The Lonely Way; Intermezzo; Countess Mizzie

by Arthur Schnitzler

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LONELY WAY—INTERMEZZO—COUNTESS MIZZIE ***

THE LONELY WAY:

INTERMEZZO:

COUNTESS MIZZIE

THREE PLAYS BY

ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

EDWIN BJÖRKMAN

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INTRODUCTION

Hermann Bahr, the noted playwright and critic, tried one day to explain the spirit of certain Viennese architecture to a German friend, who persisted in saying: "Yes, yes, but always there remains something that I find curiously foreign." At that moment an old-fashioned Spanish state carriage was coming along the street, probably on its way to or from the imperial palace. The German could hardly believe his eyes and expressed in strong terms his wonderment at finding such a relic surviving in an ultra-modern town like Vienna.

"You forget that our history is partly Spanish," Bahr retorted. "And nothing could serve better than that old carriage to explain what you cannot grasp in our art and poetry."

A similar idea has been charmingly expressed by Hugo von Hofmannsthal in the poem he wrote in 1892—when he was still using the pseudonym of "Loris"—as introduction to "Anatol." I am now adding a translation of that poem to my own introduction, because I think it will be of help in reading the plays of this volume. The scene painted by Hofmannsthal might, on the whole, be used as a setting for "Countess Mizzie." For a more detailed version of that scene he refers us to "Canaletto's Vienna"—that is, to the group of thirteen Viennese views which were painted about 1760 by the Venetian Bernardo Belotto (who, like his more famous uncle and model, Antonio Canale, was generally called Canaletto), and which are now hanging in one of the galleries of the Kunsthistorische Hofmuseum at Vienna. The spirit of those pictures may be described, I am told, as one of stately grace. They are full of Latin joy in life and beauty. They speak of an existence constantly softened by concern for the amenities of life. It is just what survives of their atmosphere that frequently makes foreigners speak of Vienna with a tender devotion not even surpassed by that bestowed on Paris or Rome.

An attempt to understand the atmosphere and spirit of modern Vienna will carry us far toward a correct appreciation of Schnitzler's art. And it is not enough to say that Vienna is one of the oldest cities in Europe. It is not even enough to say that it preserves more of the past than Paris or London, for instance. What we must always bear in mind is its position as the meeting place not only of South and North but also of past and present. In some ways it is a melting-pot on a larger scale than New York even. Racially and lingually, it belongs to the North. Historically and psychologically, it belongs to the South. Economically and politically, it lives very much in the present. Socially and esthetically, it has always been strongly swayed by tradition. The anti-Semitic movement, which formed such a characteristic feature of

Viennese life during the last few decades, must be regarded as the last stand of vanishing social traditions against a growing pressure of economical requirements.

Like all cities sharply divided within itself and living above a volcano of half-suppressed passions, Vienna tends to seek in abandoned gayety, in a frank surrender to the senses, that forgetfulness without which suicide would seem the only remaining alternative. Emotions kept constantly at the boiling-point must have an outlet, lest they burst their container. Add to this sub-conscious or unconscious craving for a neutral outlet, the traditional pressure of the Latin inheritance, and we have the greater part of the causes that explain Schnitzler's preoccupation with the themes of love and death. For Schnitzler is first of all Viennese.

Arthur Schnitzler was born at Vienna on May 15, 1862. His father was Professor Johann Schnitzler, a renowned Jewish throat specialist. I am told that Professor Bernhardi in the play of the same name must be regarded as a pretty faithful portrait of the elder Schnitzler, who, besides his large and important practice, had many other interests, including an extensive medical authorship and the editing of the Wiener klinische Rundschau. It is also to be noticed that Professor Bernhardi has among his assistants a son, who divides his time between medicine and the composition of waltz music.

The younger Schnitzler studied medicine at the Vienna University, as did also his brother, and obtained his M.D. in 1885. During the next two years he was attached to the resident staff of one of the big hospitals. It was also the period that saw the beginning of his authorship. While contributing medical reviews to his father's journal, he was also publishing poems and prose sketches in various literary periodicals. Most of his contributions from this time appeared in a publication named "An der schönen blauen Donau" (By the Beautiful Blue Danube), now long defunct.

He was also continuing his studies, which almost from the start seem to have turned

toward the psychic side of the medical science. The new methods of hypnotism and suggestion interested him greatly, and in 1889 he published a monograph on "Functional Aphonia and its Treatment by Hypnotism and Suggestion." In 1888 he made a study trip to England, during which he wrote a series of "London Letters" on medical subjects for his father's journal. On his return he settled down as a practicing physician, but continued to act as his father's assistant. And as late as 1891-95 we find him named as his father's collaborator on a large medical work entitled "Clinical Atlas of Laryngology and Rhinology."

There are many signs to indicate uncertainty as to his true calling during those early years. The ensuing inner conflict was probably sharpened by some pressure exercised by his father, who seems to have been anxious that he should turn his energies undividedly to medicine. To a practical and outwardly successful man like the elder Schnitzler, his own profession must have appeared by far the more important and promising. While there is no reason to believe that his attitude in this matter was aggressive, it must have been keenly felt and, to some extent at least, resented by the son. One of the dominant notes of the latter's work is the mutual lack of understanding between successive generations, and this lack tends with significant frequency to assume the form of a father's opposition to a son's choice of profession.

This conflict cannot have lasted very long, however, for the younger Schnitzler proved quickly successful in his purely literary efforts. The "Anatol" sketches attracted a great deal of attention even while appearing separately in periodicals, and with their publication in book form, which occurred almost simultaneously with the first performance of "A Piece of Fiction" at a Viennese theater, their author was hailed as one of the most promising among the younger men. From that time he has been adding steadily to his output and his reputation. When his collected works were issued in 1912, these included four volumes of plays and three volumes of novels and stories. Since then he has finished another play and two volumes of prose

sketches.

It is rare to find an author turning with such regularity from the epic to the dramatic form and back again. And it is still more rare to find him so thoroughly at home and successful in both fields. In Schnitzler's case these two parallel veins have mutually supported and developed each other. Time and again he has treated the same theme first in one form and then in another. And not infrequently he has introduced characters from his plays into his stories, and vice versa. A careful study of his other works would undoubtedly assist toward a better understanding of his plays, but I do not regard such a study essential for the purpose. It is my belief that Schnitzler has given himself most fully and most typically in his dramatic authorship, and it is to this side of his creative production I must confine myself here.

"Anatol" is nothing but seven sketches in dramatic form, each sketch picturing a new love affair of the kind supposed to be especially characteristic of Viennese life. The man remains the same in all these light adventures. The woman is always a different one. The story is of the kind always accompanying such circumstances—one of waxing or waning attraction, of suspicion and jealousy, of incrimination and recrimination, of intrigue and counter-intrigue. The atmosphere is realistic, but the actuality implied is sharply limited and largely superficial. There is little attempt at getting down to the roots of things. There is absolutely no tendency or thesis. The story is told for the sake of the story, and its chief redeeming quality lies in the grace and charm and verve with which it is told. These were qualities that immediately won the public's favor when "Anatol" first appeared. And to some extent it must be counted unfortunate that the impression made by those qualities was so deep and so lasting. There has been a strong tendency observable, both within and outside the author's native country, to regard him particularly as the creator of Anatol, and to question, if not to resent, his inevitable and unmistakable growth beyond that pleasing, but not very significant starting point.

And yet his next dramatic production, which was also his first serious effort as a playwright, ought to have proved sufficient warning that he was moved by something more than a desire to amuse. "A Piece of Fiction" (Das Märchen) must be counted a failure and, in some ways, a step backward. But its very failure is a promise of greater things to come. It lacks the grace and facility of "Anatol." Worse still, it lacks the good-humor and subtle irony of those first sketches. Instead it has purpose and a serious outlook on life. The "piece of fiction" refers to the "fallen" woman—to the alleged impossibility for any decent man to give his whole trust to a woman who has once strayed from the straight path. Fedor Denner denounces this attitude in the presence of a young girl who loves him and is loved by him, but who belongs to the category of women under discussion. When he learns her history, he struggles vainly to resist the feelings of distrust and jealousy which he had declared absurd a little while earlier. And the two are forced at last to walk their different ways. Unfortunately the dialogue is heavy and stilted. The play is a tract rather than a piece of art, and the tirades of Fedor are equally unconvincing when he speaks for or against that "fiction" which is killing both his own and the girl's hope of happiness in mutual love. Yet the play marks a step forward in outlook and spirit.

Schnitzler's interest in hypnotism, which had asserted itself in the first scene of "Anatol," appears again in the little verse-play, "Paracelsus," which followed. But this time he used it to more purpose. By the help of it, a woman's innermost soul is laid bare, and some very interesting light is shed on the workings of the human mind in general.

"Amours" (Liebelei) may be regarded as a cross, or a compromise, between "Anatol" and "A Piece of Fiction." The crudeness of speech marking the latter play has given room to a very incisive dialogue, that carries the action forward with unfailing precision. Some of the temporarily dropped charm has been recovered, and the gain in sincerity has been preserved. "Amours" seems to be the first one of a series of plays dealing with the reverse of the gay picture presented in "Anatol." A

young man is having a love affair with two women at the same time, one of them married, the other one a young girl with scant knowledge of the world. Yet she knows enough to know what she is doing, and she has sufficient strength of mind to rise above a sense of guilt, though she is more prone to be the victim of fear. Then the married woman's husband challenges the young man, who is killed. And the girl takes her own life, not because her lover is dead, not because of anything she has done, but because his death for the sake of another woman renders her own faith in him meaningless.

"Outside the Game Laws" (Freiwild) is another step ahead—the first play, I think, where the real Arthur Schnitzler, the author of "The Lonely Way" and "Countess Mizzie," reveals himself. It has a thesis, but this is implied rather than obtruded. In style and character-drawing it is realistic in the best sense. It shows already the typical Schnitzlerian tendency of dealing with serious questions—with questions of life and death—in a casual fashion, as if they were but problems of which road to follow or which shop to enter. It has one fault that must appear as such everywhere, namely, a division of purpose. When the play starts, one imagines that those "outside the game laws" are the women of the stage, who are presented as the legitimate prey of any man caring to hunt them. As the play goes on, that starting point is almost lost sight of, and it becomes more and more plain that those "outside the game laws" are sensible, decent men who refuse to submit to the silly dictates of the dueling code. But what I have thus named a fault is mostly theoretical, and does not mar the effective appeal of the play. What must appear as a more serious shortcoming from an American viewpoint is the local nature of the evil attacked, which lessens the universal validity of the work.

