it is far more preferable that one focuses on developing the pupils’ presence of mind.”

Thus, the key words: *liberté*, *égalité*, *fraternité* had been temporarily transformed into melody, rhythm, and harmony, and the hand that had been ready to brandish the sword was forced to resume patiently beating the time. Every conscientious person does whatever he puts his hand to with thoroughness, be it proudly or humbly.

Chapter Fifteen  
The Eccentric Damsel

Ever since Countess Blafoska had ceased coming to visit at Briar Place, Meta Braun would occasionally pay Dorothea an evening visit. Meta's mistress had specifically told her that she was not obliged on her account not to go to Dorothea's house. From the urgency with which Mamsell Braun was reminded of this permission it even appeared as if the countess would not be averse to hearing, from time to time, of the goings-on in the enemy's camp. Meta's sympathies leaned too tangibly towards the side of her German fellow countrymen, so that the latter had no need to fear any duplicity. Dorothea really liked the young girl, and Ibeles, who thought her to be somewhat austere and unfeminine, respected her for her straightforwardness. Dr. Stern, who on occasion met her, loved to debate with her, and Ibeles, who was reminded of the native expression "Teasing is a sign of affection," once mentioned to his wife that the two might not be a bad match. But Dorothea was not inclined to tolerate any hint of match-making intentions and vowed that in her home every bachelor would have to feel sure of never being bothered with marriage recommendations.

One evening, as both individuals happened by coincidence to meet in the Ibeles' house, a sealed black envelope arrived, whose contents their host had barely glanced at than he let out a cry of utmost surprise. "What is it?" Dorothea exclaimed. "Surely no calamity, I hope?"

Ibeles replied: "The long-anticipated death has come about; Hulda is already on her way to London!"

"Hulda is coming here?" Dorothea exclaimed with astonishment. "This better not be some tomfoolery!"

“Who is this Hulda, whose arrival is putting you both in such a state?” Stern asked.

“Well, that you will find out. It is the lady who hid me after the night of the barricades and helped me escape. Now the matter is no longer a secret.”

Meta clapped her hands for joy and said: “Now you must keep your promise and finally tell us the story. Whenever we have asked you about it, you put us off until such a time as the sole individual compromised by your telling would be safe.”

Stern supported Meta’s request, and Ibeles began his story by first directing a word to the comrade in his fate: “You remember the moment where we were able to shake off the detachment of soldiers, just as the burning roof collapsed. My hand was bleeding, and I left you at Reffbaum’s side. I heard your last words when you said that the citizens had triumphed for now, but that we should reconnoiter to make certain there was no ambush on the other side of the hill. I quickly turned in that direction and saw from the glowing flames a wondrous apparition float up from the narrow pass. When I went closer, I recognized a lady whom I had often seen at concerts, sitting right across from my podium. She was wearing a white morning robe, over which she had thrown a black mantilla, her hair was blowing in the wind. In one hand she was holding a dagger, and in the other a sprinkling can filled with water.”

With a loud laugh Stern interrupted him: “Wait, I know that lady. Does she have a delicate, elfish figure, with silken, light-blond hair and a very rosy complexion? That can be none other than the lady whom, I must confess, I have admired humbly from afar. At court she was given the nickname ‘the eccentric damsel.’”

Ibeles continued: “Correct! Well, she was dressed in a way that made me guess that, without a second thought, she had followed her first impulse to go and help put out the fire. I detained her and begged her for heaven’s sake to go home, since there was no way she could stay

up there in the castle square among the angry masses. ‘Please,’ I pleaded with her, ‘think of the danger you are in! You can help neither side, but you can hinder those of us fighting by forcing us to take precautions.’

“‘I am not unarmed,’ she said and pointed to her stiletto, the luxurious inlaid handle indicating that it had been seized in haste from a precious collection.

“‘And with your sprinkling can you want to put out *that* fire?’

“The young lady, who had quickly become chilled from the night air standing only moments in the wet grass dressed in her light garments, began to shiver, and her face revealed that in this moment she was open to listening to good advice. All that mattered was to ensure her an honorable retreat, to which end I showed her the slight wound I had received from the bayonet and asked if she knew a place nearby where I could have it dressed. A stranger’s emergency was able to accomplish what concern for her personal danger could not. ‘Come to my house,’ she said, ‘I shall aid you in any way I can.’ She led me to a foot path through the bushes that led up the hill on the other side. From its crest we again had a spectacular view of the flames, which illuminated the entire city and the surrounding area as if it were daylight. Then we went down into the valley where the small castle of the Saintfords was situated, from whose upper story the young lady had seen the glow of the fire and heard the shooting.

“The little garden gate that led to the bush was still ajar, a sign that no one had been looking for her outside. She now closed it carefully and led me through all kinds of labyrinthine paths of the overgrown castle garden into the mausoleum, which, to my amazement, when she lit one of the candelabras, I found to have been furnished quite comfortably. She bandaged my hand with great skill, and since I felt faint after the loss of blood and the sleepless night, she offered me a niche set into the wall across from the stone tomb. It was covered with pillows and must

often have served as a resting place. She left, but returned in some ten minutes with warm blankets and a small basket filled with food and drink, and since she had cared for me like a guardian angel, I kissed her hand with gratitude, and she left me there, locking the door from outside.

“So I was buried alive in excellent form like a vestal virgin who had broken her vows. Yet I was so little troubled by my nightmarish situation that I fell asleep and did not awaken until the bright sunlight, coming through the turret’s window, shone upon my face. The young lady must already have come stealing in on tiptoes to check on me, because a note offering a morning greeting lay on my blanket and a glass of milk beside a few pieces of rusk had been placed on the steps of the tomb.

“I had hardly stirred, when I thought I heard the sounds of an organ, and I actually recognized the last chords of the ‘De Profundis’ by Clari,<sup>33</sup> which seemed to rise from the grave across from me. I drew nearer, but backed away when a white ghost-like apparition came rising up from the floor.”

At this Meta Braun, who had until now listened with curiosity to the music director’s story, became indignant and said: “You are a real rogue for wanting to test our gullibility with such a story!”

Instead of defending himself, the narrator turned to Stern and asked him to tell the skeptical young lady what he knew of the mausoleum in the castle.

Stern now verified that there really was such a place near the residency, the peasant women claiming that the ghost of old Herr v. Saintford haunted the place and that at midnight

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<sup>33</sup> Giovanni Carlo Maria Clari (1667–1754) was an Italian composer who composed operas and church music and was best known for his secular vocal duets and trios with a basso continuo. *De Profundis (Out of the depths)* is based on one of the seven Penitential Psalms and, attached to its traditional plainsong, “has a place in the Office of the Dead of the Roman Catholic Church” and has been set to music many times. Clari’s version is written for four voices and the organ. It was published in 1720. *Oxford Dictionary of Music*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford: Oxford UP. pp. 169–70.

people who from time to time set snares in the bush for the rabbits and the blackbirds had seen the turret aglow, as if reflecting the fires of purgatory, and heard the penitent singing of the poor souls. The good gentleman had been a friendly eccentric, who had withdrawn rather too late from the court atmosphere in the old regime and had married. His passion was the magnificent garden at the castle, whose tallest tower was completely concealed by the crowns of two enormous intertwining linden trees. In the spring he liked to sit in the garden and enjoy the scent of the flowers, the buzzing of the beetles, and the singing of the nightingale. This was the period of retrospection during which he also freshly girdled each tree trunk by carving affectionate names into their bark. On Sundays the garden was opened for visits from the peasantry, and for these occasions he supplied both morality and humour: for morality with numerous moral sayings inscribed on commemorative plaques, for humour with a variety of displays. For example, one was a hermit's hut with a little bell fastened to it and a string hanging down from it most invitingly. No young peasant girl visiting the castle garden for the first time could keep from ringing the little bell just once. But the string was attached to a pail, into which the rainwater trickled down from the gutter, and as soon as the bell was rung, the pail would tilt and gush its contents into the face of the pert young bell-ringer. Herr v. Saintford always laughed heartily when, from a distance, he heard the sound of the little bell, followed by the scream of the doused victim and the derisive laughter of the bystanders.

“When the cold of November set in, the old gentlemen regretted these and other less innocent pranks of his youth and imagined his gloomy future, in which his entire life would be ancient history. For such moods he had had his mausoleum constructed in the most remote part of the garden amidst rows of English yew trees forming a labyrinth, which he called a symbol of his life's story. He alone knew the secret of the leafy labyrinthine passageway to the mausoleum

and entrusted the key to no one. A jack of all trades from a neighbouring village was the only person allowed to make repairs in his sanctuary under his watchful eye.

“Across from his open grave was a carved-out niche, which served as his daybed for the times when he desired to meditate in solitude on the vanity of earthly things. It might be noted that the hermitage had by no means been as spartanly furnished as it might appear. The old gentleman insisted that the cellar was actually the most comfortable abode, because in the summer it was the coolest place and in the winter the warmest. He had had a crypt excavated under the mausoleum. Its foundations supposedly dated back to pagan times, and he had equipped it with the most necessary of comforts for body and soul. This souterrain was very spacious. It had various branches and a concealed exit. Inside, among the other furnishings, was a small personal library, a wine cellar, and a small spinet.”

Not until after the death of Herr v. Saintford, when, in accordance with his will, he was interred in the mausoleum with appropriate ceremony, did his friends discover this ruse. At the time, the peculiarities of the recently deceased were the general topic of gossip around town, and this enabled Stern to substantiate Ibeles’s description of the situation.

Ibeles continued: “So the young lady came demurely up through the trap door after she had announced her presence with music, which was a credit to her tactfulness. She showed me the passageway that led down behind the tomb to the souterrain, its furnishings, and the little opening disguised by its stone colour on the exterior and covered with ivy. She invited me to stay there for the time being, since someone who had come back from the town had told her that the police were looking everywhere for the instigators of yesterday’s disorder in the streets and that it would go badly for them if they were captured. She gave me her word that not a soul was



aware that someone had come in with her at night, and since so one other than herself ever entered the mausoleum, I would be completely safe.

“From her later accounts I learned that she was the eccentric man’s only offspring from his late marriage and that her mother had become blind after her birth. She still remembered that after the death of her father no one had been able to find the man-made path to the entrance of the mausoleum and that the people, after having walked around through the man-high hedges searching in vain, finally out of pure impatience had used axes and garden shears to cut a path straight to it. The coffin had to be pushed along under the branches, and the entire funeral procession was forced to follow, sometimes crawling, sometimes clambering.

“Out of respect for the deceased they let the hedges grow back together later, but little Hulda had been strictly forbidden to enter the labyrinth, in order to prevent the trouble of having to find her. Only after she had reached adolescence did she find the floor plan among her father’s papers, which neither the servants of the house nor her blind mother knew how to decipher. It was the easiest thing in the world as long as one knew how often one had to turn to the right and to the left. She now asked her mother’s permission to turn her father’s favourite little spot into a small study. This was her first eccentricity, which her mother and aunts fought against with great vehemence, but in the end gave in to. Hulda had the old jack of all trades restore the worn furnishings because the craftsmen felt uneasy in a place to which they knew neither the way in nor out without the guiding hand of the gracious young lady.

“The widowed Frau v. Saintford, because of her blindness, had an intense desire to be surrounded by people, and if no one came to visit, then Hulda had to read to her, or the lady-in-waiting and the housekeeper had to inform her of the goings on in town. But most times the aunts and a host of other stray characters from the residency came to visit the talkative blind

woman, weather permitting, and on fine days the castle buzzed with gossipmongers, both men and women.

“On such occasions, Hulda slipped away to her hiding place, where she would occupy herself doing whatever she liked. She cherished this solitude so much that she often lingered there until late into the night and played improvisations on the spinet.

“Since everyone was used to this, they left the eccentric young lady in peace in her mausoleum, and truly, I could not have found a more safe and pleasant prison. She delivered a personal note from me to Dorothea, which calmed her fears about my disappearance. After a few days, she sometimes even went and fetched my wife at dawn and had her see with her own eyes that I was in good hands.”

At this point, Dorothea confirmed her husband’s words and said teasingly: “Yes, yes, when I arrived in order to bring him fresh clothing, he would be sitting there like a bullfinch in a golden cage, and the blonde Hulda spoiled him in the most gracious fashion. What must the housekeeper have thought when she saw the cream from the milk and the best delicacies mysteriously disappear from the larder, not to mention many a bottle of aged red wine.”

Ibeles continued: “In the beginning I felt quite comfortable there, too, in daily contact by letter with my wife, who sent me all the newspaper reports, and in possession of an abundance of enjoyable books. The complete rest was good for me, and the spinet brightened up some of my day. The frequent presence of the young lady was actually the best consolation in this isolation, because she was good company, well-read, pleasant. It was everything that one could only wish for given that we were forced to live together in a hermitage for two, as monk and nun. As soon as it turned dark, she came and fetched me to go for a quiet walk so that I might not become too unaccustomed to the habit of moving about in the fresh air. First, she would carefully reconnoiter

the area, and if everything was quiet, we ventured out beyond the yew hedges into the less secluded areas of the garden.

“Next to my engagement days on the Rhine, this was one of the most poetic episodes of my life, which I shall always recall with pure pleasure. Hulda is an intellectual individual through and through, full of poetic feeling, yet, from her many hours of solitary study, informed about every subject matter imaginable. But she has some confused ideas about the outside world, since she is familiar with it only through the poets and from the gossip of the old ladies at court. To merge both views does not seem possible to her, and so the black world of the small residency and the brilliant white world of idealism exist side by side but unrelated in her mind. As a result, we had an inexhaustible supply of topics in the first weeks, and even if this had not been sufficient, music would have remained a cherished intermediary between us.

“But after a while Hulda became anxious and didn’t even want to allow me to go outdoors. She implored me not to touch the spinet in her absence, so that the noise of it would not give away my presence. As cause for her heightened caution, she reported to me the following: Fräulein v. Braunstabel and many other deeply-offended individuals had been to visit her mother, and, in tears and trembling with rage, they had apparently given the full particulars regarding all the inconveniences they had suffered from the mob. There had been an outpouring of fire and brimstone against *me* in particular, because I had joined in with such ruffraff after Princess Rosalinde had been so gracious towards me and so many ladies had characterized me as a gentleman like one of their own. The entire clique was in agreement that I deserved to die, and the only thing they argued about with great passion was what kind of death I should suffer, even though they had not got hold of me yet. The suggestions by Fräulein v. Braunstabel were similar to the contents of Osmin’s great aria:

'First you'll be beheaded,  
 Then you'll be hanged,  
 Then impaled  
 On red hot spikes,  
 Then burned,  
 Then manacled  
 And drowned,  
 Finally flayed alive, etc, etc.'<sup>34</sup>

The clever Herr v. Braunstabel remarked that members of the nobility here, being among themselves, were fortunate enough to speak freely. However, he warned his sister and the others that they were never to make mention of the vanished scoundrel in general company and in front of the servants so that I would become lulled into security and come out of hiding all the sooner.

“All this information, which Hulda reported back to me while it was still fresh, caused me to decide to extract myself as soon as possible from my protectress, since my prolonged presence could place her in an embarrassing position. But how was I to obtain a passport and escape from this region, where every child knew who I was? No plan seemed feasible, until at long last an excellent opportunity happened to present itself. A brother-in-law of Frau v. Saintford, Count Pommerschild, the commander of an Austrian border fortification, had taken the fall of Metternich so to heart that his family feared for his already weak sanity. Out of fear, the countess had played along and illuminated her windows when the news came that Metternich had been driven off by the masses, but in confidence had informed her close friends that a blood-

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<sup>34</sup>Osmin is a character in Mozart's opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782) and his aria is from Act 1, Scene 3. English lyrics found here:

<[http://www.operafolio.com/libretto.asp?n=Die\\_Entfuhrung\\_aus\\_dem\\_Serail&language=UK](http://www.operafolio.com/libretto.asp?n=Die_Entfuhrung_aus_dem_Serail&language=UK)> April 7, 2016.

stained tear hung on each candle. This had become known, and as a result the young street ruffians had made a racket at the garrison headquarters and broken a few window panes. The count had an attack of maniacal rage, and his wife beseeched him to take several weeks of vacation and undergo a water cure at a sanatorium located close to our border and go on from there to Ostende.

“Countess Pommerschild visited her sister, Frau v. Saintford and invited her and Hulda to spend a few days with the countess. The blind old lady was hesitant to leave her comfortable castle home, where she was able to grope around and find any object, but the countess appealed to Hulda that she should leave her dreary mausoleum for a few days and indulge in an excursion. Hulda offered all kinds of hollow excuses for rejecting the invitation even though Countess Pommerschild presented the fact that her gift for conversation would benefit her deep-thinking uncle more than any treatment at a health sanatorium. Suddenly an idea occurred to Hulda. She gave in and promised to come in a few days. Then she made preparations for my escape, which was to happen by way of a disguise, and after this she wrote to her aunt requesting that her carriage be sent for her, but at as late an hour as possible, since she had long wanted to ride through the forest at night, as a poetic adventure. Such an idea was something people expected from the eccentric damsel, but Count Pommerschild took the romantic edge off the notion by providing a military coachman and his armed dispatch rider, it being his contention that there was no other way his niece could be allowed to travel in these times, in which the democrats endangered the country roads.

“The young lady drove out of the usual courtyard gate after nine o’clock, but then had the coachman drive down the narrow pass and stop at the foot of the hill. Here she ordered that he wait, since at the next foot path she needed to walk up to the garden once more and promised to

return shortly. According to her instructions, I had clothed myself in the dress and cloak of the plump old Frau v. Saintford. Blue spectacles and eyeshades underneath the hood, over which hung a veil, disguised me completely. For the last time I followed my Ariadne<sup>35</sup> through the labyrinth of yew trees and through the shrubs where she had led me in the past, and she shut the little wicket gate behind us forever. With a boldness I never would have expected from such a high-minded lady, she said to the escort: ‘Mama is blind; help her carefully into the carriage.’

“In an hour we reached the border station. The gendarmes approached the carriage, and when the coachman announced: ‘Frau v. Saintford and Fräulein v. Saintford,’ they shone a lantern into the coach. When they saw my green eye shade and the familiar delicate face of my companion as she greeted them condescendingly, they immediately drew back, and one said: ‘That is the blind lady from the castle over there. She finds the light to be terribly painful.’

“A more difficult challenge awaited us when we arrived at the hotel after midnight. The young lady had also become very quiet and appeared only now to be aware of the depth of the dilemma into which she had plunged herself if now her aunt were no longer awake and we would have to continue playing the roles of mother and daughter until morning so as not to arouse the suspicion of the innkeepers. It seemed to me as if I could actually hear her heart pounding above the rumbling sound of the carriage wheels, and I myself hardly knew what I should talk to her about.

“Fortunately the countess greeted us still fully dressed, and as she set her eyes on me, she flung her arms around my neck and was delighted with the surprise of seeing her blind sister. I was led with care to an armchair and out of consideration for my eyes the light was dimmed, at which I only mumbled with inarticulate sounds my obligatory thanks. Before we even spoke, the

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<sup>35</sup> Ariadne is a figure from Greek mythology, the daughter of Pasiphae and Minos, king of Crete. She fell in love with the Athenian Theseus and helped him escape from a labyrinth. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Greek Mythology, Ariadne < <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Ariadne-Greek-mythology>> April 7, 2016.

countess told us that she had convinced her husband to retire to bed early, since he had become particularly agitated today. The people had apparently sung *The German Fatherland* in the streets when they gathered for a target-shooting contest, and the scene had elicited painful memories for the patient.<sup>36</sup>

“‘Oh my, oh my!’ exclaimed Hulda with a quick-wittedness that was worthy of admiration. ‘Then I have done something that I cannot answer for to you, dear aunt. I want to confess everything to you, for you are the model of discretion and will stand by me in order to spare my dear ailing uncle from any dangerous scene.’

“‘Frightened, the countess ran to the door to see if her husband might be nearby, and she admonished Hulda to make sure to keep her voice at a whisper. The roguish damsel then nodded mysteriously in my direction to signal that other unpopular, high-ranking persons now found it necessary to elude the insults of the mobs. The countess glanced at me in fright, drew back, and let out a suppressed scream. Then she turned to Hulda and said quietly: ‘I think I know what is going on! This is Prince Metternich.’

“‘For a moment Hulda was at a loss for words, but she may have realized that confirmation of such a notion was more than she could carry out. For this reason she said: ‘I am not allowed to reveal the name, dear aunt, but it is enough if I burden your great and noble heart with the fate of a politically persecuted man, whose life you can save. This very night you must provide him with uncle’s passport and uniform and get him to Ostende by special coach.’

“‘Child, child, you eccentric creature, whatever are you thinking! How can I risk something like that? Let me have the night to think it over!’

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<sup>36</sup> Patriotic song of the nineteenth century. German title: *Des Deutschen Vaterland*, lyrics by Ernst Moritz Arndt, 1813, and music by Gustav Reichardt, 1825. Arndt was elected to the Frankfurt National Assembly in 1848 and advocated for a patriotic German nation state inclusive of all German-speaking regions.

“‘There is no time to lose,’ cried Hulda, ‘and if you will not help then I shall wake uncle. I need only whisper *one word* into his ear, and he will do it at once. But remember: you will be responsible for the consequences!’

“The young lady was already running to the door of the bedroom, where she assumed the patient to be, but her aunt desperately held her back: ‘Hüldchen, Hüldchen! Please, do not be unreasonable—the doctor has forbidden uncle from becoming excited—wait—let me have a moment to gather my thoughts—perhaps there is a way out!’

“With that, she turned to me with a courteous bow and said: ‘Whoever you might be, I respect your desire to remain incognito. Might I mention that our servant has a special passport because he is to travel ahead to Ostende as a courier? I know that it is an unseemly impertinence—but if you must flee from the angry mobs then perhaps such a disguise is safer, because it is less conspicuous than a uniform.’

“The good lady had become so absorbed in the fate that had affected her husband and his idol Metternich that it filled her entire circle of thought. The fact that her help had been enlisted for a fugitive of the other party did not even enter her mind. We did not want to wait for her to demand further elucidation, and so we seized her offer.

“My most nondescript suit, which had been packed just in case, was pulled from the trunk that Hulda had brought. The personal description on the servant’s passport hardly matched my face. But since it was an Austrian passport and it declared that I was travelling as the courier in the service of His Excellency the Count von Pommerschild, it was not the nature of the authorities to torment me with a lengthy delay. Enough, we struck while the iron was hot, and before daybreak the express coach brought me to the nearest train station. I was not lacking travel money, because Dorothea had forwarded me the necessary amount much earlier, so that I



could leave my hide-out at the first opportunity. I arrived in Ostende, no questions asked, as Sepperl Staubhaimer and, with an expression of my gratitude, sent the passport back to the countess anonymously, and to this day she has no idea to whom she provided this service.”

Dr. Stern and Meta Braun were curious to hear how the eccentric damsel had fared since that time. Ibeles satisfied their interest by reading excerpts from the young lady’s letters, which revealed that she too looked back on the spring of 1848 with elation as if it were the highlight of her life. While in the past her relationships with her mother’s visitors had been tense, they had now become hostile, since she often openly defended the revolution, a sympathetic leaning that they could hardly comprehend. For the first time in her life she had heard free and manly speech and breathed in the fresh atmosphere of a healthy bourgeois philosophy of life. Thereafter she found the stifling air of polite society to be intolerable. The few letters that she received from her mausoleum prisoner naturally passed in silence over all that related to the petty adversities of middle-class existence and echoed instead only the tremendous plans and hopes that at that time moved the circle of exiles. In the beginning, the name of the Polish countess figured in the description of the most prominent personalities, but later was omitted or mentioned only in passing. In her isolation, the young lady seemed herself as if she were buried alive with mummies, and she dreamed of an endless field of opportunity for her drive to action on the other side of the channel, among the ranks of the exiled patriots.

The first few days after her return to the mausoleum were desolate and lonely and stretched into endless boredom. How she would have liked to have followed her friend, to whom she had become more closely attached during their strange and secret life together than people normally do in many years. Nothing restrained her but the duty of a daughter toward her blind mother.

With the subsequent death of the old lady, who had been sickly for a whole year, every close connection to her homeland was severed. Out of respect for Frau v. Saintford no one had wanted to cast her out of the home in which she was familiar with every little nook and cranny. Now the male heir of the family estate wanted to renovate the dwelling according to his tastes and occupy it himself. Hulda had anticipated this long ago, and since her wealth was sufficient to meet her few needs, she sold her unnecessary belongings and told no one of her plans to emigrate until she had boarded the ship in Hamburg.

“According to the letter she should be arriving tomorrow,” Dorothea said, “and she would like to live as close to us as possible.”

Ibeles said: “Unfortunately we cannot offer her a calm sanctuary in Briar Place in the midst of our seven noise-makers and also no inaccessible labyrinth. The only place where she can perhaps find comfortable accommodation is over there with Mrs. Beak, who had volunteered in the past to take in a German lady for room and board.”

Stern, who had already allowed himself a few teasing remarks to his friend and his wife, now chimed in: “Truly, if the blonde Fräulein would only want to move in with me, I would offer her my little flat no matter how many hatboxes she would likely bring along and no matter what my old housekeeper might say to that. Admittedly though, no matter that I am such an old honourable and virtuous bachelor, the young ladies do not trust me, and instead follow after this spoiled husband as if he were a miracle-working prophet. A man has but to take a wife for him to win the trust of the entire female gender as if he were the father confessor with a tonsure. I would wager that this burgher Ibeles with his curls never leaves the ladies college for home without one of the adolescent girls having placed a bouquet or a few lines of poetry into his hat. I, poor innocent chap, am never once left alone with a female pupil when I practice grammatical

declensions and conjugations with her. A mama with spectacles on her nose or a governess is always present and keeps watch over me so that I cannot speak of anything with the little ladies other than what is written in Ahn's grammar."<sup>37</sup>

Ibeles countered mockingly: "And the English mothers do that not for their daughters' sakes, but rather, by their presence, to afford the shy teachers protection from young ladies who are much too forward."

"Enough," Stern said, "You are not to delight in the ardent adoration of the blonde damsel without a challenge from me. Be my ally, Frau Director, and divulge the secret skills such a musician applies so that the beautiful children follow him as if he were the Pied Piper of Hamelin."

With a laugh the housewife referred the philologist to Goethe's dictum:

Who ne'er seems as if he knew

If he pleases, if he charms,—<sup>38</sup>

But she stopped short in the middle of the recitation and made a speech in honour of the young damsel, so that the verse's conclusion could by no means be construed as a reference to her. She said: "This girl is one of the most charming creatures that I have ever come across in my life. Of course, I know her more from her correspondence with my husband than from the few words I

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<sup>37</sup> Johann Franz Ahn (1796–1865) was a German educator widely known for his practical and easy methods in foreign language acquisition for various European languages.

<sup>38</sup> Excerpt from Goethe's poem "Antworten bei einem gesellschaftlichen Fragespiel," "Der Erfahrene": "Geh den Weibern zart entgegen, Du gewinnst sie, auf mein Wort; Und wer rasch ist und verwegen, kommt vielleicht noch besser fort; Doch wem wenig dran gelegen Scheinet, ob er reizt und rührt, Der beleidigt, der verführt." English Translation: "Answers in a Game of a Questions," "The Experienced": "Tenderly a woman view, And thou'lt win her, take my word; He who's quick and saucy too, will of all men be prefer'd; who ne'er seems as if he knew If he pleases, if he charms,—He 'tis injures, he 'tis harms." *The Poems of Goethe. Translated in the original metres with a Sketch of Goethe's Life.* Trans. Edgar Alfred Bowring. London: John W. Parker & Son, 1753. p.58. Had Dorothea finished the verse quoted, where, in the German, the last word is "verfuehrt," or in the English context, "seduces," then she might have implied that Hulda had been seduced, but the Ibeles's are taking great pains to emphasize Hulda's purity and the virtuous nature of how she and Ibeles had interacted.

have exchanged with her personally, but one needs only to see her noble white brow and honest eyes to be certain that there is no ulterior motive present. She grasps everything from a purely intellectual point of view, and I fear only one thing—that our life together will not match the ideal picture that she paints for herself and that because of this, the all-around good perception will collapse.”

Ibeles affirmed this and added: “I have also warned her not to let her idealism lead her to delusions that will inevitably fill her life with bitterness. She has the habit of constructing people and circumstances by means of her lively imagination, and she treats them according to her mental image rather than as they really are.”

“Well now, I would wish,” said Stern, “that she might construct an ideal character of me and treat me accordingly. In any case, I am happy that our small circle is to be graced with such a lovely addition, which has been lacking for us all!”

Everyone laughed about the excitement that the recollections of blonde Hulda had aroused in Stern—the couple heartily, Meta Braun with some constraint, and a keen observer would probably have been able to read from her face that the evening’s conversation had dealt her heart a blow that she sought with utmost difficulty to conceal.

The guests departed, and Stern, who otherwise would customarily have accompanied Meta for a distance, this time brought her to the horse-drawn omnibus, helped her in, and then climbed up and sat on the box with the coachman. It might have been a mere coincidence, but it seemed to Meta as if he wanted to shake off her presence as quickly as possible, in order to abandon himself to a charming mental picture. He did not even notice that she had gotten off before the end of the route and slipped hastily into a side street.

## Chapter Sixteen

### How a New Move on the Chessboard Alters the Position of all the Other Pieces

Prior to this evening, Meta had not been aware that a closer affection drew her to Stern. She had always felt extremely comfortable in the Ibeles home, where she would often meet Stern, while she found the evenings on which she served the countess tea in the presence of her guests to be highly embarrassing. At Briar Place she was usually the only young lady who actively participated in the conversation, and because of this the men were happy to include her. The English ladies who often attended did not speak at all, and the young daughters in the house were still children. Dorothea, being the proper German housewife, admired only her beloved husband, and all the other gentlemen present were no more than onlookers. The visitors very quickly sensed that Dorothea lacked an appreciation for gallantry, and since she took on the air of matron in response to every flattering remark, no one bothered her in this manner. Meta Braun accepted the kind of attention paid to young girls, and it made her feel good to know that in at least *one* circle she was the center of attention. Stern had singled her out in particular. Because of this she had become fond of him without actually realizing it, and it seemed as if he took pleasure when in every dispute the intelligent young girl sided with him. Yet she had never inspired him or any other man to be infatuated with her, because her spirit lacked that magic capable of so occupying a man's fantasy when she was not present as to make him forget that she was not pretty. In the Blafoska salon they even called her ugly, and the ruthless way they let her sense this increased her defiant bitterness all the more.

So now she wended her way homewards through the gas-lit streets, and amid the masses thronging round her she brooded quietly to herself as if she were lying awake through a sleepless night as alone in her bedroom as could be. She said to herself: "So that too was a dream, that I could be esteemed by a man who would take the time to get to know me. I hardly know which is worse: to be treated with hatred and aversion by a man or to be treated with such complete indifference as if I did not count!"

It was certain that the harmless manner in which, in Meta's presence, Stern had looked with happy anticipation to Hulda's arrival had hurt more than all the pin pricks of those ill-disposed toward her. As long as an ugly girl has even just *one* admirer she is protected from the danger of becoming bitter. She is unspeakably grateful for every little compliment that a widely admired beauty would not even notice. Pride balances out jealousy, and the plain girl credits her lone admirer with an intelligence inordinately higher than that of the foolish masses in their pursuit of beauty, because *he alone* understood how to get past her unfriendly exterior and appreciate her for her soul. His appreciation is the weapon that shields her against every act of disrespect by strangers, and if it turns out she was wrong, then that plants the first seed of the resentment against humanity that has caused old spinsters to fall into such disrepute.

Usually, one assumes that the jealousy of the ugly women is first directed toward the beautiful. This, however, is not the case, because a young girl does not realize that she is ugly until the arrogance of the beautiful girls and their resulting positive but insulting comments make clear to her that she is. Only then does her self-esteem awaken, and she sees the value of her other qualities with such clarity that she underestimates the outward charm of her fellow sisters. It is not until a man whom she quietly adores shows her disregard that she is humiliated, and that makes her suspicious and resentful of every stranger's glance and tone.

Meta was ashamed by her own frustration, and if someone else had told her that she was angry because a much lovelier vision would from now on take her place—a spot she had until now occupied unchallenged—she would have taken that person to be of low and common character. All the injustices that had always been heaped upon her crossed her mind once again, and she felt herself pushed into pretense in order to evade an accusation of malice.

Whenever the countess uttered the greatest absurdity, all the guests marvelled at the refined intellect of the elegant lady. But when Meta contributed the most apt remark in general conversation, they just went on talking without paying any attention. Wildemann had once rudely accused her of being shallow and egocentric because she avoided conversation with the overly chatty French parlour maid in order to be able to read during her free time. He took this opportunity to praise the countess's kindheartedness, when she so selflessly condescended to alleviate the poor girl's boredom by going on for hours with gossip and chatter about clothes and fashions. Meta was labelled as being ill-mannered because she was *direct* in her criticism, whereas her beautiful mistress cultivated the cowardly, most base medium of using innuendos and was therefore considered to be kind.

Today she returned to the scene of her subservience with a doubly wounded heart, given that the only remaining sanctuary in which she had amounted to something was now under threat of being spoiled for her. But she decided not to allow her countenance to betray the sorrow in her heart.

The next morning as usual, the countess casually asked a roundabout question that forced Meta to report the goings on in Briar Place. She had until now always avoided mentioning Stern by name, and today she was even less in the mood to do so. In order to divert from the second question concerning who was all there, she immediately rushed into recounting the arrival of a

lady from Germany, who had apparently had a close friendship and correspondence with Ibeles and followed him to England. She faltered and blushed because she did not know to what extent she was obligated to conceal the closer relationships.

The countess misunderstood this and thought that Meta wanted to spare *her* feelings: “So that is the reason,” she thought, “for the aloof gentleman’s reticence! That explains everything to me!” For the diplomatic lady tended to explain away all puzzling actions that clashed with her plans only in terms of ambition or affairs, since she did not understand any other motives. Her pensive silence and sudden darkened brow indicated to the governess, like a bolt of lightning, that the moment had now arrived where she too had the opportunity to wound her inconsiderate mistress, and she was cruel enough not to allow this opportunity to pass by. All the anguish that Stern’s words had caused her, she now transferred onto the vain woman’s heart by repeating to her Ibeles’s words, that outside of his engagement to Dorothea, the relationship with his friend had been the most poetic time of his life.

After a while the countess asked her: “What does his wife say to this? Is his friend going to be living in their house?”

With this Meta told her that they were in a dilemma regarding where the Lady v. Saintford should be accommodated, and that she would most likely be staying with Mrs. Beak.

The countess withdrew in order to think about the new change in circumstances. She had felt the equanimity with which the composer had received her sudden absence from him to be like an indelible form of humiliation and for that reason, when she was asked about him, saw him only as a martyr suffering under the constraints of domestic circumstances. Immediately after the breach in their friendship she had moved into the large house, but instead of a worker’s association it resembled more a gathering place for convivial living. Since that time, she was in



continual correspondence with her brother-in-law Blafoski, and it appeared as if she wanted to heed his counsel, because those party leaders whom he had designated as most important she sought to win over into her circle. Wildemann and his cohorts looked silly enough when one of the *big* bumblebees wriggling in their net slipped through, got away, and did not return. The circle required refreshing through a new attraction, and this the countess now appeared to have found. She wanted to prove to her friend, who had offended her, that her thoughts were grander than those of his mundane wife, on account of whose stubbornness he had sacrificed his alliance with her. She was less concerned with honouring the famous artist than she was with humiliating his wife. She imagined that she could not give the people in her entire circle a more blatant demonstration of a strong mind than by fostering, without showing any envy, a spiritual bond that required her to deny her own feelings. But deep in the innermost abyss of her heart a demon laughed about the ploy she had finally worked out that would *force* Ibeles to visit a house that Dorothea could never enter.

She called Meta to her bedroom and asked her once more for the name and the circumstances of the expected woman. She remembered that she had occasionally heard mention of the Pommerschilts and Saintfords in Vienna. It was a widespread family, she said, and she dimly recalled a rumour that a member of this family had safeguarded some prominent person from a large mob in the year '48, but she had forgotten when and where. In spite of the barb in her soul, Meta felt forced to burst out laughing at this, and she was weak enough to make an insinuation that provoked the countess's curiosity to the extreme. At long last she revealed her request after having confided in Meta, whom she believed to have a grasp of all the facts, as follows:

“What you are telling me of the young damsel proves to me that *she* will not be able to last even three days with the dry Beaks. Only with *me* will she find the mutual sympathies that bind together the brilliant nobility of the entire world into one big family. If *you* really love your friend Dorothea, then you must help me keep such a disruption to their domestic harmony at bay. You have excused your friend’s treatment of me from the position that women who are given only to work cannot be in agreement with those who aspire solely to cultivating intellectual pursuits. What do you see as different in the present case from the previous one?”

Meta gladly concurred, for her only aim was distancing the young lady from Stern, whose affection she herself still hoped to win through perseverance and saintly patience. The countess was quietly surprised at the ease with which this otherwise extremely guarded person allowed herself to be fooled, and instructed her with a well-thought out plan as to how she should take the young lady by surprise, in order to gain swift consent.

Formulated by sudden inspiration, this plan to have Hulda come to reside with her and to be her protectress was easily achieved by the countess, with Meta’s assistance. Meta made her way to Briar Place on that very same afternoon, and for her purposes could not have arrived at a more opportune time. The young lady had arrived very early that morning. The happy greetings and initial exchanges had taken place, and the lull that usually follows a few excited hours had set in. The cramped house was overcrowded with suitcases and parcels. The older children were climbing all over them and the younger ones were crying because they were being prevented from doing somersaults on a bed roll that was lying in the way and appeared to be quite welcoming for this purpose. Mrs. Beak had made things difficult by asking for a two day delay to put rugs and curtains in order, since she was not prepared to allow such a respectable lady to move into a parlour that had not first been made comfortable. The modest young lady countered

that she would be content to sleep on any available sofa, but the lady of the house did not allow that either, in light of the tiring sea voyage that her guest had just endured. Meta read the quandary on each face, and this seemed to her to be the opportunity to gain the visitor's attention. She introduced herself as a friend of the Ibeles family while the others were in the adjacent room discussing the question of lodging. She told her that Countess Blafoska well remembered the lady's family and that of the Pommerschilds, and that she would consider it an honour if, during these first few weeks, Hulda would regard her house as a place to stay. She whispered to her that the countess had a large house and that a visit did not in the least pose her any awkwardness, while one could well see what futile efforts Hr. and Fr. Ibeles were making to prepare a comfortable location for such a beloved guest. Hulda pondered the offer, and as hard as it was for her to separate herself from her friend, now reunited, on the first evening, she did feel embarrassed about the disruption that her presence was making. She did not speak English and was therefore very loath to live with the Beaks, whose physiognomy left her with strong misgivings as to whether she would fit in with them.<sup>39</sup> She had an enormous interest in the Countess Blafoska, since her name had been frequently mentioned in Ibeles's earlier letters.

“I have read about Polish hospitality in books,” she said, “and I would really like to experience it personally for once.” Resolutely, she stood up and stepped into the adjacent room saying: “Now you have been put at a complete inconvenience, dear Frau Director. I have found somewhere to stay, and we could not have dreamt of a more respectable place. Your friend, Countess Blafoska, who has never even met me, has offered me a place to stay, and without doubt I have my ties to your family to thank for this kind consideration she is showing me.”

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<sup>39</sup> Since physical appearance reveals class commonality and therefore also harmony, Hulda is hesitant to consider temporary lodging with the Beaks, who are commoners, bringing to light the lingering arrogance of the nobility in the nineteenth century. By this usage the reader is given to understand that the Beak ladies were lacking in physical appearance and attractiveness.

Ibeles and his wife stood there as if they had been struck by lightning when they heard of this completely unexpected move, the motive of which they were just as unable to read as its consequences. Ibeles shied away from immediately deflating the high opinion that his friend had brought with her on arrival concerning life in exile for the fighters for freedom by exposing the petty conflicts and divisions that cast a shadow on the party. Dorothea tried in vain to comprehend what could have made Meta Braun plunge headlong into being an instrument of the countess's mood, without first giving *her* as much as a hint or seeking *her* view on the matter. Mrs. Beak, upon asking what had transpired and informed by Meta about the matter, was the only one who spoke and vehemently protested that the Polish countess was definitely not the person to whose care one could entrust an unmarried lady. She added that according to her knowledge of this lady's salon, its visitors consisted primarily of young men and that a lady unacquainted with London would be far better off placing herself under the watchful eye of a respectable elderly woman.

All this Meta faithfully translated for the young lady, who was given a contrary impression to the one Mrs. Beak had in mind. Even more than her small, dainty figure, rosy colouring, and blond curly hair, her carefree fanciful view of life gave her a far more youthful appearance than that of other women of similar age. She had found it unbearable that for this reason, at twenty-six years of age, she had been treated as a child by her old aunts at home. In order to escape the constant warnings against frivolous and eccentric behaviour she had deprived herself of so many advantages, and now she was expected to let them snare her in a net of even more rigorous parental control in England, the country of freedom. She scrutinized the figure of the dignified lady, from her head with its ornately proper bonnet down to her authoritatively planted foot peeking out from under her grey silk dress, and a resounding NO rang out from her

innermost soul. Mrs. Beak's grey eyes bored through her spectacles and burned into Hulda's ardent light-blue eyes like the sun focused through a burning lens as she gently but firmly thanked her kindly for her advice and good will, but emphatically declared that she would nonetheless accept the countess's invitation.

In England, husband and wife are accustomed to respecting the expressed will of an independent person. Thus, as soon as Meta had translated the "I will," all further negotiating ceased. Mrs. Bleak cast her eyes to heaven, then closed them and nodded her head, indicating with this that her responsibility ended here. Dorothea had fixed her stern, inquiring eyes on Meta, who now grasped her by the hand and said: "Let us go; it is really better this way; you will realize it yourself." Hulda had already snatched her bed roll from the hands of the little ones and said to Ibeles: "Good-bye and until we see each other again tomorrow, dear friend! I must tear myself away from you quickly so that you do not shake my resolve again."

The two stepped into the waiting carriage outside and abandoned those left behind to pointlessly mulling things over. How had this come about so unexpectedly and how could one have averted it and what stricter measures could one now take?

It happened just as the countess had anticipated. Ibeles could not refuse visiting Fräulein v. Saintford in her new place of residence and continuing with the lessons in music theory that he had begun with her in the mausoleum. The countess stepped in, as if by chance, greeted Ibeles with the pleasant friendliness of a lady of the world, as if nothing had happened, and asked for permission to take part in the basso continuo instruction with her new friend. Both ladies already addressed each other with the informal address, using "du," and always rested arm in arm intertwined across from him.

“Wait,” Ibeles thought. “I shall really spoil basso continuo for you!” and he obligingly replied: “If Fräulein Hulda wishes it, then I cannot object. I must just remind you that my pupil is greatly advanced and you, countess, would have had to study the rudiments earlier in order to be on par with her!”

This was a stipulation that the artist hoped would help him evade the humiliation she had planned. Hulda had practiced the chorales by Bach, the psalms by Marcello, and a host of the most superb pieces on her harpsichord and was so familiar with the legato style that her intellectual and at the same time profound musical nature had little difficulty studying musical counterpoint. However, the countess played only mazurkas and a few traditional folksongs. She knew about as much about inverted chords and the basso continuo as she did about algebra.

“What a pedagogue you are!” she said to the musician. “Should I be treated like the Kaspar Hauser of theory and start with the ABCs as if I had never heard a performance of an oratorio? I was always bored with your Handel, you know that. But the experts told me that the basso continuo was purportedly the magic key that would bring pleasure and knowledge about the great confusion that you call fugues. Therefore it is the fugues that matter to me, and if you teach me to understand them, then I shall present you with the rudiments.”

The musician answered with an unshakable calm. “The study of intervals is the foundation of the pyramid whose peak is the fugue. I can only lead you to the top by way of the bottom, and if *you* have the patience to write the first exercise, then I am prepared to proceed step by step.”

The rogue then explained to her with exemplary dryness the principle upon which the notation of the diminished, minor, major, and augmented intervals rests. He did not spare her the E-sharp to the major second F-double sharp and the augmented F-triple sharp, nor the C-flat to

the diminished seventh B-triple flat. She found this to be an absurd and antiquated notation and swore that it would be much simpler to write a G instead of an F-double sharp. With this, Ibeles allowed the ghostly Greek musical key system to emerge menacingly in the background mentioning a bit of the proslambanomenos and of the paranete in order to deter her. With a shudder she then declared herself prepared to record the chart of all the intervals and to provide all the required sharps and flats as he had insisted upon as a test exercise.

When he told Dorothea of the encounter, she was just as certain as he that the world would end before the countess ever intended to take the basso continuo seriously. To his astonishment, she sent the completed assignment with Hulda only a few days later and in it there were only some minor errors. Hulda, whose honesty was beyond any doubt, guaranteed that neither she nor anyone else had helped the countess and that she had not taken advantage of a book to aid her either. The countess had said that she would show her pedantic friend that she could indeed occupy herself with petty little matters if she found them to be worth her while.

The trap door had therefore snapped shut over the head of the cautious artist, and by the power of daily habit, he found himself trapped in a circle that split his life into two halves. As a professional musician he could not, without being impertinent, refuse instruction to a person who was not exactly disreputable. Hulda was even allowed to demand his visit to be an obligation of their friendship, and the continuation of the studies begun with her was the very least that he could offer her in grateful return for the great service she had done for him. He had no further excuse with which he could decline to give the little countess piano lessons, since he, through his advertisement in the *Times*, had committed himself to do so to all of society. The upper-class proletarian is of course just as bound by this mass task-master as the factory worker is to capital. The countess was unable to achieve only one thing, namely to arrange for Ibeles to conduct a

weekly entertainment evening paid with an honorarium, because to him this seemed to fall under the scope of the promise he had given Dorothea. In this he allowed himself to be confused neither by reasons that would talk him out of his aversion to this way of earning a living as a prejudice, nor by insinuations that he was being henpecked.

Hulda deeply regretted the inferior status that the master musician, whom she had known only at the height of his career, occupied here. She took it upon herself to help him by circulating articles about him in public newspapers in order to gain him the attention of the entire musical community in London. She was naive enough to believe that England should be ashamed that such an artist was being used to instruct dilettantes. She therefore sought to make the countess's proposal more palatable in a different form by wanting to establish a society for dilettantes similar to the German musical circles in which his compositions would be performed and sung for important experts in music. When she in confidence sweetly explained the plan to her friend, he laughed at her and warned her against establishing foundations. But eventually, she and the countess brought about a visit to the salon by Herr and Frau Gerhard along with a few musical gentlemen, and Ibeles, who was considered to be a guest just like the others, had no reason to exclude himself from the gathering. This was the basis for a series of regular gatherings, at which all found pleasure and excitement in the beginning and at which political and literary discussions melded together with the artistic. Hulda was completely in her element, Frau Gerhard's still very lovely voice charmed everyone, and everyone found something of interest that awakened a wish for a return of such evenings, and so this rough stone composed of the most heterogeneous personalities held together simply because it had been set in an embracing ring.

The countess had told Hulda of the conflict with Dorothea from her viewpoint and had depicted the latter to be a completely narrow-minded person, who was suitable to be only a



kitchen maid or a custodian of children, and that she hardly knew what to make of her. Hulda objected spiritedly and was convinced that only a mutual misjudgement could have caused a misunderstanding. She said: "I admit that I know the woman in only a superficial way, but her friends speak of her with respect!"

"Friends are biased!" the countess replied.

Hulda interjected: "But is the judgement of the enemy the only credible one?"

The countess said: "I am not her enemy, and if she wants to come here then I shall treat her with politeness."

Hulda, as the angel of reconciliation, now considered her next task to be that of re-uniting the two women and requested that Meta help her achieve this lovely goal.

Meta allowed the young lady to finish speaking and then said: "It is indeed a great atrocity when one *destroys* friendships and makes people into enemies by eliciting scandal with tittle-tattle. But I know from experience that the fixation on bringing together people who do not like each other causes just as much harm. Once dislike sets in, one must leave people alone. Then their obstinacy wears down sooner rather than appealing to them using moral pressure. The pretenses to which one forces people who are not allowed to show that they cannot bear one another ruins their character. Simply staying clear in such cases is the best."

"But consider," Hulda exclaimed, "how much our friend's sensitive nature must have to suffer because of this, being pulled back and forth between love and friendship!"

Laughing bitterly Meta said: "Men do not suffer much. They go wherever they find the most pleasure."

Hulda tried, by letter and in person, to make it possible for Dorothea to be present at the social evenings, but Dorothea replied that she had to be excused from all social responsibilities

since there was not sufficient time to adequately fulfill the duties of housewife and mother, which their situation required of her. She assured her that work gave her more pleasure than diversion and that the company of her children was more pleasant than that of would-be dilettantes. But she was sincerely pleased if her husband found enjoyment in the company, since, after he has had to attend to some unpleasant duties, he feels a deeper need to do so than does she.

The next time Meta arrived at Dorothea's, after the young lady's abduction, Dorothea openly asked her why she had been so keen to carry Fräulein v. Saintford away.

Meta retorted cheekily: "Why should I *not* have carried out the countess's orders?"

Dorothea actually knew of no reason, but she said: "But you are familiar enough with the circumstances to recognize how this invitation by the countess to *our* guest would be upsetting to us!"

"Forgive me, Frau Director," Meta replied in a somewhat irritated tone of voice, "how could I have any insight into your relationships when you always spurned sharing with me even one confidential word? You always brought a quick end to each attempt I made to tell you about something from the countess's salon."

Stern, too, had found Meta's behaviour to be strange, but he added that he never would have thought that she would perform this friendly service. Usually, it was likely to be governesses who, in such cases, tried to instigate a plot to keep away a superior female companion who might potentially come between them and the lady of the house.

Ibeles was of the opinion that Mamsell Braun had quite innocently been someone's cat's paw to pull somebody's chestnuts out of the fire. "And all and all," he said, "she probably thought that we are good-natured people who readily forgive, and therefore she decided to cross

*us* rather than fall out of favour with her employer. When, in the end, I look at the whole situation, I think that Meta, acting as a neutral person, did not act so wrongly in regarding the house of the countess to be a more suitable place for Hulda than ours or an English family's."

That is how things stayed for the time being. Stern visited Briar Place less often because the head of the household was away more frequently in the evening, and Meta did not have permission to go out as often as before, because the countess no longer had an interest in gleaning information through a third party. Dorothea silently vowed never to prevent her husband from visiting the countess's salon, in spite of how difficult the late and lonely evening hours were for her, so that he might not think her suspicious of him and that she might not appear ridiculous to those wishing her ill. As much as Ibeles attempted to persuade her into believing that his frequent visits were an unavoidable obligation, she still had a feeling that he did not mind going. Dorothea's simple, hard-working nature as a partner in life was as sound as daily bread, and her husband would gladly eat mustard by the spoonful rather than ever preferring the company of the effusive countess over her. But mustard in small portions is a very pleasant spice in life. Ibeles now viewed the countess with gentler eyes since her constant presence no longer put him on edge. Her errant notion that something more than friendship existed between him and Hulda caused her to be somewhat reserved. The everyday moments of one's female friends remain unseen, whereas those of the housewife are strikingly apparent. The contrast between a charmingly furnished salon where he was always received in the finest dress, where they had even ensured the most pleasant atmosphere when he put in an appearance at the cheerful evenings given to cultivating the arts, was very rosy in comparison to a house burdened with worries, where he instinctively believed that he saw in his wife's countenance nothing but unpaid bills from the baker and the butcher.

## Chapter Seventeen

### The Children and the Household

There is one constitutional principle in force in a household: most often the man attends to unselfish noblesse and the woman attends to the economical worry. If she does this out of miserliness or selfishness, she becomes extremely offensive. But if she economizes on her own needs as much as possible for the sake of her poor little children, then her miserliness touches us when we consider that it is motivated by love.

Dorothea was a very happy mother. Simply by virtue of her robust health, her quickness and agility of movement, and her tall and full-figured frame, she had endowed the children by birth with natural strength. The good looks of their father had been passed on to only a few of them, but at least not one among them was lacking in charm. We would like to present them in turn to those readers who are capable of taking a motherly interest in children besides their own, starting with the youngest.

This was little Conrad, at home referred to only as the little lad, who still ran about in a red-checked little gown with short sleeves, like little girls wear. He had light blue eyes, flaxen hair, and stood out from the others on account of his fat little snow-white neck, which his father loved to pinch. As long as *one* child is still carried around in the house every now and then and cannot pronounce certain letters of the alphabet, parents retain the inclination to pull childish pranks and to relinquish the serious position of people in authority.

Conrad's little playmate was Angela, who promised to grow into a replica of her mother, in her features as well as in her movement and gestures. This resemblance could be traced to the

smallest thing, which appeared almost comical when she put on Dorothea's bonnet as a joke while playing dressup. She had the very same clear eyes, the pale open brow,<sup>40</sup> the slightly protruding teeth that gave the otherwise friendly mouth an expression of resilience. Angela was usually thought to be older than her sister nearest in age, little Celia, first because she was taller and stronger, second because, much as she did the little lad, Conrad, she also, to some extent, exerted a certain control over this quiet, gentle child. Occasionally, she even strove to extend her natural talent of dominating others to her older brothers and to her sisters, although they refused to tolerate such a thing. If the boys ever blathered on about something incorrectly, one could be certain that her loud voice would be the first to bellow out and insert the correct fact into the conversation buzzing around the table. Because of this, the older boys were always ready to teasingly shout out and call her "You know-it-all!" at which she became highly indignant. This child was the comical one in the family, and the fervor with which she tried to defend herself against the use of nicknames would only encourage everyone to find even more to call her. When Angela was only three years old, she was called the square child because of her stoutness. This offended her so much that any time someone happened to mention anything about a square, she began to sob uncontrollably. In order to cure her of her sensitivity, her father greeted her one morning when she came down to breakfast with the following solemn speech: "In our square house there is a square room, in which there is a square table, upon which lay a square plate, upon which lies a square slice of cake for the square child!" General laughter broke out as Angela began howling at the first mention of the square house, but with the mention of cake she looked around as if electrified, and when she saw there really was a square cake there, she fell silent, popped the cake into her mouth, and dried her little tears. Only later did she once again

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<sup>40</sup> In German: "offne Stirn" echoes Friedrich Schiller's oft-quoted "an open brow shows an open heart" from his drama *Fiesco's Conspiracy at Genoa*, (1782).

break into heavy sobs when a newspaper article was read aloud and the Russian foothills “Sieverovostutchoi” were mentioned, she ran from the table and screamed: “That is probably going to become another nick-name for me again!”

Even though little Celia had long since recovered from the effects of her fall, her parents had continued to use the most tender and sympathetic tone of voice with her. Her delicate pale features and deep blue eyes, which gazed at one so seriously and quizzically from under her long lashes, led everyone to speak to her in a much quieter tone than to her brothers and sisters. She was her father’s favourite, and when they still lived in Germany, she often sat on his lap for hours, wrapped in her dressing gown, while he was composing. Of all the children, she was the pensive one, who knew how to call forth signs of his love in a thousand silent ways. Sitting in front of the waste basket, she patiently pulled out the strips of flowery gold foil that were often used to glue shut the envelopes around little packages in the store. Using these, she was adept at making all kinds of little flowers, which she then used to decorate a little letter for her mama. Dorothea often kept such scraps of paper in her appointment book for months, because, like a ray of sunshine, they brightened her day when, amid the most onerous chores, she would come upon an innocent greeting such as: “Dear mommy! I am giving you this little flower!” or: “I love you very much and am your child Celia.”

Nanna and Milla were now already sensible and helpful little daughters, whom their mother was able to entrust with a domestic chore or some sort of supervisory role of the youngest children. In large families the older girls are required to undergo from an early age some form of preparatory training in motherly care-giving. Beginning at age ten, each of these little daughters had been assigned one of the younger children as her special charge, with whom she shared everything that they had learnt thus far. This was not an actual formal education,

because for this children lack the necessary dominance of character that is even more necessary for teaching than is knowledge. Milla and Nanna had learned the fundamentals while still in school in Germany. But the private tutoring that they had been given at home they were now required to pass on to their siblings, for whom their mother was required to take the place of school. The blonde Milla and little Celia had a tender loving relationship, since Milla had the patience of an angel while going through the reader with Celia and helping her with her writing. But wild, brown-eyed Nanna had a resistant student in Angela, who had not yet conquered her ABC's. It was also a frequent occurrence that when Dorothea occasionally came to observe if the two were diligently learning their lessons, she instead caught them both playing, an offense that she actually did not punish all too harshly.

Little Karl was now already past the age of twelve and little Fritz past thirteen. In comparison to little Conrad, they were called the big boys and every now and then also called the two "defenders of the faith." They stuck together superbly against the corporation of girls, who usually had the addition of the little boy on their side. Yet it was often the case that Nanna went to the boys' side, in whose games she would actually prefer to partake rather than sewing little doll dresses. When these three conspired together, they were called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Little Karl was both the most accommodating yet the most self-serving little boy, however paradoxical that may sound. He was in love with himself first and then loved the members of his family, much as one finds evidenced by some openly innocent natures that those who are least self-centered are not always the most loving. Little Karl knew how to cherish every type of pleasure. He was adept at fishing the plumpest pear out of a full basket with the first grasp, and when someone looked for the most comfortable seat in the room, one only had to

chase little Karl away in order to have it. But just as much as he loved pleasure, he also strove to provide pleasure for all those he loved. His brown eyes were full of happiness, his bell-like voice chimed with joy and jest. If his father's and mother's hearts were heavy and his radiant little face appeared in the door, it was as if a recovered treasure, which one had buried somewhere or other and forgotten, had suddenly come to light again. Little Karl did not especially possess the inclination to apply himself to learning and studying, but he always had his eyes and ears open and was the observant genius in his house. He saw with a glance what no one else noticed.

Fritz, the oldest, was very different from his brother not only in character but also in appearance. He was more earnest, had more serious features, and his grey-blue eyes already indicated his introverted nature. His delicate lips had taken on a reserved expression. Actually, similar to his mother, one could call him a workhorse, and he almost loved to toil just for the sake of toil. He was more good than good-natured, since his hypersensitive love of justice often drove him, in response to the errors of his younger siblings, to suppress the tolerance that people usually consider the mark of a good-natured child. His strong sense of duty endeared him especially to his mother, while the bits of scientific knowledge he possessed that she did not already instilled in her a degree of respect for the upright, independent lad.

The great variety that one usually observes among members of a family, even the contradictory small shortcomings occurring among the siblings, serve to strengthen the family unit, as long as *one* sound principle is respected overall. For after all, as we all know, the interlocking irregularities of the stones make the cyclopean wall solid.<sup>41</sup>

It had been the father's dearest hope that his oldest son, who had shown traces of having a great musical ear even at the age of two, would also devote himself to music. The second lad

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<sup>41</sup> This reference is to the type of masonry utilized in pre-classical Greek architecture in which huge, irregularly shaped stones were fitted together without the use of mortar to form a dry stone wall.



outdid his older brother with his beautiful voice, clear intonation and in sensitivity of feeling when he heard beautiful melodies. This had opened a delightful prospect for the father, and he imagined a second generation of artists who would keep his name alive in the musical world, just like the Scarlattis and the Bachs.

He himself had given both boys lessons since they were five years of age in the evenings during his spare time, even on Sundays, and even if a hundred other demands crowded into his leisure time during the first years in England, he would nevertheless snatch a few minutes in order to cultivate the artistic spirit in his darlings.

But since the lads had absorbed at their English school the realistic atmosphere so averse to all fantasy, a distaste for the study of music had grown in them, and they shirked their lessons whenever they could. Their playmates had jeered at them when they told them that they wanted to become musicians, and they had been told that it was not proper for a gentleman to be a musician. Ibeles, too, remarked that only a very small number of men attended London concerts, and Mr. Chapel had admitted with regret that one had little confidence in businessmen practicing their trade if they were also musicians and that for this reason, some, out of fear that they would forfeit their reputation, never allowed a stranger to see them holding a violin. Just as a Turk pays slaves to dance for him and stares in wonder at the Frenchman who finds great delight in dancing along, the Englishman pays for others to make music and does not understand the German who is most blissful when he can swim along as a drop in the full current of harmonies. Only an active interest that an entire nation shows in the arts gives the artist a happy sense of self-esteem.

In this new world that now surrounded the two boys, they saw how interest was fixed only upon things concerning business and industry, because the great sphere of the life of the state at large was still far from their minds at this age. One day when their father wanted to test

them for the first time after weeks to see how far they had progressed in practicing a sonata for four hands by Mozart, he found that the boys played completely without soul and had obviously forgotten the basic rules. When he said with anger: "If this continues then you can never become musicians!" Fritz replied: "I don't want to anyway!" Ibeles felt as if the carpet had been pulled from under his feet when the younger lad joined in agreement and exclaimed with a plea: "Oh father, please let us stop studying music! We would much rather become something else!"

This sudden outburst of expressing their opinions was so surprising to the artist that at first he found no words to utter in reply. He felt a stab in his heart by the condemnation of his own life's profession spoken from the uninhibited lips of his children. After several minutes of silence he asked: "Well, what do you want to be?"

Fritz said: "You once spoke with Herr Stern about this: that as foreigners we could never hope to gain entry into the civil service in England and that it would therefore be good that as artists we associate with the public independently. Well, I would very much like to be such a man: one who invents things, those things that allow ships to go faster, or new machines, or something like that."

Karl said: "I would like to be a merchant who travels on ships to India and brings back wonderful things!"

Ibeles said: "We cannot always be what we wish to be; we must seize the nearest opportunity. I can train you to become artists without needing financial aid from strangers. And if you can earn your own bread in six years, then you are free, and that is the first thing."

The boys played the sonata again, but as if having to force themselves to do it, and this time it was even worse than the first time through. Their father felt distressed by the thought that perhaps he was imposing a path in life that would not make them happy. Yes, he himself had

already doubted whether this was the time in which one should in all good conscience steer clear heads and strong characters toward music.

He took his hat and cane and walked until he found a secluded spot where he could quietly rest under the trees and think. He asked himself if his own life might perhaps also be a failure, since, having now arrived at the mature stage of manhood, he felt for the first time a sense of dissatisfaction with his profession. He blamed his discontent on the circumstances, but admitted that he had to conform to them. If he had not been snatched out of his restricted circumstances because of Herr v. Halen's generosity, he would at best have remained a spice merchant in a small Rhenish town. Then he would always have regretted that he had fallen short of his purpose in life to be an artist. Why then should he have such a low opinion of his occupation now, because a greater one wafted over him in the skies like a phantasmagoria? He told himself all of this and decided to treat the matter lightly as far as it concerned himself.

When he observed the way in which one pursued the arts in London, it almost seemed to him as a blessing that his lads did not want to involve themselves in the public music trade. He said to himself: "In England the artists themselves become merchants, entrepreneurs, and milliners and dressmakers, and only if they voluntarily choose poverty can they also say: ours is the Kingdom of Heaven. What is the quiet song of the human soul among the deafening noises of the rattling wheels, clinking money, and the groaning of the steam engines that can be drowned out only by the piercing barrel organs and barkers and hucksters? Perhaps if one day I hear the whispering sounds of nature in the forest or the wonderful roar of the ocean's waves it will fill me with remorseful melancholy that I renounced the dream of my youth."

When Ibeles announced to his sons the next morning that he was not going to force them into a profession that they hated, their elation was so great that he understood the degree with

which the poor boys had struggled out of obedience. Through a connection of an acquaintance he was soon able to obtain for them positions as apprentices in one of the largest industrial concerns, where they worked under the personal supervision of the owner's son. The ability to speak several languages, an outstanding schooling, and many another pleasing talent earned the lads a comradely relationship with the son of their master, and the joy with which they now spoke of their current occupation consoled their parents for the sorrow they felt at such an early breaking away from the domestic bond.

Milla and Nanna had received their first instruction in music from a student of composition of their father's while still in Germany, and they were past the unbearable period of plonking away on the piano when the emigration brought a setback. Later, their father had taken time to teach his young daughters a bit now and then, but only in terms of minutes, since he did not want to take time away from the lads destined to be artists. Mother asked young Fritz to help his little sisters with their practicing after he had completed his homework, and she would add some little gift meant to encourage him. But her request was successful only if she admonished him daily to do it, and this was contrary to her nature.

After the lads, cleanly dressed, had left the house, henceforth only to slip the yoke of their workaday routine and be guests at home from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning, Dorothea expected that the young girls, instead of the boys, would now become their father's personal priority with regard to music lessons. But Ibeles was so put out by the wasted years that he could not stand the thought of going down that path again. He misjudged the talent of his daughters by not taking into account the adverse circumstances that caused them to be neglected compared to the boys. He came home exhausted from his teaching, which he was forced to take on in order to earn money, and then he became angry when he was reminded to still look in on

Milla to see if she was playing her etude correctly and if Nanna had the correct fingering. He would rather sit down to compose a song, which meant that the children had to keep as quiet as possible, or he took advantage of free tickets to the opera or to a concert. A few times in the week the countess and her salon took up his time, since she had been so kind as to arrange for her lesson to occur immediately before the evening meal, so that if he stayed for dinner, her usual evening gatherings would then follow, not to mention the other things that would crop up by chance to make demands on his time.

External circumstances began to improve for the artist, and with his students' growing trust their numbers also began to grow, which resulted in his decision to rent a space closer to the city's center. This was a large hall suitable for group practicing, which he could close down in the evening, like an office, when he returned to the bosom of his family at Briar Place in the evening. Even on this point of separate accommodations, the life of artists in London has a commercial touch to it, the only difference being that the city merchant is content with a dark, small business location and retires for his pleasure and relaxation to his magnificent house in the suburb. Conversely, the artist must economize at home so that he can offer the fashionable world of the West End an elegant studio. But in one main area these two circumstances contradict each other most sharply, namely regarding the position that the woman of the house occupies. The elegant lady for whom the merchant provides the means to arrange a marvelous home has the opportunity to greet him like a carefree sweetheart in the evening and to display before him the most serene side of family life and conviviality. But the hard-working housewife, whose worth is valued in part according to her thrift, is often found exhausted in both body and soul when her equally hardworking husband returns to his cramped house. It is seldom that she has been granted any other interesting impressions during the day other than those concerning trivial

situations at home. For the wealthy lady, the management of the household is only a supervisory matter. In the mornings, she assigns the day's tasks to her servants and by midday she finds herself free of the most unpleasant duties. However, the woman who must personally contribute to the day's tasks finds it necessary to postpone precisely that aspect of her duties that she finds most onerous—namely, supervision—until the afternoon. When her husband returns home in the evening he finds her preoccupied with calculations, with the war against disorder or deception, or quickly undertaking a forgotten or incomplete task.

The experiences that Dorothea had in her youth, when she lost her fortune and social position on account of her mother, had pushed her in another direction in life. Without being tight-fisted she tried to banish all affluence and luxury from the house and to display the most extreme form of republican simplicity in her own manner. Until now she had never called upon the services of more than one servant into her regular employ. Ibeles insisted that *two* maids did less than *one*, because they chattered amongst themselves, and that every superfluous servant would also multiply the housework proportionately. Only now did Dorothea allow herself to be convinced by her English friends that the stringent household rule that she had imposed upon herself in Germany under completely different circumstances was no longer applicable.

We Germans are accustomed to the good old tradition that a woman of the educated classes enters the kitchen and sits at the table with a friend, sewing. We praise this and consider it to be luck when a man has acquired a hard-working and undemanding wife. In fact, we actually go too far in our predilection for domestic virtues in that we consider an intellectual preoccupation to be harmful and the most moderate education to be excessive. In England, or more precisely, in the city of London, one finds the opposite. Women in the social standing that generally corresponds to our educated middle-class degrade not only themselves but also their

husbands if they do physical work. Among the Londoners we note that there is an exception on this point for frivolous activity such as embroidery and other dalliances, while this claim is applied only to *useful work*. Not even a respectable maid wants to be employed in a house in which the wife works alongside her. The female working class of this sort, which one can accommodate in a civilized family, flatly declares: "We will work only for a lady, not for a mere mistress." The two terms reveal the difference between the lady who gives the orders and the housewife who assists with the chores. In Germany the classes imperceptibly cross over, whereas in London there is, between educated society and the merchant and working classes, a chasm that leaves no room for compromise. All classes are rigidly organized according to convention that is almost as onerous to breach as are the laws of the most Draconian high court. Anyone who so desires can gain entry into a different class in society with the provision that he is willing to adopt its arrangements and customs, but to transfer the practices of one class into another cannot be put into effect without one's being ostracized by one's peers.

It has been established through habit, for example, that in a house of a certain style the appropriate number of servants adheres to a rigid hierarchy. It is said: this is a house for three servants, that one for six, one more page boy is needed here, over there one or two male servants. Each servant has specific parameters regarding his duties, beyond which he cannot be coerced to render service. And bear in mind: we are still referring to the very modest middle class, despite the fact that we are talking about page boys.

While previously Dorothea had to learn to change her tone from that of a noble official's daughter in order to pose as a middle-class housewife, she now had to rehearse a complete comedy in order to be respected as a lady by the English maids and gain their compliance. Since Ibeles and the oldest lads started working outside of the home there was at least a bit more space.

A small outbuilding with a garden plot once belonging to the villa and rented out to a neighbour before the arrival of the German family was now handed over to Herr Ibeles by the owner. Dorothea had the pleasure that a thriving family otherwise comes across only once in a lifetime of establishing a household and seeing it improved and beautified daily. The skill of her growing little daughters made it possible for her to relinquish some small duties to them, and something that had not occurred in a many a year was that for once she had *time*.

What was she to do with this leisure time? Should she continue cooking and sewing and allow strangers to educate her daughters, or should she raise them herself and allow strangers to cook and sew for her? She chose the latter.

Her husband she saw only late at night. He had followed the example of so many musicians who make progress by excessive work and deprivation in a short number of years while in London, earning as much as they can so that they can later pursue an intellectual activity appealing to them without regard to financial benefit. In order to bring about this season of carefree happiness even sooner, Dorothea was content to forgo having him present from early in the morning until late at night. After all, the awareness of the love and devotion with which he worked for his family was the sunlight that, even when covered by clouds, brightened everything. She did not want to lag behind him and decided one day to surprise him by providing a joy for which he would have her willpower and perseverance to thank.

Previously, when he was giving the boys their lessons, she would often be present with her needlework, or she would look in on them from time to time. She had observed everything to which he attached importance, and as if they were relics, she had preserved every sheet of music on which he had written comments, rules, and assignments for the boys. Since her childhood in her uncle's household, her soul had been nourished with the best works of the masters, and even



if their execution was very faulty, nonetheless the soul was more uplifted by a badly-played classical piece than by the pleasure found in salon music performed by the greatest virtuoso. A naturally musical person who has heard much good music and who has an unspoiled taste in music can become a teacher through the mere force of character. Would not a sensible human being, having a scholarly education and having lived in Spain, be able, with the aid of a simple Spanish grammar book, to teach us Spanish more easily than would an uneducated Spanish native with absolutely no idea of the principles?

To Dorothea, music was like a delightful country through which she had once travelled, and she remained familiar with its language by virtue of her beloved. She could still sing and accompany a simple song, but she had given up playing more demanding pieces since her marriage. She would have felt ashamed to even sit down at the piano, since she could listen to her favourite compositions performed to perfection by her husband. She now vowed to teach her daughters, whose drive to learn was so great that one felt they had been born to be artists, in his spirit.

She had long realized that it was impossible to keep house *comme il faut* with Katrinchen. As long as Dorothea's situation had been perceived to be that of a woman whose life was derailed by fate, she was only pitied by other women, not scorned. But now she was at the mercy of a good many indignities when she was forced to explain herself to strangers who, when her husband was not at home, arrived concerning some business matter and requested that she announce their arrival to the lady of the house. Therefore, the circumstances made it imperative that the wife of the respected artist behave differently than the wife of the refugee. But when Dorothea first announced to her husband that it would now be necessary to set up a respectable household, and gave her husband an account of the incidents, each in itself trivial, that made the

continuing role of housekeeper in this country unbearable for her, he thought that arrogance had taken a hold of his wife. He held the influence of his wife's English friends responsible for this, since he was so unaccustomed to any high-toned behaviour from her that he took to be pretentious what for every other lady was a matter of course. For the first time, Dorothea sensed by the tone of his protest that within his soul he now saw her in a different light than he had in the past. For months nothing had happened at home that necessitated a joint consultation between husband and wife. Dorothea had stopped bothering him with small problems that she herself could settle, because a few times he had become quite upset when she had addressed such matters upon his return from the countess's salon in a particularly poetic mood.