"Change Partners!" (Reigen) was produced about the same time as "Outside the Game Laws," but was not printed until 1900, and then only privately. Yet those ten dialogues provoked from the first a storm which seriously threatened Schnitzler's growing reputation and popularity. When Vienna finds a work immoral, one may

look for something dreadful. And the work in question attempts a degree of naturalism rarely equaled in France even. Yet those dialogues are anything but immoral in spirit. They introduce ten men and as many women. The man of one scene reappears with a new woman in the next, and then that woman figures as the partner of a new man in the third scene. The story is always the same (except in the final dialogue): desire, satisfaction, indifference. The idea underlying this "ring dance," as the title means literally, is the same one that recurs under a much more attractive aspect in "Countess Mizzie." It is the linking together of the entire social organism by man's natural cravings. And as a document bearing on the psychology of sex "Change Partners!" has not many equals.

In "The Legacy" (Das Vermächtnis) we meet with a forcible presentation and searching discussion of the world's attitude toward those ties that have been established without social sanction. A young man is brought home dying, having been thrown from his horse. He compels his parents to send for his mistress and their little boy, and he hands both over to the care of his family. That is his "legacy." The family tries hard to rise to this unexpected situation and fails miserably—largely, it must be confessed, thanks to the caddish attitude of a self-made physician who wants to marry the dead man's sister. The second act ends with the death of the little boy; the third, with the disappearance and probable suicide of his mother. The dead man's sister cries out: "Everything that was his is sacred to us, but the one living being who meant more to him than all of us is driven out of our home." The one ray of light offered is that the sister sees through the man who has been courting her and sends him packing. It is noticeable in this play, as in others written by Schnitzler, that the attitude of the women is more sensible and tolerant than that of the men.

The physician is one of the few members of that profession whom the author has painted in an unfavorable light. There is hardly one full-length play of his in which at least one representative of the medical profession does not appear. And almost

invariably they seem destined to act as the particular mouthpieces of the author. In a play like "The Lonely Way," for instance, the life shown is the life lived by men and women observed by Schnitzler. The opinions expressed are the opinions of that sort of men and women under the given circumstances. The author neither approves nor disapproves when he makes each character speak in accordance with his own nature. But like most creative artists, he has felt the need of stating his own view of the surrounding throng. This he seems usually to do through the mouth of men like Dr. Reumann in the play just mentioned, or Dr. Mauer in "The Vast Country." And the attitude of those men shows a strange mingling of disapproval and forbearance, which undoubtedly comes very near being Schnitzler's own.

The little one-act play "The Life Partner" (Die Gefährtin) is significant mainly as a study for bigger canvases developing the same theme: the veil that hides the true life of man and woman alike from the partner. And the play should really be named "The Life Partner That Was Not." Another one-act play, "The Green Cockatoo," is laid at Paris. Its action takes place on the evening of July 14, 1789—the fall of the Bastille and the birth of the Revolution. It presents a wonderful picture of social life at the time—of the average human being's unconsciousness of the great events taking place right under his nose.

"The Veil of Beatrice," a verse play in five acts, takes us to Bologna in the year 1500, when Cesare Borgia was preparing to invest the city in order to oust its tyrant, Giovanni Bentivoglio (named Lionardo in the play), and add it to the Papal possessions. All the acts take place in one night. The fundamental theme is one dear to Schnitzler—the flaming up of passion under the shadow of impending death. The whole city, with the duke leading, surrenders to this outburst, the spirit of which finds its symbol in a ravishingly beautiful girl, Beatrice Nardi, who seems fated to spread desire and death wherever she appears. With her own death at dawn, the city seems to wake as from a nightmare to face the enemy already at the gates. The play holds much that is beautiful and much that is disappointing. To me its chief

importance lies in the fact that it marks a breaking-point between the period when Schnitzler was trying to write "with a purpose," and that later and greater period when he has learned how to treat life sincerely and seriously without other purpose than to present it as it is. That was his starting point in "Anatol," but then he was not yet ready for the realism that must be counted the highest of all: the realism that has no tendency and preaches no lesson, but from which we draw our own lessons as we draw them from life itself in moments of unusual lucidity.

"Hours of Life" (Lebendige Stunden), which has given its name to a volume of four one-act plays, may be described as a mental duel between two sharply opposed temperaments—the practical and the imaginative. An elderly woman, long an invalid, has just died, and a letter to the man who has loved and supported her during her final years reveals the fact that she has taken her own life because she feared that the thought of her was preventing her son, a poet, from working. The duel is between that son and the man who has befriended his mother. The play constitutes a scathing arraignment of the artistic temperament. Bernard Shaw himself has never penned a more bitter one. "Even if you were the world's greatest genius," the old man cries to the young one, "all your scribbling would be worthless in comparison with a single one of those hours of real life that saw your mother seated in that chair, talking to us, or merely listening, perhaps."

The most important of those four one-act plays, however, is "End of the Carnival" (Die letzten Masken). An old journalist, a might-have-been, dying in a hospital, sends for a life-long friend, a successful poet, whom he hates because of his success. All he thinks of is revenge, of getting even, and he means to achieve this end by disclosing to the poet the faithlessness of his wife. Once she had been the mistress of the dying man, and that seems to him his one triumph in life. But when the poet arrives and begins to talk of the commonplaces of daily life, of petty gossip, petty intrigues, and petty jealousies, then the dying man suddenly sees the futility of the whole thing. To him, who has one foot across the final threshold, it means nothing,

and he lets his friend depart without having told him anything. There is a curious recurrence of the same basic idea in "Professor Bernhardi," where the central figure acquires a similar sense of our ordinary life's futility by spending two months in jail.

To what extent Schnitzler has studied and been impressed by Nietzsche I don't know, but the thought underlying "The Lady With the Dagger" is distinctly Nietzschean. It implies not only a sense of our having lived before, of having previously stood in the same relationship to the people now surrounding us, but of being compelled to repeat our past experience, even if a sudden flash of illumination out of the buried past should reveal to us its predestined fatal termination. This idea meets us again in the first act of "The Lonely Way." The fourth of those one-act plays, "Literature," is what Schnitzler has named it—a farce—but delightfully clever and satirical.

Those four plays, and the group of three others published under the common title of "Puppets" (Marionetten), are, next to "Anatol," the best known works of Schnitzler's outside of Austria and Germany. They deserve their wide reputation, too, for there is nothing quite like them in the modern drama. Yet I think they have been over-estimated in comparison with the rest of Schnitzler's production. "The Puppet Player," "The Gallant Cassian" and "The Greatest Show of All" (Zum grossen Wurstel) have charm and brightness and wit. But in regard to actual significance they cannot compare with plays like "The Lonely Way," for instance.

The three plays comprised in the volume named "Puppets" constitute three more exemplifications of the artistic temperament, which again fares badly at the hands of their author. And yet he has more than one telling word to say in defense of that very temperament. That these plays, like "Hours of Life" and "Literature," are expressive of the inner conflict raging for years within the playwright's own soul, I take for granted. And they seem to reflect moments when Schnitzler felt that, in choosing poetry rather than medicine for his life work, he had sacrificed the better choice.

And yet they do not show any regrets, but rather a slightly ironical self-pity. A note of irony runs through everything that Schnitzler has written, constituting one of the main attractions of his art, and it is the more acceptable because the point of it so often turns against the writer himself.

"The Puppet Player" is a poet who has ceased writing in order to use human beings for his material. He thinks that he is playing with their destinies as if they were so many puppets. And the little drama shows how his accidental interference has created fates stronger and happier than his own—fates lying wholly outside his power. The play suffers from a tendency to exaggerated subtlety which is one of Schnitzler's principal dangers, though it rarely asserts itself to such an extent that the enjoyment of his work is spoiled by it.

His self-irony reaches its climax in the one-act play which I have been forced to name "The Greatest Show of All" because the original title (Zum grossen Wurstel) becomes meaningless in English. There he proceeds with reckless abandon to ridicule his own work as well as the inflated importance of all imaginative creation. But to even up the score, he includes the public, as representative of ordinary humanity, among the objects of his sarcasms. And in the end all of us—poets, players, and spectators—are exposed as mere puppets. The same thought recurs to some extent in "The Gallant Cassian," which is otherwise a piece of sheer fun—the slightest of Schnitzler's dramatic productions, perhaps, but not without the accustomed Schnitzlerian sting.

When, after reading all the preceding plays, one reaches "The Lonely Way" (Der einsame Weg), it is hard to escape an impression of everything else having been nothing but a preparation. It is beyond all doubt Schnitzler's greatest and most powerful creation so far, representing a tremendous leap forward both in form and spirit. It has less passion than "The Call of Life," less subtlety than "Intermezzo," less tolerance than "Countess Mizzie." Instead it combines in perfect balance all the

best qualities of those three plays—each dominant feature reduced a little to give the others scope as well. It is a wonderful specimen of what might be called the new realism—of that realism which is paying more attention to spiritual than to material actualities. Yet it is by no means lacking in the more superficial verisimilitude either. Its character-drawing and its whole atmosphere are startlingly faithful to life, even though the life portrayed may represent a clearly defined and limited phase of universal human existence.

The keynote of the play lies in Sala's words to Julian in the closing scene of the fourth act: "The process of aging must needs be a lonely one to our kind." That's the main theme—not a thesis to be proved. This loneliness to which Sala refers, is common to all people, but it is more particularly the share of those who, like himself and Julian, have treasured their "freedom" above everything else and who, for that reason, have eschewed the human ties which to a man like Wegrath represent life's greatest good and deepest meaning. Again we find the principal characters of the play typifying the artistic temperament, with its unhuman disregards of the relationships that have primary importance to other men. Its gross egoism, as exemplified by Julian, is the object of passionate derision. And yet it is a man of that kind, Sala, who recognizes and points out the truer path, when he say: "To love is to live for somebody else."