He now said: "But you wanted to be only a housewife and not a salon lady! The women with whom you interact will not hold it against you if you receive them here in the old manner, and ever since I have been teaching outside of the home, few strangers come here anyway. We actually do not have enough work for two maids, and I do not understand how you would keep yourself and two others occupied."

At this, Dorothea became angry herself and replied: "Well, certainly. If I am the primary maid then we need only Katrinchen as the secondary maid. But there are moments where I *must* look like I am the lady of the house, and where it would shed a very poor light on you and the children if the rumour were to arise that you had married your cook."

Ibeles had already become so accustomed to the loss of connection with his wife and children that such a notion no longer particularly moved him. His world was now in the public domain away from his home, and no matter how indelibly the good qualities of a man's wife are etched in his memory, her picture nevertheless becomes brighter or hazier in his soul, depending upon whether his world values or maligns her. Even if no one in the countess's salon dared to

attack Dorothea directly, the tendency to ignore her personality or the disparaging or pitying tone used when referring to her domestic life was nevertheless enough to make him ask himself if perhaps there really was a reason to pity him.

Dorothea did not want to reveal her musical plans out of fear of appearing ridiculous to him and also in order not to allow despondency to be instilled within her, which could place success in jeopardy. She therefore told him that, with the present way of life, she would have to give up spending time with the older children, whereas with two maids she would have enough spare time to supervise their activity. She wanted to read with them outside of school time so that the language and poetry of their native country might not be lost while in this foreign land. She wanted to be their guide as they ventured out from the confines of the nursery and the school of ABC's into a more educational, but also a more precarious path in life.

Ibeles was of the opinion that all this could quite easily be amalgamated if the women would only want to arrange the housekeeping according to a schedule the way a music teacher did. And in fact the next day he actually produced a chart upon which he had worked out, with careful consideration, the activity for each female in the family, old and young, and with such preciseness that there was no overlapping of duties. Everything worked marvellously: from seven to nine breakfast and get dressed; from nine to eleven Katrinchen does the sweeping and Dorothea minds the children; from ten to eleven Katrinchen again minds the children and Dorothea does her shopping. From eleven to one cooking, tidy up bedrooms, inspect linen cupboard etc...; from one to two lunch. From two o'clock onward the entire afternoon is free for Katrinchen to do the washing up, take the little ones for a walk, and the evening is free for doing the mending. Afternoons, Dorothea can attend to her committees, receive visitors, read, and give

the daughters their lessons, because from two until ten there are a total of eight free and undisturbed hours.

When Dorothea saw all this on paper it all appeared for a moment to be quite plausible, yet on further reflection the entire chart pointed to something akin to what happens in a game of forfeit that they call a “general pardon,” where everyone kneels down in a row and holds both arms in the air. If one of them gives the first one a push, he will tumble down on his neighbour and knock him over; that one tumbles down on top of the next, and so on, until the entire row is lying on the floor. This is what happened in this case, as well. If one child was missing something and the entire small workforce was not finished getting dressed by nine, then Katrinchen was also not engaged with the sweeping at ten. Every merchant who brought an item to the house at an inconvenient time or did *not* deliver something that one had counted on brought all the dealings of the day into confusion. The people always rang the bell when Katrinchen was not on hand to answer, and even those few ladies who came to visit seem to have conspired to arrive precisely when chores that could not be postponed besieged Dorothea. So every omission stretched from one hour into the next, and in the evening when the housewife reviewed the fruitless day it seemed to her as if her own heart was also just bleak and empty.

She said to herself: “When my husband’s day is over he at least knows: I have taught this many students, I wrote this many pages. The mason sees stone upon stone lead to the formation of a building, the seamstress can at least count up the stitches in a seam. But housework never gets done or it starts fresh with each new day. The man sees only what isn’t done, because the completed tasks do not catch his eye. All orderliness appears as if by magic from invisible hands, but the disorder is supposedly the woman’s doing! It is no wonder that activity without visible

results degrades an intelligent person and that whoever does manual labour eventually becomes treated like a machine!”

Once again she brought her request to arrange the household according to the English custom and to withdraw herself from the lower working domain, which she had until now willingly fulfilled. Ibeles said: “Do as you wish. I do not see a reasonable cause for this change, but I leave you the freedom to decide.”

He did not speak this with harshness, but he was dissatisfied with Dorothea’s request and misjudged her motive. His health was more delicate than hers, and he had been forced to step down from a both nobler and easier occupation in order to provide a means of subsistence for his family. He felt that his current duties were more beneath his dignity than the housework was beneath his wife’s, who was strong enough for it and, moreover, was accustomed to it. He believed that she was punishing him for the fact that for some time now, in another circle where higher intellectual interests prevailed, he had been seeking respite from domestic cares and that now only injured pride was driving her to rebel against the modest position with which she had otherwise always been satisfied.

The divergence of their lives had already alienated them from each other so much that they shied away from fully voicing an opinion with one another in order to avoid provoking a disagreement. Added to this, virtually no time could be found for communication, and unfortunately all the details require a terrible amount of such time. Dorothea shied away from seeming to be mean if she brought up practical evidence of everything that she did and therefore only asserted herself regarding requests and her feelings. Ibeles could not be detained in the mornings, in the evenings he was too tired, and, of course, the dinner table and the bedroom, like Sundays, had to be kept sacrosanct and apart from the troublesome domestic business. What kept

his tongue in check was the fact that it had been Dorothea's uncle who had used her inheritance to tide them over during times of unemployment, and therefore he was not entitled to dictate to what degree she needed to preserve his creative power by extra effort on her part. But secretly he regarded it as unfair that she chose precisely this time to strive to make the home more pleasant and comfortable for herself, while he did not share in the enjoyment.

There is one attitude within marriage that is more hurtful to the soul than the harshest criticism, and that is cool courteousness. Ibeles now adopted this attitude frequently. Previously, husband and wife had privately discussed everything with one another, from the most important and intellectual to the mundane events of daily life. Then had come the years of hardship, years during which he felt compelled to express himself intellectually only in the company of strangers and during which it was often weeks that anything new regarding a book or a work of art would refresh her mind. Just like a shipwrecked person who floated aimlessly at sea without a meal and who slowly had to adjust to having nourishing food again, so her soul had become unaccustomed to those bygone pleasures and was almost overwhelmed when, on occasion, she was unexpectedly ladled a cup from a full intellectual river. Ibeles misunderstood this and believed that her ability to understand important concepts had become dull, and so at home he fell into either a comfortably lackluster or cold attitude. After all, for all other intellectual interests he had a base of communication elsewhere. That is why he was verging on mistakenly assuming that it was now only comfort and convenience rather than a desire for culture that had changed Dorothea, unnoticed by him, and consequently a quiet reserve emerged, which she did not want to break through by being overly affectionate.

She believed that being dutiful was certainly the best remedy for all atypical moods, and she was inwardly convinced that the execution of her good intentions would surely bring their

relationship back to its former harmony. She justified pursuing her own way by telling herself: “If his house is lovely once more, then he will also love it again. At this point the difference between duty and pleasure is too formidable for the artistic soul constantly seeking beauty. In the Middle Ages, during which people expected to receive a reward in the afterlife, they devoted themselves to the belief that all virtue had to be sacrificial in this world. Now, where we hope to find complete fulfillment in this life, we must make virtue as palatable as possible.”

## Chapter Eighteen

The Slave Market and the Free Daughters of Albion<sup>42</sup>

Flotow's opera, *Martha* or *The Market at Richmond* came to the mind of our German housewife as she naively asked Mrs. Busy which weekday might be best to go to the above mentioned city in order to hire a maid. Her friend laughed heartily and stated that this institution no longer existed and that now one went to Richmond only for picnics and similar amusements. But she added that there were enough bazaars in London where one could find seamstresses, cooks, ladies-in-waiting, and whatever kind of servant one desired. Every type in great variety could be found displayed in their specific section. Mrs. Busy declared this method of hiring maids to be more practical than any other, particularly more so than finding them through the employment-sought section of the *Times*. "The people," she said, "who advertise in the newspaper have extremely lofty demands. Among ten there are sometimes nine who insist that they will live only in a house in which there are male servants. Even so, I would advise you to pay special attention to your appearance when you go to the bazaar on Oxford Street, for just as we scrutinize the maids there, we ladies are being scrutinized by them, and experience has shown that it is not we who find a submissive cook there, but instead the cooks are looking for a lady whom they can order about."

Dorothea then went to this welcoming bazaar and saw even from a distance how a group of women dressed in purple cotton dresses, dark shawls, and straw hats—the usual morning attire

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<sup>42</sup> Helmer's edition of *Hans Ibeles in London. Ein Roman aus dem Flüchtlingsleben* (the edition used for this translation) has unfortunately mistransposed the title to read "Der Sklavenmarkt und die freien Töchter Albinos." Instead of "Albinos" it should have read "Albions."



of housemaids—were thronging in and out. The door looked like the opening of a beehive, and one would think that with such an abundance of women workers, it must not have been difficult to have found someone willing to be of service within the space of five minutes. Dorothea saw that all of them stopped in front of a placard with giant letters hanging beside the entrance. It was an invitation for free emigration to Australia, Canada, and other colonies to which the government called for young women who were enthusiastic to work, and Dorothea observed in passing how an enterprising red-cheeked lass pointed with her parasol at the name Melbourne and exclaimed to her companion: “That’s where my cousin went, and if I don’t find a choice position today, then I’ll register this evening to go to Australia, too.”

In the hall sat a gentleman in a glass-enclosed office, of whom Dorothea inquired regarding procedure and regulations. With great politeness he gave her the institute’s regulations and explained to her that with the payment of a small sum she could come as often as she liked, for fourteen days, and view the maids on display from ten o’clock until five o’clock in the evening. If she did not find one that she liked during this time period then she would be required to renew her ticket of admission.

Dorothea had not expected that she would need so much time and asked meekly whether it ever happened that a lady would go home on the first day without a maid? The gentleman smiled slightly and indicated to the foreign lady that with the payment of a larger sum one could have a subscription to this bazaar for the entire year. He mentioned that those ladies who frequently hired new servants, as well as servants who liked to change employment, found this type of payment more profitable than the entry ticket that expired in a mere fourteen days. Dorothea shook her head, paid her temporary admission, and resolved to proceed with more determination than the London ladies.

She looked about her and saw approximately twenty old and young women, dressed poorly and without gloves, sitting on wooden benches along the walls. “These are the maids for all general work!” the gentleman stated. “That is not what you require. The cooks are located over there on the middle platform, and the housemaids and nursemaids are at the top!”

The cooks appeared to range between thirty and forty years of age, and all of them had bonnets with bright, often quite crumpled flowers under their hats. She walked past this department because since little Conrad could walk and her husband usually dined elsewhere, she had taught Katrinchen how to prepare simple meals with which she and the children were satisfied. She required one of those cute parlour maids who, simply by the way she looked when she opened the front door, vouched for the respectability of the family for whom she worked. Katrinchen had indeed learned to cook, but the style that convention demanded in the way of comportment towards guests, doing light housework and tidying, and adding pleasingly to the décor could not be instilled in her.

As Dorothea now ascended the steps of the bazaar an elegantly dressed manageress led her into a hall where the parlour maids stood arranged on stairs, amphitheatre style, leading to a second story: big and small, young and old, pretty and ugly, according to the wishes and interests of the various customers. The draperies of the glass wall that separated the ladies’ hall from the place for the maids had convenient cracks along the corners making it possible that one could observe those on display before one engaged oneself in a negotiation.

Dorothea felt embarrassed for the young girls on the steps, because the manner in which the entire matter was handled seemed to her to be degrading to human nature. She felt as if she were at a slave market when a fat, expensively-dressed, richly-trimmed lady came gasping up the stairs behind her, who without further ado stood with her lorgnette in front of the amphitheatre

and, after looking around, said to the manageress, but loud enough for Dorothea to hear: "There is not one here today that I like!" Turning her back, she returned to her carriage.

"With which of these girls do you wish to speak?" the manageress now asked Dorothea, since she noticed that Dorothea stood indecisively in the hall and appeared to be looking for an introduction. "The tall one there please, with the green ribbon on her hat!" she replied, and the girl came to her.

Our housewife soon realized that a significant difference existed between this bazaar and a slave market. After she had posed the usual questions to the young woman, her expected wages, whether she was familiar with the usual housework, and whether she could procure a good reference from her last position, and these along with all the minor items had been sufficiently answered, she agreed to hire the girl. The wage was admittedly exorbitant, but she had been prepared for this.

But now the maid started to question Dorothea and subjected her to a stringent examination. Among the questions were the following items: "How many guineas apart from my wages am I to be guaranteed to pay for having my laundry done?"

Dorothea said that, in her opinion, a parlour maid would have sufficient time left over to wash her own laundry, but the latter replied that she had never before agreed to do such a thing. The question regarding the daily indulgence of good ale was easier to mediate because as a result of frequent disputes in the past between masters and servants, the portion of ale with which maidservants in the United Kingdom of Great Britain had to be content was established by parliamentary decree. Then she was asked whether the servants had their own sitting room other than the kitchen and whether her bedroom was furnished with a decent rug and a good feather bed. Finally the maid wished to know if her prospective master belonged to the High Church,

since out of principle she would never be in service to dissenters, heretics, or unbelievers, the latter generally considered as lesser people.

At this point Dorothea was fed up with the lengthy interrogation and politely expressed her regrets at having troubled the woman in vain. She curtsied and said: "Thank you!" and returned to her place. The group of other maids looked at her quizzically, and Dorothea thought she heard a quiet murmur that spread like a wildfire down the row, and to her sharp ear it sounded like the words: "She is not a lady!"

The memoirs of Meta Braun came to her mind, and she remembered that she had spoken with the stranger while standing. Alarmed at forgetting English etiquette, she quickly took the corner spot on a nearby sofa and began to look about her to see how the business of hiring was being conducted by the others present. In the hall, furnished with comfortable seating, several scattered groups lingered about. Several ladies passed the time waiting by looking at the pictures on the wall, others sat at the round tables upon which newspapers and books had been laid out. From time to time a sign was exchanged between one of the ladies and the director whether any other new maids had joined those already seen, and, if so, the new arrival was instructed to go for a turn about the hall. The ladies reclined imposingly in their chairs while the hopeful lady's maid walked past in a wide arc through the hall. If she passed by the lady who had demanded a closer appraisal then the lady would give her a signal to pause and the negotiations would commence. If, however, the girl's outward appearance was not pleasing, the lady would not even engage in a short conversation. Dorothea observed how the one only shook her head at the passing girl whispering: "too young!" and how another was dismissed with the blatant verdict: "too old!" Conducting themselves with great decorum, the ladies did not utter so much as a "no."

Instead, when a maid passed by whom they found displeasing, they simply lowered their eyes with a barely perceptible negative movement of the head.

Mrs. Busy and the Beaks had told Dorothea that only such an expression would impress English maids, and Dorothea tried to explain to herself the contradiction between this fact and the strong sense of self of the English working class. She thought: “They probably feel humiliated if they are required to obey someone who to them appears as their equal, or could it be that she feels her own pride increased in the same measure that the respect for her mistress rises?” In her mind she considered the problem further and pondered democratic England, the freest nation on the earth, at the same time having the greatest reverence toward everything aristocratic. With a smile, she finally concluded to herself: “And in such a world one is supposed to be astonished by the fact that a democratic husband, the moment he breathes English air, no longer treats a wife as courteously as he does a spouse.”<sup>43</sup>

A new group of people came into the hall now. At the head came a fairly short lady in a flowered satin dress over which she wore a velvet mantilla adorned with a lot of lace and embroidery. Her head was bedecked with an abundance of pearls, feathers, and blonde-lace ribbonry and frills, and her entire appearance revealed a merchant woman who, having become rich, was no longer involved in the business. For all their finery, one can still detect the ladies considered to be counterfeits in England by the way they pronounce the letter “h,” because, with dire consequences, they always place this letter where it does not belong, and leave it out where it is meant to be. Behind the short lady two very frilly little girls also appeared and lastly the husband carrying a basket filled with food. The entire company settled down on one of the sofas,

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<sup>43</sup> In the novel Kinkel makes a distinction here between “Weib” (wife) and “Gemahlin” (spouse) indicating that a woman married out of love is a “Weib” or wife and the woman in an arranged marriage (thus likely referring to the British aristocracy) is a “Gemahlin” or spouse. The implication is that in England deference is given the aristocracy who generally choose arranged marriages, becoming “Gemahl” and “Gemahlin” or (spouses), while the ordinary populace marry out of love, becoming “Mann” (husband) and “Weib” (wife).

and it appeared as if they considered this bazaar to be a place of entertainment—a place to go to see and be seen.

The lady in the flowery dress was looking for a nursemaid, under the condition that she must have been employed by members of the aristocracy so that her children would be taught style and manners. Dorothea sat so close to them that she overheard the entire conversation, which she found remarkable as an illustration of how a person's fate can change. A pale, aged woman, tall in stature and dressed in widow's attire, was brought forward, and since the short lady naturally remained seated, the former was forced to remain in a stooped position during the long interview. The short woman was extremely talkative and gave an account of all the former nursemaid's shortcomings in order to admonish the new one not to succumb to the same sins. This tendency to useless prattle, something unheard of from an English lady speaking with a servant she barely knew, would have sufficed to identify her as someone from a lower class—if her diction had not already betrayed the fact.

Finally she delved into the circumstances of the nursemaid standing before her, a young woman whose delicate features and refined diction guaranteed her assurances that she had not previously been in service. She stated that she was nevertheless familiar with all the duties pertaining to life in a nursery because she herself had in the past employed and supervised attendants for her own children. She seemed reluctant to discuss things that were not relevant to the matter, but the short lady did not disengage her until she had queried her about everything that peaked her curiosity.

The elderly widow had been married to a businessman who had become bankrupt and then gone to Australia with the children. She was to stay with relatives in England until her family members had established a business in Australia and then follow them there. Instead, she

received notice of her husband's death. The children were old enough to earn a living there and promised to return as soon as they became wealthy. The mother could not render herself useful to the relatives and felt compelled to find work in service. She mentioned that she had been schooled in an institution of education, where she had even learned to draw and play the piano. Admittedly she did not know enough to be a governess, but she hoped her talent would be of use with little children.

The short lady found the idea of drawing quite appealing, but that teaching music was unnecessary because this had long been taken care of within her house. She explained that she had purchased a barrel-organ for the nursery on which the nursery attendant was required to play for two hours mornings and afternoons. She said that this was now the fashion in the most genteel nurseries, because it happened to be the best and most inexpensive method of making children musical from the cradle on. She finally dismissed the widow with the remark that she still wanted to see if she could find a nursemaid who had worked within the aristocracy. In all, it appeared to her as if today had been much more about conversation than about achieving her objective.

Meanwhile Dorothea had been eyeing a young girl who had already been turned down by two other ladies. Dorothea asked this girl several questions, and since she liked the girl's honest-looking demeanor, she promised to engage her provided that her credentials from her former employer were sufficient. Her friends had impressed upon her that she should not allow her confidence to be carried away and open the doors to her home to a stranger with only an oral reference, because it often happens that thieves use counterfeit references to insinuate themselves as servants into the homes of unsuspecting families. It is almost unthinkable that a lady should not give the other a warning, ever since parliament had passed a law that restricted overly

generous recommendations of unqualified servants. The legislation stated that a lady who helped a dishonest young woman acquire a position by telling a deliberate lie could be fined thirty pounds sterling and more in compensation for damages. Much as people in our country are very careful about becoming a financial guarantor for another person, it can be just as costly in England to provide a "character reference" for a maid. For that is what one calls the testimonial reference for a servant, and depending on the length of time, be it short or long, that a young woman has been employed in the same house, she gives notice in the *Times* as being a cook of good character for three years or nine months, etc....

The young woman with whom Dorothea spoke had a character reference for only one month, and therefore she would quite likely encounter considerable difficulty. Custom demands that the young woman requests a character reference from the lady who has dismissed her and the latter then specifies the time that the future mistress is to come to her home. After the messages are carried back and forth the future mistress announces herself to the former lady with the following pronouncement: "I have come to request the character reference of your house maid!" and then the consultation begins, which affords one of few opportunities to peer into the secrets of a stranger's household affairs.

In this case, Dorothea learned that it is not so much offensive as it is consideration for the servant if one avoids even minimal contact until one is willing to employ them under any circumstance. For no lady is required to give a dismissed maid more than one character reference, and if one has been given the reference and then does not employ her, she has then lost her character reference and is subjected to the awful state of helplessness. For example the last lady, in whose home the young woman has been in service for only one month, still had her last character reference, which was more valuable because it was for eight months.



On the following morning Dorothea made an appearance at the home of the lady with the character reference, whose verdict of the young woman was that she was honest and hardworking, but very impertinent. She cited the example that the young woman had already wished her a good morning on the second day, which was most disrespectful. A house maid, she explained, was never allowed to address a comment to the lady without the latter's initiation, and because the maid was never able to break herself of this bad habit the lady dismissed her after the first month. Dorothea then asked whether the lady still had the previous eight-month reference, as the young woman had informed her. The lady confirmed that she did, but then added: "Her previous mistress was an American, and these are no ladies."

In spite of the warning, the democratic housewife, who took no offense at the tone of familiarity from the working class, hired the young girl and had no reason for regret. Rather than going in detail into a whole series of stories about maids, we prefer to grant the majority of English servants encountered in the homes of the middle classes a general "good character reference." They do indeed stubbornly insist on their mandated rights, on their holidays, on the strictest delineation of their sphere of work. Yet they seldom attempt to gain even more liberties beyond these. The extent of their duties is very easy to fulfill, but they perform their duties day in day out and do not need to be reminded and prodded to do them. The workers of this class are as innocent outwardly as they are in their soul, and their healthy cheerfulness is the best proof of their good conscience. A happier, easier life than the English maids have as a rule cannot be found as easily in any other line of work, all of which are far more beset by sorrow.

After Dorothea, out of consideration for her husband's genius, had done the work of a servant for years rather than compelling him to go out and earn money, she finally realized that the prosaic routine of their daily lives had as crippling an effect as poverty. Admittedly, the

prosaic routine born of her mood had been the result of poverty, and because of this realization she made sweeping changes to her current routine activity. She now read the greatest literary works with her young daughters and explained to them any difficulties in comprehension that led to the most exhilarating conversations. Every mother enjoys all the beauty in the world and in nature threefold once the young minds and the innocent hearts of her children are captivated by them. Her depiction of the life and customs of their homeland kept the love for their country alive, and even more powerful than a mother's word were the thousand voices of German writers and musicians who came flowing in from across the sea. From every song the breath of the eternally faithful mother Germania came wafting warm to her young and far-off children.

The musical education of the two older girls moved forward quickly beyond all expectation, and mother and the children secretly looked forward with pleasure to the day when their father would be given a surprise family concert. Mila, of her own initiative, had been so kind as to offer to teach her younger sisters, and Dorothea was moved to tears as her child explained to her: "I don't want to learn to play for other people just for my own pleasure, but instead I would like to learn the art of teaching. Then I can soon help dear father, and if I relieve him of his students, then he can use that time to compose wonderful symphonies. I feel so proud when I can teach another child a small piece, but when father takes up the baton then all the instruments should always join in with drums beating and trumpets sounding."

Nanna contemplated more of the practical side of this business and said: "Don't we find in life that there are people who possess every imaginable useful thing and still have time and money to spare? They would love to have the ability to play beautiful music in private or when they feel sad. So then they come to us because we have enough music, and they purchase truly refreshing melodies, and then we can acquire useful things in return!"

Celia imagined that this bartering would take place in a direct and literal fashion, and she inquired which students had brought the green peas last Sunday. Nana was so mischievous as to try to fool Celia into thinking that father had been forced to listen to a wrong note for each pea in the bowl. Celia, who had a very sensitive ear, shed a few tears over this, but Angela's curiosity was only provoked by this notion, and she asked in all seriousness: "How many natural signs, sharps and flats did it take to pay for one sausage?" Nanna replied: "I don't know, but I think that Miss Hobble de Hoye's wrong notes would amount to an entire head cheese!"

## Chapter Nineteen

### The Mute Guests and Nervous Society

The moment one is no longer smothered by visitors, one feels an inner pleasure at seeing friends, provided that they are not dull. But unfortunately many people imagine that one can let oneself go with one's friends and no longer strive to make conversation. Some English ladies commit this error, which is all the more inexcusable coming from them since this error is not committed out of ignorance, but rather from a laziness of the mouth. Perhaps out of pride they fear saying something mediocre in the presence of strangers, even though each of them realizes that not every day provides an occasion for high and intellectually stimulating conversation. It is very easy never to show any weakness when one refrains from speaking, and experienced people have long ceased believing in the profound depth of reticent minds. It is also not always the forward ones whom one must look out for, but rather much more so for those reserved, observant ladies.

Boredom is less of a natural weakness than it is a sin, and were people brought up to see it as such and avoid it, then perhaps some of those people afflicted with it would seek to break the habit. A dull visit kills the precious time of the person who, forced to endure it, is thus rendered unable to think. If one enters the presence of one's dear neighbour and intrudes upon his domestic privacy, then one must give him something in return. One is *obliged* to make the effort either to resume the conversation or to leave one's friend to his own devices at that point where the thread of the conversation breaks off.

While lacking wittiness, our dear Dorothea possessed the animated, cheerful talkativeness of the Rhineland women, and in private she also knew how to engage any individual English

lady in conversation. She gained their trust because she did not criticize harshly nor did she gossip, and out of a natural regard for her visitors she endeavoured to make their time as rich in substance as possible. But when several English ladies gathered in her home at the same time, they all felt shy and fell silent. Only when music was being played did they make an exception in that each lady attempted to hold a private conversation with her neighbour.

In such instances Dorothea did indeed seek to direct the conversation to a topic of general interest as soon as the music started, and with effort and persistence she at least met with success when Mrs. Busy and the neighbour ladies were present. But if the Mutebell daughters were in attendance, every attempt to shake them from their lazy complacency of listening silently was in vain.

Dorothea knew from Ibeles, who gave these young girls their lessons, that they were not stupid. In their youth the fame of their father had also brought them into contact with important people, but they had become accustomed to politely enjoying a conversation without joining in the effort to bring it about. In England one often finds that *one* prodigious speaker in a family renders its next three generations mute, and it has been said that the great-grandfather of these young ladies had at one time tired the entire parliament with his incessant prattle. No matter which topic one sought to introduce that would stimulate a personal opinion from any thinking person in the world—warring parties in a country, the arts, literature, and society, it was all to no avail—Mutebell's daughters persisted with their “Yes”—“No”—“Quite right!” and this drove Dorothea and even more so Ibeles to despair when he allowed himself to be lured into their presence outside of their music lessons.

He was wont to say: “No one would dare to offer a rich man accustomed to a good meal brown bread and potatoes. So why does one coerce a man accustomed to lively conversation to

mute company. The rich man is considered to be generous when he gives to the poor, but those who are dull do not even show appreciation when one makes every effort to devote his best energy to filling their empty hours!”

The intolerance of tediously dragging conversation was what finally made Ibeles blind to what was worthy of respect and actually favourable in his wife’s friends, and with every passing day he felt himself attracted more to the circle that was hostile toward his wife, but where he found constant stimulation. In the salon of the countess the conversation faltered so rarely that, on the contrary, most of those in attendance were inclined to assert their opinions simultaneously. It was only the presence of several calmer minds that curbed the excess liveliness. Ibeles felt like one of the mildest and most sober-minded individuals in this social circle when he saw the brilliant perversities shoot up like blazing red mushrooms round about him.

If a work stoppage in the factories had occurred and Ibeles had defended the rights of the overworked lower classes, that was enough to make Mrs. Beak accuse him of being one of the so-called “exalted” democrats—the term denoting the radical republican faction of the liberal revolution—and spoke out for the divine right of capital. But if this same topic came up for discussion at the salon, Wildemann insisted that property had to be abolished once and for all and that only the proletarians possessed sufficient political genius to create a system of government and a national economy.

A transgression committed in the overwhelming throes of passion or the severance of an unbearable marriage bond is something that Ibeles had always judged without severity and simply by doing that had offended overly rigid people. But in the countess’s salon there was a young spokesman, a scholar named Maus, who considered it the primary duty of all progressive

men to put an end to the institution of marriage. This youth, who was otherwise quite innocent, believed it was the highest glory of a female's character to make no demands at all on the loyalty of a man to whom she had entrusted her honour and life. He maintained that only the totally free and unselfish love of a woman who, in exchange for that *one* blissful moment that she granted her lover, would accept an entire life full of humiliation and misery merited being called love.

These extreme positions were being disputed freely by only this one section of society, but the fact that they were brought up for discussion at all had, on the hitherto steadfast principles of the good souls, an effect akin to someone yanking back and forth, day and night, in an attempt to loosen an iron ring forged into a wall.

The greatest divide arising between these people and English society was that of religious sentiments. Devout religious people can seldom understand that free thinkers can keep themselves from temptations honestly and unaffected as if the ability to embrace absurd tales was absolutely necessary in order to love the eternal moral law of purity and virtue. Ibeles, as well as Dorothea, placed no value on belief or disbelief in supernatural things that could not be proved by the evidence of the senses and the acceptance or rejection of which was each individual's own choice, depending on his or her upbringing and powers of understanding. However, the so-called "exalted" radical-liberals took on the battle against the common Englishman's blind, unquestioning faith as their sacred duty and declared each church-going person to be a donkey or a scoundrel.

It had come to the point that most of the refugees viewed the name "revolutionary" as the title of an exclusive office, and every non-revolutionary was regarded as a wastrel. There was no more talk of doing any kind of positive work because only negative plans were considered to be a suitable activity. In the same way that Countess Blafoska felt her spirit lifted only when she

was in love and therefore elicited artificial passions for the sake of her own interests, Wildemann and his peers showed enthusiasm only when recalling the passionate mood of the revolution. The year of '48 had been the highlight of their lives. They had risen from their Philistine existence onto a wave of world history of a power and height that they were unlikely to attain a second time in their lives. The thinker who knows how the natural laws of ebb and flow also prevail in the realm of intellect waits patiently for the movement to come, his hand ready on the rudder, his eye on the stars. But people who, during times of peace, cannot or will not act for the benefit of their fellow travelers on life's journey give themselves over unthinkingly to the notion that they can whip up the calm sea of the all-powerful will of the people with their proclamations.

Every now and then a poor emissary was thrown overboard and into the teeth of the shark, the continental police. This always resulted in intense scenarios. The ladies wept and wore ribbons of mourning in their hair, and the sober-minded and solemn men reminded everyone of the warnings they had uttered, and the "exalted" radical-liberals defended themselves and swore that everything had been laid out with utmost caution, but in some unfathomable way a secret spy must have detected their plans. The countess speculated that the reactionaries had perhaps seen to it that niches had been built in the walls of her house that were linked to neighbouring buildings through hidden passageways, but Ibeles drily commented that this was not necessary and that the absolute governments could probably spare themselves such expensive intricacy as long as the ladies at tea openly conspired together in the presence of approximately twenty people each evening. To be sure, they turned against the music director with severity when he expressed himself in this derisive manner against friends, but he was and still remained the ladies' darling and could allow himself some impropriety.



This circle of people was such a motley ensemble, as always happens where only a solitary symbol serves as identification of intellectual kinship. In conditions of calm people consider a similar level of education, similar customs and lifestyle to constitute a far more solid bond in terms of social interaction than belief in *one* specific point. The protestant philologist is closer to the Catholic archeologist than to any cobbler of his denomination, although it may have been different in the fanatical time of the reformation wars. The year '48 has brought about similar unusual combinations and alliances, and thus all social ties whose only symbol is the memory of the revolution result in such a colourful mosaic of adventurous figures from all classes.

The countess loved to play with these people like pieces on a chessboard, and in spite of the attacks against the institution of marriage there was no lack of attempts at bringing about a marriage within the salon. She had soon determined that Hulda definitely was not concealing any lovesickness, but rather that she had only desired a more exciting life. During all debates about the question of free love she had been on the side of legitimate marriage and had suggested that only sentiment that believed in its own immutability was love and that therefore only where one experienced misgivings in advance about the union's longevity would one's conscience warn against entering into such a union. To someone appealing for the wife's absolute duty of devotion, she retorted that a man who expected such a sacrifice or even supported it was not worth such an offering and that a devotion that was not mutual demoralizes both halves of a marriage union.

To the astonishment of all, Wildemann had allowed himself to be brought around to agreeing with the blonde young lady, and for the countess this appeared to be the moment in which she could present new proof of her sentiments that were exalted above all vanity. She

asked Wildemann if he could love Hulda, and he responded that he could have if he had never seen the countess. However, when the one he worshipped told him that his affection was hopeless, he declared himself to be strong enough to renounce the countess and offer Hulda his hand in marriage. He considered it to be an admirable deed by a representative of the working class to bring about an indissoluble union between a like-minded woman from the ranks of the aristocracy and democracy.

He gave the countess a note for Hulda, because she had advised him to do so. The countess wanted to announce the union immediately, as if she were a priestess, and not let slip away this moment, which guaranteed her such a special and extraordinary relationship to her friends. She believed that she had noticed Hulda's eyes to have lingered with a particular expression upon Wildemann's bold facial features, and was therefore very surprised to see her friend, with darkened brow, thrust the note into a drawer without saying a word. She waited in vain for Hulda to share the contents with her, but this did not occur until she had wheedled out of Hulda her answer to Wildemann's proposal. It was a definite *No*.

The countess could not accept this and wanted reasons. The following short conversation ensued:

“Why are you rejecting such a handsome, good, and charming man?”

“Because I do not love him!”

“Do you love someone else more?”

“No.”

“You are no longer so young that you could possibly hope to still spurn many suitors! I don't say that to offend you, but rather because I would like to steer your life's fate towards

happiness. Wildemann is a person that one could love with passion if one were not captivated by anyone else's charm."

"There is much too great of a divide between us!"

"How, Hulda? Through all your remarks you gave him reason to believe that you held no prejudices. He has achieved fame in the revolution. Doesn't that count for more than rank and position?"

"That is not the issue, believe me! But—I am loath to appear to you to be petty minded!"

"Ha! So you know—it is said that he already has a wife—he firmly denies it.—Yet even if that were the case, I do not doubt that a legal divorce could take place—"

"No," Hulda exclaimed, "not a soul has accused him of this, but no spiritual or man-made laws rend such a great divide between two human beings as —"

"Well what?"

"As spelling mistakes!"

The countess broke out into loud laughter and asked whether the ghost of a schoolmaster's daughter had possessed Hulda. She reminded her of great Prussian generals, even of princes, who had supposedly not been exact in distinguishing between the usage of the *me* and *myself*, but Hulda maintained the position that she was incapable of falling in love with a German who could not write clearly.

One can imagine that a man who was too at ease with his mother tongue to take spelling rules into consideration would have even less time to learn English. This failure was in part to blame for the fact that neither Wildemann nor his clique found useful employment in exile. During the morning the gentlemen lazed about and conspired. Reading newspapers and writing for newspapers provided at most a small diversion. But they made no effort to embrace the

inexhaustible resources for educational development and the many job opportunities available in the country in which they now lived. They treated with hostility those among the exiled who had educated themselves and were working, having achieved a broad footing on foreign soil through concentrated and vigorous efforts, and then still demanded that the latter give *them* the fruits of their labours. And so Wildemann, who often made it out to be a crime for Ibeles and Stern to put their talents in the service of the wealthy bourgeois, came and demanded that the two should exert their influence with this same group in order to provide a means of subsistence for his clique.

Wildemann and Hulda made a big mistake by not having immediately avoided meeting together after the topic of marriage had come up for discussion. An uneasy tone had come up between the two, which Wildemann sought to conceal by acting even more forward and in that way caused those present to be all the more aware. Yet both were so entangled in the salon that, in order not to miss out on the stimulation it granted them, they preferred to endure the awkward situation, thus providing the others with an entertaining pantomime.

All of these people could no longer regain their inner equilibrium after the violent storm of life had rocked them, and they lost their sense of proportion for small mistakes as well as for customary virtues. London's atmosphere tends to nurture rather than to heal such a state of mind if a person does not possess the will power to restrain his or her measure of duty and pleasure according to necessity.

Each day makes known to the entire nation scandalous deeds and fates. A sound like muffled thunder rolls over the heads of those subjected to a life of labour. The pious and modest women lower their eyes when the blue thunderbolts strike nearby, and all they do is close off their own house all the more resolutely. But wild and voracious spirits revel in the fevered frenzy

that the portrayals of London's dark side stir up and that steals upon them silently like a poisonous contagion.

So one day the body of a statesman, poisoned to death by his own hand, was found under the heath's blooming gorse bushes in the very spot where several hours prior innocent children had been playing happily. The dead man, because of the power and trust that his high position had given him, had directed all of his ingenuity in gaining control of entire savings of thousands of hard workers. For a few years he lived on this ill-gotten gold like a prince, allowed himself to be celebrated as the most noble and generous friend, and killed himself on the day the gleaming bubble burst and exposed him to be a beggar and a scoundrel.

Then the world was astonished because the young, beautiful, and well-raised daughter from a devout family relinquished all the advantages of a rich, highly regarded circle of relatives and fled her parental home in order to go live with a blind, dirty Indian beggar in one of the most depraved drinking holes. Her personal defense in court revealed that it was only the monotony of life in respectable society that had thrown her in among the merry street life. The wild young lady had already been rescued several times, but she did not *want* to be converted, and when through deceit she had somewhat reassured her taskmistress, she once again escaped to the vagabonds living in the bowels of London's underground. There her fine education made her a queen. Her begging letters were admirably stylized, and the touching signs that she fastened to the chests of blind and crippled paupers elicited many a silver piece from sympathetic souls.

The gruesome discovery had been made that a respected doctor was guilty of systematically carrying out murder by poisoning. He had insured the life of his patients for huge sums of money and, with his drugs, inflicted upon them the most agonizing deaths. Wife, brother, friend. All of them he lured with his adroitly feigned bonhomie into the power of his

rattle-snake jaws only to satisfy his pride in possessing the most expensive racehorses. And in doing so this monster acted with such coldblooded caution, with such a cunning mind, that it almost seemed a waste of such extraordinary gifts when he was hanged as a poisoner.<sup>44</sup>

More than these and a rapid succession of similar crimes, it was Mrs. O’Nalley, a beautiful Irish woman, who aroused the interest of Countess Blafoska and her circle. This woman, on trial for her life, had for weeks with brazen brow faced the prospect of physical and moral annihilation with defiant heroism. When news of her acquittal came, not because the jury had declared her innocent, but rather on grounds of insufficient evidence, the countess proposed a toast to the health of this phenomenal woman.

On this occasion Meta Braun had her say, because she was the only one at the table who refused to raise her glass and declared loudly that she would rather be stoned before participating in a toast. The student Maus, who was extremely emotional concerning the dissolution of marriage, had proposed a toast to Mrs. O’Nalley, who had allegedly escaped her husband’s tyranny by poisoning him because he had attempted to curb her wild lifestyle.

Meta burned with indignation, and since she, who usually only exchanged a few words with her neighbour, raised her voice loudly, everyone fell into a surprised silence, and she said:

“If someday the death sentence is abolished for good and for all, I shall be extremely happy. But if one assumes that there are crimes that can be avenged only by death then this monster should also not be spared. Recently, a woman was found guilty because of considerably less incriminating evidence against her. Her deed was less gruesome than that of the Irishwoman,

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<sup>44</sup>This reference is to William Palmer (1824–1856), also known as the Prince of Poisoners. Palmer was an English doctor with a serious pastime for betting on horses, albeit unsuccessfully. He had fallen deeply into debt, and at the same time members of his immediate family were dying inexplicably. Prior to the deaths of his wife and brother he had taken out various life insurance policies on their lives and then later collected the insurance money. With his betting debts continuing to mount rapidly, he also allegedly proceeded to poison his betting partner, John Parsons Cook, who had won large sums of money in a race, but who died several days later. Palmer went to collect the money for his associate, but was subsequently arrested and convicted of murder and publicly hanged. This murder case was considered one of the most notorious of the nineteenth century.

but she was *not* pardoned. In following newspaper accounts for years I have observed that when a woman is portrayed as having features that are off-putting, the jury believes she is guilty and convicts her. But one can always be certain that they allow the criminal to escape sentencing if she has a fetching appearance.”

The countess replied: “Even this partiality indicates a higher degree of justice because beauty is susceptible to greater temptations. The passions of the extraordinary woman are more intensely aroused, and therefore a higher degree of virtue is needed if she is to maintain her purity.” With self-assurance she added: “Only completely perfect people are capable of being both beautiful and virtuous!” and then looked modestly about her.

Meta boldly retorted: “Quite the contrary, Countess Blafoska. The ugly gain a much greater benefit from self-control. Hatred is often exhibited towards them, but love only seldom. Should not the *poor* man be excused more readily when he steals than the rich man?”

Ibeles joined in with the conversation: “The women committing crimes out of an excess of love are also more readily pardoned than those committing the crime out of hatred!”

On this point, Meta held to her view that the standard of guilt for ugly versus beautiful women was incorrectly applied. She stated: “The beautiful woman endures a tragic fate for the same misfortune that is ridiculed as comical in the case of the ugly woman whose life is nevertheless even more hopelessly ruined. When the beautiful woman, out of her injured pride, takes revenge brutally and maliciously, she is labelled as being poetic and great like Medea.<sup>45</sup> The ugly woman who, provoked by a thousand pinpricks, finally becomes overpowered by a clear, genuine anger, is simply considered to be vile. Again, instead of condemning the poor old

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<sup>45</sup> Medea is a sorceress in Greek mythology. She avenges her husband’s betrayal for leaving her for Glauce, daughter of the king of Corinth, by killing their two children.

woman in whose case they twisted manslaughter into murder, they should have condemned that deceitful Irishwoman!”

“Do you have such an unsympathetic soul? How can you be so unkind toward a creature of your own gender!” Wildemann exclaimed.

Meta answered: “I am being no more cruel or unsympathetic than a man is toward *his* gender. For instance, aren’t the reactionary ministers whom you have so often wished beheaded of *your* gender? Again, my deepest desire is: abolishment of all capital punishment. Instead of having sympathy for street robbers and poisoners, allow me to put in a good word for *your* enemies! You men live in an endless conflict with one another, with the sword and with the pen. No one questions you on your moral character because in times of war you point your canons at your own gender. But if a woman even simply criticizes the book of another woman, she is immediately accused of being ruthless toward her own gender. With regards to the beautiful sinful woman, we cannot recognize our own gender at all in such a degraded character.”

Hulda now spoke up again saying: “Dear Meta, let us not judge more harshly than the jury has. After all, it is always possible that the Irishwoman is innocent in spite of all accounts to the contrary. I am even inclined to see her as an innocent persecuted woman, because with such an open, honest brow, with such admirable strength displayed by this young woman, I can hardly dare to presume that she has anything but a clear conscience. Even in the other case I would like to know how to acquire this Titan nature. If such strength is directed toward what is noble and great, imagine what a glorious person could result from such wonderful qualities! A Judith! A Charlotte Corday!”

The others smiled at the tempered interpretation of the blonde young woman’s mitigating position, because no one doubted the guilt of the acquitted woman. Indeed, it was precisely the



colossal sin that they had marvelled at, since they had now fantasized upon the extremes of self-determination for so long that ordinary licentiousness was no longer as titillating to the senses.

Ibeles could never discuss current events from his point of view with Dorothea at home. She had absolutely no sense for the exotically appealing glamour of bourgeois crime, but instead always found the depravity to be mundane. Her standard for all violations against lawful order were based on whether the felon belonged in the state prison or in a workhouse, and she directed her sympathies accordingly. At one time she had been enthusiastic for the rebellion, since she had once loved it with all her strength of mind. These two passions—for her husband, to whom she was devoted, and for the freedom of her homeland—were sufficient for her. Apart from that her wish was that the world would behave reasonably, that loyalty and integrity be practiced, and that there would be a guilt-free pleasure in life.

Having knowledge of the evil that crosses everyone's path aroused in her a loathing, and she anxiously avoided any discussion of it for the sake of her daughters. Her reverence was directed toward a different class of people, whose activities in the salon were unknown or did not count for anything. There are enough men and women in London whose established position entitles them to happiness and pleasure, who voluntarily undertake to live a life filled with work and self-denial in order to have an impact on the greatness of the nation or the rescue of those who suffer. This is akin to many a wealthy, gracious lady who renounces the struggle for personal success in order to dedicate all her talents and strengths to the common good. There are political regulations whose blessing the entire nation enjoys, and which were written about in the press by indefatigable women in this country until the nation finally realized their importance and implemented them.

A lady whose wealth dims the splendour of many a female regent preserves her freedom and the power bestowed upon her in order to devote it to the great reform of the education of the nation's women. She strives to direct the minds of her protégés towards practical things yet to be taught in schools. Between ignorance and corruption, the source of so much poverty, she chooses knowledge that increases economic vitality and safeguards against pernicious errors. She establishes prizes, for example for those schoolgirls who exhibit the most astute knowledge of the laws as imposed upon their daily lives, or for those who can demonstrate which foods are most suitable in specific situations, or which fabrics are most beneficial to buy for a family of so and so many children and a specific income and what should be made from them, or how to ensure the health of a family and what sort of care simple illnesses require.

In a public calamity the practical mind and determination of another lady saved the life of countless soldiers. Her unassuming self-sacrifice was imitated by many other women, and without having been driven by a religious fanaticism, these brave women became kind-hearted sisters out of a love for their country and out of pure human compassion.

Yet another woman made it her life's passion to foster the colonization of Australia, and undeterred by mockery and obstacles, she became one of the greatest benefactors of her nation.

Indeed, it was not English egotism alone that gave rise to the motto: "Time is money!" but also English generosity and human kindness. Many a man who has no other treasure here other than his time is stingy with every minute in order to devote it to doing a good deed. It is the businessmen and scholars who, tired from the burden of their daily duty, devote the evening to the institutions in which the children of thieves and beggars are reclaimed back into civilization.

Even the noble pleasures that a quiet, conscientious collector, upon his death, bestows upon thousands thirsting for knowledge awaken in the German soul a loving gratitude for being

allowed to enjoy these pleasures alongside the countries' natives. This love, which extends far into the future, one encounters so often in London, and it reconciles one to the devastation caused by the passing incidents of evil.

A peculiar feature of what is positively good is that it seldom calls forth animated intellectual discussion. We quickly dispatch our praise of a person or event, not lingering upon details when we say: "It is good." It is just the same with good fortune: it is not verbose, but quiet and silently content in itself. But all that is perverse and eccentric spurs the minds and plunges them into a maelstrom of contradiction, defensiveness, and turmoil. Hence the attraction that the abominable exerts upon many an honest nature. Among all the firebrands of the moral world, most of them surely wanted to play with the light just a bit.

And so for some time now the companionable leisure hours of the exiled couple had dwindled, and essentially only matters relating to the household, the job, and child-rearing were hastily discussed either during the mornings or late evenings. Dorothea always tried to appear cheerful, and for that reason Ibeles believed that she was feeling completely content with the current state of affairs. If he was more quiet than in the past, his family thought he was overly weary, and they guarded against disturbing the few moments he had to himself. From time to time Hulda came and paid Dorothea a formal visit, and Stern, too, occasionally made an appearance, but never to that point had coincidence brought the two together at the same time.

Meta Braun could sense that Dorothea no longer trusted her. When she came to visit she was not actually received in an unfriendly manner, but Dorothea no longer extended invitations to her. She held to the principle that whoever comes into contact with the plague must also be quarantined. Meta had once allowed herself to be used in a falsehood against Dorothea, which could not be denied, even though the motives behind this remained a mystery to her.

As much as Meta would have liked to have had some information about Stern, she did not dare to ask Ibeles, let alone Hulda. In every way, she attempted to discover whether Hulda had become acquainted with him and whether he still frequently went to Briar Place and, if so, when. But it seemed as if he had vanished from the face of the earth, because no one made any mention of him. She could not understand that other people could be so apathetic toward a character who had branded himself in her memory so deeply, and no less could she understand that not everyone was aware of her heart's secret etched upon her brow.

When she took the countess's children for a walk, she always chose the area in which Stern's flat was located. She would never for all the world have set foot on his actual street, but she walked by it from some distance and stole a glance at the wisp of fog that stretched itself between the houses blackened by smoke. Each time she secretly thought that today might be the day that she would perhaps encounter him, and, having not seen him, she would break out in tears once she was back in her room. That happy coincidence that always causes two people in love to cross paths with mathematical precision in a small country town, for which sake they roam about on the street, has lost its power in a city of three million inhabitants.

While Meta thus occupied her thoughts with Stern, who had never thought of such a relationship involving her, it just so happened that the image of Hulda, who was just as disinterested in *him*, took hold of *his* imagination. Ibeles had told him that Wildemann had been rejected by the aristocratic young miss and that the countess had not exactly kept the details secret. Admittedly, Stern could not give an account of why he found himself experiencing spiteful pleasure of sorts, but he was undeniably pleased that Hulda had not said yes. He was less elated when Ibeles told him that the sweet-tempered miss, in order to alleviate some of Wildemann's humiliation, was taking a greater interest than ever before in his social plans for

improvement and had undertaken to establish a society. It had not yet been made apparent as to which people would belong to this society and what its purpose was. Ibeles knew only that Hulda was coming to visit his wife on the following Sunday with the intention of inviting her to join this society.

“With your permission,” Stern said, “I too shall come to visit and accept membership in this society as long as it is concerned only with preventing cruelty to animals and is not a temperance movement.”

The friends parted for the present after this agreement, and Stern, who usually paid very little attention to appearance, was inspired to give meticulous attention to his grooming, having his hair and beard trimmed, and refraining from smoking cigars as of Saturday morning.

## Chapter Twenty

### The Happy Old Bachelor

On the following Sunday, just as the Ibeles family was preparing to sit down to breakfast, a coachman rang the door chime vigorously and then proceeded to loosen the rope that was holding an old seal-skin trunk to the roof of the carriage. This trunk was of gargantuan size and dated from the time when three days were required to travel from Koblenz to Mainz. Dorothea looked out of the window and said: "Look children: we had exactly this kind of suitcase at home in which a supply of nuts and prunes ...." But the words died on her tongue in joyous astonishment when the round, reddish face of old Uncle v. Halen came into view at the carriage door. His appearance had not changed. He looked just as bright and at ease as when they had parted years ago.

With a cry of joy she ran to the door, and Ibeles and the children came running after her, heading for the old gentleman. "See Dorchen!" he exclaimed, "Here I am! I had always planned on seeing London one day. So this year I thought to myself: instead of writing first I am simply going to arrive on their doorstep one fine morning as a guest. Goodness, how the children have grown! And you look as young as always! Only our Hansibbeles is still the same old bird."

And so the old gentleman walked into the house amidst joyous greetings, chatting about his sea voyage and telling them about old Frau v. Dewald and other acquaintances, seasoning the conversation with all kinds of little jokes. Soon he was surrounded by all the children. Even the youngest children, who remembered him only from the accounts of others, crowded onto his lap as if he had been living with them daily.

“I almos’ brought along Ibeles Mathias’s Bärbel” Herr v. Halen said in the dialect of his native city, speaking about the daughter of Ibeles’s brother. Her father, Ibeles’ brother, was called Mathias and was a master locksmith. His daughter Bärbel had somewhat more genteel aspirations, and it offended her sensibilities that one referred to her only as Ibeles Mathias’s Bärbel instead of as Miss Babette Ibeles. Some time ago she had written to her Uncle Johannes with the request that he might find her a position as a lady’s companion in London. Ibeles had refused her request whereupon he received a pointed letter in which he was criticized for having become too arrogant upon his marriage to a gracious young lady and that he now felt ashamed of his poor relatives. Herr v. Halen, who heard of the matter through the grapevine, talked Matthias Ibeles and his daughter Bärbel out of this presumption and vouched for the democratic nature of his dear Johannes.

Noticing the expression of grim shock on Ibeles’s face when Bärbel’s name was mentioned, old von Halen refrained from questioning him. Since no one said a word, he continued: “I am sure you probably wanted to wait until your situation had improved before sending for Bärbel. I told her that you couldn’t have had any other reason and that I wanted to see how matters stood and that, if you knew what could be done for her, I would have no problem paying travelling costs.”

Ibeles did not want to spoil the first hour of this surprise visit with an altercation, and so he looked for a way to get around the embarrassing topic. He asked whether Herr v. Halen might be tired, but the robust old man assured him that he had slept on the train as if in the finest feather bed. He said: “Of course you know how I’m accustomed to living. Each morning that God grants me, I take a short walk up to the vineyard no matter what the weather may be. Doing that keeps me healthy and strong even though I’m not so young any more. If it suits Dorothea,

then we men should take a little walk in the city before our meal. I can only imagine that your wife would prefer to have us out of her way so that she can prepare a room for me.”

This wasn't completely inaccurate, for even in spite of how happy Dorothea was about the visit, her conscience as a housewife made it a matter of honour to make the cheap lodgings as comfortable for him as the difficult circumstances allowed. When the men are out of the house, a woman is less shy about wielding her scepter energetically to drive the maids to work and to banish the youngest ones impeding her progress into a corner until one or another room has been transformed happily and quickly into a guest room.

Fritz and Karl were visiting their parental home today and had received a ticket for admission to the zoological garden from their employer as a reward for good conduct. The brothers offered the tickets to their father and great uncle and sang the praises of the wonderful monkeys. Herr v. Halen said: “I have always been a great friend of menageries, and I am particularly mad about monkeys. The finest sermon on a Sunday morning could not give me *more* pleasure, and so I accept with gratitude. Dorchon, in the meantime just don't go to too much trouble.”

With that the jovial gentleman set off with Ibeles, and Dorothea began the great transformation with Katrinchen and Polly. As usual, on such occasions the older children were to keep the younger ones under control. But it seemed as if the arrival of the uncle or the accompanying sweets had shifted the young world into gleeful intoxication. All seven children, the oldest in the lead, were making a fanatical clamour. Dorothea could not keep her head together with all the noise and sent Polly upstairs to exercise her authority and quiet down the screaming little Conrad. Suddenly she heard a cry of indignation erupt from all the children,



accompanied by the sound of blows and of chairs being overturned. Alarmed, she went to the stairs and called up to Polly asking what had happened.

Polly came to the top of the stairs and announced with great dignity: "I have given Master Conrad and Miss Angela a thorough beating, if you must know, madam!"

Dorothea was infuriated at this breach of one of her most important household rules, and she exclaimed emphatically: "Who told you to beat the children? You know that is not to occur ever and that I warned you of this on your first day!" Polly, who was already in something of a bad mood because the disturbance had caused her extra work on her free Sunday, on which she had planned to go out, replied sullenly: "Every nursery maid in England has the right to discipline the children, and I would sooner terminate my employment than allow my rights to be restricted! Children must be disciplined. How else should I have kept them quiet?"

Dorothea, as outraged as she was, nevertheless realized that it would be wise to adopt a lighter tone in order not to have a fall out with her indispensable helper particularly on this day. After taking a moment to collect herself she said: "Now Polly, you surely see all kinds of children on the streets, and you've been employed in some respectable homes. Tell me which children get the most beatings, the children of the riff-raff on the streets or those from civilized families?"

Polly earnestly replied: "Granted, the genteel children are beaten less than the children of the mob, but at times they must also receive a beating."

Dorothea continued: "And do you find that the children of the mob, as you call it, are really better behaved and calmer because they receive more beatings than other children?"

Only now did Polly realize that she had allowed herself to be trapped, but refusing to concede she said stubbornly: “The children of the queen are brought up excellently and are beaten just like other children. The entire nation knows that. God bless her.”

Dorothea had at least achieved in lightening the mood on every side, even if she had no choice but to allow the housemaid to have the final word. She calmed the little ones as best she could, and after a short time she had finalized her arrangements so that she was able to allow herself a moment to collect her thoughts.

With a sigh she thought about the desire of their poor niece Bärbel. It was one of the many perverse fantasies that had incessantly embarrassed her husband ever since things started going well for him in London. While the English saw Dorothea as being the democratic side in the marriage, her husband’s German relatives perceived her to be the aristocratic devil at his side. Ever since he married, the female cousins of the Ibeles clan had, each in turn, determined to affiliate themselves with the artist, and many on that side of the family had seen it as foolishly arrogant of him not to have dragged any of them along to the residency. Admittedly, a newly *rich* cousin can help needy relatives with money, and it would be mean-spirited if he were to neglect doing so out of vanity’s sake, but an upwardly mobile newcomer who has only his talent to thank for his entry into a higher social class cannot confer this personal quality upon his relatives. Yet the little Liesels, Mariannes, Annebells, and Bärbels could not understand this and thought that if they could only get away from their parental home and be under the auspices of their famous uncle and his wife amidst fine society, they, too, would come into their good fortune.

The relocation to London had not reduced these demands. On the contrary, acquaintances from various little German cities pinned their hopes on Ibeles as well. Many were dear and good

people, who declared themselves willing to provide their services in return, but what is the likelihood of someone in London needing to conduct business in, for instance, Eisleben or Schwarzburg-Sondershausen? On the other hand, there is hardly a corner of Europe where there was someone who would not have had a connection to London at least once in a lifetime. Because of this the letters never stopped, stereotypically beginning as follows: "With your many connections in London, it will be a simple thing for you to obtain this or that for me." This so-called simple thing then always consisted of requests that were best settled with a sum of money. It was worse when they took up a lot of time, because for productive people loss of time means a loss of livelihood.

The aforementioned Bärbel was a stout young person, who could no doubt fulfill her tasks admirably working in the fields, or in the kitchen and cellar. She had been an excellent student in school, and as the testimonials sent to Ibeles indicated, she had been the teacher's helper. As a result, she had taken it into her head to try her luck in London, and thought that it simply depended on Uncle Johannes and his wife to lend a helping hand in the big world. Dorothea well remembered the locksmith's resolute daughter, who with her shrill voice could make herself heard over three hammering journeymen and who would give her knee a hearty slap every time she burst out laughing. At best, Ibeles, if he could have ignored the relationship to his own position, could have recommended his niece as a maid to an English lady, but of course Bärbel wanted to be a lady's companion or, if necessary, a teacher.

It is seldom that one quandary occurs alone, and Dorothea had no sooner calmed her conscience with the thought that the impossible could hardly be considered an obligation than still other hands reached out to her, seeking help. Reffbaum, the carpenter's apprentice, and Butzmann, the drum-beating baker, turned up, and their appearance revealed that they had long

since lost their bourgeois tidiness. After Ibeles and Stern escaped, they had sided with the authorities thinking they could shift all the blame for all the trouble on the two escapees, who were now safe. Unfortunately they had been mistaken with regard to the punishment, for instead of getting off with a few months in prison as they had assumed, they had been incarcerated until now. News of the changed situation and of the resulting calmer mood of all the spice merchants and other good Philistines had not made its way to them through the prison gates. The two of them, having served their time, emerged from prison like two Rip van Winkles who had been asleep since 1848, and their first foray was to the Black Eagle in order to inquire about the present-day assembly of the people. No one who had slept a whole century could have spoken a more foreign language than those two, going on in 1855 with those seven-year old anachronisms from the year of 1848. Those among the living were astonished to hear the speeches of the timpanist and the carpenter revolving around the March achievements, the St. Paul church, and a certain imperial regent.<sup>46</sup> Only the last-mentioned one aroused a faint memory because the peasantry had named a festival dance in his honour.

In their native country, the two were advised to decamp as quickly as possible if they did not want to fall into the hands of the police once again, and they were referred to Stern and Ibeles. In the principality, rumour had it that Stern and Ibeles had such brilliant employment that they each owned a carriage and horses. The emigrants came to Stern first, and he, as best he could, had given them some cash for the first day, since the travel money that had been collected for them at home had been enough only to get them to London. Stern could not help them with employment, since he had no knowledge of places where people in their trades might find a position. Just like any other well-known refugee he had found his finances depleted by the host

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<sup>46</sup> The Pauluskirche (St. Paul's Church) in Frankfurt am Main was the location for the session of the first freely elected Frankfurt Parliament from May 1848 to May 1849. Archduke Johann of Austria (1782–1859) was elected by the Frankfurt National Assembly on 29 June 1848 as German imperial regent.

of similar cases. In the tavern to which he had sent them for information and night lodging they found the entire horde of desperate people of whom one had no idea through which means they were able to procure strong drink and tobacco. This tavern was the forum for the schemers, conspirators, and hate mongers, and if Stern had known the light in which he and his best friends were being portrayed to the newly-arrived compatriots he would likely have thought twice about giving them the money to buy the drinks. The first stipulation—that one *had* to work in order to belong to the worker's party—was held in as much disregard by this clique as it was by their spokesman Wildemann when he spent half his days theorizing with the ladies in the salon.

It was from this kind of atmosphere that Reffbaum and Butzmann appeared before Dorothea, just as she was endeavouring to serve up the best food the household could afford to her beloved uncle, the benefactor and sustainer of her entire family. She, who normally kept things as simple as possible, had ordered some wine today, which the old uncle did not like to go without. She had dressed herself and the children nicely in order to avoid giving him the impression that she required further financial contributions from him. And so it was amidst this quite deliberately staged show of prosperity that the two angry new arrivals appeared when Dorothea, in happy anticipation, thought she was opening the door to the expected housemates.

No one can be happy in the presence of misery, and all jovial times we enjoy are thanks only to an averted gaze that allows us to forget the existence of hopeless adversity. A person with possessions seeks to console himself with having done his utmost, because of course he cannot feed everyone at his table. But every destitute person sees that charitable individual as a terrible, unwilling benefactor and makes a sin of the enjoyment he affords.

Butzmann and Reffbaum proceeded from the general conviction that it would not take much effort for a local London musician with his many connections to help a baker and a

carpenter establish their business once all else had failed. Admittedly, the two wanted only enough money to survive on so as not to allow any egotistical pursuit of gainful employment to distract them from the great plans for the rescue of Europe that they had conceived with their party comrades the night before.

There are moments in history in which a high and noble state of inspiration drives people to risk the impossible, and without the blind belief in the omnipotent will of the people no great deed would ever have transpired. But should one then ridicule or lament the lone helpless person who, even in calmer, more sober times, desires to alter the course of the world? Nevertheless, Reffbaum and Butzmann seemed to be marked as comical figures and appeared to Dorothea like a pair of poor, freezing-cold actors who had just adorned themselves in weather-worn heroes' costumes. To Dorothea it seemed that the most prudent thing for her to do was to embrace only the lowliest role in this drama by serving them a meal and including a small gift of money to help them for the moment. The resentment of the unexpected guests, who parted after enduring an hour's embarrassment, had made itself felt, and Dorothea, anticipating a series of still worse scenes, steeled herself with all the stoicism she would need.

It appeared as if her uncle could not get enough of the animals, because the usual time for their meal had long since passed when he finally returned with Ibeles. A gloomy cloud still shadowed Dorothea's face, and she quickly recounted the event before everyone sat down at the table. Herr v. Halen said: "Don't trouble yourselves about not being able, as it says in the Bible, to feed six thousand people with two fish and a small pastry.<sup>47</sup> Worthwhile indeed is the life of one who gives his all."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Herr v. Halen comically misquotes his reference to Jesus' miracle of the feeding of the five thousand with five fish and two loaves, found in all four gospels: Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:31–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 5:5–15.

<sup>48</sup> An old proverb appearing here in its common English translation generally attributed to Saint Arnold Janssen (1837–1909), a Roman Catholic priest born in the Rhine area of Germany, and ordained to the priesthood in 1861.

During the meal the jovial old gentleman described his amusement at seeing the extraordinary animals, and the children naturally agreed. The one inquired about the giraffes that stretch their giant, leopard-spotted necks over the tall garden wall, the other remembered the hippopotamus that rolls around in the pond and stretches its dreadful mouth wide open as if it wanted to crack heads as if they were nuts. Gradually the parents perked up and abandoned themselves to the harmless chitchat.

By prior arrangement, Hulda v. Saintford arrived toward evening in order to present her plans regarding the establishment of a society, and she could hardly have picked a more inopportune day to talk the annoyed housewife into another burdensome commitment. The most suitable persons to join a society are unmarried ladies without any responsibilities, but with ample funds, and if these ladies apply their attention to a good purpose, it will benefit substantially. However, there resides in the female nature a tendency to dislike working for someone else's ideas until she has learned through marriage to control her willfulness. Not for anything would Hulda have complied with the statutes of an existing association, but she wanted to establish a society based on *her* views, and she found that it would favour success to have respectable women join.

She confided to Dorothea how a woman who confines her good deeds only to her nearest surroundings is considered mean-spirited and unloving. She assured Dorothea that nothing attracted her more to her new friend Blafoska than that she, free of all familial selfishness, worked only for the greater good and even now was issuing an appeal to make better wives and mothers of all English women.

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Even though this saying is most commonly linked to Janssen, its usage here predates Janssen's, since Kinkel confides to a friend in a letter dated 1 February 1855 that she has written a book, which Whittle and Pinfold suggest refers to *Hans Ibeles in London*. See *Voices of Rebellion: Political Writing by Malwida von Meysenbug, Fanny Lewald, Johanna Kinkel and Louise Aston*, Ruth Whittle and Debbie Pinfold (New York: Lang, 2005), 119.

Dorothea replied: "I am no different, and I do not want to persuade anyone to believe that I love strangers more than those closest to me. I also confess that my duty is dearer to me than my popularity, and finally, allow me to humbly say that I have learnt much in England and that *my friends are exemplary wives and mothers.*"

Hulda now raised what for a respectable young girl was a rather awkward point, namely that the concept of equality obligates the pure minded to rescue their fallen sisters. She said that the existing societies alienated the *willing* sinners by putting pressure on them to convert and be reformed and that in order to win these women back to virtue one had to accept them into society and treat them with gentle tact.

Dorothea made a gesture that said, in essence, keep them away from me! Then she said: "Even for *this* class of women I accept only *one* cure, namely work, and for that no one need be too genial. Our party, which has continually blamed the plague of human society on the aristocracy, should above all not trifle with the principles that multiply the number of these unfortunate ones."

Hulda agreed fully with Dorothea on the last point. She was by nature a rigorously moral person and had attended the debates between Wildemann and the academic Maus regarding this delicate—or, rather, quite indelicate—subject with a feeling of revulsion. But experience had taught her that those women who most vehemently condemned others were not always the most strict and rigorous when it came to their own behaviour. And this feeling caused her to force herself to speak more freely than the natural shyness of a virgin dictated.

Hulda blushed deep red even when she tried to get a theoretical grasp of the subject, and Dorothea continued: "If I cannot avoid an encounter with the *unfortunate ones*, as such ladies are called with such delicacy in England, I do not make a great show of wanting to run away filled



with revulsion. I merely avert my eyes from those features that have forfeited *that* open child-like gaze that is not dependent on youth or on age. I am not so presumptuous as to penetrate into the psyche of such creatures, but instead I simply follow the inner dread that separates me from them. If you had a husband and children, you would happily let the question of legitimate or free love rest. I predict that no one will think more lawfully than you do when you have your own home and family.”

At this moment the door opened and Ibeles ushered in Dr. Stern, announcing as he did so that Uncle v. Halen had risen from his afternoon nap. Then they all gathered for tea, and a lively conversation ensued. Stern, who back home had known Hulda slightly, now, of course, encountering her in a foreign country, took the liberty of treating her like an old friend. The situation back home and their many mutual acquaintances provided material for friendly conversation. The presence of the jovial old Rhineland and the children’s antics enhanced the convivial atmosphere, and Ibeles was surprised that he felt so pleasantly stimulated in his own home. Dorothea was silent and pondered the previous conversation and the peculiar character of Fräulein v. Saintford.

Hulda was so good-natured that she viewed all people and all things in a favourable light. She sought to facilitate the reconciliation of all parties in spite of how irreconcilable each contradiction might be, and this made her the embodiment of ambivalence, with an “on the other hand” for everyone’s “on the one hand.” She was able to take delight in the domestic happiness of a friend without envy and with a pure mind, yet she allowed herself to be used as an agent for another person who felt the need to destroy this domestic harmony. She maintained that anything good was only a compromise with evil. Pure morality was the death of all poetry, and therefore even virtue was in need of that bit of spice that a brush with the shadow of sin could impart.

The men began to speak of times past, and Herr v. Halen, who was all human kindness, appeared to be quite similar in nature to the young lady in terms of party matters. But when he gave an account of what he had done at the elections all present laughingly declared him to be a monster politician, since it turned out that those of his class who were loyal absolutists trustingly chose him as their electoral delegate. He had asked to be given the election list of his constitutional party, yet in the end voted for the democratic candidate out of family sympathy.

With that, Stern told an anecdote worthy of being taken for the truth. Back home he had a relative, a woman of angelic kindness, whose fate decreed that her son was helping to defend a barricade at the same time that her husband was at the castle as part of a deputation of citizens, and her brother, as a commissioned officer, was commanding a detachment of soldiers. The following morning she had told Stern about her night spent in anxiety, and he imitated her gentle motherly voice while repeating her words:

“The people thronged into our narrow streets and worked up a sweat ripping up the cobblestones. I said to my daughter: ‘Just look at how the poor people are working themselves to death, Luischen! Prepare some slices of buttered bread with sausage for them and put out some beer to help keep their strength up.’ No sooner had they finished eating than the shooting started, and after a quarter of an hour the military had taken over the square, and the soldiers pulled down the barricades and with all their might had hauled all the heavy stones out of the way again. I said: ‘Oh dear God, Luischen, I’m sure we’re out of bread now, and the soldiers have really been through a terrible struggle!’ But fortunately we still found some brown bread and sausage in the cellar and in great haste also prepared buttered slices of bread for the soldiers and put beer outside. For me, they weren’t soldiers or democrats, but just tired people—and they all liked the food.”

So they were telling stories, and Stern had to repeat for Herr v. Halen the story of his escape, which we have already heard. He used this opportunity to portray in the warmest of terms his regret that it was his friend rather than he who had had the good fortune to encounter Fräulein v. Saintford on that disastrous night. “Had *I* been your prisoner in the mausoleum, citizen Hulda!” he exclaimed, “I would rather have been buried alive there than have to endure the dismal life of a bachelor in this unsociable country!”

Hulda smiled very sweetly and referred citizen Stern to Herr v. Halen, in order to be consoled by observing that gentleman’s cheerful bachelor state.

Stern, who firmly believed in his youthful appearance and hoped that the young lady might look at him even more favourably than did his reflection in the mirror, was anything but flattered by this comparison with Herr v. Halen, who had hair as white as snow. To him it felt as if suddenly a gentle rain had cooled his hot brow, yet he composed himself and said to Herr v. Halen: “May I ask my colleague what has transpired to make him an old bachelor? It hardly seems as if it were your choice, judging by the tenderness with which you hold the little one on your lap!”

“I will tell you,” he replied, “but first I must request a little something to drink because I do not like to recall my youth without some wine. You see, even by the time I was a lanky chap I still wasn’t thinking about young girls. My cello was my hobby, as was shooting birds. When my father died I inherited the most beautiful vineyards along the Ahr river, and so I moved there. At the autumn ball, I became acquainted with some very nice ladies from Cologne and Düsseldorf, and when they left my heart was bleeding and I began to make up poems. On occasion I did think of pursuing one of them, but I could never decide on which one. I had taken one thing into my head, which was that I would not consider a woman who had no sense for music or poetry.

Let a cuckoo endure a winter along the Ahr without a nightingale in the house. A handsome young man in his youth, owning beautiful vineyards and having been blessed with an aristocratic name, has no difficulties obtaining an ‘I do’—that much I may say without being arrogant. But because I knew that of all the young ladies with whom I danced at the autumn ball, not one would have said *No*, I kept a guard on my tongue. I did not stop writing poetry—it brings with it no commitment—but the young ladies wanted to hear it in prose. And so we mutually put one another to the test without taking the bait.