The play has no thesis, as I have already said. It is not poised on the point of a single idea. Numerous subordinate themes are woven into the main one, giving the texture of the whole a richness resembling that of life itself. Woman's craving for experience and self-determination is one such theme, which we shall find again in "Intermezzo," where it practically becomes the dominant one.

Another one is that fascinated stare at death which is so characteristic of Latin and Slav writers—of men like Zola, Maupassant, and Tolstoy—while it is significantly absent in the great Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon poets. "Is there ever a blissful

moment in any decent man's life, when he can think of anything but death in his innermost soul?" says Sala. The same thought is expressed in varying forms by one after another of Schnitzler's characters. "All sorrow is a lie as long as the open grave is not your own," cries the dying Catharine in "The Call of Life." It is in this connection particularly that we of the North must bear in mind Schnitzler's Viennese background and the Latin traditions forming such a conspicuous part of it. The Latin peoples have shown that they can die as bravely as the men of any other race or clime, but their attitude toward death in general is widely different from the attitude illustrated by Ibsen or Strindberg, for instance. A certain gloom, having kinship with death, seems ingrained in the Northern temperament, put there probably by the pressure of the Northern winter. The man of the sunlit South, on the other hand, seems always to retain the child's simple horror at the thought that darkness must follow light. We had better not regard it as cowardice under any circumstances, and cowardice it can certainly not be called in the characters of Schnitzler. But the resignation in which he finds his only antidote, and which seems to represent his nearest approach to a formulated philosophy, cannot be expected to satisfy us. One of his own countrymen, Hermann Bahr, has protested sharply against its insufficiency as a soul-sustaining faith, and in that protest I feel inclined to concur.

With "The Lonely Way" begins a series of plays representing not only Schnitzler's highest achievements so far, but a new note in the modern drama. To a greater extent than any other modern plays—not even excepting those of Ibsen—they must be defined as psychological. The dramas of Strindberg come nearest in this respect, but they, too, lag behind in soul-revealing quality. Plots are almost lacking in the Schnitzler productions during his later period. Things happen, to be sure, and these happenings are violent enough at times, but they do not constitute a sharply selected sequence of events leading up to a desired and foreshadowed end. In the further development of this period, even clearly defined themes are lost sight of, and the course of the play takes on an almost accidental aspect. This is puzzling, of course,

and it must be especially provoking to those who expect each piece of art to have its narrow little lesson neatly tacked on in a spot where it cannot be missed. It implies a manner that exacts more alertness and greater insight on the part of the reader. But for that very reason these later plays of Schnitzler should prove stimulating to those who do not suffer from mental laziness or exhaustion.

"Intermezzo" (Zwischenspiel) might be interpreted as an attack on those new marital conventions which abolish the old-fashioned demand for mutual faithfulness and substitute mutual frankness. It would be more correct, however, to characterize it as a discussion of what constitutes true honesty in the ever delicate relationship between husband and wife. It shows, too, the growth of a woman's soul, once she has been forced to stand on her own feet. Viewed from this point, the play might very well be classified as feministic. It would be easy, for one thing, to read into it a plea for a single moral standard. But its ultimate bearing goes far beyond such a narrow construction. Here as elsewhere, Schnitzler shows himself more sympathetic toward the female than toward the male outlook on life, and the creator of Cecilia Adams-Ortenburg may well be proclaimed one of the foremost living painters of the woman soul.

The man who, in "Anatol," saw nothing but a rather weak-minded restlessness in woman's inconstancy, recognizes in "Intermezzo" woman's right to as complete a knowledge of life and its possibilities as any man may acquire. The same note is struck by Johanna in "The Lonely Way." "I want a time to come when I must shudder at myself—shudder as deeply as you can only when nothing has been left untried," she says to Sala in the fourth act. This note sounds much more clearly—one might say defiantly—through the last two acts of "Intermezzo." And when Amadeus, shrinking from its implications, cries to Cecilia that thereafter she will be guarded by his tenderness, she retorts impatiently: "But I don't want to be guarded! I shall no longer permit you to guard me!" In strict keeping with it is also that Schnitzler here realizes and accepts woman's capacity for and right to creative

expression. It is from Cecilia's lips that the suggestion comes to seek a remedy for life's hurts in a passionate abandonment to work. In fact, the established attitudes of man and woman seem almost reversed in the cases of Amadeus and Cecilia.

Significant as this play is from any point viewed, I am inclined to treasure it most on account of the subtlety and delicacy of its dialogue. I don't think any dramatist of modern times has surpassed Schnitzler in his ability to find expression for the most refined nuances of thought and feeling. To me, at least, it is a constant joy to watch the iridescence of his sentences, which gives to each of them not merely one, but innumerable meanings. And through so much of this particular play runs a spirit that can only be called playful—a spirit which finds its most typical expression in the delightful figure of Albert Rhon, the poet who takes the place of the otherwise inevitable physician. I like to think of that figure as more or less embodying the author's conception of himself. All the wit and sparkle with which we commonly credit the Gallic mind seems to me abundantly present in the scenes between Albert and Amadeus.

The poise and quiet characterizing "The Lonely Way" and "Intermezzo" appear lost to some extent in "The Call of Life" (Der Ruf des Leben), which, on the other hand, is one of the intensest plays written by Schnitzler. The white heat of its passion sears the mind at times, so that the reader feels like raising a shield between himself and the words. "It was as if I heard life itself calling to me outside my door," Marie says in this play when trying to explain to Dr. Schindler why she had killed her father and gone to seek her lover. The play might as well have been named "The Will to Live," provided we remember that mere existence can hardly be called life. Its basic thought has much in common with that of Frank Wedekind's "Earth Spirit," but Schnitzler spiritualizes what the German playwright has vulgarized. There is a lot of modern heresy in that thought—a lot of revived and refined paganism that stands in sharp opposition to the spirit of Christianity as it has been interpreted hitherto. It might be summarized as a twentieth century version of Achilles' declaration that he

would rather be a live dog than the ruler of all the shades in Hades. "What a creature can I be," cries Marie, "to emerge out of such an experience as out of a bad dream—awake—and living—and wanting to live?" And the kind, wise, Schnitzlerian doctor's answer is: "You are alive—and the rest has been...." Life itself is its own warrant and explanation. Unimpaired life—life with the power and will to go on living—is the greatest boon and best remedy of any that can be offered.

The weak point of "The Call to Life" is Marie's father, the old Moser—one of the most repulsive figures ever seen on the stage. It may have been made what it is in order that the girl's crime might not hopelessly prejudice the spectator at the start and thus render all the rest of the play futile. We must remember, too, that the monstrous egoism of Moser is not represented as a typical quality of that old age which feels itself robbed by the advance of triumphant youth. What Schnitzler shows is that egoism grows more repulsive as increasing age makes it less warranted. The middle act of the play, with its remarkable conversation between the Colonel and Max, brings us back to "Outside the Game Laws." That earlier play was in its time declared the best existing stage presentation of the spirit engendered by the military life. But it has a close second in "The Call of Life." To anyone having watched the manners of militarism in Europe, the words of the Colonel to Max will sound as an all-sufficient explanation: "No physicians have to spend thirty years at the side of beds containing puppets instead of human patients—no lawyers have to practice on criminals made out of pasteboard—and even the ministers are not infrequently preaching to people who actually believe in heaven and hell."

If "The Lonely Way" be Schnitzler's greatest play all around, and "Intermezzo" his subtlest, "Countess Mizzie" is the sweetest, the best tempered, the one that leaves the most agreeable taste in the mouth. It gives us a concrete embodiment of the tolerance toward all life that is merely suggested by the closing sentences of Dr. Schindler in the last act of "The Call of Life." It brings back the gay spirit of "Anatol," but with a rare maturity supporting it. The simple socio-biological

philosophy of "Change Partners!" is restated without the needless naturalism of those early dialogues. The idea of "Countess Mizzie" is that, if we look deep enough, all social distinctions are lost in a universal human kinship. On the surface we appear like flowers neatly arranged in a bed, each kind in its separate and carefully labeled corner. Then Schnitzler begins to scrape off the screening earth, and underneath we find the roots of all those flowers intertwined and matted, so that it is impossible to tell which belong to the Count and which to Wasner, the coachman, which to Miss Lolo, the ballet-dancer, and which to the Countess.

"Young Medardus" is Schnitzler's most ambitious attempt at historical playwriting. It seems to indicate that he belongs too wholly in the present age to succeed in that direction. The play takes us back to 1809, when Napoleon appeared a second time outside the gates of Vienna. The central character, Medardus Klähr, is said to be historical. The re-created atmosphere of old Vienna is at once convincing and amusing. But the play is too sprawling, too scattered, to get firm hold on the reader. There are seventy-four specifically indicated characters, not to mention groups of dumb figures. And while the title page speaks of five acts and a prologue, there are in reality seventeen distinct scenes. Each scene may be dramatically valuable, but the constant passage from place to place, from one set of characters to another, has a confusing effect.

There is, too, a more deep-lying reason for the failure of the play as a whole, I think. The ironical outlook so dear to Schnitzler—or rather, so inseparable from his temperament—has betrayed him. Irony seems hopelessly out of place in a historical drama, where it tends to make us feel that the author does not believe in the actual existence of his own characters. I have a suspicion that "Young Medardus" takes the place within the production of Schnitzler that is held by "Peer Gynt" in the production of Ibsen—that Medardus Klähr is meant to satirize the Viennese character as Peer Gynt satirizes the Norwegian.

The keynote of the play may be found in the words of Etzelt, spoken as Medardus is about to be shot, after having refused to save his own life by a promise not to make any attempts against Napoleon's: "God wanted to make a hero of him, and the course of events turned him into a fool." The obvious interpretation is that the pettiness of Viennese conditions defeated the larger aspirations of the man, who would have proved true to his own possibilities in other surroundings. A more careful analysis of the plot shows, however, that what turns the ambitions of Medardus into dreams and words is his susceptibility to the charms of a woman. Once within the magic circle of her power, everything else—the danger of his country, the death of his sister, his duty to avenge the death of his father—becomes secondary to his passion. And each time he tries to rise above that passion, the reappearance of the woman is sufficient to deflect him from his purpose. It is as if Schnitzler wanted to suggest that the greatest weakness of the Viennese character lies in its sensuous concern with sex to the detriment of all other vital interests. To me it is a very remarkable thing to think that such a play was performed a large number of times at one of the foremost theaters in Vienna, and that, apparently, it received a very respectful hearing. I cannot but wonder what would happen here, if a play were put on the stage dealing in a similar spirit with the American character.