“This beautiful season was lovely to endure. Whenever I was a little bit enamoured the region seemed to me even more beautiful, and when I performed my favourite melody on my cello: “New joys, new pains, Now rage in my heart”<sup>49</sup> I would move the audience to tears. Meanwhile, many a neighbour’s child had come of age, but the more enticing migratory birds of autumn had made me lose my taste for the local young girls. In small towns people see each other every day, and in order to be infatuated and fall in love, one has to see something of the exotic in a woman.

“When November came around I would always have thoughts of marriage, and with every passing year I resolved more earnestly to choose myself a young girl. It was to be a girl I could love and who would love me and who thought and felt as I did.

“One day a friend visited me and told me about a young girl he had met while travelling. She was one of those girls who gaze out into the world as if it were a garden and hear naught but melodies in the air. He said that she appeared to be far too fanciful for his taste but that with every word she spoke he had thought of *me*. When he told me that she sang and played

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<sup>49</sup> A line from an aria in Mozart’s opera *The Marriage of Figaro*, First Act, Scene 5: “Neue Freuden, neue Schmerzen toben jetzt in meinem Herzen.” The translation is based on the earliest German version (published 1794) of the Italian libretto.

beautifully and that Mozart's aria: "New joys, new pains" was also *her* favourite, I was all fire and flame.

"I dismissed my friend's notion with a scornful sneer, but nevertheless inquired about the young girl's name and place of residence. Several times I had the opportunity to sound out others who knew her, and everything that I heard about her strengthened my belief that she was the right one for me. Countless times I had thought of finding out for myself what could happen. But then I felt like a true Don Quixote again for taking a few day-long journeys, all for a lady I did not know and who perhaps might even reject me. I carried that plan around with me for several years, vacillating again until finally a completely unexplainable restlessness seized hold of me. Back then, traveling was not as easy as it is now. And to be carted along the Rhine in a post carriage pulled by slow horses, all for nothing, was no fun. But I did it anyway.

"When I arrived in the city where the young lady was said to be living, I searched for her father's address in my address book, being too embarrassed to ask the innkeeper about her. Slowly and lost in thought, I stole along the street, and all at once it hit me like a thunderbolt when I asked myself: 'My friend, what do you want to do? Get married? Have you even considered what that all means!' Breaking out in a sweat, I stopped and wondered if I had better turn back with nothing achieved, since I had no one but myself to be ashamed of about my expedition. But I felt ashamed of myself and kept going.

"Then I came to a spot where the street was strewn with green palm leaves, and that seemed to me to be a good omen, because the leaves were a sign that there had been a wedding. The wind must have blown them across my path from a doorstep. The house that I was searching for was not far off, and with my heart pounding, I took hold of the door chime. Once again I looked inward, asking myself what I should say, because I could not just introduce myself as a

suitor without all the preliminaries. Just ring, I thought, the rest will all come out. The sound seemed ear-piercing to me, and, stuttering, all I could do was ask whether Fräulein So-and-so lived here. The maid bowed and replied, with a pleased smile: “Our Fräulein was married yesterday and is now on her wedding trip to the Ahr valley.”

At this point the listeners broke their silence and expressed their heart-felt regret at Herr v. Halen’s misfortune. Dorothea was surprised that her uncle had never breathed a word of this story to her until now, and Ibeles asked whether he had ever encountered the lady later in life.

Herr v. Halen continued: “Well that is precisely what has turned me into an old bachelor. A year later the same friend who first drew my attention to the young girl told me that the man whom she had married had severely mistreated her. She could not bear to stay with him and left. Her parents incessantly badgered her to reconcile with her contentious husband; they had several other daughters to provide for. She took that all to heart and decided to travel and give concerts. I was plagued by the daring impulse to strike up an acquaintance with her again. I thought to myself: once you see her the restlessness will end, and you will laugh at yourself when you discover that there isn’t anything very special about her.

“I read in the newspaper that she was going to be playing at a concert in Cologne, and so I went, and I arrived at the concert hall so early that I was able to procure a seat close to the stage and facing the piano. A Haydn symphony was being performed, and the orchestra played it beautifully. I clapped my hands full of joy, and because of the finale I had almost forgotten why I had come. You know the symphony, Ibeles, the one in G major with the theme *ti ti ti ti tiddle-diddle-dum*, you know which one I mean. It is a divine composition.<sup>50</sup> All of a sudden I heard a prelude in another key being played on the piano and I looked up dumfounded: there sat a pale lady who looked like she couldn’t count to three, with no ribbon or flowers in her hair like all the

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<sup>50</sup> Joseph Haydn’s Symphony No. 94 in G major (1791), also commonly known as the Surprise Symphony.

others usually wear when they give concerts. There was no colour to her at all other than her brown silk dress and melancholy blue eyes.

“I couldn’t be more astonished that this was apparently the girl. But I knew it was her as soon as she got to the adagio. There was an extraordinary fire in this pale figure, and it appeared to me as if she were telling me her life’s story throughout the entire piece. The first allegro skipped along like a happy child. But then there was a minor chord and her fingertips conveyed a grief that no human tongue could possibly express in the same manner. Then, last came the prestissimo, which sounded as if she were firing an entire quiver of lightening arrows at the villain who had robbed her of her youth. I did not take my eyes off her, and at last persuaded myself that she came to look quite lovely as a result of the music. It was as if a grey-tinted gemstone that goes unnoticed amidst all the surrounding colour suddenly began to glow in a darkened room. The entire audience, the chandeliers, and the orchestra all but vanished, and I believed that the melody emanated solely from those two eyes.

“I didn’t miss her second concert either, and when I heard that she intended to continue her journey, I found the courage to visit her. We spoke only about music, but we were soon *one* heart and *one* soul. I found out that she had composed the first piece and that I had understood the topic without needing words. This was proof for me that we belonged together, and I clapped my hand to my forehead, feeling like a criminal, at fault for all her misfortune by my procrastination. I could not tell her what had affected me, and she looked at me strangely and appeared as if she were anxious for me to leave.

“Giving concerts at that time was not very profitable, and what her attire already told me was confirmed by an acquaintance: the young woman was struggling with poverty. So I went to visit her once more and told her of my wonderful estate, of my loneliness, and of my love for

music. I told her that if she could ignore the prejudices that would arise about her living in the house of a bachelor, I would promise with the most solemn vow that I would never infringe upon her freedom. My only demand of her was to be allowed to listen on occasion when she played.

“She looked at me gravely, and my honest face and my age appeared to instill trust in her. I was happy that she took the matter as it was intended, without affectation, honestly and sincerely, for she did not stammer out anything about impropriety or about the bad world, as other women might have done. After she had silently pondered a while, it seemed to me as if her eyes filled with tears. I grasped her right hand and asked: ‘Do you want to do this?’ Her hand twitched and she silently pulled it away and said with a firm voice: ‘No, I do *not*.’

“Once more I gazed into those blue eyes, but I perceived in them a character that knew what it wanted. So I said not another word and went home. Later I heard that she had died young. The strain of her forceful playing and her travelling had worn her down.

“All the sheet music that she had left behind I had bought from her parents, and I also obtained the manuscript in which she had expressed her musical life. It contained an addendum, dated the day that I had taken my leave from her, and a few words were written at the end that I alone could understand and that struck a blow to my heart. They revealed the struggle that her last words to me had cost her. She had rejected my friendship only because I was *too* dear to her.

“From that day forward my vineyards no longer gave me any pleasure, and during the annual autumn ball I avoided all the guests. The matter had affected me terribly, and I believed that I would never be able to get her out of my head. I leased everything and moved to my current residence. My married sister and my little Dorothea here, whom I always liked having around me, lived there. The quartet society was established, and I placed my pride in Ibeles here.



Before I knew what happened, the joy had returned to my life, and when I look at you children, then I have no choice but to think: it is a good thing that I became an old bachelor.”

With this the old gentlemen’s story ended. They realized that it had become late, and as Hulda prepared to leave, Dr. Stern offered to accompany her to the nearest carriage stop. On the way there Hulda remarked that instead of Herr v. Halen travelling as a suitor, he should have initiated a friendly correspondence by letter with the young lady. Then he would have been able to judge whether such a wonderful harmony of souls actually existed between them before having taken that disastrous step. His letters might have deterred the young girl from her impetuous decision.

Stern agreed that everything hinged upon the consensus between minds, and that a face mirroring the soul was much more deceptive than the expression of sentiments in writing. When the young lady was already seated in the carriage, Stern asked, before taking his leave: “Dare I hope to see you again soon!”

Hulda replied: “You will surely be a welcome guest in my friend’s political salon!”

Stern said: “As much as your presence entices me, I still cannot not attend this circle in which neither you nor I are at home. Forgive me for being so honest. Time is urging, and I find it dreadful to part from you with such bad behaviour, for which I might not be able to atone. Could I write to you, and would you reply?”

With the words: “Yes, I will!” Hulda extended her hand to him from the window, and the carriage rolled off.

## Chapter Twenty-one

### The Sunlight of Love behind the Clouds

Herr v. Halen's story had given Dr. Stern a serious warning, and as he walked past nothing but closed window shutters at midnight, ominous thoughts and decisions rose to the surface. It was strange that a picture of Meta, whom he had not thought of for months, suddenly came into his memory as clearly as if she were standing in front of him. He had often walked down this particular street with her, and they had always had splendid conversations without it ever having occurred to him to speak to her about love. Stern knew from experience that one often courts boring young ladies out of pure desperation because this is the only way to coax them out of their taciturnity. But with Meta he had lively conversations regarding serious issues, and she had walked along beside him like a male friend. She had never stirred his imagination because she said exactly what she thought, speaking clearly and with reserve. Her soul appeared to hold no mystery for him, and he believed he knew her completely. He thought her to be incapable of any infatuation because, as it happened, their conversations had been dominated with dry intellectual prose. As unattractive and poor as Meta was, she lacked the courage to express her emotions on those points that touched her the most, and not for the world would she have wanted to appear ridiculous by making any expression of affection. Because of a timid avoidance of anything that was sentimental she had unfortunately adopted a harsh, even bitter tone of voice, and with that she had prematurely cast off the last enchanting aura of youth.

Hulda's independent position and her early association with the aristocratic world had preserved for her the exhilarating feeling of free autonomy. She dared to respond to men with a

light, bantering air, because she knew how to hold them at bay within the finely drawn lines within which audacity retained its charm. She was not in need of being provided for through marriage, and hence every favourable glance that she cast on a friend fell on him like a radiant beam of warm and gracious sunshine from her eyes. Even though most girls act unintentionally when they respond with friendliness to a man who instills trust, everything still depends upon the acknowledgement of the fact that this behaviour is unintentional.

Stern compared Meta with Hulda and thought to himself: "When I parted from Meta I would reflect, at most, only on our conversation. But with Hulda I also think about her personality. I hardly remember what she said even though the charming sound of her voice still rings in my ears and her figure continues to accompany me. Now, I do not want to surrender irrationally to this one appearance. I would like to know more about her, take a deeper look into her mind, and I hope I am well on my way to doing that. Ibeles told me that she is blessed with a gift for writing letters, and since our inner selves are made clear through writing, we can do nothing better in order to understand our feelings."

Upon her arrival at home Hulda had gone up to her room even though she could still hear the familiar guests talking loudly in the salon. Stern's deep, calm voice had been as good for her as a song from home, and she wanted to hold on to that soothing impression. She was not accustomed to someone dispatching her with a curt *No*, and yet he had gained her respect by not simply obeying her first signal. She had an unspeakable yearning to see the letter in which he explained his refusal.

It is not our intention to write a letter-writing guide for lovers in this chapter, and so we shall ignore the beginning of his letter, which, as we know, intimates the longing of the writer to

see the letter's recipient. We shall single out only a few sentences from the middle of the letter that prove that the letter writer was honestly anxious to be candid with Hulda.

Stern writes to the young lady:

*...“Do not be angry with me for not wanting to break any principle even for your sake. Diplomatic salons are a practice that we learned from courtiers, and they stand in direct opposition to democracy. Every worker who makes himself useful in exile expresses to a mighty foreign nation the interests of his fatherland more powerfully than all the conspiring salons. Public secrets cast an incurable ridiculousness on those who would wrap themselves in an aura of mystery.*

*A person's inborn sense of freedom remains ever present in all life's situations. Just as it is impossible for common acids to assault pure gold, so it is impossible for even dishonourable representatives of a good principle to cause that person bewilderment. But in cases where an individual's enthusiasm for democracy is naught but a superficial adornment, like gold foil, the traditions of that person's previous life soon come to the fore. Just as declining heathenism passed on to the early Christian world some of its fripperies and vestiges, the weather-worn life of church and state still pollutes and falsifies our pure republican air. I do not wish to belong to any circle in which everyone seeks to take hold of the people by way of their weakness. For me the mark of a true republican is that he appeals only to the strength of an individual: to that individual's respect for the eternal laws of virtue, truth, and honour.*

*I know that in your homeland you turned away from a society that wantonly played with these laws. Is there no means by which your lovely, pure nature can also now be freed from unholy connections?”*

Hulda pondered whether Stern perhaps mistrusted her own attitude or to which of the others he could have been alluding. She blushed when she thought of the topic that Maus the student had taken up—a matter that she would have wanted never to mention to Stern. The countess had sought, by way of her own example, to set Hulda on a frivolous course by enforcing her old habit of implementing deceitful stratagems even in the context of democracy. Another spokesman of the salon could never completely cast off the veneer of affectation that resulted from the fact that he used to say mass. When he gave one of his confusing mystical speeches, the countess's desk had to be draped with a velvet cloth to make a travesty of an altar, and one time he even organized a solemn procession of small children carrying icons. Just as a lady at court requires gallantry when she meddles in politics, so he needed clouds of incense swirling around his head before he could utter oracles. Poor Madam Gerhard, who during the election campaigns could never have done enough for her husband in her role as plebeian, was now forced to carry on like the Queen of the Night in order to impress foreign diplomats who came to appraise the salon. There was also a young lieutenant who had idolized the prince and his grandmother while at cadet school. But when in 1848 he saw that his idol was, so to speak, threatened by a pentagram,<sup>51</sup> he asked in astonishment: “Is there someone greater than my lord?” and he fell to his knees before the sovereign nation. But now the old swagger stick was also becoming visible through the gold foil of *his* appearances and poses.

Stern was an honest man through and through and had been a liberal from his youth.

Back home, Hulda had often heard Stern faulted on that point, and she had often been scolded

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<sup>51</sup> The original text uses a phrase with “pentagram” that evokes a line in Goethe’s *Faust I*, (“Das Pentagram macht dir Pein?“, “The pentagram gives you pain?”). It concerns the fact that a powerful figure must acknowledge a higher power. Mephisto must obey the sign of the pentagram, which bans or controls evil spirits. The powerful figure that the lieutenant idolizes, along with that figure’s grandmother, would appear to be Johann of Austria, grandson of Maria Theresa, who on 29 June 1848 was elected by the National Assembly as Imperial Regent of the German realm following the March Revolution. However, following the later election of Prussia’s King Friedrich Wilhelm IV on 28 March 1849 as Kaiser der Deutschen (Emperor of the Germans) Johann subsequently submitted to this higher power and resigned from his position as Imperial Regent on 20 December 1849.

for her defense of his and Ibeles's position as a show of sympathy for eccentric people. But now it had come to the point where she was required to justify herself to Stern. Little by little she not only offered in her letters a confession of her political beliefs but also dealt with more important social questions that came up for discussion. Regarding marriage they were both of the opinion that one partner was not required to be obedient to the other, but rather that one was to bow his or her will to the recognized principle of equal status and that neither active employment and effort nor self-sacrificing patience could be demanded solely from one side.

They also discussed the arts, and it was completely natural that they would meet in the galleries whose paintings they had discussed in their letters. Stern possessed much knowledge, and Hulda had a vivid aesthetic sense, and so these excursions proved to be not only extremely pleasurable but in fact mutually beneficial.

A sign of deep love is when two people do not gauge what degree of freedom they are required to part with for such-and-such an amount of happiness. Marriages late in life most often fail because of this egotistical calculation, which proves that each partner is in love only with his- or herself and seeks in the union only his or her own happiness. Stern had taken Hulda's entire being into his heart and, with the love that is typical for every teacher, aspired to encourage the clear and free unfolding of all her inner qualities. He took heartfelt pleasure in immersing himself in her own special appearance, and when he wished her a peaceful and happy existence his most selfish thought was that it might be *his* love in which she might find such happiness.

Stern was not a man warranting sympathy. He looked too proud and aware of his own strength for that. But concerned interest bordering on sympathy is always accorded a solitary bachelor, because somewhere traces of a certain helplessness always become evident in his outer

appearance. These needs, visible only to the probing gaze of a woman, awaken in such women a well-meaning regret that in hundreds of cases is the first seed of tenderness. The extreme housewives—for example those who experience a sleepless night when they remember that a nail is loose upstairs in the linen closet and finally make their way upstairs with light and hammer to ensure that the used linen they had hung on that loose nail does not fall on the floor—these extreme housewives also silently weep for all the forelorn bachelors who do not partake of the blessing of such orderliness, and from them come the relentless campaigns to marry such fellows off.

Hulda, who was acquainted with the bliss of undisturbed solitude, understood very well how happily a bachelor can live and how little he knows how to appreciate all the anxieties he causes his older lady friends. Her fond concern for Stern's well-being was therefore somewhat modest, and the tear that welled up in her eye when he once told her that he had been ill for several days and with no one to care for him expressed just enough emotion as a man is willing to put up with.

Fortunately, the love quietly flourishing between the two remained unperceived by any living soul who could have had reason to disrupt it. To be sure, the fact that Hulda no longer spoke of establishing societies and that she was more withdrawn than usual would have to have attracted the attention of her acquaintances. But for some time the salon had been seized by a new interest that distracted all attention from Hulda's activities.

Tables turning, ghosts knocking, and all manner of magnetic tricks had been unearthed from the junk room of the past century and become fashionable once again under other names and in new forms. Countess Blafoska, who considered herself to have been born a psychic, passionately embraced the useful activity of exorcising ghosts and tended to appear before her

guests dressed in a black suit with a flame-coloured shawl and carrying a little white wand in her hand. Music was relegated to the background, and all manner of ill-considered attempts were made to elicit speech not from living politicians but from long-dead greats of the past. The countess's entire character had changed, and in particular her attitude towards Ibeles alternated between melancholy and criticism. Maus was in his element. He assured everyone that he had heard subterranean voices, and if he found even just six like-minded people, they were able to set the caster-mounted table aspinning.

Meta Braun, Hulda, and Ibeles were the silent opponents to this evening amusement, and they were joined by the few other sceptics of the circle. The majority, awestruck at the deception, tried to show that those skeptics were lacking an organ, or they tried to draw them into their camp with the most outrageous evidence. For the first time Ibeles was bored, and he would immediately have cancelled his scheduled evenings if, after each of his lesson times, the tenacious force of habit did not hold him thrall to the comfortable velvet armchair beside the fireplace.

Herr v. Halen, who in the meantime had settled in comfortably at Briar Place, travelled around with Dorothea and the children seeing the sights. Everything captivated him, and even the works of the stone carvers set up on New Road he considered an open-air museum and was astonished at the artistry of the English. Only the fact that there was no casino to which one could go in the evening in order to make the acquaintance of dignitaries—that alone seemed to him a great shortcoming for such a great city. When for the first time he entered a typical cafe after sightseeing in the city, he suggested that it had been built on the model of the prison cells and exclaimed: "What kind of a melancholic life is this where each party dines, alone and cut off, each confined to its own little wooden cubicle. I am inclined instead to applaud our long vine



arbours in which the plank tables stretch from one end to the other. A carnival tent decorated with yew trees and belladonna is not such a bad idea either!”

Ibeles, to whom he lamented his sorrow, recalled a German innkeeper by the name of Göhringer who had opened a wine and coffee tavern completely furnished in the German style. He promised to take the uncle there that very same evening so that he could chat to his heart’s content with his fellow countrymen. But at dusk Ibeles was still not home, and Herr v. Halen grew impatient.

“Listen, Dorchen,” he said “can’t *you* try to explain the way to this Döring innkeeper?”

“The man’s name is Göhringer,” Dorothea corrected. “Should the need arise, I do know the way, but under no circumstances can you venture out alone in the evenings in London, dear uncle, since you speak no English. What would you do if you were to get lost?”

Herr v. Halen could not understand why his niece treated him like a little child, and he thought that everyone would surely know where the German innkeeper Döring lived. He doggedly persisted in using the popular name Döring in spite of the repeated reminder that the name of the innkeeper in question was actually Göhringer.

Dorothea had caught the old gentleman’s restlessness and looked out several times when she heard footsteps in the gate to Briar Place, but Ibeles appeared to have completely forgotten about his promise. After the children had left the room, the uncle approached her and said: “I have to tell you, Dorchen, that here in your household all is not as it should be. I have been here now for a few weeks, and your husband has had dinner with us three, maybe four times at most. Why is that? If there is no casino where the men stay until closing, then where on earth is he?”

Dorothea became alarmed at this question because her uncle was a man from the old world and she could not make him understand the delicate courtesies for which she had

sacrificed all her cherished customs. The more she disapproved inwardly of her husband's estrangement from the family to which he felt compelled and which he ultimately appeared to accept, the more embarrassing it was for her to talk about it. The longer the shadow of a cloud hung over her domestic security, the more timid she was about speaking of it. Her husband's love was the sunshine in her life, and only as long as it remained in the sky overhead was life worth living for her. The belief that the sun of his love still shone undiminished behind the clouds had until now kept her strong and calm. All her duties were easy to accomplish because she believed she could be sure of her sweetheart's former appreciation if only he had time to cast his eye at what she had accomplished in the meantime. But now the question posed by her dear uncle struck her like a thunderbolt, and she sensed with a shudder that her distant sun of happiness beyond the clouds had already set.

She had taken so long to come up with the most suitable answer that contrary to her nature she now stammered out spurious reasons until finally the tears fell from her eyes.

Herr v. Halen now intruded upon his niece's sentimental thoughts with an old Rhenish oath: "Well hit me with a bomb! I could have told right away that the old warmth was no longer there. Nothing but civility and polite compliments, as if husband and wife were paying each other a courtesy visit. When a husband acts with such formality at home, then one can imagine what kind of figure he is cutting in public among merry companions. We had envisaged with wonder what kind of solid family man the quiet Johannes might make, but here we have it! The old Dutchmen are right! When a suitor enters the house they always say: 'Young man, *have* you already frolicked about or *do* you still want to frolic about? If the latter, you will *not* have my daughter!'"

Only now did Dorothea realize what kind of assumptions the old bachelor was making when he judged her husband. She quickly dried her tears and said with the most confident voice of every proper wife: “*My* husband is a true model of virtue. I can stake my life on it. If you weren’t my dearest uncle, I could never forgive you for thinking even in jest that you could say one word against him. What is poor Ibeles supposed to do in order to revive his spirits but to spend the evening among genial company? The nobility will never grant him the stage, and with that he has been torn from his one and only sphere of activity. Do you actually believe that the delicate nerves of a composer of such distinction can tolerate the clamour of children in the evenings when throughout the entire day a veritable purgatory of wrong notes has roasted his nerves?”

“I am pleased to hear you talk that way!” the uncle replied. “Yet I would like to take a look at the type of company he’s keeping. Since I cannot insist on finding my own way to the innkeeper Döring, I will request that Ibeles take me along to the Polish lady countess where the entire little club will surely be in attendance!”

## Chapter Twenty-two

### Rocking Tables and Knocking Spirits

When a few days later Herr v. Halen set about carrying out his intention, Ibeles had already taken steps in aid of his undertaking, since the Countess Blafoska had expressed the urgent wish to become acquainted with the old gentleman, of whom Hulda had drawn a jovial picture. Moreover, the countess adhered to the principle that one should always win over the friends of friends so as to prevent the loosening of any link in the chain that bound an optimally broad circle of people to her personality.

For this occasion, the Rhenish gentleman donned his most splendid coat, filled a gold tin with the finest snuff, and took in hand his walking stick with the golden grip. He considered his cane to be essential for a dignified entrance even though Ibeles assured him that only the gatekeepers were in the habit of carrying one.

Hulda met him with cheerful greetings and introduced him to the countess and the rest of the guests. All the familiar people were in attendance, the number increased by a traveling boyar from Moldavia and two new women, both of them particularly striking by dint of their dark colouring, the older of the two appearing to be a genuine mulatta, while the European features of the younger contradicted her skin colour. The older woman sat impassively in a corner and gazed at the floor. The younger one appeared to be looking about, but as soon as anyone looked at her she would turn to survey the paintings on the wall or take a book from the table and browse through it.

Tea was served, and with a great show of unpretentiousness the countess focused her attention on Herr v. Halen, who soon found himself in deep conversation with her and found her to be a very charming woman. Maus the student insinuated himself into their conversation with a few awkward jokes and then went on to tell about time bombs as if they were toy tops. He lamented bitterly about the apathy of his compatriots back home in the German states, and asked Herr v. Halen to exert his influence as a known liberal in order that his and Wildemann's ventures might be better promoted by the Philistines. Herr v. Halen looked the young man up and down and said: "If the fatherland is supposed to do something for you then you must first gain some respect and provide a good example for the nation. Whoever wants to banish the devil must first be without fault himself."

In the meantime, Wildemann had drawn the music director aside and informed him that the two dark-skinned women were escaped slaves, who in some mysterious way had come across from America. He said: "Look at the young one. Have you ever seen a more ravishing creature? She is a renowned psychic and has brought the countess greetings from her deceased mother in the spirit world."

When the countess heard their conversation she stood up and relinquished Herr v. Halen to the remonstrances of Maus. She approached Ibeles and Wildemann and whispered: "This wonderful figure has been guided into my sphere as if by a magnetic spell. Three days ago an anonymous letter arrived alleging that I would find a kindred spirit in a specific hotel. You know that I am very careful and not prone to deception. I therefore sent my trusted servant Ivan ahead to make an inquiry. The innkeeper told him that two American women were staying in the rooms whose numbers were stated in the letter and, having just arrived, were being visited by many

elegant ladies and gentlemen. Ivan gathered that adherents of Swedenborg and of Mesmer<sup>52</sup> were competing with each other to draw the younger lady over to their party, but she has not yet decided because the spirits with whom she has direct contact must have the final word. Unfortunately, circumstances force this remarkable young woman to accept money when she conveys any messages from the supernatural realm. Yet what believer will be put off by this? To a bishop who visited her and expressed misgivings about her mission she gave a marvelous reply: “The Old and New Testaments acknowledge that angels, prophets, and saints appearing in human form all partook of food. So when appearing in the nineteenth century, they would be in need of money. But because accepting money would not be considered appropriate for direct messengers of God, in our age a medium appears in their stead.”

While the countess was speaking, Ibeles had been studying the object of their conversation. She had a fine figure and moved with ease and grace among the groups in the hall as if she were a mermaid clad in a silk dress of ocean blue. When she was standing beside Hulda, her dainty head with its black curly hair gave her a somewhat Indian-like appearance. But when she inclined her head toward her companion she evoked more the Italian type. As with all people of dark complexion, her facial expressions became clear only after one’s gaze had lingered on them long enough. Yet Ibeles was too respectful to do that, for whenever he glanced at the strange woman she would fix her dark eyes upon him, but then lower her heavy eyelids and divert her gaze as if exhausted. She did indeed look young, but very guarded and as if she had recovered from a very severe illness. Nothing suggested her to be a negress, not even the black

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<sup>52</sup> Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) was a Swedish scientist, philosopher, theologian, and mystic. Initially his writings focused on the natural sciences, but after a spiritual crisis he drew upon his spiritual experiences to write various theological books in Latin and had them published in either London or Amsterdam. His most famous work was entitled *Heaven and Hell* (1758) in which he described the afterlife and its inhabitants. Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) was a Viennese physician known for his belief in magnetic fields that could be used to heal the human body of disease by developing techniques to restore the equilibrium of the “magnetic fluid” existing in all living beings. Famous patients included Mozart. Mesmer also coined the term “mesmerism.” <<http://www.anton-mesmer.com/index.htm> April 29> April 29, 2016.

hair, which was obviously not naturally curly. Her lips and nose even looked markedly delicate when one observed her in profile.

Ibeles asked: “And she claims to have been a slave? A very clever way to garner sympathy in England!”

“Oh what a sceptic you are,” the countess exclaimed, “to not trust even this childlike face! Her mother, who obviously bears the stamp of a bondwoman on her brow, is sitting beside her over there. Her daughter has almost the same colouring, but she is said to be the spitting image of her father, who was an Englishman. She was given the education of the wealthiest ladies and considered herself the legitimate heir until the death of her cruel father, when it emerged that he had never bought her mother out of slavery and that his entire estate was encumbered with debts. Among the creditors there was a man of noble character who helped her and her mother escape after they had vowed never to reveal his name in order for him to be protected from revenge by his party. As an abolitionist he would be terribly mistreated if the secret were to get out, because an enormous price had been offered for the beautiful slave Livia.”

“I believe it!” Wildemann chimed in with a sigh.

The countess continued: “Thus, Miss Livia observes the utmost secrecy about anything that could shed a light on her previous circumstances. She refused to describe her former residence, assuring me only that it had been a paradise. She did not even want to tell me the name of the ship that brought her to Europe and the port at which she disembarked. The community of believers that visits her heard about her arrival in secret, and its number increases daily.”

Smiling, Ibeles said: “So it would be easily explainable that you would become acquainted with her without the spirits revealing her address!”

In a dignified and serious tone the countess replied: "She gave me proof. On my first visit she disclosed to me names and events that no stranger could have known about and that revealed a deep connection to my inner life."

Ibeles threw out the following question: "Didn't you say before that you sent your servant Iwan ahead before you yourself called on the mysterious lady?"

"Indeed," the countess said, "but that has no bearing on what she knew about me. What she told me were things that none of my servants has ever heard me speak about."

She then related a host of relevant little oracles that people who believe in premonitions from the outset never lack. Every objection that the strange woman could have known Blafoska's handwriting, her coat of arms, or even her face beforehand the countess refuted with counterevidence. Yet *one* coincidence was indeed striking, and she finally revealed it to Ibeles with considerable embarrassment and out of impatience with the way Ibeles responded to all her other claims with a smile and a shrug of his shoulders.

She looked around to see if Miss Livia might be watching her, and seeing her in deep conversation with the Moldavian boyar, to whom she had introduced her, she pulled Ibeles into a sideroom. "We have done something that you do not approve of," she whispered to him, "and I wouldn't tell you if I were actually to find it right to keep a deep secret from you, my best friend. You recall the innocently persecuted Irishwoman, O'Nalley, on whose behalf the good Maus at the time had that bitter argument with my malicious governess. Maus came the other morning, having penned an enthusiastic petition for O'Nalley, and he asked me to sign it along with Hulda and my other friends. It would have been petty of me to refuse, and so I wrote my name at the



top and also added the motto: “être tyrannicide n’est pas être assassin.”<sup>53</sup> The paper was sealed before my very eyes and sent to O’Nalley’s solicitor.”

Just then Herr v. Halen looked in, and Ibeles, who was annoyed at being overheard during a tête à tête in which the countess was whispering in his ear and holding onto his arm as was her way, tried to break away. He said: “Your sympathy for this dubious person was human and pardonable. But I consider signing a petition written by Maus a bad error. Pardon me, and let us return to the company, because I do not see what this story concerning the legal proceedings has to do with the information regarding the coloured lady.”

“No, it does, it does,” the countess whispered. “Let me just finish. During my visit yesterday at the hotel I requested Miss Livia to ask the poisoned O’Nalley’s spirit whether his wife was guilty or not guilty in his death. She gave a start as if she had been hit by an electric shock, and I noticed her lips turning blue. Then she said: ‘The wife of the suicide victim has followed him. The voice of the spirit says: être tyrannicide n’est pas être assassin.’ That was my own phrase as if spoken from the grave. But you don’t know the most terrible thing yet. When I returned home, I found this letter and this newspaper clipping. Read it.”

She handed Ibeles both papers. He unfolded the letter written by O’Nalley’s solicitor, which acknowledged that he had received the petition and passed it on to his unfortunate client. The letter indicated that the countess’s words had been the final consolation for the misjudged innocent woman and that she had kept them in her heart and taken them with her to her death. The newspaper clipping was taken from a local newspaper and contained the news that Mrs. O’Nalley had plunged from a cliff into the sea.

While Ibeles was reading the letter, the countess had seated herself on a footstool at his feet. Her lips quivered and she shivered. After Ibeles had handed the letter back to her without a

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<sup>53</sup> “To kill a tyrant is not to be an assassin.”

word, she begged him to approach Miss Livia and ask her a question about some deceased person in order to be convinced himself. But her rational friend explained that he had been born with an aversion to all signs and wonders and that for him eternal confusion began when the five senses ended. She then seized upon his principle of sympathetic resonance, which connects the sentient human soul with the insentient nature by way of a miraculous chain. In the heat of her speech she had fallen to her knees as if she wanted to implore him with all her being to escape from the dry world of the clear senses over to the ominous twilight world, which she declared to be the most appropriate sphere for a musician.

At this point Wildemann disturbed their tête à tête by reminding them that the table-rocking was about to commence by prior arrangement of the countess. Everyone was now assigned their seat, and in spite of all his resistance, Ibeles was forced to take a seat between the countess and the brown-skinned Miss Livia. Herr v. Halen, who was extraordinarily curious as to what was about to take place, was positioned between Hulda and the old mulatto woman. Wildemann, Maus, Gerhard and his wife, the young countess, and the boyar formed the chain around the table. A few additional people who had been excluded from participating in the experiment because of a lack of ladies needed to continue the man-woman seating order, stood about. Meta Braun had not let herself be persuaded to join in, and her passive resistance irritated the countess so much that she told Meta rather sharply: “In the future you can stay in the nursery if you can’t comply with the social forms!”

Now the company had to place their hands flat on the table and so that each person’s small finger touched that of his or her neighbour. Herr v. Halen was feeling curious. Hulda’s delicate and pale little finger was definitely not unpleasant for him, but when the dark claw of the old mulatto woman made contact, he jolted as if a garden spider had skittered over his hand.

The beautiful slave appeared not even to notice that everyone was waiting only for her to complete the chain. Like an uncomplaining victim, Ibeles had placed his hands down, but with the mischievous intention of holding onto the table and immobilizing all the pushing and shoving of the others. The countess now called on Miss Livia, who like a shy child placed the tip of her finger on the artist's and then as if frightened, withdrew it again. Ibeles cast her one of his cold, hard glances intended to express his disdain. She glanced past him only fleetingly as if nothing was capable of unnerving her, yet it was not defiance that her gaze expressed but rather *a* composure born of superhuman sorrow. Her deep-set eyes appeared to have been the target of missiles far deadlier than the disapproving glare of a respectable man.

Now followed what for the non-participating onlookers was an excruciatingly dull hour, during which all awaited a great marvel with eager anticipation. Here and there a voice whispered: "There!"—"The table is moving!"—"No, not yet!"—"Didn't you also feel something like a jolt?" and so on. Then the believers tried to assist the stubborn natural forces with an energetic pressing in one direction, but the non-believers countered every muscle movement that tried to foster that deceitful game. Experience often shows that a natural law is never violated if even just one rational person is watching. The countess became angry, and even though she was bored she did not want to give up. She asked Livia to break through the lull by spirit-knocking. Livia answered: "A stronger force is hindering me" and glanced at Ibeles, as if needing to wait for his permission.

A man who is armed against every advance has more difficulty resisting a tone of reverence that a beautiful woman uses towards him. With a more friendly countenance than previously the artist turned to her and said: "I am happy that you have recognized the power of sound common sense."

The word “spirit-knocking” had no sooner reached Herr v. Halen’s ears than he cried out: “So it seems as if knocking is called for in this social game. Now I understand! If only you had said so right away, then I would have known what kind of a little game you mean. In my younger years at grape-harvest time a similar amusement was fashionable, but it wasn’t as deadly silent in the process. If you will allow me I would like to demonstrate, and you will see for once how quickly we shall get even the heaviest table moving.”