"The soul is a vast country, where many different things find place side by side," says Dr. Theodor Reik in his interesting volume named "Arthur Schnitzler als Psycholog" (Minden, 1913). Thus he explains the meaning of the title given to "The Vast Country" (Das Weite Land). And I don't think it is possible to get closer than that. Nowhere has Schnitzler been more casual in his use of what is commonly called plot. Nowhere has he scorned more completely to build his work around any particular "red thread." Event follows event with seeming haphazardness. The only thing that keeps the play from falling apart is the logical development of each character. It is, in fact, principally, if not exclusively, a series of soul-studies. What happens serves merely as an excuse to reveal the reaction of a certain character to

certain external pressures or internal promptings. But viewed in this light, the play has tremendous power and significance.

Dr. Reik's book, to which I just referred, has been written to prove the direct connection between Schnitzler's art and the new psychology established by Dr. Sigmund Freud of Vienna. That the playwright must have studied the Freudian theories seems more than probable. That they may have influenced him seems also probable. And that this influence may have helped him to a clearer grasp of more than one mystery within the human soul, I am willing to grant also. What I want to protest against, is the attempt to make him out an exponent of any particular scientific theory. He is an observer of all life. He is what Amadeus in "Intermezzo" ironically charges Albert Rhon with being: "a student of the human soul." And he has undoubtedly availed himself of every new aid that might be offered for the analysis and interpretation of that soul. The importance of man's sub-conscious life seems to have been clear to him in the early days of "Anatol," and it seems to have grown on him as he matured. Another Freudian conception he has also made his own—that of the close connection between man's sexual life and vital phenomena not clearly designed for the expression of that life. But—to return to the point I have already tried to make—it would be dangerous and unjust to read any work of his as the dramatic effort of a scientific theorizer.

Schnitzler is of Jewish race. In Vienna that means a great deal more than in London, Stockholm or New York. It means an atmosphere of contempt, of suspicion, of hatred. It means frequently complete isolation, and always some isolation. It means a constant sense of conflict between oneself and one's surroundings. All these things are reflected in the works of Schnitzler—more particularly the sense of conflict and of isolation. Life itself is blamed for it most of the time, however, and it is only once in a great while that the specific and localized cause is referred to—as in "Literature," for instance. And even when Schnitzler undertakes, as he has done in his latest play, "Professor Bernhardi," to deal directly with the situation of the Jew

within a community with strong anti-Semitic tendencies, he does not appear able to keep his mind fixed on that particular issue. He starts to discuss it, and does so with a clearness and fairness that have not been equaled since the days of Lessing—and then he drifts off in a new direction. The mutual opposition between Jews and Catholics becomes an opposition between the skeptical and the mystical temperaments. It is as if he wanted to say that all differences are unreal except those between individuals as such. And if that be his intention, he is right, I believe, and his play is the greater for bringing that thought home to us.

The play is a remarkable one in many respects. It deals largely with the internal affairs of a hospital. An overwhelming majority of the characters are physicians connected with the big hospital of which Professor Bernhardi is the head. They talk of nothing but what men of that profession in such a position would be likely to talk of. In other words, they are all the time "talking shop." This goes on through five acts. Throughout the entire play there is not the slightest suggestion of what the Broadway manager and the periodical editor call a "love interest." And yet the play holds you from beginning to end, and the dramatic tension could not be greater if its main theme were the unrequited love of the professor's son instead of his own right to place his duties as a physician above all other considerations. To one who has grown soul-weary of the "triangle" and all other combinations for the exploiting of illicit or legitimized love, "Professor Bernhardi" should come as a great relief and a bright promise.

These are the main outlines of Schnitzler's work as a dramatist. They indicate a constant, steady growth, coupled with increased realization of his own possibilities and powers as well as of his limitations. In all but a very few of his plays, he has confined himself to the life immediately surrounding him—to the life of the Viennese middle class, and more particularly of the professional element to which he himself belongs. But on the basis of a wonderfully faithful portrayal of local characters and conditions, he has managed to rear a superstructure of emotional

appeal and intellectual clarification that must render his work welcome to thinking men and women wherever it be introduced. And as he is still in the flower of his manhood, it seems reasonable to expect that still greater things may be forthcoming from his pen.

SCHNITZLER'S "ANATOL"

Spearhead fences, yew-tree hedges,
Coats of arms no more regilded,
Sphinxes gleaming through the thickets....
Creakingly the gates swing open.
With its tritons sunk in slumber,
And its fountains also sleeping,
Mildewed, lovely, and rococo,
Lo ... Vienna, Canaletto's,
Dated Seventeen and Sixty.
Quiet pools of green-brown waters,
Smooth and framed in snow-white marble,
Show between their mirrored statues
Gold and silver fishes playing.
Slender stems of oleander
Cast their prim array of shadows
On the primly close-cropped greensward.
Overhead, the arching branches
Meet and twine to sheltering niches,
Where are grouped in loving couples

Stiff-limbed heroines and heroes....
Dolphins three pour splashing streamlets
In three shell-shaped marble basins.
Chestnut blossoms, richly fragrant,
Fall like flames and flutter downward
To be drowned within the basins....
Music, made by clarinettes and
Violins behind the yew-trees,
Seems to come from graceful cupids
Playing on the balustrade, or
Weaving flowers into garlands,
While beside them other flowers
Gayly stream from marble vases:
Jasmin, marigold, and elder....
On the balustrade sit also
Sweet coquettes among the cupids,
And some messeigneurs in purple.
At their feet, on pillows resting,
Or reclining on the greensward,
May be seen abbés and gallants.
From perfumed sedans are lifted
Other ladies by their lovers....
Rays of light sift through the leafage,
Shed on golden curls their luster,

Break in flames on gaudy cushions,
Gleam alike on grass and gravel,
Sparkle on the simple structure
We have raised to serve the moment.
Vines and creepers clamber upward,
Covering the slender woodwork,
While between them are suspended
Gorgeous tapestries and curtains:
Scenes Arcadian boldly woven,
Charmingly designed by Watteau....
In the place of stage, an arbor;
Summer sun in place of footlights;
Thus we rear Thalia's temple
Where we play our private dramas,
Gentle, saddening, precocious....
Comedies that we have suffered;
Feelings drawn from past and present;
Evil masked in pretty phrases;
Soothing words and luring pictures;
Subtle stirrings, mere nuances,
Agonies, adventures, crises....
Some are listening, some are yawning,
Some are dreaming, some are laughing,
Some are sipping ices ... others

Whisper longings soft and languid....

Nodding in the breeze, carnations,

Long-stemmed white carnations, image

Butterflies that swarm in sunlight,

While a black and long-haired spaniel

Barks astonished at a peacock....

Hugo von Hofmannsthal,

(Edwin Björkman.)

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PLAYS BY ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

Anatol (Anatol); seven dramatic scenes; 1889-91 (1893). A Piece of Fiction (Das Märchen); a drama in three acts; 1891 (1894). Paracelsus (Paracelsus); a verse-play in one act; 1892 (1899). Amours (Liebelei); a drama in three acts; 1894 (1896). Outside the Game Laws (Freiwild); a drama in three acts; 1896 (1897). Change Partners! (Reigen); ten dialogues; 1896-97 (1903). The Legacy (Das Vermächtnis); a drama in three acts; 1897 (1898). The Life Partner (Die Gefährtin); a drama in one act; 1898 (1899). The Green Cockatoo (Der grüne Kakadu); a grotesque in one act; 1898 (1899). The Veil of Beatrice (Der Schleier der Beatrice); a drama in five acts; 1899 (1900). The Lady With the Dagger (Die Frau mit dem Dolche); a drama in one act; 1900 (1902). Hours of Life (Lebendige Stunden); an act; 1901 (1902). End of the Carnival (Die letzten Masken); a drama in one act; 1901 (1902). Literature (Literatur); a farce in one act; 1901 (1902). The Puppet Player (Der Puppenspieler); a study in one act; 1902 (1906). The Gallant Cassian (Der tapfere Cassian); a puppet play in one act; 1903 (1906). The Lonely Way (Der einsame Weg); a drama in five acts; 1903 (1904). Intermezzo (Zwischenspiel); a comedy in three acts; 1904 (1905). The Greatest Show of All (Zum grossen Wurstel); a burlesque in one act; 1904 (1906). The Call of Life (Der Ruf des Leben); a drama in three acts; 1905 (1906).

Countess Mizzie (Komtesse Mizzi); a comedy in one act; 1909 (1909). Young Medardus (Der junge Medardus); a history in five acts with a prologue; 1909 (1910). The Vast Country (Das weite Land); a tragicomedy in five acts; 1910 (1911). Professor Bernhardi (Professor Bernhardi); a comedy in five acts; 1912 (1912). The Gallant Kassian (Der tapfere Kassian); a musical comedy in one act, with music by Oscar Straus; —— (1909). The Veil Of Pierrette (Der Schleier der Pierrette); a comic opera in three acts, with music by Ernst von Dohnnanyi; 1909 (not published).

The figures without brackets indicate the dates of production as given in the collected edition of Arthur Schnitzler's works issued by the S. Fischer Verlag, Berlin, 1912. The figures within brackets, showing the dates of publication, are taken from the twenty-fifth anniversary catalogue of the same house (Berlin, 1911), and from C. G. Kayser's "Vollständiges Bücher-Lexikon" (Leipzig, 1891-1912).

"Anatol" was first published by the Bibliographische Bureau (Berlin, 1893), and "A Piece of Fiction" by E. Pierson (Dresden, 1894). Both were reprinted by the Fischer Verlag in 1895. The original versions of "A Piece of Fiction" and "Amours" have been considerably revised. "Change Partners!" was printed privately in 1900, and was subsequently published by the Wiener Verlag, Vienna. "The Gallant Kassian" was published by Ludwig Doblinger, Leipzig.