The lady of the house was happy to go along with Herr v. Halen’s new suggestion, but reminded her guests to pause for some refreshments first. For some time now, some of the guests had been glancing at the buffet table upon which Iwan had lined up several bottles and glasses in rank and file, yet no one dared to disrupt the magic doings until Miss Livia had conceded that the experiment was hopeless by raising her hand.

After the ladies had sipped enough from their glasses to actively join the loud conversation of the male company, Herr v. Halen directed everyone to once again take their seats around the table. He was not concerned about having them in man-woman order. He only made certain that he seated himself out of the reach of the old mulatto woman.

“Now pay attention ladies and gentlemen,” he exclaimed, “and make sure to copy everything I say!” There was general silence and an eager attentiveness.—But as Herr v. Halen spoke the first incantation “Miller, grind me a sack of flour!”<sup>54</sup> gales of laughter broke out among all those who understood. The two brown-skinned women exchanged puzzled glances and stood up intending to withdraw. Ibeles, who did not want to be considered coarse, tried as hard as he could to stifle his desire to laugh and explained to the sombre Livia that no insult had been intended. She seized the opportunity that the situation now gave her. For having to stand

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<sup>54</sup> This is a reference to a nineteenth-century social game requiring memory to keep the right order of tapping and thumping. The game becomes loud and boisterous even without the added dimension of the alcohol forfeit as often found in modern social drinking games.

before such a fine lady like a crude scoffer was almost as disgraceful as the allegation of deceit might be for her. He worked hard at trying to translate the student game into English for her. This was certainly very easy as far as just the words were concerned, but who would want to teach a sense of humour to a solemn-looking person without appearing like an extremely dull character in doing so?

About six of those in attendance knew the game and insisted that it be played out. Herr Gerhard, who longed to relive his university years, promised the countess that it was all completely innocent fun and that it would put a humorous crown on the serious attempts earlier in the evening.

The countess was indeed embarrassed to have the boyar hear the informal tone that her sycophants had struck up, appearing as she did to value his visit in particular. Yet she was even more afraid of offending Ibeles's uncle, having resolved to make a cordial impression upon him. She therefore gave her consent, and to the cheers of those ready for some laughter Herr v. Halen began once again: "Miller, grind me a sack of flour!"

Herr Gerhard, who sat next to him, asked: "How am I supposed to grind it?"

"Like this!" Herr v. Halen replied, and with his right index finger he began to tap on the table keeping in time. Herr Gerhard now took up the incantation and called out to Hulda sitting beside him: "Miller, grind me a sack of flour!"

The same answer, the same constant tapping, and when the incantation had finally gone around the countess claimed that it reminded her of an actual mill, whose interior she had once visited in a romantic forest. Even the boyar smiled graciously and said that this sound reminded him of the bottom of a valley in the vicinity of Baden-Baden where he had been acquainted with a miller's beautiful daughter and that it was a pleasant memory for him.

“That’s nothing yet, countess,” Herr v. Halen said, “it gets even better. Just wait until the big millstones join in.”

Then the incantation went around the table for the second time, everyone now drumming along with the left index finger. The sound grew so gradually that those who were the source of it did not realize that the noise was already audible on the street and that a group of people had begun to gather in front of the house.

Now they all started slapping with their right hands, and the left. The racket and the loud laughter not only had an intoxicating effect on the former students but also affected the boisterous mood of the ladies. When Herr v. Halen added the first *sforzando* into the clattering rhythm by answering the question: “How should I grind it?” with an energetic blow of his fist on the table on the next round, those new to the game thought the din could never be surpassed. But once all fists became active, the elbows were next in line, and even stronger stomping instruments would have been added if suddenly Iwan had not entered the room, livid with anger. Contrary to all propriety, he pushed his way through to his mistress, and since she could not hear his voice with all the tremendous thumping, he seized her arm and gave her a shake. Roused from her tearful laughter, her face contorted with rage at finding herself so impertinently patronized in front of her guests. A sudden hush ensued, in which other sounds of alarm became audible that had previously not been heard amid all the table pounding. There was a vigorous knocking at the door, a bell had already been yanked loose, and amid the hubbub on the street they could hear the policemen’s rattles signalling murder and manslaughter.

Iwan led the countess to a window from where she could overlook a gathering of a few hundred people. All the passing coachmen had likewise stopped because the pinnacle of English curiosity is to be found among London’s charioteers, who cannot be budged from their spot once

their eyes are drawn to an unusual scene on the street. Such a racket coming from an elegant house in the most fashionable neighbourhood of the city was something completely incomprehensible, and any policeman might be excused for attempting, without a second thought, to force his way in with the intention of hindering an unknown crime of some sort.

The guests were in too much of a merry mood to realize at once the consequences of their harmless fun. The younger men were about to burst from laughing when they noticed the effect that their pounding mill had made upon the English public. But when Wildemann's glance fell upon Iwan and the countess, he deemed himself called upon to step forward as the knight in shining armour on behalf of his offended lady. The Russian servant, although one could not understand what he said, appeared to have completely forgotten himself in his maniacal rage. He shouted down the answers of his mistress and stamped his foot. The countess was weeping, and Wildemann asked whether he should throw the cad out. When Maus the student, the port wine having gone to his head, heard talk of throwing someone out, he became merry with boisterous excitement and shouted jubilantly: "Let's go outside! Let's go outside!"

Ibeles and Herr v. Halen were looking at each other in embarrassment when Ibeles heard someone addressing him quietly. Miss Livia, who had attempted to withdraw inconspicuously during the noisy game, was too afraid to venture into the throng outside the door. She whispered to him: "Since you seem to be the only gentleman in this gathering, you won't deny a lady your protection. I beg you, help us to our carriage!"

Ibeles could only approve that the company was dispersing and was quickly prepared to escort the stranger. He offered the ladies his arm in order to escort them to the front door, which the other servants, on Iwan's orders, were keeping barred. Now that it had become quiet upstairs they made no objection to Ibeles's urgent request to open the door. The moment the bolt gave

way, the policemen entered and demanded information about the events that had drawn such a mob into this quiet street. Ibeles already had sufficient experience on how to communicate with the police in London. He explained that the racket was a lark that several young gentlemen had allowed themselves and asked for assistance in order to be able to leave with his ladies. The policeman, who recognized that Ibeles was a respectable gentleman, was at once willing to open a way for him through the crowd while the other policemen guarded the door. Ibeles was forced to walk a considerable distance with the ladies since their carriage had been requested for a later hour and therefore had not arrived yet. Miss Livia was wrapped in a brown mantilla, with only her eyes peering out from under the hood. When the old woman expressed her gratitude that Ibeles had escorted them in the right direction, Livia whispered to herself quietly, but so that he could still hear: "This man I could trust!"

Then they came upon a carriage for hire, and as soon as Ibeles had seen the strangers into the carriage, he turned back slowly to fetch Uncle v. Halen. The strange image of the woman had occupied him as a result of his impression that perhaps her youth and talents were being misused in a deceitful way by the old mulatta and that perhaps a serious word from him might save her integrity.

Amid these thoughts he arrived back at the countess's residence. The street had indeed been cleared of the mob, but the servants met him with great dismay. Likewise, Hulda approached him distraughtly and invited him to come into the nearest parlour on the ground floor whereupon she reported what had occurred in the mean time.

Wildemann and Maus, in their zeal over the wounded dignity of the lady of the house, had wanted to lay their hands on the angry, frenzied Iwan, who had seized a knife, whereupon the women in attendance unanimously let out such a piercing scream that the constables came



rushing up the stairs and into the salon. When they arrived, they found surly little Maus and Wildemann in his big black beard looking so savage that they could only take them for robbers who had entered the house by force. Iwan, who was still holding the knife threateningly in his hand, had been seized from behind and dragged back by Herr v. Halen and the boyar. The entrance of the constables did in fact bring them all momentarily to their senses, but the attitudes of the quarreling group were not to be mistaken.

When the first constable asked who had started the scandal, everyone remained silent; when he repeated his question the young little countess pointed at Herr v. Halen. The constable believed that the child was in error because no other gentleman looked as respectable as the highly dignified cavalier. However, when no more information was forthcoming from the others he again asked the child, who innocently confirmed that the big, tall foreign gentleman with the white hair had been the first to start the pounding.

At that, the countess, who had collapsed trembling onto the chair, had stepped in to block the constables, who were about to arrest all the quarrelling guests and had commanded: "Arrest this servant of mine! He refused to obey me and threatened my guests with the knife! You can see in what kind of a state he is in!" The constables had naturally obeyed the lady's orders leaving the guests to go free on their own cognizance and forcibly leading Iwan away after they had, with great effort, wrestled the knife from him.

When Hulda had finished reporting everything, she added: "I am trembling so much that I can hardly remain standing, for the sight of that raging man and even the behaviour of the countess has filled me with deep horror. Can you comprehend, dear friend, that the quiet subservient Iwan would be capable of such a demented rage and losing control of himself so completely? I shall never forget that look of deadly hatred that he cast at her as she surrendered

him to the police, and yet the chilly smile with which she did this was almost even more appalling!”

Meanwhile one after the other, the remaining guests had stolen away down the stairs in search of the open air. With a sneer, the boyar had asked the countess on his departure whether she had an order for her brother-in-law Blafoski, whom he hoped yet to meet in Paris, and she had uttered a barely audible apology. Herr v. Halen, who had heard the sound of Johannes’s voice downstairs, took his leave uttering the following: “No offense countess! I hope that you will visit me sometime during the grape harvest when you pass through the Rhineland, and then we shall create a racket to our heart’s content again and again without fear of anyone being angry about it!”

He met Ibeles on the stairs and took him by the arm as he said: “The countess has been deeply shaken. She is lying in the chair, and the governess and the French chamber maid are with her. Leave her be now and come home.” Ibeles was only too happy to withdraw from the scene of such an acrimonious awkward situation and asked Hulda to express his regret to the countess. In silence he walked alongside the uncle, who cursed the misfortune that had made him the innocent cause of the mischief.

## Chapter Twenty-three

### The Worm under the Golden Green Apple Peel

The next morning when Herr v. Halen came in for breakfast Ibeles had long since left the house and started to make his rounds at the educational institutions. The evening before, when the uncle had observed through the salon door the intimate tête à tête between his Johannes and the kneeling countess, he had firmly resolved to appeal to Johannes's conscience so that he might divest himself of these dangerous circumstances. But the boyish impetuosity in which he had allowed himself to be carried along in spite of his old age weighed upon his own conscience, and he no longer had the courage to be his protégé's moralizer.

Prior to leaving, Ibeles had told Dorothea only that her uncle seemed unable to forget that he was the president of the carnival society back home and had unfortunately failed to leave that office behind while in London's serious society. So at breakfast she asked the old gentleman if he had enjoyed himself, and he poured his heart out and also did not neglect to tell her that he had narrowly escaped being carried off to the police station because of the night's racket disturbing the peace. Dorothea absolved him of his moral anguish by pointing out the foolishness of modern society adhering to the custom of considering an innocent clamour to be more of a violation than unwholesome secret games often bordering on a crime. Both then discussed the specific incidents of the evening, and she became quite alarmed when she heard about Iwan's arrest and the scene leading up to it, fearing for Ibeles and their future if he continued to remain closely connected with this circle.

Herr v. Halen said: "I can now understand why Ibeles enjoys himself so much in that circle. The ladies all hang upon his every glance, and none of the men are capable of outdoing him. He puts up with this without making any personal effort because his face speaks *for* him. One has to admit that he is the most handsome fellow in the world, and if one did not know that he is a family man, then one would be more likely to take him, rather than me, to be the bachelor."

Dorothea laughed wholeheartedly about her uncle and complimented him on his rosy cheeks. She mentioned that, according to accepted experience, the love for music makes the soul youthful and that is why he is surely enjoying such vitality at his age. Then with a sigh she added: "If only my Johannes looked as healthy as you do. I often have the most anxious thoughts regarding his pale colour and the ghostly glance in his eyes. It is inevitable that the fire in him will rapidly be consumed. If only I could prevent him from putting that late-night company ahead of his need for rest! My efforts to bring him back to the old familiar happiness are all in vain because the intellectual turmoil that surrounds him over there has become a necessity for him. In all honesty, I must tell you and only you something else, dear uncle. We women who are married are all too familiar with the human weaknesses and errors of our husbands just as much as they can see ours, and therefore we cannot always kneel before them, lost in reverence. The more genuine and true our love is, the more it is inclined to have a purely maternal perception. And alas, there are far too many eyes that look up to a famous artist with childish infatuation! In the end, won't all their adulation flatter him more than the quiet, loyal, and pure love of his one wife?"

“Put that idea out of your mind, Dorchen,” he replied. “Nothing will make a man tire more quickly than the little song *Laudamus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te!*<sup>55</sup> Even our God has ultimately wearied of the eternal singing of Hosannas and purposely sent unbelief into the world so that he can take a little break from the incense!”

“What would your friend the pastor say if he heard you making such jokes?!”

“*He* is accustomed to that! He is always a welcome sight when he comes to visit me for a glass of wine and discusses worldly things with me. But after the year of revolution he suddenly wanted to convert a skeptical old curmudgeon like me from going to the casino, and he thought we should be an example to the people and engage in going to church more often than only at Easter. But to this I replied: ‘Our Lord God has invited me to His table but once a year, and so I wouldn’t like to go cadging free meals from God.’ At another time he assured me that if I would only force myself to listen to the sermon every Sunday, then I would finally believe in it.”

Dorothea now reminded him that he had promised to go for a walk with the little ones, and when she saw him walk outside with a little darling holding onto each hand she promptly called the older daughters to come practice. She had now almost exhausted her own teaching material, and the girls had worked their way conscientiously through the music that the boys had left behind with the exception of a few of the most difficult pieces. As soon as she had listened to her good girls each play the first pieces by Beethoven with the greatest of enthusiasm and awarded their achievement, a peaceful air of the purest bliss came over her once again. Hope filled her heart that the surprise that she and the children wanted to give their dear father would count far more to him than a thousand flatteries. This labour of love, which had been prepared with lengthy persistence, was intended to demonstrate that he had no need to look far and wide for his closest kindred souls.

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<sup>55</sup> English translation: “we praise you, we adore you, we worship you.”

The day passed in a steady flow of quiet activity only occasionally interrupted by a short conversation with the uncle, who upon his return had settled down to playing dominoes, wolf-and-lamb,<sup>56</sup> and other children's games with the little ones. Herr v. Halen was rather batty about children, which was evident from the wild behaviour of the youngest, whom he had spoilt terribly since his arrival.

Among the letters that arrived throughout the course of the day there was one that had been long awaited announcing the return of Evelyn, the friend from Dorothea's youth. The older one becomes and the more the number of one's friends who still address one with the familiar "du" form dwindles, the more valued one considers the few with whom one can discuss one's most blissful memories. In youth one needs but a short time to come to love another being with one's whole heart, and for such young people it takes a long, long time to learn to hate! When bitter experiences have eventually hardened the heart, the opposite is only too easily the case.

Evelyn had never seen her friend's husband and knew him only from Dorothea's loving portrayal. Evelyn's own husband, now Lord Worth, had in the meantime gained a higher position within the aristocracy upon the death of his cousin, and he had just inherited the cousin's estates in Ireland. Dorothea's wealth consisted only of her children and the inexhaustible fountain of love's joys and sorrows that such a treasure abundantly provides. With joyful pride she had exchanged her aristocratic title, on which she had never placed great value, for that of bourgeois housewife, while Evelyn was now called "My Lady" and allowed to rule over grand riches. And yet Evelyn would happily have given up all of her husband's inherited possessions for one child's pair of eyes to look up to her like the seven pairs that smiled upon her friend.

Dorothea's husband did not share in his wife's joy over the imminent reunion, because he could not forget the comments in Meta Braun's journal regarding Evelyn and her family's

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<sup>56</sup> Wolf-and-lamb was a popular children's chasing and catching game during the nineteenth century.

arrogance. He said: "I hope I never meet these people and am certainly not in the mood to offer obedient flattery to the aristocracy of a nation that values artists as if they were servants."

Dorothea did not wish to force the issue since she could tell by his tone that a general resentment had taken hold over him. She attributed this to the disturbance that had occurred the previous evening, and so this time she made no mention of the other personal messages in Evelyn's long letter.

The next evening Ibeles visited the countess again in order to atone by his attendance for what he might have caused the evening before. This time the uncle had gone with the older children to one of the enchanting places of entertainment that fulfill for the appreciative German nature every fairytale dream of youth. A moving diorama depicted the entire voyage from London's harbour into the interior of India, and deceptive illusions of the wonders of nature and of the most charming buildings passed by the viewers' eyes to the accompaniment of harmonious incidental music played offstage.

Dorothea had stayed behind by herself, at home and undisturbed when Evelyn arrived, hoping, as her letter had indicated, to spend a few free hours with her. After they had greeted one another with a kiss and had gazed at the great transformation that several years of life had produced in their features and figures, they made the obligatory pilgrimage to the nursery. The little children were not yet asleep and saw with their own eyes the splendid dolls that Lady Worth had brought along. With heartfelt warmth she asked Dorothea about all of her loved ones, about their lives during the past years, and reproached herself for the lengthy absence from her friend's life resulting from her own marriage and foreign travel. She said she could hardly wait to see Ibeles and introduce the two of them to her husband, whom she described as quite the

freethinker and great lover of the arts. Dorothea felt awkward and did not agree wholeheartedly because she dreaded persuading Ibeles to do so.

She steered the conversation to Evelyn's sister-in-law, the same one we came to know by way of Dorothea's first visits and Meta Braun's manuscript, and Dorothea inquired where she was now living. The lady had normally paid Dorothea a short visit at least twice a year and had conveyed greetings between Dorothea and her childhood friend. Now, even during the height of the season, Dorothea had noticed in passing that the shutters of that lady's house had remained closed.

Evelyn said: "The poor woman has left the country with her children, and my brother is about to follow her. They have liquidated all of their assets and want to relocate to India. You know of course that my sister-in-law's maiden name is O'Nalley."

Dorothea thought for a moment and asked: "I hope she is not related to that much-talked-about O'Nalley woman!"

"Oh, but she is," Evelyn said. "But if she weren't such a foolish woman she would have stayed here because fortunately in this country the disgrace of a crime never falls upon the innocent relative. However, my sister-in-law has summoned the nemesis upon her own head through her dreadful prudishness. Haven't you ever had the experience that people who take such extreme pains to shy away from others who have been humiliated are often then themselves afflicted by a far worse scandal in their own family? Admittedly, the hideous O'Nalley is only distantly related by marriage to my sister-in-law, and she could no doubt deny any connection to her if she cared to. But she was forced to suffer *such* malicious gossip because—as you may or may not have heard—she is on particularly bad footing with my older sister's husband."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Evelyn's sister-in-law, who is distantly related by marriage to O'Nalley, the alleged but acquitted poisoner, is at odds with the husband of Evelyn's older sister because he is a piano teacher, which is considered a very lowly



Dorothea noticed Evelyn blush and helped her to pass over an explanation with a smile: “Yes, I know!” she said. “It’s the sister who brought an artistic friend of my husband’s into your family!”

“You know what *I* think and how little I care about matters of aristocracy,” Evelyn replied.

“I know!” Dorothea said and suppressed a remark about the outright travesty that Evelyn had committed by making Dorothea, whose maiden name was “von Dewald,” out to be the “Baroness de Wald,<sup>58</sup> for she did not want to hold against such a loyal and kind-hearted friend the one weakness that she found displeasing about her.

“Well then,” Evelyn continued, “you can imagine how my brother-in-law, the piano teacher, has exploited the opportunity to get back at my sister-in-law by making much of the fact that she is related to that notorious poisoner. And she deserves it, because for ten long years she has made him run a gauntlet of nothing but snide references.”

Dorothea, for whom domestic worries and the duties of parenting took up not only most of the time but also most of her thoughts, said: “I cannot at all understand this intense interest that the entire female population of England has taken in this detestable trial. Back when all the papers were filled with news about the hearing, no two decent women could pay each other a visit without at least one of them talking about the latest news concerning O’Nalley. They even brought *me* a pamphlet with the picture of this person simply because they were concerned when I said that I found it too inconvenient to read about it in the densely printed columns of the *Times*. There was so much sordidness featured on the first page that I quickly disposed of it

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profession in the upper classes. But because of the scandal in the O’Nalley family, the brother-in-law now has reason to disparage Evelyn’s sister-in-law for her snobbish behaviour towards him.

<sup>58</sup> Earlier (see page 71), Evelyn made it appear as if she had a really aristocratic friend by leading her family to believe that her girlhood friend “Dorothea von Dewald” was the “Baroness de Wald.”

without finishing it so that my daughters couldn't read it. Really, the woman might have been guilty or not guilty of the fatal crime. The proven details of her conduct are sufficient to consider her to be capable of the crime. But now, of course she's dead."

"I'm not so sure of that!" Evelyn replied.

"How come?" Dorothea asked. "Weren't her suicide letter and her will found on the table, and didn't her hat and her notoriously well-known coat wash ashore beneath the overhanging cliff?"

"You see!" Evelyn exclaimed. "Once again two decent women, in their first conversation after being separated for years, are discussing this O'Nalley woman. So what the cruel Irish say about her must be true: she *is* a witch. But all joking aside, it is only too natural that the best of society discuss such a psychological problem from every angle in order to solve it, because never has there been a more incomprehensible contrast than the one between the figure of this devilish woman and the devout, genuinely puritanical surroundings in which she grew up. Indeed, my husband asserts that it was precisely her upbringing that made her who she is and that she might have perhaps remained harmless if she had been steered into a career as an actress or dancer."

When Dorothea heard the word upbringing, she began to listen attentively and let Evelyn continue speaking without interruption. Evelyn went on:

"Lora Borrow—that was O'Nalley's maiden name—had an inborn inclination to pretence and deception. In order to achieve the most trivial thing she played a role with the most astounding persistence. Her mother had weak eyesight, which prevented her from reading in a well-lit room. As soon as little Lora found her lessons distasteful she would feign bad eyesight as well. For a time she controlled the entire household by doing this. Whenever she feigned tears she got everything she wanted so that her dark eyes, which showed no sign of illness, might not

go blind. One doctor after another was dismissed for being unwilling to verify the unseen eye disease, and her mother could not be persuaded that her docile child could be lying. The girl endured all the discomfort of the darkened parlour and the eye bandage with a resolve of which no one thought so young a child to be capable. Of course, the matter was said to be less astounding because Lora's efforts were supported by a shrewd mulatto woman. This woman had come along from the West Indies, where the family had lived for several years, to be Lora's nurse. Herself a stranger to education and thus adverse to it in any form, she supported the child, to whom she was devoted with the doting love typical of her race, in her resistance to learning. Slaves rely upon obedience and subterfuge to get by in life, and in order to stay close to her darling, the mulatto woman in the mother's presence would play the role of one converted to the most devout piety, while freeing herself and Lora of all such demands and restrictions when they were alone together.

“Lora's farce with her bad eyes was finally discovered by an eavesdropper, who saw the girl cut out a little picture in the glaring light of a lamp. With that, they wanted to separate her from the mulatto, but the child leapt like a demon onto the windowsill and threatened to jump if they sent her Molly away.

“The fact that people thought her capable of such madness was decisive for her whole life. On every future occasion when they would try to rein in her wilfulness or when she wanted to escape punishment for some malicious prank, she would threaten to kill herself. A career as an actress—brandishing the dagger on stage as a tragic thespian—would have provided a harmless outlet for such a character, a lightning rod for such inclinations. But instead they resorted to the extreme of piety, mixed with the superstitions and hypocrisy that plague our province. They surmised that *one big lie* could swallow up all the little ones.

“As Lora grew up she became beautiful, at least what we admirers of the true Celtic race deemed to be beautiful. She had the most incomparable red hair ever seen!”

“What, red hair?” Dorothea interrupted, “and that is supposed to be beautiful?! What taste!”

“Well,” Evelyn continued, “you shouldn’t imagine fiery red, frizzy hair like you might see on your caterpillars. There was a reddish golden gleam upon O’Nalley’s full head of hair, and nothing could match the effect of when she would suddenly open her dark eyes. You know the milky-white complexion of red-blondes that are usually combined with light watery-blue eyes. This exotic combination of colours made O’Nalley really quite exotically titillating, and I would recognize her again among thousands, even though I saw her only once, years ago, at a ball.”

“And what makes you think that she is still alive?” Dorothea interjected.

“I shall tell you. Her ravishing figure, some agreeable pleasing talents, and the status of her much respected parents made her the most courted young lady in her home town. Her marriage astonished everyone because instead of choosing one of the two very handsome suitors with whom she had flirted simultaneously and recklessly, she gave her hand to the dull business man, O’Nalley, who spent his life exclusively engaged in figures, numbers, and coins. Her acquaintances insisted that she did this because this man seemed the easiest for her to dominate, control, and deceive. But in this man she had found her master. This O’Nalley had scraped and saved, grovelled and canted until he had assured himself of the firmly established appearance of being a man of honour in the eyes of the business world. Then he set up life in a country house that was the envy of every fashionable person, an exemplar of elegance and luxury. And whom would he choose to join him there? the mothers asked, and in most unseemly fashion, the dull

man, whom previously no one had paid the least bit of attention, was assailed with invitations to galas and dances. He chose Lora Borrow to be the most dazzling ornament he could make the figurehead of his life's ship.

“She thought the day had arrived when she could be joyously footloose and free, but with dogged obstinacy O’Nalley stripped her of every opportunity to enjoy and shine on any stage other than the one where he required her talents. The most tenacious battle of subterfuge and tyranny was waged in this marriage, and since Lora was finally and inevitably discovered in a compromising situation, she anticipated his revenge.

“So you too are one of those who implicitly believe in her deed!”

“Do you think that even just one of the judges or the jury would have doubted it for a moment? The evidence was admittedly difficult to produce because Lora had used great care to ensure that she was not detected. What initially condemned her in the eyes of the world was the meticulous care she took in seeking to secure O’Nally’s fortune. The creditors laid claim to it and threatened her with an inquiry, and if she had quickly renounced all claim to the estate back then she would have at least saved her reputation. She declared her innocence to all the relatives and vowed that she would rather kill herself than taint her family’s name. When my sister-in-law heard about this she said: ‘Indeed, that would be the best thing Lora could have done. Then the matter would be silenced, and no one would be compromised. I intend to go to her and appeal to her conscience, and if she has any sense of honour, she *will* kill herself.’ But my sister-in-law came back from this campaign empty-handed because Lora absolutely refused to entertain any assistance offered in planning her suicide and preferred to chance it. You know the outcome. She charmed the jury so much that they let her off. The talent to wallow in the dirt with grace won her more male hearts than the purest innocence would have. Isn’t it a disgrace that the acquittal

of this dangerous boa constrictor caused such public jubilation? According to her counsel, she was even sent a petition; however, it was signed only by foreigners. A very distinguished Polish woman and a wealthy German lady are said to have added their names to it.”

Dorothea asked for the names, but Evelyn did not know them. Then Dorothea inquired how the parents of O’Nalley were bearing the terrible blow.

Evelyn replied: “Their entire lives have been destroyed, however outwardly they continue to exist. It hangs over their house like a benumbed madness, and I believe that the parents are beyond feeling either fear or hope. Only *one* creature followed O’Nalley with true and unwavering loyalty, and that was the old nurse. Even O’Nalley’s most bitter enemies were moved to find this mulatta on the steps of the courthouse every morning before the break of dawn and reading upon her features the shifting mood of the culprit. O’Nalley, who people believed was incapable of any human emotion, had shown the same loyalty to the old woman and had named her as her sole heir.”

“Well then, what has become of the nurse?”

“After she had accepted a substantial sum of money she disappeared without a trace. It was in the best interest of both parties to avoid a new trial, which would have easily and completely eaten up the already dwindling inheritance. Upon the advice of O’Nalley’s lawyer her creditors divided it with the heiress, and with that the entire matter will soon fall into oblivion.”

Dorothea could not hold back from criticizing the truly appalling state of society in which such mysteries were played out under the most saintly of surfaces. Before Evelyn departed, she made Dorothea promise to spend a few days with her in her beautiful country house, very close to London, where she would be residing.

Herr v. Halen and the children returned home late quite enamoured of the delightful evening they had enjoyed together. For Dorothea it was as if the scent of the blossoming vineyards on the hills of her homeland wafted about her when the children sat around her bright-eyed, innocently chattering, and feasting on pure white bread and fresh fruit for their light evening meal.

She would also have gladly awaited Ibele's homecoming, but in view of the upcoming day and its cares and duties it seemed wrong for her to force herself to stay awake by reading. After all, he possessed the symbol of freedom, the house key, in his hands, and so this time she went upstairs alone to once more carefully tuck in all the children and to plant a kiss on each little brow. At the door she turned around once more, held the lamp up high, and allowed its light to fall upon the dear little heads, then vowed to staunchly and faithfully protect the young offspring from every blight. She did not pray for them. The voice of the God she knew spoke audibly enough into her own heart, and she decided to heed it.

She was made anxious by a bad dream that was inspired by some paintings that she and her uncle had seen in a gallery. It weighed heavy upon her breast like a nightmare, and figures broke loose to swarm around her. Wild music could be heard in the distance, and Orpheus, torn to shreds by the maenads, sank bleeding at her feet. She recognized his features, and she wanted to reach out with her arms and hold his head in her lap. The brazen women touched her with their clammy hands and, laughing, sat down beside her on the grass. A deathly gloom descended, the life-giving colours of golden nature turned pale—this was the painting of *The Deluge* by the landscape artist Turner.<sup>59</sup> She struggled with Herculean strength: up hill after hill, always dragging behind her the corpse of her beloved in her arms. Ever more muddy new waves rolled

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<sup>59</sup> Joseph Mallord William Turner's (1775–1851) oil painting, *The Deluge* depicts the biblical flood in the Book of Genesis and was exhibited in 1805.

toward her—at last she was washed into the abyss with him, and just as in that very famous painting art rendered the final exhortation to motherhood, she felt as if she was that same female figure, who, already sinking with dying arms holds the youngest child above the floodwaters.

Waking from her dream she heard the sound of real music coming from downstairs. She recognized the voice of her husband, who had utilized the deep and solitary night to compose a song. She listened to the various harmonies he tried out but then discarded or modulated. She would gladly have gotten up and begged him to grant himself some sleep. She thought of Mozart's fate, and Schubert's, both men having worn themselves out before the prime of their lives. Yet if ever an hour of time is sacred, it is that rare period of quiet intellectual creativity. So she remained awake listening until she heard him singing the completed song. The familiar lyrics were by Eichendorff. She had read it with the children, and Angela had copied it into her notebook. The child had left the book open on the music stand, and she now recalled that she had neglected to put away the music and close the piano, a disorderliness that had never occurred before. So it was her fault that Ibeles had denied himself sleep in order to compose, because he was in the habit of automatically picking up anything that lay on the music stand, printed or written, and engrossing himself in it. The lyrics read as follows:

The treasure-seeker<sup>60</sup>

When the forests lay in slumber,  
To dig he'd begin once again,  
Unceasing in the depths of the mountains;  
A treasure was to be his aim.

The angels of God were singing  
While in the silent night,  
Like eyes of red he saw peering  
Glinting metals from the shaft so bright.

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<sup>60</sup> German text by Josef Karl Benedikt von Eichendorff (1788–1857), “Der Schatzgräber” from *Gedichte in 7. Romanzen*. The translation offered here is my own.



“You will be mine!” and more grimly  
Did he dig and dig on down;  
Then stones and rubble came tumbling  
Upon that poor fool’s crown.

Wild laughter of scorn then resounded  
From down in the chasm so deep,  
And sadly the angels’ song faded  
In the air o’er the forest’s sound sleep.

He came to their bedroom. She remained motionless, her breathing quiet, as if she were asleep, so that she would not draw him into a conversation, what with the morning star already in the sky. For a moment Johannes gazed at his wife’s prominent brow and her long lashes brushing against her dark cheeks, and he thought to himself: “Ah, what a creature she has become, so homey, so simple. She seems not to sense even a trace of what is eating away at my heart. What a downright fool I am that I sacrifice myself to a family life that would just as well exist happily without me!”

Only after several days did Dorothea learn through casual conversation that the countess had departed. She could not understand why the entire relationship had so suddenly collapsed, until Meta Braun wrote her a letter asking to speak with her.

Chapter Twenty-four  
Shaking the Kaleidoscope

On the morning after Iwan's arrest Dr. Stern received a letter from Hulda that provided a brief account of those events. Another letter, in handwriting not unfamiliar to him, followed. It was from Meta, who wanted him not to forget her. She asked him to recommend her to some teaching position, since for several reasons she wished to leave the countess's house. A peculiar mood beset him as he compared their handwriting. Hulda's writing was graceful and relaxed. Meta in contrast had a rigid, idiosyncratic script that clearly expressed her character. He sat down in the corner of the sofa and pondered the circumstances. If Hulda left London he feared he would lose her. But would it be right to tie her down, and was the life he could offer her sufficient to content her for the rest of her days? For the first time he began to see that Meta loved him and would be a more suitable wife for him than would the aristocratic young lady. Not that Meta had given any indication in her letter of her affection for him, but it was precisely the care she took to avoid any warmth of expression and the defiant brevity that was possible to produce only with well-thought out deliberation, revealing a strong, deep-seated sense of self. The way they had previously related would have allowed her to write to him on intimate and confidential terms without compromising herself, yet she did not do so.

Women are not in doubt about *whom* they love, but men can vacillate between two women. As soon as a young woman loves one man, she finds the approach of another man to bode for dire consequences, and she focuses more and more closely on the one man as her fondness for him grows. A man, on the other hand, becomes attractive to all women once, by

being in love with one woman, he has overcome the roughness of his character. Stern had enough experience to know that love for a particular person can be fleeting and, with strong resolve, be overcome. He had never expressed his feeling for Hulda with such clarity that he could not have retreated from a relationship with her without a breach of fidelity. His relations with her had something of an almost fatherly nature to them, and precisely therein lay a major allure for him. He loved to guide, to bend, and with Meta's resolute, set character he would not have had occasion to act in that way. Hulda, who acted and spoke very impulsively, offered him more opportunity to relate to her as an advisor and a protector. One question especially still needed to be taken into account, namely that Hulda was an aristocrat and Meta a working-class woman. Stern had broken off contact with rich relatives *because* he was their heir. He did not want to bear for the rest of his life the humiliation of enslavement that would have been bound up with the expectation of an inheritance. Hulda's fortune was sufficient to maintain the lifestyle to which she was accustomed, but not to establish an aristocratic household. She would make demands for a public way of life that would never have occurred to the working-class woman.

He intuitively felt that Hulda loved him less than Meta did. In fact, he held Meta's character in higher regard than he did that of his beloved. But Meta's sharp mind filled him with a certain sense of timidity that he did not feel towards Hulda's more poetic nature so open to sweet delusions.

Suddenly he abandoned his brooding and exclaimed: "Away with these reflections! The one I love is the one it shall be if she will have me; and then we shall see how our relationship develops." And with that he wrote a letter to Hulda.

She accepted his proposal and was soon his gracious wife. Everything regarding establishing societies was forgotten when Hulda provided evidence that she knew how to make *someone* quite happy with her gracious domesticity.

Meta was bitterly pained to learn that the two whom she had sought to keep apart were now, despite her efforts, a couple. Stern had written a friendly reply to her former request and had been helpful in finding her refuge with very kind people. But she rejected the offer and made the hasty decision to emigrate to Australia.

It was in order to say farewell that she appeared at Dorothea's house. She no longer had to be mindful of any concerns and therefore confided to her all the events that had come to her knowledge in the past weeks. Count Blafoski had quickly hurried over from Paris and had used his personal influence to get Iwan released immediately. In spite of all her objections he had taken the countess with him back to Paris, where in future she would appear in society under his watchful eye. His actions indicated that he determined his sister-in-law's income and lifestyle. All visitations, other than that of the dark-skinned Miss Livia, had ceased since he had arrived at the house. He had had a long meeting with Livia, and Meta had chanced to hear, as she entered the room, that they were talking about the somnambulist sessions in Paris. The discussion had been abruptly broken off when she walked in, but she had connected the few words that she had overheard with another exchange of information that she had picked up somewhere else. She remembered that these somnambulism séances were used by some diplomats in order to draw conclusions regarding the political position of the visitors by way of their questions and that in particular the Russians from Paris were among the most devoted of those who attended such meetings.