"The Green Cockatoo," "Paracelsus" and "The Life Partner" appeared in one volume with the sub-title "Three One-act Plays." "Hours of Life," "The Lady With the Dagger," "End of the Carnival," and "Literature" were published together under the title of the first play. "The Puppet Player," "The Gallant Cassian," and "The Greatest Show of All" were brought out in a single volume under the title of "Puppets" (Marionetten).

For additional bibliographical data, see "Arthur Schnitzler: a Bibliography," by Archibald Henderson (Bulletin of Bibliography, Boston, 1913); "The Modern

Drama," by Ludwig Lewisohn (New York, 1915), and "The Continental Drama of Today," by Barrett H. Clark (New York, 1914). A good, though brief, analysis of Schnitzler's work is found in Dr. Lewisohn's volume.

A LIST OF FIRST PERFORMANCES OF PLAYS BY ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

Anatol: Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna, and Lessingtheater, Berlin, Dec. 3, 1910. A Piece of Fiction: Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna, Dec. 1, 1893. Paracelsus: Burgtheater, Vienna, March 1, 1899. Amours: Burgtheater, Vienna, Oct. 9, 1895. Outside the Game Laws: Deutsche Theater, Berlin, 1896. The Legacy: Burgtheater, Vienna, Nov. 30, 1898. The Life Partner: Burgtheater, Vienna, March 1, 1899. The Green Cockatoo: Burgtheater, Vienna, March 1, 1899. The Veil of Beatrice: Lobetheater, Breslau, Dec. 1, 1900. The Lady With the Dagger: Deutsche Theater, Berlin, Jan. 4, 1902. Hours of Life: Deutsche Theater, Berlin, Jan. 4, 1902. End of the Carnival: Deutsche Theater, Berlin, Jan. 4, 1902. Literature: Deutsche Theater, Berlin, Jan. 4, 1902. The Puppet Player: Deutsche Theater, Berlin, September, 1903. The Gallant Cassian: Kleines Theater, Berlin, Oct. 12, 1905. The Lonely Way: Deutsche Theater, Berlin, Feb. 13, 1904. Intermezzo: Burgtheater, Vienna (with Joseph Kainz as Adams), Oct. 12, 1905. The Greatest Show of All: Lustspieltheater, Vienna, March 16, 1906. The Call of Life: Lessingtheater, Berlin, Feb. 24, 1906. Countess Mizzie: Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna, January, 1909. Young Medardus: Burgtheater, Vienna, Nov. 24, 1910. The Vast Country: Lessingtheater, Berlin, Oct. 14, 1912. Professor Bernhardi: Kleines Theater, Berlin, Nov. 28, 1912. The Veil of Pierrette: Hofopernhaus, Dresden, Jan. 22, 1910.

Single scenes from "Anatol" were given at Ischl in the Summer of 1893, and at a matinée arranged by the journalistic society "Concordia" at one of the Vienna theaters in 1909. A Czechic translation of the whole series was staged at Smichow, Bohemia, sometime during the nineties. Three of the dialogues in "Change Partners!" were performed by members of the Akademisch-dramatischer Verein at

Munich in 1904.

The official records of the Burgtheater at Vienna show that, up to the end of 1912, the eight Schnitzler plays forming part of its repertory had been performed the following number of times: "Paracelsus," 12; "Amours," 42; "The Legacy," 11; "The Life Partner," 14; "The Green Cockatoo," 8; "Intermezzo," 22; "Young Medardus," 43; "The Vast Country," 30.

The list of dates given above has been drawn chiefly from "Das moderne Drama," by Robert F. Arnold (Strassburg, 1912); "Das Burgtheater: statistische Rückblick," by Otto Rub (Vienna, 1913), and the current files of Bühne und Welt (Berlin). For dates of Schnitzler performances in America and England, see the Henderson bibliography previously mentioned.

THE LONELY WAY

(Der Einsame Weg)

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

1903

PERSONS

Professor Wegrat } President of the Academy of Plastic Arts Gabrielle } His wife Felix } Their children Johanna Julian Fichtner Stephan von Sala Irene Herms Dr. Franz Reumann } A physician Fichtner's Valet Sala's Valet A Maid at the Wegrats'

THE LONELY WAY

THE FIRST ACT

The little garden attached to Professor Wegrat's house. It is almost surrounded by buildings, so that no outlook of any kind is to be had. At the right in the garden stands the small two-storied house with its woodwork veranda, to which lead three

wooden steps. Entries are made from the veranda as well as from either side of the house. Near the middle of the stage is a green garden table with chairs to match, and also a more comfortable armchair. A small iron bench is placed against a tree at the left.

Johanna is walking back and forth in the garden when Felix enters, wearing the uniform of a uhlan.

JOHANNA (turning about)

Felix!

FELIX

Yes, it's me.

JOHANNA

How are you?—And how have you been able to get another furlough?

FELIX

Oh, it won't last long.—And how's mamma?

JOHANNA

Doing pretty well the last few days.

FELIX

Do you think she would be scared if I dropped in on her unexpectedly?

JOHANNA

No. But wait a little just the same. She's asleep now. I have just come from her room.—How long are you going to stay, Felix?

FELIX

To-morrow night I'm off again.

JOHANNA (staring into a fancied distance)

Off....

FELIX

Oh, it sounds big! But one doesn't get so very far off—not in any respect.

JOHANNA

And you have wanted it so badly.... (Pointing to his uniform) Now you've got it. And are you not satisfied?

FELIX

Well, at any rate it is the most sensible thing I have gone into so far. For now I feel at least that I might achieve something under certain circumstances.

JOHANNA

I believe you would make good in any profession.

FELIX

I have my doubts whether I could get anywhere as a lawyer or an engineer. And on the whole I feel a good deal better than ever before. Often it seems to me as if I hadn't been born at the right time. I think I should have come into the world while there was still so much of order left in it, that one could venture all sorts of things one couldn't possibly venture nowadays.

JOHANNA

Oh, but you are free—you've got place to move.

FELIX

Only within certain limits.

JOHANNA

They are a great deal wider than these at any rate.

FELIX (looking around with a smile)

Well, this is not a prison.... Really, the garden has turned out quite pretty. How bare it looked when we were children.—What's that? A row of peach trees? That doesn't

look bad at all.

JOHANNA

One of Dr. Reumann's ideas.

FELIX

Yes, I should have guessed it.

JOHANNA

Why?

FELIX

Because I can't believe any member of our family capable of such a useful inspiration. What are his chances anyhow?—I mean in regard to that professorship at Gratz?

JOHANNA

I don't know anything about it. (She turns away)

FELIX

I suppose mamma is outdoors a good deal these fine days?

JOHANNA

Yes.

FELIX

Are you still reading to her? Do you try to divert her a little? To cheer her up?

JOHANNA

Just as if it were such an easy thing!

FELIX

But you have to put some spunk into it, Johanna.

JOHANNA

Yes, Felix, it's easy for you to talk.

FELIX

What do you mean?

JOHANNA (speaking as if to herself)

I don't know if you'll be able to understand me.

FELIX (smiling)

Why should it all at once be so hard for me to understand you?

JOHANNA (looking calmly at him)

Now when she is sick, I don't love her as much as before.

FELIX (startled)

What?

JOHANNA

No, it's impossible that you could quite understand. All the time she is getting farther away from us.... It is as if every day a new set of veils dropped down about her.

FELIX

And what is the meaning of it?

JOHANNA (continues to look at him in the same calm way)

FELIX

You think...?

JOHANNA

You know, Felix, that I never make any mistakes in things of that kind.

FELIX

I know, you say...?

JOHANNA

When poor little Lillie von Sala had to die, I was aware of it in advance—before the rest of you knew that she was sick even.

FELIX

Yes, you had had a dream—and you were nothing but a child.

JOHANNA

I didn't dream it. I knew it. (Brusquely) It's something I can't explain.

FELIX (after a pause)

And papa—has he resigned himself to it?

JOHANNA

Resigned himself?—Do you think he too can see those veils coming down?

FELIX (having first shaken his head slightly)

Nothing but imagination, Johanna—I am sure.—But now I want to.... (Turning toward the house) Papa hasn't come home yet?

JOHANNA

No. As a rule he's very late these days. He has an awful lot to do in the Academy.

FELIX

I'll try not to wake her up—I'll be careful. (He goes out by way of the veranda)

[While alone for a while, Johanna seats herself on the garden bench with her hands clasped across her knees. Sala enters. He is forty-five, but looks younger. Slender to the verge of leanness, and smooth-shaven. His brown hair, which has begun to turn gray at the temples, and which he wears rather long, is parted on the right side. His features are keen and energetic; his eyes, gray and clear.

SALA

Good evening, Miss Johanna.

JOHANNA

Good evening, Mr. von Sala.

SALA

They told me your mother was having a little nap, and so I permitted myself to come out here in the meantime.

JOHANNA

Felix just got here.

SALA

Well? Have they already granted him another furlough? In my days they were stricter in that regiment. However, we were then stationed near the border—somewhere in Galicia.

JOHANNA

I can never keep in mind that you have gone through that kind of thing too.

SALA

Yes, it's long ago now. And it didn't last more than a couple of years. But it was good fun as I look back at it now.

JOHANNA

Like almost everything else you have experienced.

SALA

Like much of it.

JOHANNA

Won't you sit down?

SALA

Thank you. (He seats himself on the support of the armchair) Am I permitted? (Johanna having nodded assent, he takes a cigarette from his case and lights it)

JOHANNA

Are you already settled in your new place, Mr. von Sala?

SALA

I move in to-morrow.

JOHANNA

And it gives you a great deal of pleasure, doesn't it?

SALA

That would be a little premature.

JOHANNA

Are you superstitious?

SALA

Well, for that matter—yes.—But that was not what I had in mind. I only take possession temporarily, not for good.

JOHANNA

Why not?

SALA

I'm going abroad—for a prolonged stay.

JOHANNA

Oh? You are to be envied. I wish I could do the same—go here and there in the world, and not bother myself about a single human being.