Before her departure, the countess had recommended her friend Ibeles as a valuable friend and protector to Miss Livia in order for his memory of her not to die. When Meta Braun touched upon this last point, she moved closer to Dorothea and whispered to her: “Consider giving your husband a warning, because it appears to me that this strange woman is a sinister and in fact very dangerous person!”

Dorothea said in reply: “You do not have much luck playing the role of the faithful Eckart!<sup>61</sup> Let’s drop the subject! Every person is best left to the guidance of his own sense of honour!”

Meta appeared to be hurt at being reminded of the past mistake that had robbed her of Dorothea’s trust.<sup>62</sup> She wanted to get up, but her old friend held her back because she did want to part with her for good on a jarring note. She steered the conversation to Australia and the possibility of an appropriate and respectable occupation open to her there. In the wake of a failed love it is difficult to find room in one’s heart for hope of a different future, and the ability to do so speaks for a resilience of character. Meta had this ability. She realized that her knowledge and talents would not ensure success in London, but that a personality such as hers would find its place in a newly emerging community. She said: “I am not leaving in order to mend my personal loss, but I want to surrender myself to some duty there instead.”

She and Dorothea parted cordially, and Meta promised to write as soon as she arrived in Australia. It is a very long distance to Australia, and this story will have ended before Meta’s letter reached her friend. So we shall offer a quick look ahead in order to relate a strange interweaving of fates.

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<sup>61</sup> “Der getreue Eckart” (German) or the faithful Eckart refers to a figure in German medieval literature portrayed as a hero, faithful protector, and counselor.

<sup>62</sup> Reference is made to the betrayal Dorothea felt when Hulda arrived, and Meta, mainly in her own interests, helped to carry out the countess’s plan to steer Hulda away from the Ibeles’s and into the countess’s house and circle. See pp. 245–47.

Wildemann had threatened to follow the countess to Paris, yes, even to the end of the world. Thus did he wish to take revenge on her for having toyed with his trust and for not voluntarily revealing to him the web of events that a ridiculous chance had revealed all too late. Then he received an unexpected offer of free emigration to which the government attached only one simple condition. He inquired in vain who might have become involved in his fate, but his efforts resulted only in unprovable speculation. He assessed his situation and came to the conclusion that, no matter which corner of the world one might be in, nothing could deter a person to rush to the aid of the fatherland as long as one remained true to one's convictions. Since he was not granted a long time to consider the offer, he quickly seized the opportunity and to his great surprise found himself sailing on the same ship as his adversary Meta.

There is something special about a long sea voyage, and a pair of compatriots among only strangers, alone between the sky and the sea, have enough time between England and Australia to bring into harmony their most extreme opinions. At least Meta's letter, taking a year to arrive, never revealed a hostile opinion towards her traveling companion.

Maus did not fare as well when the social circle to which he had been committed fell apart. He had been just as unwilling as Wildemann to seize upon some positive work and instead lived from day to day. He was often in the most desperate financial straits. Then he was again helped out of his dire situation or assigned an intermittent job for a short-lived business of some sort. As immature and wrong as he was, he appeared harmless and was abandoned to his fate. And in fact he proved to be a loose cannon in any undertaking, a danger more to his comrades than to the enemy.

Our music director had come to find himself in a strange situation. For years he had no longer spoken at home of matters related to this circle, and so he hardly knew how he was all at

once to explain its dissolution to his wife. The two evenings that had at first been established for Hulda's and the countess's music lessons had gradually been extended to the habit of daily gatherings. Other visitors tended to interrupt the lessons. They would stay to chat, and the lessons would be postponed to the following day. Ultimately music was found to be an altogether childish, nebulous skill unworthy for a thinking person in our time to engage in further. In times when the pathway to action is blocked, the discourse of fiery people tends to stray to extremes. To the disputing individuals nothing appeared sufficiently grand and important to devote themselves to than the *impossible*.

Ibeles was ashamed of his occupation, which he found to be the most worthless on earth. He imagined struggles that were to reshape the world, discoveries that would solve the mystery of all things, yet he felt himself barred from contributing. Once one has touched the spinning wheel of time, the joy in the quiet, peaceful, modest routine of daily life is lost. Only two things make bearable the contribution to this modest routine: the profoundest love for one's family or total devotion to the pleasures of life.

Our artist had been hurled out into these wild times as a good and proper, even somewhat Philistine type, and it had taken a long process of unraveling until he was tied to his own home by only a thin thread. No one had seen any outward signs of his internal transformation because he was generally sparing with his words and not certain of his own will. It is terribly difficult to depart from the path one has followed for half a lifetime and find one's way in a labyrinth of new principles.

As much as he had fought against the excesses advocated by his friends, he now felt that living exclusively in such an atmosphere had not left his character unshaken. He was certain that the countess had not intentionally wanted to deceive him, but rather that she too had felt the

misery of having great strength yet being confined to such a narrow circle. Too proud and too passionate to be merely a tool, but not clever and strong enough in character to cut her own new path, she had ruined her relationship to both parties.

He pondered his own direction and told himself: "It was not *my* lot to be the highest that a man can become in these times. I have dreamt away half of my life with sweet melodies, and because I have developed only my intellect to the highest virtuosity, I may not count myself among the reformers. If I had a wife who was ambitious, who could be both father and mother to my children, I would even now sacrifice myself to the world's progress and would buy myself into the world's history with a grandly conceived deed. It would have to be a deed that would destroy all the impulsive follies of my party—one of those acts that endures because they cannot fail, and therefore admit to no successors. But where can great deeds still be found that do not ultimately become ridiculous!"

Thus our friend fantasized and despaired of achieving enduring good and greatness, because an association in which he had sensed some patriotic significance had fallen apart under his feet. He carried out his work, gruelling to the nerves, out of a sense of bourgeois integrity and felt he was a martyr in doing so. Dorothea, who steadfastly and unwaveringly believed in his sense of honour, had come to think that he was struggling within himself with an ill-fated attraction, and this illusion was reinforced by his statement, "that only unhappy or forbidden love was poetic!" But he had made this statement only in reference to music, where the reproach of an uneasy, unobstructed attraction would not have made much sense.

That Ibeles had not loved the countess she knew as well as she knew that his fondness for Hulda had been completely harmless. As if illuminated by a flash of lightning her suspicion became fixed on Miss Livia, and when Ibeles informed her several days later that he had been



commissioned to compose a melodrama for that woman and that for this reason the evenings that he had otherwise spent with the countess he would now be devoting to Miss Livia, she was silent and sombre. She felt too deeply hurt to utter a flattering word that might have led to an explanation. Rhenish women never like to compete for the affections of their own husbands, but in any circumstance they want first to be respected and then loved. Dorothea feared that any appeal to the poetic enchantment of their old love could make her look ridiculous, and so she was far more inclined to show a coldness that made her the opposite of charming.

She passed several days in great apprehension, and it was as if the blackest night had surrounded her. The more she attempted to conceal her mood, the deeper the poison ate into the wound in her heart. There are gentle natures who confide every worry to the heart of their loved ones as soon as it arises, and the resulting scenes of reassurance and comfort then constitute a very lovely pleasure of life. Dorothea was not one of these, and even if she could have and had wanted to, she had no spare time to do so, given the current structuring of her household. A large portion of London's middle classes suffer from the same condition. Husbands and wives are forced to lead a divided family life, because the areas of the city where the husband earns his living are a considerable journey away from the more modest part of town where his family lives. Like the genteel mothers of Paris who turn their offspring over to be raised by a woman from the country, many a London husband, having sent his family off to live in the country, likewise feels like a stranger to his children.

After Dorothea had steeped herself so deeply in the illusion that Johannes's melancholy could arise only from some secret affection, she listened carefully to every remark he tossed out and interpreted them as if a double-meaning must have been intended. She became more and more certain of her delusion, and since she assumed the woman's view that as soon as a man had

a mistress he would have to hate his own wife, she exercised utmost caution in maintaining the greatest reserve so as not to make him hate her more.

A good many times she had asked him to prearrange a day on which the children could present to him what they had learned and achieved. He always put off the request either because he did not have enough time or because he had already spent the entire day with immature creatures and had had his fill of all pedagogy. Sundays had been relinquished totally to his friends, and if there was no outing planned together, then foreign visitors prevented a closer connection with his family.

Whenever he drove past one of the large prisons and looked up at the desolate windows, he shuddered at the thought of how close each person is to crime. He had never done anything that was not in line with his old convictions, and yet he felt cut off from his own self and his nerves so shattered that the slightest incident filled him with anger at his insipid life's work. If someone had prophesied to him: "You will end your days locked up in a cell like that!"—he would have accepted it as most likely. The jolly hustle and bustle that Paris imparts to its inhabitants does not allow feelings of such grim depression to arise. It is a malady that only London's dismal air can cause, combined with a feverish, artificially induced excitement that eats up the soul instead of invigorating it.

It was in such a frame of mind that Ibeles became acquainted with Livia. Their first encounter had something repugnant about it for him, but when she caused him to sense that she was unhappy and needed his advice and support, his natural kindness then drove him to make up for his earlier coldness with friendliness. The countess had been foolish enough to disclose all of her observations about Ibeles's character to her new confidante, and as incorrect as her conclusions were, in most instances she still made it possible for the colder, sharper-eyed Livia

to detect his weak spot. She guessed that she had to strike the opposite tone from Blafoska, who had triumphantly exhibited the friend to the whole world, and instead, if she wanted to attract him, snare him with the enchantment of a secret novel. A popular musician is so showered with adulation that all vanity residing within him soon becomes satiated. It is more effective to apply a stronger lever to turn him from his chosen course and bind him to a new cause.

Livia was residing at this time in a charming little house that was completely covered with clinging vines. In front was a garden enclosed by a high wall covered with ivy, which hung over the top on the side facing the street. At certain times this hermitage was invaded by people who, believing in Livia's oracles, paid dearly for messages from the realm of the dead.

We join them now, just as she was alone with the mulatto woman, who was rolling up the money and locking it away.

"My dear!" the old woman began, "Business was good today!"

Livia replied: "Cover up every trace that someone was here! Smooth the footprints out of the sand on the walkway before he arrives."

"My dear! He never takes a look around. He always walks as if in a dream and looks only at you and at his music sheet!"

Ibeles arrived at dusk and was ushered into a room where a piano had been positioned so that the person playing could look out over a platform affixed to its far end. The two women appeared, the old one in her native finery, Livia in a silver-grey silk dress, closed at the neck in nun-like fashion, with long sleeves and simple white cuffs and collar. She acted with great timidity in the presence of her "mother," as if unable to express her inmost thoughts with her there, although something weighed heavily upon her heart.

They rehearsed the melodrama together, its content devised by Livia. The poetry was cast in loose verse form and arranged in the style of Félicien David's cantatas. Ibeles had decided in an earlier discussion on David's popular composition *The Desert*.<sup>63</sup> He had expressed his regret that similar works on a smaller scale were not occasionally performed in society instead of the operatic arias or lyric songs, and Miss Livia had seized upon this remark and at once asked Ibeles to create for her oracles an accompanying music that could facilitate the transition from everyday feelings to that mood in which the soul, trembling with expectation, feels itself touched by greetings from the spirit world. Ibeles had been reluctant to allow his art to serve in any kind of deception of the senses, and Livia with much skill had countered his refusal by reminding him of free-thinking painters whose paintings of saints supported a belief that they personally rejected. During this conversation he had openly attacked her mysterious occupation and had appealed to her conscience whether she was herself deceived or whether she was knowingly being deceptive. She had then, when they were briefly alone together, confessed to him that she perceived herself to be the most wretched of mortal beings as long as she could not clear herself of his suspicion and that his respect was worth more to her than her very life. Her timid glances toward the mother, her fragmentary statements when the old woman suddenly left the room, and her abrupt silence when she came back, left Ibeles to believe that Livia was totally under the old woman's control. The physiognomies of the two women did admittedly make such a relationship difficult to comprehend, with the old woman seeming so stupid and lethargic, while Livia appeared to be so lively. Had Ibeles been slightly less naive he would have to have noticed that the two were colluding to play out prearranged roles.

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<sup>63</sup> French composer Félicien David (1810–1876) wrote *Le Désert*, a symphonic ode in three parts after a stay in Egypt and the Holy Land where he collected oriental melodies that later influenced his music. The work was successfully debuted in Paris in 1844 and had an influence on Bizet, Gounod, and Delibes. *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012. p. 212.

His curiosity had grown with every visit, and he gladly took on the task of composing the melodrama from whose text Livia had omitted everything that his artistic conscience rejected. The underlying story was about an Indian woman who loves a white man, a match prohibited by her tribe. She follows him to his fort, which has been raided by the Indians during his absence. She is to lure him and his band of warriors into the fort, or she must die. She warns him with a song, he tries to save her, and both perish.

When she presented her verses to Ibeles and suggested to him the places where the music was to come in and intensify the discourse, he had declared: “And with such a talent you want to be something other than a performing artist? Choose the only deception permitted to weave around the human soul: the lovely pretense of art, which we know to be an illusion. You seem to me an elemental being vacillating between heaven and hell. Let singing be your fairy language if you want to reveal yourself to people.”

“I cannot sing!” Livia said.

“So you can be an actress!” Ibeles exclaimed.

“I am!” she replied with a deep sigh and then looked around to see if the old woman had heard.

This and later comments had made Ibeles determined to work on the melodrama with the utmost fervour. He hoped that this, her debut work, would be the talisman tying her to the art of presentation in a more innocent manner. He knew from history that after mankind receives a great intellectual shock all kinds of delusional ideas for a time take control of the minds of people for whom the intoxication was too intense, and he attributed the entire somnambulistic madness to a similar illness. Sympathy for this strange woman and the powerful attraction that her mysterious appearance exerted upon him compelled him to vow to himself to divert the

doom that an imminent disillusionment would of necessity have brought upon this imaginative creature. He realized that she could not revert from her current activity into a simple daily life. What was to be her fate if she did not seize the anchor of art that would hold her unsteady soul above the abyss?

“This child has been sent to me so that we might save each other from despair!” he told himself.

Today was to be the first rehearsal during which Livia would practice her mimic performance to the music. This was difficult work because Livia appeared not to have any sense of rhythm in her blood. Her verses surged from fantasy to passion, but her oration had absolutely nothing musical about it. Many years before, Ibeles had experienced a similar scenario during the rehearsal of Radziwiłł’s *Faust*.<sup>64</sup> There, the actor at several points in the monologue could not speak the lines so that they converged in arsis and thesis with the chords.<sup>65</sup> If this was a possibility in the case of Goethe’s melodic syllables then he could not be surprised that it happened here. Livia was only a dilettante, and in spite of all the counting and calculating, the measures of the metre got somewhat out of cadence. In their emotional wildness they sounded like a spirited song, but sung without rhythm, and only an experienced musician like Ibeles was able to accompany her recitation through sudden jumps in the harmony. However, her facial expression and gestures were so admirable that he was happy to show patience with the one deficiency and repeatedly ran through the hardest spots with her *ad infinitum*.

It was a mild starry night, and when Ibeles finished, Livia opened a glass door in the adjoining room, which led directly to the garden. The old woman appeared to have dozed off in

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<sup>64</sup> Prince Antoni Henryk Radziwiłł (1775–1833), was a Polish aristocrat, politician, musician, and patron of the arts, who collaborated with Goethe to write the score for Goethe’s *Faust*.

<sup>65</sup> Derived from the Greek, these terms apply to music and prosody. In music, arsis is the upbeat and thesis the downbeat.

an armchair, and Livia, who walked several steps into the garden ahead of the artist, turned suddenly and said to him quietly in passing: "Here is a paper that might be of value to you." She left the sheet in his hand and slipped back into the illuminated room.

After arriving home, Ibeles unfolded the paper and found a list of all the German police spies in London along with their addresses and an accompanying personal description as well as a precise description of the various guises under which they would sneak into the homes of politically compromised individuals. A few had already been exposed and expelled by his friends in the past, and others were unknown to him, but one he had found inauspiciously going and coming from Stern's house posing as a pedlar. At the bottom of the page Livia had written: "Do not give me away, so that I can remain of further use to you."

Now he believed to have firmly in hand the evidence that her intentions toward him were honest, and his heart swelled with the thought of how with such an ally he would completely destroy the traps set by forces opposed to freedom.

Livia had the garden gate locked after his departure and then stayed a while to converse with the old woman.

"My dear," the old woman began, "you are clever and know how best to sort everything out. But I'd like to know what your plan is with this poser. We will never earn as much money from this as we do with our séances."

Livia replied: "I cannot remain in London if those protecting me discover that I am going my own way. I do not want any coercion other than what I choose myself. During those terrible hours when my life hung by a thread, the hypocrites crowded around me and each one whispered in my ear: Spin only *one* thread in the net in which I capture humanity and you will be declared free and innocent. I have seen revealed the most secret codes of the two-faced hypocrites, and

they all say: Prosecute the honest person who delivers us unto truth; protect the evildoer who spreads the big lie further and further. The noble-coloured colossal sinner, the virtuoso posing as innocent, she who defies the world and even death is their invaluable prophetess. I used both parties, allowed myself to be given free access to their leaders in modern-day Gomorrah, and freed myself. We must leave soon before the fiery fury rains down on me.”

The mulatto shook her head and said: “Oh dear, surviving that fear-ridden time and my age have made me simple-minded, and I don’t understand your great speeches anymore. Should we go to Paris, to the Polish count who invited you so kindly?”

“Me? Go to *him*? I don’t want a master! All I need is someone to protect me!”

“Oh that unfortunate marriage!” the mulatto exclaimed. “If only you had heeded me and waited for that nice cousin, who loved you from his youth and was always on your side! You can’t deny that you were in love with him, and yet you chose that abominable man, that tormentor—well, now he has received his punishment!”

Livia gave a start and spoke with vehemence: “Be silent! Even in the loneliest night, never speak of this again! If I ever discover that you even so much as utter a syllable of his name in your dreams, we shall have to part from one another!” She calmed down somewhat and continued: “I did not want my cousin as a husband *because* I could have loved him. Was I to endure the life-long abysmal agony that no woman who loves her own husband can escape? No matter how many laws are passed in order to secure equal rights for women: all are for naught as long as love makes us into voluntary slaves!”

“My dear, my dear! And yet you are out to find a husband for yourself. Don’t be deceived by his gentle face. This one will restrain you with all meekness, like the other—whose name you have forbidden me to utter.”



“This German! The one, who is *himself* bound by the chain?”

“Child, what do you want with him? Let him go. You can find enough younger men who are also *rich*.”

Livia laughed with an ugly distortion on her face and retorted: “Foolish woman with your money, always money. I want money too, but much more than that, as well. I want the honour of the virtuous woman and the amusement of the frivolous woman, and in order to unite the two I require an associé, cut out of exactly the same cloth as the friend of the Polish countess.”

“He won’t want to be linked to us!” the old woman countered.

“Of course he won’t *want* to. That is why it is important to make it easy for him to choose between dishonour and shame here or running off with us into the golden yonder. A *fait accompli* controls all people. But I am being foolhardy talking to you about what you do not understand. Just obey, and conduct yourself exactly as I instruct. Do not ever leave me alone with him, and in his presence pose as if you were keeping a strict watch over me. I want to stir up his curiosity just enough so that he does not reject the only opportunity to hear my confession.”

## Chapter Twenty-five

### The Talisman

Stern and Hulda sat chatting cheerfully in the dim little room, and the present and the future smiled upon them with gladness and hope. These were the initial blissful days of love's happiness, when the human heart is so self-content that it even appears simple to surrender this heavenly joy for a noble death. Adversity makes people more egotistical than does bliss. This becomes evident during revolutions, when only those who have relished happiness in its highest and purest earthly manifestation surrender themselves completely and unselfishly to an idea and seek no personal gain. A happy home attracts good people, and so it happened that after only a few weeks a close-knit and quite charming circle had begun to form around the couple. The individuals who had been burnt felt uneasy in Stern's presence and stayed away.

Since her marriage Hulda had been seized by a natural sympathy for sensible women and shook off all the ambiguous individuals on whose characters she had carried out her experiments in salvation. Whoever has practiced tolerance for weak-willed natures learns quite quickly that only personal determination can lift up an individual. Leaning on a strong masculine will and being guided by a man had shifted Hulda's helpful, reconciliatory instincts onto the right path—where benevolence keeps pace with reason.

One afternoon as the couple were walking among the crowds in a main street, they were delayed by one of the usual parades that a newly opened dairy organizes to attract the neighbourhood's attention. Four horses were pulling a brightly painted wagon slowly through the streets. The wagon bore a banner, and four fellows sat up front blowing trumpets, while another

at the back was beating on a drum. From time to time the wagon would stop, and a snow flurry of leaflets bearing the new shop's address and its reduced prices was hurled out among the people. Thousands of street urchins and other disrespectful riff-raff followed along behind the wagon, shouting and blocking the street. Sometimes the coachman whipped his horses recklessly, and then the mass of people scattered, only to close in again, defying death. Above the sea of heads towered a procession of marching banners, born along by shabbily dressed men, their heads downcast, struggling to hold them aloft as they trudged along.

The banners were large boards painted bright red with huge black letters on them so that the whole procession spelled out a word or phrase. The boards were fastened to tall poles, carried along with a slight gap between the letters. This was done so that people passing by on foot or in carriages too quickly to have a pamphlet thrust upon them could read the name and address of the new shop.

Hulda had sought refuge on a high doorstep in order to keep clear of the densest crowd. She said to her husband: "What a miserable task for a strong man like that one there to be the letter 'i' in the word 'Milkshop,' while the little old fellow in front of him makes me even sadder. He seems almost ready to collapse under the giant 'M'!" Stern glanced in his direction, and Hulda did not know what to think when he suddenly broke away from her side and cut through the crowd into the path of the "M" and "i." The people thought he wanted to get the address of the shop, and from every side they held out leaflets to him. Instead he pulled out two of his calling cards and handed them to the ragged fellows carrying the two front letters. General laughter and shouting ensued as the well-dressed gentleman returned to his abandoned lady after this expedition. A policeman, who thought him only to be a fool or prankster, approached him

and remarked to him that it was inappropriate to wilfully hold up the procession of letters or to get them out of formation.

As they walked along Stern explained to his young wife that he had recognized his old comrades-in-arms, Reffbaum and Butzmann, of whom he had lost all traces. He said: "For carrying those banners they use only the most destitute and lost men, and I can just imagine what my poor fellow countrymen must have gone through before they stooped to doing this. Back when they arrived, I couldn't be of any help, and they defiantly rejected even what my friends and I wanted to provide in order to help their condition. They said they did not want to have their lifestyle dictated to them by anyone who considered themselves above them, and yet they attacked *our* lifestyle and made it unpleasant for us, even impossible, to help them. Now that I have found my own haven of happiness, I once again feel the urge to offer help to others. I invited them to visit us, and I mean to look into the matter and see what can be done."

Even that same evening the two turned up at Stern's house, where with great kindness Hulda had a warm evening meal served to them. It was depressing to hear how they had gradually sunk into the most wretched misery. They would now have gladly accepted the work that they had turned down in the past—that is, if their current outward appearance did not scare off every employer.

Stern offered to collect clothing from his friends for them so that they might be able to gain employment in their own trade. He was willing to vouch for their honesty as their acquaintance and compatriot if they wanted to name him as a reference.

Reffbaum responded: "Carrying banners has broken me down, otherwise I would never consider wielding the axe for this accursed England. I would much rather start another rebellion, but there is nothing to be done against these prim and proper people."

Stern told him that Ibeles's lads were now working in a business where carpenters were needed and that using the musician's name there would not fail them. Reffbaum said hotly: "If I could build a gallows I know who should be hanged on it." Hulda was taken aback and regretted having extended the man her hospitality, but Stern laid his hand on the man's shoulder and said: "Quiet, say no more. Many a good carpenter's axe will be needed for a German fleet, and you two are in the right country to learn that trade."

Butzmann now chimed in with a cantankerous tone of voice and said: "Yes, you highbred people have all become meek. You're all doing well, you live a life of pleasure and abundance, and you're apathetic about how things look in our fatherland. For us, it is not only hunger that eats away at our heart. We also feel the *shame* of exile. If only *you*, who could raise the money, wanted to, we would all go back and show them that we're still the same men we were."

"And to what purpose?" Stern asked.

"In order to save our honour we should at the least try a rebellion, even if nothing comes of it!" Butzmann exclaimed.

"Above all, banish the thought of *your* special honour," Stern replied, "when it comes to representing the honour of the fatherland in the face of a proud foreign nation. You two remind me of fire-fighters wanting to start a fire in order to demonstrate their power. For now, let us all do what is good and beneficial at the present time, thereby providing evidence that we were worth more. As a linguist I work toward the reconciliation between nations, and if there had not been such scholars from time immemorial, humanity would have forever remained divided into herds."

Hulda inquired about Butzmann's children, who would all have to be grown up by now. They were at home, scattered among various families of tradesmen who had taken them in. Not

one of them was self-sufficient, and sending their father financial aid was by no means possible. However, even in dire circumstances there was finally still a way out. The old timpanist agreed to avoid the tavern frequented by the quarreling founders and accept any honest type of work offered him. Not long after that the former musician was seen looking respectable and pursuing a sideline job in a book store, where he was quite happily able to indulge his pleasure in reading.

Herr v. Halen, who had now spent several months in London, decided that it was time to return to the Rhine. He had lost much of his former cheerful disposition and bluntly told Dorothea that he would prefer to take her and the children back to Germany with him. He had wanted to speak to Ibeles in a half-playful, half-paternal tone about the discord making itself felt in the home, but in doing so he made the serious man only more withdrawn. The sensitivity of the artist had increased to the point of illness, and the well-meaning proverbs of the talkative old uncle gave him the impression that now, in the prime of life, he was to submit to being led about on a leash like a small child. He replied: "I won't admit that either advice or criticism is justified until I have neglected my obligation to my family. I earn the bread and pay all the household bills. I can do that only if my time is my own."

With the uncle's departure Dorothea's brave disposition also declined, and even the cheerfulness of the children could not brighten her spirits. She felt as if she was lying deep beneath the ground and hearing the children laughing and dancing around on the grassy mound of her grave. Even when Ibeles, as was now sometimes the case during the summer, spent a few hours at home, she did not have the resilience to appear lively and talkative. Her daughters had unlearned and forgotten much because of their many outings with Uncle v. Halen, and it would have been the most inappropriate time to invite their father to test what they had learned. Added to this was the fact that all their acquaintances dropped in once more before they left for the

seaside. There was a sense of restlessness without any intellectual stimulation, and Dorothea, exhausted from forced conversation with people to whom she was indifferent, realized that her husband must find himself feeling bored at home.

A not unwelcome invitation arrived from Evelyn, who invited her and her husband to a great gala on their estate. Evelyn asked whether Dorothea might not want to come a few days earlier so that the two of them could have an affectionate heart-to-heart talk and time to look around the countryside. English hospitality is not to be spurned, especially when, besides the fine personal qualities of the host, a house filled with beautiful works of art and a splendid park beckon alluringly. Evelyn's letter contained a postscript especially for Ibeles, luring him with the prospect of a concert, at which several virtuosos and one of the most fashionable, brilliant divas were to appear.

Dorothea hoped that a few days with her husband out in some beautiful settings in the open air might provide the best remedy for appeasing his irritability and finding the old path back to his heart. How sad she was when he did not want to hear a word about accepting the invitation, without even paying heed to the name of the place and the description of its charm. He said: "You can go visit your friend, with whom you have a cordial relationship, but you can sympathize with how unbearable it would be for me to be a guest in a house in which an artist is considered to be on merely the same footing as a paid jester. I would blush for my artistic associates if I should have to see them kept apart from the other guests."

Dorothea said that she did not feel much enthusiasm for the gala either, but that she was looking forward to seeing Evelyn and that she would have liked to see him enjoy the excursion to the country. Ibeles was surprised that his wife, who never wanted to leave the children for a night, now proposed an exception to that rule, and he thought she would feel much better about

going away if their father would stay at home with them. Milla meekly suggested that she and Nanna were now old enough to look after the little children and that they could also watch over the fire and lights without mama.

Dorothea felt she could not argue how rude it was towards her friend that Ibeles turned down the opportunity to make her acquaintance. She had, after all, expressed similar resistance to attending Blafoska's musical evenings. Whether her rational arguments from the past or whether her husband's emotional reasons from today were more important could not be determined. She went to Evelyn's gathering and hoped that the empty melancholy that had come over her would subside and that upon her return home she might attend to her life's work with fresh strength.

A short absence is sometimes the fastest way to bring two people who have misunderstood each other to their senses. In the absence of the mother's watchful eye, Ibeles felt a need to keep a sharp watch over the rules and order of the house, and as a result he saw a thousand signs of her loving authority. Speaking to him, the children used a variety of expressions that could have come only from the loveliest German songs that they had unconsciously incorporated into the speech of their everyday life. His eyes had been spoiled by the splendour of the rich drawing rooms where he taught his lessons, and his house had appeared to him to be stark and humble by contrast. Now he was moved even by the modest efforts to give this simple residence a little bit of adornment, if only with a bouquet of flowers or an ivy tendril growing up a window frame. The world had become a binding shackle to him, and in the confinement of this house unappreciated freedom smiled at him. But his mind had been as if trapped under a bell jar that he would first have had to shatter in order to really breathe in the pure air that he sensed beyond the evil spell surrounding him.



A letter from Livia summoned him to run through the melodrama with her for the last time on the following evening. The letter had been kept quite businesslike, so much so that even an additional request was made that he might be so kind as to come formally dressed. From this he assumed that a few friends might be in attendance, and he took it as a good omen that Livia was being serious about embarking upon a dramatic career. After he had accepted Livia's invitation, a letter from Dorothea arrived in which Evelyn's invitation was reiterated. Dorothea's friend could not accept the notion that Ibeles would miss the marvelous concert, and on Evelyn's behalf Dorothea requested that he at least come for the one evening and accompany her home on the following day. The letter was so affectionate and cheerful that he was sincerely sorry that he had already committed himself. But when he was about to write and tell Dorothea this he felt himself seized by a furtive feeling of timidity. She possessed an inherent dislike against all people of mysterious origin, and she sensed ambiguous circumstances ultimately to be a sign that something was amiss and suspect. Whenever Livia's name had been mentioned in her presence her brow had darkened, and after her uncle's first portrayal she had declared Livia to be a *phantom*. Just as children do not recognize any middle ground between good and bad people, so this simple housewife knew no compromise between truth and pretense. She considered only those to be *human beings* who remained of constant character in all their thoughts, words, and deeds, and every role-playing person was a phantom. She was inextricably bound to this way of classifying people—which is basically akin to the outlook that places the democrats and diplomats against each other in battle formation.

Ibeles sat hesitating with a pen in his hand at his desk and told himself: "If I write and tell her that I am spending the evening with Livia, then her joy will be spoilt. It is more considerate and kinder toward her to withhold that information." Since he now had something to conceal, he

made an effort to make amends by using double the tenderness in his letter. He did this not out of the base motivation of wanting to deceive her, but rather out of a false conscientiousness that deludes one into thinking that a person one is treating dishonestly least deserves to be hurt by an impolite tone. He wrote back telling her that he still had to teach some lessons that evening and being a good provider, he did not want to lose those hours. He also felt it was too difficult to leave the house to the children and the maids for one night.

After he had sent the letter he pondered the fact that this was actually the first excuse that had made him feel guilty toward his wife. He smiled and thought to himself: “What an extraordinarily conscientious person I really and truly am that a letter like this makes my heart heavy. Essentially, the letter contains the absolute truth because the rehearsal of the melodrama does involve indirect earnings, even if I’m not being paid for it. There is also a big difference if I stay in the city and even come home late in the night, as opposed to taking a trip that would leave the children alone overnight.”

It is one of the world’s most unfortunate fallacies that the moral betrayal that a man commits against his wife is easier to pardon than cheating some person he does not know or care about out of the least bit of money. How devastating to a loved one’s feelings can be the one false word spoken with the good intentions of sparing them! One mistake can doubtless be healed with the truth, but never can sweet deception conceal a painful truth. The words yes and no are a person’s most precious possessions, a thousand times more valuable than the shadow or the mirror image whose loss is portrayed in old fairy tales as signifying a link to the evil one. Whoever has personally resolved never to deceive that one person in the world to whom one has pledged the greatest respect and trust will be able to uphold a purity of character whatever the circumstances and temptations.

On the appointed evening, the artist went to the remote square where Livia lived and was ushered into a room where he found only the old mulatta. She was very sullen and said: “My daughter is just putting on the costume for her role. I have little to thank you for having brought her to this.”

Ibeles was astonished and angered at this greeting, which his kindness and patience in preparing Livia for the performance did not deserve. Yet the old woman was not a person by whom a man could consider himself to be insulted, and so he let her go on talking after his monosyllabic response.

The old woman sighed: “She obeys you more than she does her own mother! We were on the most promising path to getting on in life! Some grand people paid us visits and hung upon her every word. Now you have given her conscience a fright, and she has said: all the gold in the world is not as important to her as what *you* think of her.”

Ibeles replied: “I’m pleased to hear that—*not* because *I* am flattered by it, but because the respect of one honest person is bound up with that of every other.”

The old woman continued: “I don’t see how all this play acting is more respectable than what we had been doing. I could weep at how she has disguised herself today.”

The door opened and Livia stepped into the room dressed in a costume that, while appropriate for the role, was not at all frivolous. The eye had become accustomed to so much that is unnatural in the way of the stiff skirts and puffed-up, coiled hair that a softly flowing garment that gives a hint of the figure it covers seems much too bold. It seemed to the artist Ibeles as if poetry in visible form had alit from its carriage onto solid ground and declared war on vile fashion. Yet he realized that Livia could not appear like *that* in front of English society without destroying herself in the eyes of other women. He thought: “On stage we are accustomed

to accepting revealing costumes and passionate gestures, but in everyday society we all too easily mistake the spirit of the portrayal for the brazenness of the portrayer.”

This time she acted and declaimed with infinitely more enthusiasm than before. Entranced, he drew her image into his heart, and, in spite of all the seriousness of life, he felt the flames of youth once more shine from her eyes into his. He heard whisper in his inner being: “Can the magic spell of life be cast by a figure wearing a bonnet and with knit stocking in hand as she spins out life’s eternal prose in its narrow soul? Or is it the pure power of nature, all glowing feeling, all allure, with a word: woman?”

It was good that the music had become second nature to him because his soul was no longer bound to the sheet music. Unconsciously his fingers struck the chords as they ranged up and down the keys, now sighing, now thundering.

When the last note had died away, Livia again displayed her cold, bleak expression and wrapped herself in a cloak that Ibeles recognized as being an authentic Indian pattern. She said: “I shall always wear this cloak when performing for strangers; for you, who are like a father to me, I did not want to spoil the role by being prudish.”

Ibles cast a glance at her meant to indicate that he had not yet renounced all emotions that were not purely of a paternal nature. Livia remained composed and continued: “I have one request of you. A gala has been arranged at an aristocratic country estate today. The lord’s agent offered me a handsome remuneration if I was interested in appearing as a medium. I suggested that instead I might venture to make my debut as a dramatic elocutionist, and he accepted the offer. His employer had given him completely free reign as to what kind of fashionable amusement he organized. You must accompany me and buoy up my courage.”

Ibeles became alarmed and said: "It is against my principle to appear as a paid performer in aristocratic circles."

Livia replied calmly: "Then I am bound by my word to practice my old talents. I don't know where I would find another accompanist who could sight-read your music. The direction of my entire future life is dependent on this first performance, and I shall risk it only with a thoroughly prepared masterpiece such as this."