SALA

Still at it?

JOHANNA

Still at it.... What do you mean?

SALA

Oh, I recall how the same kind of schemes for traveling used to occupy your mind when you were nothing but a little girl. What was it you wanted to become?—A ballet dancer, I think. Wasn't that it? A very famous one, of course.

JOHANNA

Why do you say that as if it were nothing at all to be a ballet dancer? (Without looking at him) You, in particular, Mr. von Sala, should not be talking like that.

SALA

Why not I, in particular?

JOHANNA (glances up calmly at him)

SALA

I don't quite make out what you mean, Miss Johanna.... Unless I must.... (Simply) Johanna, did you know at the time that I was looking at you?

JOHANNA

When?

SALA

Last year, when you were in the country, and I came out once and stayed over night in your attic. It was bright moonlight, and I thought I could see a fairy gliding back and forth in the meadow.

JOHANNA (nods with a smile)

SALA

And it was for me?

JOHANNA

Oh, I saw you very well, where you stood behind the curtain.

SALA (after a brief pause)

I suppose you will never dance like that for other people?

JOHANNA

Why not?—I have already. And then, too, you were looking on. Of course, it was a good while ago.—It happened on one of the Greek islands. A large number of men stood in a circle around me ... you were one of them ... and I was a slave girl from Lydia.

SALA

A princess in captivity.

JOHANNA (earnestly)

Don't you believe in such things?

SALA

If you want me to—certainly.

JOHANNA (still very serious)

You should believe everything in which the rest cannot believe.

SALA

When the time comes for it, I suppose I shall.

JOHANNA

You see—I can rather believe anything than that I should now be in the world for the first time. And there are moments when I recall quite clearly all sorts of things.

SALA

And at that time you had such a moment?

JOHANNA

Yes, a year ago, when I was dancing for you in the meadow that moonlit summer night. I am sure it was not the first time, Mr. von Sala. (After a short pause, with a sudden change of tone) Where are you going anyhow?

SALA (falling into the same tone)

To Bactria, Miss Johanna.

JOHANNA

Where?

SALA

To Bactria. That's quite a remarkable country, and what's most remarkable about it is that it doesn't exist any longer. What it means is that I am joining an expedition which will start next November. You have read of it in the papers, haven't you?

JOHANNA

No.

SALA

The proposition is to make excavations where it is supposed the ancient Ecbatana stood once—some six thousand years ago. That goes even farther back than your Lydian period, you see.

JOHANNA

When did you get hold of this idea?

SALA

Only a few days ago. Conversationally, so to speak. Count Ronsky, who is at the head of the matter, inspired me with a great desire to go. That wasn't very hard, however. He stirred an old longing within me. (With more spirit) Think of it, Miss Johanna: to be watching with your own eyes the gradual rising of such a buried city out of the ground—house by house, stone by stone, century by century. No, it wasn't meant that I should pass away until I had had this wish of mine fulfilled.

JOHANNA

Why talk of dying then?

SALA

Is there ever a blissful moment in any decent man's life when he can think of anything else in his innermost soul?

JOHANNA

I don't suppose a single wish of yours was ever left unfulfilled.

SALA

Not a single one...?

JOHANNA

I know that you have also had many sad experiences. But frequently I believe you have longed for those too.

SALA

Longed for them...? You may be right, perhaps, in saying that I enjoyed them when they came.

JOHANNA

How perfectly I understand that! A life without sorrow would probably be as bare as a life without happiness. (Pause) How long ago is it now?

SALA

What are you thinking of?

JOHANNA

That Mrs. von Sala died?

SALA

It's seven years ago, almost to a day.

JOHANNA

And Lillie—the same year?

SALA

Yes, Lillie died a month later. Do you often think of Lillie, Miss Johanna?

JOHANNA

Quite often, Mr. von Sala. I have never had a girl friend since that time. (As if to herself) She too would have to be called "miss" now. She was very pretty. She had black hair with a bluish glint in it like your wife, and the same clear eyes that you have, Mr. von Sala. (As if to herself) "Then both of them walked hand in hand along the gloomy road that leads through sunlit land...."

SALA

What a memory you have, Johanna.

JOHANNA

Seven years ago that was.... Remarkable!

SALA

Why remarkable?

JOHANNA

You are building a house, and digging out submerged cities, and writing queer poetry—and human beings who once meant so much to you have been rotting in their graves these seven years—and you are still almost young. How incomprehensible the whole thing is!

SALA

"Thou that livest on, cease thou thy weeping," says Omar Nameh, who was born at Bagdad in the year 412 of the Mohammedan era as the son of a cobbler. For that matter, I know a man who is only thirty-eight. He has buried two wives and seven children, not to speak of grandchildren. And now he is playing the piano in a shabby little Prater1 restaurant, while artists of both sexes show off their tights and their fluttering skirts on the platform. And recently, when the pitiful performance had come to an end and they were turning out the lights, he went right on, without apparent reason, and quite heedless of everything, playing away on that frightful old

rattle-box of his. And then Ronsky and I asked him over to our table and had a chat with him. And then he told us that the piece he had just played was his own composition. Of course, we complimented him. And then his eyes lit up, and he asked us in a voice that shook: "Gentlemen, do you think my piece will make a hit?" He is thirty-eight years old, and his career has come to an end in a small restaurant where his public consists of nurse-girls and non-commissioned officers, and his one longing is—to get their applause!

REUMANN (enters)

Good evening, Miss Johanna. Good evening, Mr. von Sala. (Shakes hands with both of them at the same time) How are you?

SALA

Fine. You don't suppose one must be your victim all the time because one has had the honor of consulting you once?

REUMANN

Oh, I had forgotten all about it. However, there are people who feel just that way.—I suppose your mother is having a little rest, Miss Johanna?

JOHANNA (who apparently has been startled by the few words exchanged between the physician and Sala, and who is looking intently at the latter) She is probably awake by this time. Felix is with her.

REUMANN

Felix...? You haven't telegraphed for him, have you?

JOHANNA

Not that I know of. Who could have...?

REUMANN

I only wondered. Your father is inclined to get frightened.

JOHANNA

There they are now.

MRS. WEGRAT (enters from the veranda with Felix)

How are you, my dear Doctor? What do you think of the surprise I have just had?

[All the men shake hands.

MRS. WEGRAT

Good evening, Mr. von Sala.

SALA

I am delighted to see you looking so well, Mrs. Wegrat.

MRS. WEGRAT

Yes, I am doing a little better. If only the gloomy season were not so close at hand.

SALA

But now the finest time of the year is coming. When the woods sparkle with red and yellow, and a golden mist lies on the hills, and the sky grows pale and remote as if it were scared by its own infinity...!

MRS. WEGRAT

Yes, that ought to be worth seeing once more.

REUMANN (reproachfully)

Mrs. Wegrat....

MRS. WEGRAT

Pardon me—but thoughts of that kind will come. (Brightening up a little) If I only knew how much longer I might count on my dear doctor?

REUMANN

I can reassure you on that score, madam: I shall stay in Vienna.

MRS. WEGRAT

What? Has the matter been settled already?

REUMANN

Yes.

MRS. WEGRAT

So another man has actually been called to Gratz?

REUMANN

No, not that way. But the other man, who was practically sure of the place, has broken his neck climbing a mountain.

FELIX

But then your chances should be better than ever. Whom could they possibly consider besides you?

REUMANN

I suppose my chances wouldn't be bad. But I have preferred to forgo them.

MRS. WEGRAT

How?

REUMANN

I won't accept the call.

MRS. WEGRAT

Is that out of superstition?

FELIX

Or out of pride?

REUMANN

Neither. But the thought of having another man's misfortune to thank for my own advancement would be extremely painful to me. Half my life would be spoiled for me. That is neither superstition nor pride, you see, but just commonplace,

small-minded vanity.

SALA

You're a subtle one, Doctor.

MRS. WEGRAT

Well, all I gather is that you are going to stay. Which shows how mean your thoughts grow when you are sick.

REUMANN (changing the subject on purpose)

Well, Felix, how do you find life in a garrison?

FELIX

Fine.

MRS. WEGRAT

So you are really satisfied, boy?

FELIX

I feel very thankful to all of you. Especially to you, mamma.

MRS. WEGRAT

Why to me especially? After all, the decision lay with your father in the last instance.

REUMANN

He would, of course, have preferred to see you choose a more peaceful calling.

SALA

Oh, but to-day there is none more peaceful.

FELIX

That's where you are right, Mr. von Sala.—By the by, I was to give you the regards of Lieutenant-Colonel Schrotting.

SALA

Thank you. Does he still remember me?

FELIX

Not he alone. We are constantly being reminded of you—at every meal, in fact. Yours is among the pictures of former officers that hang in the mess rooms.

WEGRAT (enters)

Good evening.—Why, Felix, are you here again? What a surprise!

FELIX

Good evening, papa. I have applied for a two-day furlough.

WEGRAT

Furlough ... furlough? A real one? Or is it another one of those little brilliant tricks?

FELIX (cheerfully and without taking offence)

I am not in the habit of fibbing, papa, am I?

WEGRAT (in the same tone)

I meant no offense, my boy. Even if you had been guilty of deserting the flag, your longing to see your mother would be sufficient excuse for you.

MRS. WEGRAT

To see his parents, you mean.

WEGRAT

Of course—to see us all. But as you are a little under the weather, you come foremost just now.—Well, how are you getting along, Gabrielle? Better, are you not? (In a low voice, almost timidly) My love.... (He strokes her brow and hair) Love.... The air is so mild.

SALA

We are having a wonderful Autumn.

REUMANN

Have you just got away from the Academy, Professor?

WEGRAT

Yes. Now, when I am also the president of it, there is a whole lot to do—and all of it is not pleasant or grateful. But I seem to be made for it, as they have insisted. And I suppose it will have to go on this way. (With a smile) As somebody once called me—an art-official.

SALA

Don't be so unjust to yourself, Professor.

MRS. WEGRAT

You must have been walking all that long way home again?

WEGRAT

I even went out of my way some distance—to pass across the old Turkish fort.2 I am awfully fond of that road. On evenings like this the whole city lies beneath you as if bathed in a silvery mist.—By the by, Gabrielle, I have some greetings to deliver. I met Irene Herms.