Ibeles found himself in a quandary: he knew only too well how much in life is determined by one momentary impulse not to fear that his refusal could reverse Livia's resolutions. He thought of the talisman to which he had bound his domestic peace, the diamond heart with the genuine pearl, which he had always thought to be a symbol of the strong, almost masculine heart of his wife. "If you ever hear me playing music for remuneration in a salon of the aristocracy you can give away the diamond heart with the pearl!"<sup>66</sup> Those were the words that he had spoken at the time the suggestion had been made to him to perform on such terms for the sake of his family. He turned to Livia and said: "I gave my wife the solemn promise never to play at galas of the aristocracy."

For the first time he heard Livia laugh out loud. As he looked at her in astonishment she quickly suppressed an expression of derision that hung on her lips and said: "Then of course you are *not* permitted to do such a thing."

Ibeles remembered that only the countess could have portrayed to her his relationship at home, and although he had done his utmost over the years to show the world that he was a free man, nevertheless he found it intolerable to be reminded, in this moment and by these lips, of the specter of the hen-pecked husband.

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<sup>66</sup> This promise occurs in Chapter Fourteen; see page 210.

Livia stood up and said: "I must leave you in order to change. The carriage will be here shortly!" Ibeles asked her to stay another moment, perhaps because he wanted to commit to his memory, for the last time, her appearance, which had so enraptured him. She stood at the window as the last light of day, shining through the bushes of the garden, cast a ray of light upon her head. The sun hung like a red sphere in the dense fog that bathed distant shapes in a bluish light. Then what looked like a golden thread shimmered in her crimped black hair. He thought it was a spider's web, and came up to her to remove it. It was a single reddish strand of hair that fluttered about, having come loose from its ribbon, but he found that it was definitely attached because she flinched when he took hold of it. The old woman asked what it was, and he replied jestingly: "I have caught the goddess of fortune by her one gold strand of hair." Livia seemed startled, but since Ibeles appeared to be less surprised at this strange phenomenon than if it had been a silver strand of hair she asked: "Should I take this as an omen?"

In that same moment the carriage arrived, and Ibeles, who had still been standing there dreaming, now quickly shook off his indecision. Livia said: "Listen to my last word on the matter. The house to which I am taking you belongs to newly arrived foreigners and is located a good distance outside of London. It would be too remote a stroke of bad luck if you were to meet an acquaintance there. So you may be compromising your artistic pride by acting as my accompanist, but there is all the less chance of your being noticed. I shall keep your name secret if you like!"

Ibeles had already quietly come to a decision. The fact that the old woman had been opposed to the new venture appeared to him to be a sign in its favour. He also hoped at last to have some time alone with Livia so that she could inform him about her strange situation. In addition to this, he also thought that she really was in need of a protector, and he took as a sign

of her desperation the fact that she was about to plunge headlong into an activity totally unfamiliar to her. He did not want to admit to himself that the appeal of a solitary carriage ride was more of a deciding factor than all the rest.

“Well then,” he said, “I shall go!”

The old woman muttered: “You will have to take responsibility for the consequences” and left the room. Livia followed her as if she wanted to placate her, but outside of the room whispered to her: “You acted your part well. Now take care that everything is organized as I have told you. Don’t forget the wine, you know, the heady dark red—and give me the key to the garden.”

It was not necessary to give the coachman directions because he had been sent by the lord’s agent, who had engaged Miss Livia. Ibeles sat beside her and waited to see if she would now reveal the much-anticipated information, but she was silent. He tried to engage her in a conversation, but she replied: “You must let me spare my voice now and above all not disturb the composure that I am struggling to preserve. I have much to tell you, but it must wait until the journey home. A new artist must learn self-denial! That is what you tell me, and I have taken your words very much to heart.”

It became darker and darker, and they had still not arrived at the country estate. Finally, at the entrance to a park lit with torches they saw a whole host of carriages drawn up. Others were just arriving, and finely dressed ladies were alighting, turning the night into day in their glittering finery, as is customary in this country.

The lord’s agent was expecting Livia and saw to it that she and her escort were ushered by way of some side stairs into a small private room adjacent to the hall where they were to stay until it was time for their performance. Several other people, whom Ibeles had seen in concerts

or on stage but had never spoken to, were also waiting here. No one took notice of anyone else, for after all they had not been introduced to each other.

We shall leave the beautiful dark-skinned woman and the German musician for now in order to seek out Dorothea, who after such a long time away from the children's nursery had returned to the sphere of a sophisticated lady.

Upon his departure Uncle v. Halen had shown his gratitude for the hospitality he had received by presenting her with, among other things, an expensive dress. He had told her: "You should not always attend only to your home and the children the way you do. For once I would also like to adorn my Dorchon as befits a patrician Rhineland daughter." In spite of her protests she was obliged to accept a dress of black velvet with expensive Brussels lace and a majestic headdress, which the well-intentioned uncle hoped might entice her to appear in society again. Inwardly she had simply looked forward to the innocent delight of pleasing her husband in this attire and was bitterly grieved to put it on for this evening's concert after she had just now received his negative reply. Evelyn came to her room and found her not yet dressed with unmistakable traces of having wept.

"What is wrong, my best and dearest friend?" she asked, "he isn't coming—you received a letter—no bad news, I hope?"

Dorothea pulled herself together and said: "Oh no, my husband has written me a very affectionate letter more likely meant to reassure me. I was afraid that he couldn't come, as I mentioned to you earlier. There is something in the tone of the letter that is unfamiliar and frightening to me. I can only imagine that one of the children is ill or that some other misfortune has occurred and that he does not want me to know in order not to spoil my happiness. I would love nothing better than to return home at once!"



“You cannot do that to me,” Evelyn cried out. “It has given me so much pleasure to show you for once a proper English gala that would finally make you forget about the German celebrations from the court concerts to the grape harvest. You have experienced nothing but boredom with your Mrs. Busy, Beak, and Mutebell because they are all snobs. You will have a different perception of us English people once you see how the aristocracy appreciates adorning life with splendour. Come into the hall and tell me if it doesn’t look like the background in one of Paulo Veronese’s feast paintings.”<sup>67</sup>

Dorothea replied: “I have spent a few delightful days with you and your gracious husband. Our outings in the park, the cheerful conversations, and the noble atmosphere of your home have been so good for me that I would now prefer to leave with this mental impression. This morning you had already told me that at any moment you would place your carriage at my disposal. Let me go now, I beg you!”

“Please, please,” Evelyn coaxed, “just stay until tomorrow morning, after that I won’t try to hold you any longer, since you are bound by a diamond chain round your ankle, pulling you home again to little Conrad, Angela, Nanna, Cilia, Milla, and whatever they’re all called. Good heavens, you almost make one glad to be childless.”

Dorothea was silent for a moment and then said: “Well, in order not to treat your kindness with contempt I shall stay until the festivities are over, but make sure that I can connect with any of your London friends who can take me back with them without embarrassment. Then I shall be home in the morning to start the day with my family!”

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<sup>67</sup> Paulo Veronese (1528–1588) was one of the leading painters in the sixteenth century. He found his success in Venice, where he established himself painting frescos, portraits, and large-scale history paintings using mythological or religious subject matter, as for example in his paintings, *The Wedding at Cana* (1563) and *The Feast in the House of Levi* (1573).

“It seems as if you have been away for a year!” Evelyn said. “If you enjoy yourself more cheerfully through the evening, I shall comply with your stringent terms. No inconveniences will be imposed since there are enough carriages available, considering that the foreign singer is performing here.”

The lady of the house left the room and Dorothea quickly packed her things into her valise in order not to be detained by any further excuse. Then for the honour of society she got dressed in her finery, in whose elaborately pleated splendour she looked like one of those stately Dutch patrician women in van Dyck’s paintings. The only jewelry that she owned, a diamond and pearl piece, fastened the lace collar over the black velvet dress.

Lady Worth stood, as was the custom, at the entrance door to the hall and greeted the arriving guests, whose names were being called out by a servant with a resounding voice. The rooms were soon full, and splendour and beauty competed with each other within the most diverse groups. Dorothea quietly sat down in a side room that contained a pair of very fine marble statues and a collection of copper pieces that had been set out for display. Occasionally Lord Worth went to find her there and called her attention to some of the famous people in attendance. Then, on his arm, she would take another turn about the hall, which always took considerable time since it is the pride of an English host that even the largest of rooms are too cramped for the crush of visitors. Indeed, it often occurs that in the height of a London season invited guests can penetrate only halfway up the staircase through the swarm of beautifully dressed people in front of them, and after an hour of vain pushing, they return to their carriages without having entered the hall or having greeted the host. Granted, the situation is not as bad as this on a country estate, where there is air to breathe even though it is hard work to wend one’s way through all the company.

Dorothea could only whisper a few words of admiration in passing to Evelyn about the royal splendour of the guests, since the lady of the house could not leave her post at the door. Evelyn complained to her that she had just now learned that the famous singer who was to have been the crowning moment of the evening's pleasures had suddenly become ill. The lord had responded by ordering his agent in the city to arrange for some other entertainment and had demanded only that it was to be something quite brilliant, something new that would surpass the interest of the first half of the evening's presentation.

It was now midnight and the guests were requested to take their seats since the concert was about to start. During the first piece, Dorothea congratulated herself that her husband was absent because it was one of those performances that is highly valued in salons, yet an abomination to an artist. Every class of society most loves music that speaks to its inner world. Since the fashionable salon gives expression to neither action, nor emotion, nor passion, it has given its name to one type of music that gives expression only to empty chatter. It was this so-called salon music that was being performed with a skill worthy of amazement while the chit-chat babbled gaily on.

The virtuosos left the stage, and three female singers of middling talent appeared, one dressed in white, the other in blue, and the third in pink. Vocal music always brought about more silence than was accorded instrumental music, and therefore it was possible to follow the trio quite undisturbed. After several arias had been performed separately by these ladies, one of the first actors took the stage to give an oration and that gave evidence of the reverence that England has for its great poets. When it comes to music, this nation to some extent disdains the imported talent from foreign nations. But it reveres every verse of Shakespeare since it emanates from

British soil. In a deep hush the guests listened to the popular poem whose fantastic subject matter stood in strange contrast to the dress coat and the high collar of the modernly coifed orator.

The musicians and singers reappeared and warbled to the enthusiastic audience about joy and suffering. A tall basso, looking as strong as a horse, sang a song in which he expressed the strange desire to become a tiny little bird in the first verse but then in the last verse decided that he would rather be the melancholy tear that he espied on the cheek of a certain Miss Annie.

A rumour spread through the hall, loudly and intentionally repeated from row to row by several well-informed individuals, that a theatrical scene was in the offing. Dorothea heard whispered behind her the words medium, slave, debut, melodrama, and the name Livia. Seized by intuition she quickly turned around, but because she did not know the speakers she did not want to ask them for more information. Lord Worth, who with such thoughtful attentiveness had sought to ease her evening spent among strangers, approached her and offered her a place in the front by the stage. From this position she could see through a glass door into the adjacent small room to which the musicians had withdrawn after the completion of their performance. All the others had gone; only *one* couple remained in a corner whispering to each other. The demoniacal, beautiful, dark face of a woman was turned in her direction; the figure of the man was in the shadows.

Just then the piano, which had been positioned in the middle of the stage earlier, was being moved to the side so that the room became more open. Up to this point the singers had been accompanied by a pianist who played very mechanically, and one could tell by his touch on the keys that he was probably not averse to taking engagements playing the quadrille if he could not get a "job" playing for the vocalists. Instead of this wooden figure another pianist now seated himself at the piano, declining to glance at the audience as he quickly stepped out of the side

room. Dorothea recognized the figure, and in her eyes all colours and lights sank into the night. He was capable of deceiving her. Her world came to an end.

The brown-skinned woman, whom she had seen in intimate conversation with him earlier, now took the stage in an amazing costume. Disapproving and admiring remarks went around the room for a moment as, with a bold flourish of her cloak, she struck a provocative pose. Yet recalling her fate as the fugitive slave that the declamatory artist had made herself out to be, and aware too of her ties to occult powers, all fell deathly quiet as everyone aware of Livia's previous activities now waited in curious anticipation of what would now occur.

The melodrama, whose content we outlined earlier, combined with the stately chords of the piano accompaniment, stirred even the most lethargic among the listeners to vigorous applause. People of an inherently reserved culture like the English, in order to be enthused, need something more intense than do the people of a more sensitively feeling culture, who are already more susceptible to the most delicately expressed impressions. Livia's wild, exaggerated gestures alternated in rapid contrast with a statuesque rigidity. She used her gaze and voice in like manner to bring about electric shocks of surprise. It was a calculatedly simulated naturalness—and thus as unlike art that emanates naturally from the warm soul as cognac is from grape nectar. Yet that imparts to such a mannered performance an effect like intoxicating brandy that suddenly numbs the judgement, taking it, so to speak, unawares.

The melodrama had passed over only *one* soul without touching it. Dorothea's heart was as if turned into stone, and without hearing the music that poured from the once so adored hand she sought to find one point of consciousness amid the chaos of her thoughts. Like a dark cloud, Livia's figure floated before her eyes, and the voice touched her core like a cold blade of steel.

Finally, only questions struggled to the surface: “Is this his first and only act of betrayal, or have I *never* really known him? Is he only *doing* something dishonourable or *is* he dishonourable?”

The loud applause accorded the orator at the conclusion of the melodrama awakened her out of her stupor. She looked over and saw how Livia, escorted by Ibeles, exited to the side room. She seemed to be exhausted from the fervid effort, and he was holding her upright. His eyes rested with tenderness upon the figure of this demonic woman in a way that he had not looked at his own wife for a long time.

“He loves her!” a voice now spoke with a cold ruthless certainty in the heart of the deeply injured spouse, and strangely enough there was some comfort in this belief. A loyal heart pardons authentic love for its suffering, for such a heart can gladly suffer for the sake of love but not for the sake of a mere love affair. Passions are natural phenomena as are hurricanes and earthquakes that lay low even the strongest walls. We weep over the one struck by a bolt from nowhere, but we turn angrily away from the one who, playing carelessly with fire, sacrifices the blessed fruit born of years of labour.

Just then Lord Worth anxiously approached her and said: “You have become deathly pale. Did the performance move you just as it did the rest of us?”

Dorothea summoned her vital spirits only now to overpower death. She amiably took the lord’s arm and requested that he introduce her to the orator. He replied: “It is the prevailing wish of all to hear the last piece again. I shall send one of my assistants to the side room in order to discuss this with the young miss and her loyal servant. If you like, I shall have her summoned after the performance so that you can speak with her here.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> In the upper classes in nineteenth-century England, a barrier of some kind always separated performers from the aristocracy, verifying here in Lord Worth’s conversation Ibeles’s strong criticism of the status accorded to fine musicians in Britain.

A servant went to the side room to convey the message and pointed through the glass door to Lord Worth and Dorothea, who were still conversing with one another. At the same time, he brought in some refreshments in order for the two to summon up new strength for the repeat performance. Evelyn, who now also joined her husband and her friend, had arranged for this in advance.

Livia peered through the glass door and recoiled when she recognized Evelyn's features, having once seen her under very different circumstances. She quickly turned around and walked to the mirror that reflected her dark face shaded by coal-black curls. "Impossible!" she muttered to herself, and then quietly sat down at the small table and began spooning away at her ice cream. Ibeles, turning pale, stood beside her and did not hear as she invited him to join her. He too had looked through the glass door into the hall and, shocked, said: "How much this lady resembles my—no, it *is* my wife! Where *am* I?"

Once more he looked at the so familiar and yet so different-looking apparition, scrutinizing her, yet she had averted her face and seemed to be conversing quite unself-consciously with the old gentleman. The gold leaves and pearls of her headdress hung down from the rich dark hair onto her neck, and her posture failed to reveal any internal flurry of emotion. "Foolishness!" he said to himself. "How could I imagine this!?"

This time he took the glass offered by Livia, but his gaze was repeatedly drawn to the tall, commanding figure of that lady, who statue-like held to her position opposite the door. In vain he waited to see if she might turn her head once more. Even as the signal for the repeat performance was given she seated herself in such a way so that he was unable to glimpse even a trace of her features. "It cannot be her!" he thought, "she would not have remained so calm!" Yet merely the possibility of encountering her here caused the blood to rush to his cheeks, and he

assumed the coincidental resemblance to be his conscience warning him never again to allow himself to be coerced into such a situation.

Loud signs of approval welcomed Livia as she returned to the stage. This time the accompanist also cast a glance out into the filled hall. The object of his curiosity still sat turned away from him talking to the gentleman sitting behind her. Not until he played the first chord did the lady turn around and her eyes met his: it was her.

If he had seen her collapse and lose consciousness he would have regained his composure by being able to have come lovingly to her assistance, encouraging her with an apology and an explanation. But she sat gravely and calmly in the seat of honour as if the performance was being held specifically for her, her gaze fixed upon him. He would rather have been fighting for a good cause and facing the deadly canon fire than having to play his way again through the long melodrama with her gaze fixed upon him. Livia sensed that he was distracted. She tried to encourage him by focusing all the suggestive points in the piece on him as if she wanted to pay him homage in public.

When the piece came to an end Dorothea stood up and walked over to Livia, who gave her a deep bow. Without saying a word, Dorothea removed from her bosom the diamond heart with the pearl and pinned it on the orator who received this token of acknowledgement with surprise. The costliness of the gift, the earnest gaze of the donor, and the posture that she had assumed during the performance stirred in Livia the illusion that this lady, who had adorned her with this gift, was of very high social standing, and in order to keep her mask in place, she bowed down with a servile gesture and kissed the hem of Dorothea's dress.

When Ibeles saw how his wife handed over the talisman of peace, he was touched as if he were seeing the lovely dream of his youth embraced by the circle of his smiling children sink



into the past, with his fatherland and his hopes plunging after them. He compared the two figures before him, and the poetry no longer clung to the smouldering flower when he saw her in the shadow of simple German virtuousness. Dorothea now turned her back on the stage without seeking his gaze again, while Livia went with her prize into the side room and waited for him there. The guests had just been invited to join the dance in another room, and those who had stood up obstructed Dorothea's way between the pushed-back chairs. With a sudden determination Ibeles walked after her and easily tore a gap in the delicate material of the barrier. Dorothea did not hear the sound resulting from this revolutionary move amid the overall noise, but a moment later she heard his voice behind her quietly uttering her name. She turned to him, and he asked: "Do you despise me?"

"I just did not want to place you in an embarrassing position," she said, and her voice trembled with choked-back tears. "We cannot express ourselves here, and so we have no choice other than to pretend that we do not know one another."

"And you are able to leave me here alone with this consuming emotion in your heart and pass this time with strangers in a ballroom?"

Dorothea said: "You are not alone, and I am not staying. A carriage is already waiting downstairs. It will bring me back to my children, and my place now is solely with them."

They had reached the door, and before her friends could look about for her, Dorothea had managed to slip up the spiral staircase leading to her room. Her husband was right on her heels, and since one is much more inconspicuous in a whirl of people than in deepest privacy, not one of the servants hurrying past felt it worth the trouble to turn and look at the couple. Upstairs in the corridor it was quiet, and they were able to exchange a few words without interruption, but the sound of hasty steps and heavy breathing on the spiral stairs made her decide to quickly open

the door to her room so that Evelyn's chambermaid would not be surprised to encounter this tête à tête.

Livia had observed through the glass door of the side room that her escort had made a move to make off with that strange lady. Without pausing to wait for Lord Worth's agent, who was supposed to pay her before her departure, she stole after them through the empty hall and, while still on the steps where she had stopped to listen, she heard a door being closed and bolted from the inside. Livia's striking appearance had been much more noticeable to the servants than the familiar figure of Dorothea, who had been going up and down this winding staircase for several days now. One of the powder-wigged guards of the house quickly followed her and reminded her that this was not the way that led from the waiting room for the singers to the outside door. Another one came in search of her, since in the meantime the agent had appeared. Trembling with rage she asked who the lady was who had just gone upstairs. They gave her name as "Baroness de Wald." She wanted to inquire further, but here she encountered the impenetrable shield with which the domestic staff of the English aristocracy responds to all inappropriate questions: "I am sure I don't know." This is the *terminus technicus* of anyone who does not want to feel obliged to provide any information, and Livia could neither extort one more word nor force her way further up the spiral staircase.

She demanded that the agent find her escort, who must have gone upstairs. He offered to take the musician's place as her escort if she was fearful of going home alone, an offer that she resolutely rejected. Her carriage was notified, and since Ibeles vanished without a trace and no one wanted to discuss the matter further, she followed the agent. Before doing so, she had touched the jewelry again, but not to violently throw it down and trample the perfidious gift in anger out of offended feelings, but rather to feel and ensure that it was fastened tightly. In spite

of her emotion she had carefully counted and pocketed the lord's money. She threw herself into the carriage and clenched her small dainty hands as soon as she was alone in the dark, brooding over cold thoughts of revenge.

Halfway along the route another, faster carriage, lit by bright lanterns at the coachman's seat, overtook her carriage at great speed. Indifferently, she watched the carriage disappear into the distant darkness not suspecting whom it was carrying off.

Since Dorothea was familiar with every area of the house she had succeeded in reaching the door through a side corridor where a carriage was, by agreement, to be waiting for her. Her husband had declared that he would be riding home with her, whether seen or unseen. It had been easy to have a servant fetch her bags as well as her husband's things. She had simply told the servant that she had offered an acquaintance, who had missed his own carriage, this opportunity to ride with her back to the city. Both of them were so shocked by the surprising encounter that the ground was burning under their feet and they wanted only uninterrupted solitude.

In the room they had refrained from conversation in order not to arouse the attention of any person who might be lingering nearby. Now Ibeles broke the silence the moment they were past the illuminated courtyard and said: "Heaping burning coals upon a person's head is more subtly wicked than if one properly berates the perpetrator. Stop sitting in silence beside me, my dear. I would rather you voice the most bitter reproach that you have in mind against me so that I can plead my case!"

Dorothea replied: "Your self-reproach I can well ignore. Your deceit becomes pardonable only if you no longer love me and that would carry no blame but rather be only an immeasurable misfortune."

Her tone was strained. Her bright, otherwise so cheerful voice trembled with pain when she spoke, but not one tear had yet broken free. He put his arm around her and said: "If I did not love you, would I have so irresponsibly insulted the lady that I came with only to prevent any misunderstanding from coming up between us?"

"That could have occurred from other motives," Dorothea replied, "I can well believe that you have not been so completely torn from your old circle as not to subordinate your desires to your sense of duty, yet a man might prefer to play the martyr rather than be humiliated."

"Stop for a moment," the artist cried out and pulled his arm away, "otherwise I could subject *you* to a harsher reproach. It would have been more worthy of you to retreat to the farthest corner of the hall and conceal your presence from me instead of torturing my soul like that. I think I might have a greater right to ask: Do you still love me?"

Dorothea answered: "Whether I still love you is my secret, and if I conceal it, it is in order to allow you complete freedom in your actions. I do not want you to decide for the sake of *my* feelings what would be torment or desire for your feelings.—Consider our current situation as it must appear to me and then prove me wrong, if you can."

"Good," Ibeles said, "the injured party does have the first shot in a duel."

"It is quite difficult to comprehend," his wife replied, "that we who as children lived next door to one another, after half a lifetime of peace and love, should now all of a sudden be facing each other as enemies. Instead, consider me as your most loyal friend and believe that what I say is neither out of contempt, nor is it intended to move you."

"For years you have been alienated from your own home, and the total break with your past will be less painful than the chain that you feel forged around your heart. Today I saw how young you look, how young your innermost mind still is. While I was watching you in

conversation with that sorceress, how you, without being aware of how nearby I was, bent towards her in intimate banter, I noticed that your eyes were more childlike and warm than those of that beautiful young woman. Can I be angry with you if you consider how wide and bright the world is, how easy it is to achieve what you are offered, how enticing the possibility is to go through the most beautiful part of life's drama for a second time? Also, make no pretense of hiding the alternative's dark side. As of today, the seeds of doubt and fear have been sown in my heart, and the heroism of this hour will not pervade every moment of my future everyday life. A flash of lightning quickly strikes the oak tree and singes its trunk, yet the new crown slowly sprouts out from the root still intact. Be sure that darker and bleaker days can come along than those that you had sought for years to escape, and choose before it is too late."

Ibeles spoke: "Do I have such a low place in your eyes that you believe the thought of personal happiness would dictate my life whose guiding star until now has been only honour? You are reacting too severely to a misstep in which I was ensnared partly out of thoughtless action, partly out of indulgent kindness."

He now told Dorothea, without concealing anything, the whole context of his relationship to the strange woman, and he did not even hold back the marvelous state of excitement to which he had been transported by the allure of her youth so enhanced by the enchantment of mystery. He concluded: "It is possible for me to describe this feeling to you, because you have broken the spell. I do not understand why I am seeing you in a different light today than I did before. I could not have been able to pour my heart out to you back then no matter how much I would have been in need of doing so. You seem to be so unjust about the demands of the outer world and so dead to imagination! Now that you are even just recognizing these demands I feel that you can fulfill them as soon as you wish."

Although Dorothea did not feel much edified by her husband's confessions, she did have to smile at his closing remarks: "So because I know how to play the lady dressed in velvet, I impress you more than in the past when I turned myself into Cinderella out of love for you and out of loyalty?"

He replied: "This hour, in which the most beautiful feeling of my youth awakens, is too sacred to spoil with niggling reflection. I would rather that you tell me if you too still believe in our native saying: mature love rusts not!"

"And so you do *not* love that woman?" Dorothea asked in disbelief.

"No, no!" he exclaimed: "With this kiss I love *you!*"

A kiss is very convincing, and its most inner spirit speaks with more fervency to the compassionate soul than does all persuasion. The cold, angry lips were once again aglow with the flame of love, and Dorothea smiled once again with unfading youthful gaiety: "Now tell me again if you want to leave me!" her husband said proudly sensing the power that he now had over her soul.

Dorothea was not so proud as to delude them both that, apart from him, life for her might be something other than a bitter obligation. But her sense of honour was just as strong as that which her husband had expressed to her. For the sake of personal happiness, she too wanted neither to do nor to tolerate anything dishonourable. For her it was a much deeper need of the soul to respect the man she loved than to possess him. For a moment she had believed in the need to set him free so that he might recover the unity of his character. Wherever there is a chasm between a word uttered by one's lips and the sentiment felt in one's heart—and over which no bridge of trust can cross—that is the point where nature has separated two people.

Morning had dawned brightly as the two arrived home. With the rosy light that conquered the night, the shadow of the clouds cast upon their old love and faithfulness parted, and a warm beaming sunlight radiated from eye to eye. The solemn reticence that had so long prevailed between them gave way to friendly chat in their native tone. The bell jar had been shattered, and they breathed in the fresh air of heaven once more.

## Chapter Twenty-six

### Conclusion

Our German couple had always known only two motivations that controlled their lives: love and honour. Not until they were in the country of materialism were they forced to learn that there are people who, though members of the human community, look upon religion and science, love and trust, and every sacred stirring of the heart as matters open to speculation.

At dawn Livia stepped into the garden room and cast herself upon the day bed, burying her face in the pillows. The bottle of fragrant wine that she had left untouched stood beside her. A strange transformation was happening deep within her as she recalled the scene that she had just witnessed. She had believed that her heart had remained as cold as ice towards the man whom she had chosen as her protector and escort just because he seemed to pose no danger of becoming her master. She had considered herself capable of outwitting him in a moment of passion and, herself remaining calm, shackling him irrevocably to her fate. Instead, to her he now revealed himself to be an experienced adventurer and daredevil who, under the bright glow of the chandeliers, could lure any matron he chose out of her family circle and sweep her away. She thought she was going insane and inwardly cursed the masterful pretense that had outdone even her own. This lady with the puritan expression had been able to make the best of what was unmistakably romantic whispering on the spiral staircase! And he?—Only minutes before, with every sign of infatuation, he had hung upon *her* every glance. Yet one sign from this proud woman had so captivated him that he cast aside the affection of which he had been assured. Like a maenad raising the goblet to her lips as she danced wildly, not caring if she spilled the



intoxicating drink, so she had been so sure of his love only the day before. Now scorned, she thirsted for his presence, and the word: *lost!* bore into her heart with fierce pain.

Suddenly she started upright and mumbled to herself: “For inflicting this pain he shall suffer—not with a short death-struggle, but rather with a life filled with loathing. No poison is as deadly as a word whispered in his wife’s ear. Blafoska called her common. Well, he shall have to endure life with her as one who will always share his knowledge of what he did.”

Livia pulled herself together, cast off her theatrical costume and, trembling with hate, donned her usual clothes. She shivered in the morning chill as she stepped outside into the dew-bedecked garden to glance over the garden wall at the street. On the other side the shutters were already being opened, and people and carriages began to bring the square before the house to life. Even from within her own residence she could hear a sound indicating that she was being observed.

Quickly, before anything was said, she slipped out of the house, wrapped in a black mantilla and heavily veiled. At the end of the street she ordered a cabman to take her to Briar Place.

Even from outside the door Livia heard cheerful children’s voices laughing and singing inside, and at the window she saw a little blonde head peek out and then draw back in fright. It was little Conrad, who had still not quite overcome his fear of chimney sweeps and thought this black lady in the cab to be the embodying spirit of that terrible guild.

Katrinchen, who opened the door, said that Mrs. Ibeles was having breakfast and invited the strange woman in with no further ado. Livia pulled away the veil and followed on the heels of the servant. In the next moment she was standing eye to eye across from the same lady who

had only hours earlier abducted her knight. It was clearly her, despite her simple housecoat and her motherly preoccupation not with jewelry, but with passing out the milk and bread.

Dorothea and the children looked in astonishment at the strange visitor, who paused, stopped in her tracks, at the door. The next moment Ibeles walked into the room from the other side and his lips turned pale in anger when he saw the adventuress enter his chaste home. In an instant he guessed that she had come in order to destroy him in the innocent minds of his family, and he cast a look of horror at her distorted features. She could not bear this look, and, cost what it might, she knew that she now had to melt his heart right there in his wife's presence.

She summoned up memories of every humiliation that burned like brimstone in her life, and she was about to make herself weep. But a cheek that is acquainted with makeup should beware of tears. In the intense fervour of passion Livia forgot that her entire life hung on the dark colour that protected her only too revealing features from being recognized.

With astonishing theatricality she threw herself before Dorothea, clutched at her dress, looked up at Ibeles with a dying look, and began, as if half mad, to stammer forth unintelligible syllables meant to allude to inexpressible secrets. A person who wants to stir others through theatrical means can face nothing more unfortunate than when she alone finds her situation to be tragic, while the audience finds the scene to be irresistibly comical. Little Angela, who had at first speculated in fright as to what the brown-skinned woman might have done that should cause her to weep so, saw with her natural powers of observation that two pale stripes were appearing where the woman's hand had touched her moist face. Flippant and cheeky as always, she burst out: "Mother, don't you see how it really is possible to whitewash a Moor?"<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Reference to the German idiom: "Einen Mohren kann man nicht weiß waschen," translated in English as: "There is no washing a black moor white" meaning there is no point in attempting the impossible. Reference might also allude to the Old Testament passage in Jeremiah 13:23: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (KJV).

Livia stared up and tried to pull her hat and veil, which had slid down, back up over her face. She had quickly gathered her wits, and her sobbing stopped immediately. Smiling, Dorothea helped her to her feet and led her to the mirror, in which she caught sight of her own face and behind her that of the artist who turned away in disgust. She would have given anything to be standing there in that moment worthy of hate rather than having to take her leave burdened with humiliation at her foolishness! She covered her face with both hands and leaned against the wall while Dorothea quietly requested that her husband take the children out of the room. The two women were alone, and when one member of the fairer sex sees another weeping, an immediate motherly instinct awakens to console and to help. Dorothea said to herself: "I can only imagine if my wild Angela had been lured to the edge of a precipice and had committed such madness. How might I receive her if she were to return to her parental home?"

She led the strange woman over to the sofa, placed her hand on her head and said: "If you want to confide in me, then speak." Livia shook her head. "Shall I bring you fresh water so that you can wash the lie off your forehead before you step over my threshold back into the world?"

"No!" Livia exclaimed and again buried her face, helpless and stunned. Dorothea sat beside her quietly pondering and fixed her eyes on the rumpled hair that protruded out from under the veil. In a flash Evelyn's earlier account suddenly came to her mind when she parted one of the coloured curls down to its glistening gold root. She flinched as if a cold viper were coiling itself around her fingers, let go of the curl, and instinctively whispered the question: "O'Nalley?"

This arrow, by blind chance, hit its mark. Hearing her name uttered caused Lora O'Nalley to cast away the fear of recognition, and with the same cold strength with which she

had faced the jury she now stood up and faced Dorothea. “Help me to get away from here quickly,” she said, “and you will never see me again.”

Only after the sound of the carriage that carried the sinister guest from Briar Place had faded away did the foreboding sense of evaded disaster settle upon the house. Yet this soon vanished after the enemy had disappeared without a trace. To hide away in London was much too dangerous, and on more serious occasions she had played with the threat of suicide too often to be expected to make any last attempt to make foolishness look grand. For someone no longer able to bear the scrutiny of innocent glances, Britannia has roads aplenty that beckon with far off destinations of flight—to the reclusiveness of a log cabin in Canada, for example, or to plunge into the luxuriant morass of India’s lassitude.

But what did our German friends do to enjoy the life that now lay before them in all its meagre, undramatic simplicity? Did a rich uncle die, or did the relocation to a different dwelling place bring a solution to the old worries and pains?

Definitely not! The visits from the jovial, still-living uncle promised them a thousand times more joy than the richest inheritance would have, and they yearned for the day when he might be able to enjoy the fresh life of their rejuvenated existence together with them again. Nor did they indulge in the delusion that carrying over old deceptions into a new home would make the human heart whole. No, with the recovery of their old love, which had slumbered unaltered in the deepest reaches of their souls, the joy in the resilient beauty of life also grew again within them. Since the cloud had passed from the father’s mind, that beauty appeared like a gentle sunlight over the entire house. And so many a seed of the talent in the young souls that mother had guided and nurtured with her cautious hand then, under the light from the father’s loving eyes, blossomed forth in rich and thriving bloom.

Another Sunday arrived in the quiet period during late summer when the busy striving of the London season had passed and the heart could live for itself once again. It was Ibeles's birthday, and the young couple, Hulda and Stern, had been invited to the celebration. These two had read deeply enough the souls of their friends to be able both to sense the estrangement the couple had gone through and to be able to share, in silent happiness, their regained conciliation. Dorothea's heart beat more rapidly, for today she was to see fulfilled her long-cherished wish to show the children's father how much love and beauty their own house could offer him.

After a cheerful dinner, with children, parents, and guests all gathered around the large table, each of the children, starting with the youngest, stepped forward to offer the gifts they had, under their mother's guidance, prepared for their father. Even from the small pieces of embroidery, little poems, and pictures of the youngest children it was evident how much of a sense for beauty, how much creativity, how much well-cultivated talent he encountered in their offerings! The oldest lad handed him the letter from his employer, who was now paying him a salary in his workshop, which absolved his father from having to support him. Karl, himself now a grown and sensible young man, produced a most artful and intricate model of a steam ship he had made, pointing out, with laughing eyes, several improvements and additions that he himself had devised. But then the two oldest girls sat down together at the grand piano. Dorothea's heartbeat was audible as she went behind the two girls to turn the pages for them. For weeks, while their father was out of the house, they had practiced a sonata for four hands that he had composed. With a firm, masterful touch they played the slow opening chords. Ibeles, who was still occupied with the other children's gifts, was not listening at first. But now, as he heard his own ideas played with so much vigour, soul, and fire, when he heard how Mila with a steady beat held together the bottom line with such a profound grasp, while from Nanna's fingers the

ornamentation leapt with sparkling purity and enchanting clarity, how in the loving hearts of his beautifully blossoming young girls he saw his own spirit reflected so purely and fully, and felt flowing through him the certainty that his aspiration and creativity had not, after all, been in vain and that he was living on in these two artistic natures that were the equal of any man—sensing all this he leapt to his feet in amazement, a flash of joy from his blue eyes darting over to Dorothea, who with lowered eyes stood quietly shivering with joy, as he wept hot tears. He went to Dorothea and knelt before her, his face pressed to her heart, overcome with silent, devoted tears. In this moment both felt that everything, everything had been restored to them anew more lovely and fully than ever before. All the haze had melted away, and a blue sky of happiness hovered once again over the reconciled couple.

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