MRS. WEGRAT

Is she in Vienna?

WEGRAT

Just passing through. She intends to call on you.

SALA

Has she still got an engagement at Hamburg?

WEGRAT

No, she has left the stage, she told me, and is now living in the country with her married sister.

JOHANNA

I saw her once in a play of yours, Mr. von Sala.

SALA

Then you must have been a very small girl indeed.

JOHANNA

She played a Spanish princess.

SALA

Unfortunately. For princesses were not at all in her line. She has never in her life been able to treat verse properly.

REUMANN

And you can still bear that in mind, Mr. von Sala—that some lady on some occasion happened to handle your verse badly?

SALA

Well, why shouldn't I, my dear Doctor? If you were living at the center of the earth, you would know that all things are of equal weight. And were you floating in the center of the universe, you would suspect that all things are of equal importance.

MRS. WEGRAT

How does she look anyhow?

WEGRAT

She is still very pretty.

SALA

Has she preserved her resemblance to that portrait of hers which is hanging in the Museum?

FELIX

What portrait is that?

JOHANNA

Is her portrait really in the Museum?

SALA

Oh, you know it. In the catalogue it is labeled "Actress"—just "Actress." A young woman in the costume of a harlequin, over which she has draped a Greek toga, while at her feet lie a confused heap of masks. With her staring glance turned toward the spectators, she stands there all alone on an empty, dusky stage, surrounded by odd pieces of misfit scenery—one wall of a room, a forest piece, part of an old dungeon....

FELIX

And the background shows a southern landscape with palms and plane trees...?

SALA

Yes, and it is partly raised so that still farther off you can see a pile of furniture, steps, goblets, chandeliers—all glittering in full daylight.

FELIX

But that's Julian Fichtner's picture?

SALA

Exactly.

FELIX

I had not the slightest idea that the figure of that woman was meant for Irene Herms.

WEGRAT

Twenty-five years have passed since he painted that picture. It caused a tremendous sensation at the time. It was his first big success. And to-day I suppose there are lots of people who no longer remember his name.—Come to think of it, I asked Irene Herms about him. But strange to say, not even his "perennial best girl" could tell

where in this world he happens to be straying.

FELIX

I talked with him only a few days ago.

WEGRAT

What? You have seen Julian Fichtner? He was in Salzburg?—When?

FELIX

Only about three or four days ago. He looked me up, and we spent the evening together.

[Mrs. Wegrat throws a quick glance at Dr. Reumann.

WEGRAT

How is he doing? What did he tell you?

FELIX

He has turned rather gray, but otherwise he didn't seem to have changed at all.

WEGRAT

How long can it be now since he left Vienna? Two years, isn't it?

MRS. WEGRAT

A little more.

FELIX

He has traveled far and wide.

SALA

Yes, now and then I have had a postcard from him.

WEGRAT

So have we. But I thought you and he were corresponding regularly.

SALA

Regularly? Oh, no.

JOHANNA

Isn't he a friend of yours?

SALA

As a rule I have no friends. And if I have any, I repudiate them.

JOHANNA

But you used to be quite intimate with him.

SALA

He with me rather than I with him.

FELIX

What do you mean by that, Mr. von Sala?

JOHANNA

Oh, I can understand it. I suppose you have had the same experience with most people.

SALA

Something very much like it, at least.

JOHANNA

Yes, one can see it from what you write, too.

SALA

I hope so. Otherwise it might just as well have been written by somebody else.

WEGRAT

Did he say when he would be back in Vienna?

FELIX

Soon, I think. But he didn't say very definitely.

JOHANNA

I should like to see Mr. Fichtner again. I am fond of that kind of people.

WEGRAT

What do you mean by "that kind of people"?

JOHANNA

Who are always arriving from some far-off place.

WEGRAT

But as a rule he never arrived from far-off places when you knew him, Johanna.... He was living right here.

JOHANNA

What did it matter whether he was living here or elsewhere?—Even when he came to see us daily, it was always as if he had just arrived from some great distance.

WEGRAT

Oh, of course....

FELIX

I had often the same feeling.

WEGRAT

Well, it's strange how he has been knocking about in the world—these last few years at least.

SALA

Don't you think his restlessness goes farther back? Were you not students together in the Academy?

WEGRAT

Yes. And to know him properly, you must have known him then. There was something fascinating about him as a young man, something that dazzled. Never

have I known anybody whom the term "of great promise" fitted so completely.

SALA

Well, he has kept a whole lot of it.

WEGRAT

But think of all he might have achieved!

REUMANN

I believe that what you might achieve you do achieve.

WEGRAT

Not always. Julian was undoubtedly destined for higher things. What he lacked was the capacity for concentration, the inward calm. He could never feel at home for good anywhere. And the misfortune has been that in his own works, too, he has lived only as a transient, so to speak.

FELIX

He showed me a couple of sketches he had made recently.

WEGRAT

Good?

FELIX

To me there was something gripping about them.

MRS. WEGRAT

Why gripping? What kind of pictures were they?

FELIX

Landscapes. And as a rule very pleasant ones at that.

JOHANNA

Once in a dream I saw a Spring landscape, very sunlit and soft, and yet it made me weep.

SALA

Yes, the sadness of certain things lies much deeper than we commonly suspect.

WEGRAT

So he's working again? Then, perhaps, we may expect something out of the ordinary.

SALA

In the case of anybody who has been an artist once you are never safe against surprises.

WEGRAT

That's it, Mr. von Sala. That's where the great difference lies. In the case of an official you can feel perfectly safe on that score. (With cheerful self-contempt) Such a one paints every year his nice little picture for the exhibition, and couldn't possibly do anything else.

REUMANN

It is still open to question who do most for the advancement of life and art: officials like you, Professor, or—our so-called men of genius.

WEGRAT

Oh, I have not the least intention to play the modest one. But as to men of genius—we had better not talk of them at all. There you are dealing with a world by itself, lying outside of all discussion—as do the elements.

REUMANN

My opinion, I must confess, is utterly different.

WEGRAT

Oh, it's of no use discussing anybody but those who have distinct limitations. And what I have found is—that he who knows his own limitations best is the better man.

And on this point I have pretty good reason for self-respect.—Do you feel chilly, Gabrielle?

MRS. WEGRAT

No.

WEGRAT

But you had better pull the shawl a little closer about you, and then we should have a little exercise—in so far as it's possible in here.

MRS. WEGRAT

All right.—Please, Doctor, give me your arm. You haven't paid the least attention to your patient yet.

REUMANN

At your service!

[The rest start ahead, Johanna walking with her brother, and Wegrat with Sala. Dr. Reumann and Mrs. Wegrat seem about to follow, when she suddenly stops.

MRS. WEGRAT

Did you notice his eyes light up—I mean, the eyes of Felix, when they were talking of him? It was most peculiar.

REUMANN

Men of Mr. Fichtner's type appear undoubtedly very interesting to young people. They seem to carry with them an odor of romance.

MRS. WEGRAT (shaking her head)

And he looked him up.... It is perfectly clear that he went to Salzburg just to see him again. I suppose he is beginning to feel a little deserted.

REUMANN

Why not pay a visit to a young friend when one happens to be near the place where

he is living? I can see nothing peculiar in that.

MRS. WEGRAT

Perhaps you are right. Perhaps I might have looked at the matter in the same way not long ago. But now, in the face of.... No, Doctor, I am not going to be sentimental.

REUMANN

I don't object to sentiment, but to nonsense.

MRS. WEGRAT (smiling)

Thank you.—However, I have occasion to think of many different things. And it is no reason for taking it too seriously, my dear friend. You know, of course, that I told you everything merely that I might have a kind and sensible man with whom to discuss the past—and not at all to be absolved of any guilt.

REUMANN

To give happiness is more than being free of guilt. And as this has been granted you, it is clear that you have made full atonement—if you'll pardon the use of such a preposterously extravagant term.

MRS. WEGRAT

How can you talk like that?

REUMANN

Well, am I not right?

MRS. WEGRAT

Just as if I couldn't feel how all of us, deceivers and deceived, must seem equally contemptible to you in particular!

REUMANN

Why to me in particular...? What you call contempt, madam—supposing I did feel anything like it—would, after all, be nothing but disguised envy. Or do you think I

lack the desire to conduct my life as I see most other people conducting theirs? I simply haven't the knack. If I am to be frank, madam—the deepest yearning of all within me is just to be a rogue: a fellow who can dissemble, seduce, sneer, make his way over dead bodies. But thanks to a certain shortcoming in my temperament, I am condemned to remain a decent man—and what is still more painful perhaps: to hear everybody say that I am one.

MRS. WEGRAT (who has been listening with a smile)

I wonder whether you have told the truth about what is keeping you here in Vienna?

REUMANN

Certainly. Indeed, I have no other reason. I have no right to have any other. Don't let us talk any more of it.

MRS. WEGRAT

Are we not such good friends that I can talk calmly with you of everything? I know what you have in mind. But I believe that it might be in your power to drive certain illusions and dreams out of the soul of a young girl. And it would be such a comfort to me if I could leave you for good among these people, all of whom are so near to me, and who yet know nothing whatever about each other—who are hardly aware of their mutual relationships even, and who seem fated to flitter away from each other to God knows where.

REUMANN

We'll talk of those things, madam, when it's time to do so.

MRS. WEGRAT

Of course, I regret nothing. I believe I have never regretted anything. But I have a feeling that something is out of order. Perhaps it's nothing but that strange glimmer in the eyes of Felix which has caused all this unrest within me. But isn't it peculiar—uncanny almost—to think that a man like him may go through the world

with all his senses open and yet never know whom he has to thank for being in the world?

REUMANN

Don't let us indulge in generalities, Mrs. Wegrat. In that way you can set the most solid things shaking and swaying until the steadiest eyes begin to grow dizzy. My own conclusion is this: that a lie which has proved strong enough to sustain the peace of a household can be no less respectable than a truth which could do nothing but destroy the image of the past, fill the present with sorrow, and confuse the vision of the future. (He goes out with Mrs. Wegrat)

JOHANNA (entering with Sala)

In this way one always gets back to the same spot. I suppose your garden is bigger, Mr. von Sala?

SALA

My garden is the whole wide woods—that is, for people whose fancy is not restrained by a light fence.

JOHANNA

Your villa has grown very pretty.

SALA

Oh, you know it then?

JOHANNA

A little while ago I saw it again for the first time in three years.

SALA

But three years ago they hadn't put in the foundations yet.

JOHANNA

To me it was already standing there.

SALA

How mysterious....

JOHANNA

Not at all. If you will only remember. Once we made an excursion to Dornbach3—my parents, and Felix, and I. There we met you and Mr. Fichtner, and it happened on the very spot where your house was to be built. And now everything looks just as you described it to us then.

SALA

But how did you happen to be in that vicinity?

JOHANNA

Since mamma was taken sick I have often had to take my walks alone....

SALA

And when was it you passed by my house?

JOHANNA

Not long ago—to-day.

SALA

To-day?

JOHANNA

Yes. I went all around it.

SALA

Oh? All around it?—Did you also notice the little gate that leads directly into the woods?

JOHANNA

Yes.—But from that spot the house is almost invisible. The leafage is very thick.—Where have you placed those busts of the Roman emperors?

SALA

They stand on columns at the opening of an avenue of trees. Right by is a small marble bench, and in front of the bench a little pool has been made.

JOHANNA (nodding)

Just as you told us that time.... And there is a greenish gray glitter on the water—and in the morning the shadow from the beech tree falls across it.... I know. (She looks up at him and smiles; both go out together)

CURTAIN

THE SECOND ACT

In the home of Julian Fichtner. A pleasant, rather distinguished room in a state of slight disorder. Books are piled on two chairs, while on another chair stands an open traveling bag. Julian is seated at a writing desk, from the drawers of which he is taking out papers. Some of these he destroys, while others are thrown into the waste-paper basket.

VALET (announcing)

Mr. von Sala. (He goes out)

SALA (enters. His custom to walk up and down while talking asserts itself strikingly during the following scene. Now and then he sits down for a moment, often only on the arm of a chair. At times he stops beside Julian, putting his hand on the latter's shoulder while speaking. Two or three times during the scene he puts his hand to the left side of his chest, in a manner suggesting discomfort of some kind. But this gesture is not sharply accentuated)

JULIAN

I am delighted. (They shake hands)

SALA

So you got back early this morning?

JULIAN

Yes.

SALA

And mean to stay...?

JULIAN

Haven't decided yet. Things are a little upset, as you see. And I fear they'll never be quite in shape again. I intend to give up this place.

SALA

Too bad. I have become so accustomed to it. In what direction are you going to move?

JULIAN

It's possible that I don't take any new quarters at all for a while, but just keep on moving about as I have been doing the last few years. I am even considering to have my things sold at auction.

SALA

That's a thought which gets no sympathy from me.

JULIAN

Really, I haven't got much sympathy for it myself. But the material side of the question has to be considered a little, too. I have been spending too much these last years, and it has to be evened up somehow. Probably I'll settle down again later on. Sometime one must get back to peace and work, I suppose.—Well, how goes it with you? What are our friends and acquaintances doing?

SALA

So you haven't seen anybody yet?

JULIAN

Not one. And you are the only one I have written about my being here.

SALA

And you have not yet called on the Wegrats?

JULIAN

No. I even hesitate to go there.

SALA

Why?

JULIAN

After a certain age it would perhaps be better never to put your foot in any place where your earlier years were spent. It is so rare to find things and people the same as when you left them. Isn't that so?—Mrs. Gabrielle is said to have changed considerably in the course of her sickness. That's what Felix told me at least. I should prefer not to see her again. Oh, you can understand that, Sala.

SALA (rather surprised)

Of course, I understand. How long is it you have had no news from Vienna?

JULIAN

I have constantly started ahead of my mail. Not a single letter has overtaken me during the last fortnight. (Alarmed) What has happened?

SALA

Mrs. Gabrielle died a week ago.

JULIAN

Oh! (He is deeply moved; for a while he walks back and forth; then he resumes his seat and says after a pause) Of course, it was to be expected, and yet....

SALA

Her death came easily.... You know how those left behind always pretend to know

such things with certainty. Anyhow, she fell asleep quietly one night and never woke up again.

JULIAN (in low voice)

Poor Gabrielle!—Did you see anything of her toward the end?

SALA

Yes, I went there almost daily.

JULIAN

Oh, did you?

SALA

Johanna asked me. She was literally afraid of being alone with her mother.

JULIAN

Afraid?

SALA

The sick woman inspired her with a sort of horror. She has calmed down a little now.

JULIAN

What a strange creature.... And how does our friend, the professor, bear up under his loss? Resigned to the will of God, I suppose?

SALA

My dear Julian, the man has a position. I fear we cannot grasp that, we who are Gods by the grace of the moment—and also less than men at times.

JULIAN

Of course, Felix is not here?

SALA

I talked with him less than an hour ago, and informed him that you were here. It

made him very happy to have you call on him in Salzburg.

JULIAN

It looked so to me. And he did me a lot of good. For that matter, I have really thought of settling down in Salzburg.

SALA

For ever?

JULIAN

For a while. On account of Felix, too. His unspoiled nature affects me very pleasantly—it makes me actually feel younger. Were he not my son, I might almost envy him—and not on account of his youth alone. (With a smile) Thus there is nothing left for me but to love him. I must say that I feel a little ashamed at having to do it incognito, so to speak.

SALA

Are not these feelings a little belated in their appearance?

JULIAN

Oh, I suppose they were there long before I knew. And, you know, I saw the youngster for the first time when he was ten or eleven years old, and it was only then I learned that he was my son.

SALA

It must have been a strange meeting between you and Mrs. Gabrielle, ten years after you had committed that piece of hideous perfidy—as our ancestors used to put it.

JULIAN

It wasn't strange even. It came about quite naturally. Shortly after my return from Paris I happened to meet Wegrat on the street. Of course, we had heard of each other from time to time, and we met as old friends. There are people who seem born to a fate of that kind.... And as for Gabrielle....

SALA

She had forgiven you, of course?

JULIAN

Forgiven...? It was more or less than that. Only once did we talk of the past—she without reproach, and I without regret: as if the whole story had happened to somebody else. And after that never again. I might have thought some miracle had wiped those earlier days out of her memory. In fact, as far as I am concerned, there seemed to be no real connection between that quiet matron and the creature I had once loved. And as for the youngster—well, you know—at first I didn't care more for him than I might have cared for any other pretty and gifted child.—Of course, ten years ago my life had a different aspect. I was still clinging to so many things which since then have slipped away from me. It was only in the course of time that I became more and more drawn to the house, until at last I began to feel at home there.

SALA

I hope you never took offense at my gradual discovery of the true state of affairs.

JULIAN

You, at any rate, didn't think me very sensible....

SALA

Why not? I too find that family life in itself is quite attractive. Only it ought, after all, to be experienced in one's own family.

JULIAN

You know very well that I have frequently felt something like actual shame at the incongruity of that relationship. It was in fact one of the things that drove me away. Of course, there were a lot of other things that pressed on me at the time. Especially that I couldn't make a real success out of my work.

SALA

But you hadn't been exhibiting anything for a long time.

JULIAN

It wasn't external success I had in mind. I could never get into the right mood any more, and I hoped that traveling would help me again, as it had done so often in earlier years.

SALA

And how did you fare? We have heard so little of you here. You might really have written me a little more frequently and fully. For you know, of course, that I care a great deal more for you than for most other people. We have such a knack of giving each other the right cue—don't you think? There are sentimental people who speak of such a relation as friendship. And it is not impossible that we used to address each other by our Christian names some time during the last century, or that you may even have wept your fill on my shoulder. I have missed you more than once during these two years—honestly! On my lonely walks I have quite frequently thought of our pleasant chats in the Dornbach park, where we were in the habit of disposing temporarily of (quoting) "what is most lofty and profound in this our world."—Well, Julian, from where do you come anyhow?

JULIAN

From the Tyrol? During the Summer I made long tours on foot. I have even turned mountain climber in my old days. I spent a whole week at one of those pasturing grounds in the Alps.... Yes, I have been up to all sorts of things. It's a wonder what you can do when you are all alone.

SALA

And you have really been all alone?

JULIAN

Yes.

SALA

All these last years?

JULIAN

If I don't count a few nonsensical interruptions—yes.

SALA

But there should have been no difficulty in that respect.

JULIAN

I know. But I cannot rest satisfied with what is still offered me of that kind of thing. I have been badly spoiled, Sala. Up to a certain period my life passed away in a constant orgy of tenderness and passion, and of power, you might say. And that is all over. Oh, Sala, what pitiful fictions I have had to steal, and beg, and buy, during these last years! It gives me nausea to look back at it, and it horrifies me to look ahead. And I ask myself: can there really be nothing left of all that glow with which I once embraced the world but a sort of silly wrath because it's all over—because I—I—am no less subject to human laws than anybody else?

SALA

Why all this bitterness, Julian? There is still a great deal to be had out of this world, even when some of the pleasures and enjoyments of our earlier years have begun to appear tasteless or unseemly. And how can you, of all people, miss that feeling, Julian?

JULIAN

Snatch his part from an actor and ask him if he can still take pleasure in the beautiful scenery surrounding him.

SALA

But you have begun to work again while you were traveling?

JULIAN

Hardly at all.

SALA

Felix told us that you had brought some sketches from your trunk in order to show him.

JULIAN

He spoke of them?

SALA

Yes, and nothing but good.

JULIAN

Really?

SALA

And as you showed those things to him, you must have thought rather well of them yourself.

JULIAN

That was not the reason why I let him see them. (Walking back and forth) I must tell you—at the risk of having you think me a perfect fool.

SALA

Oh, a little more or less won't count. Speak out.

JULIAN

I wanted him at least not to lose faith in me. Can you understand that? After all, he is nearer to me than the rest. Of course, I know—to everybody, even to you, I am one who has gone down, who is finished—one of those whose only talent was his youth. It doesn't bother me very much. But to Felix I want to be the man I was once—just as I still am that man. When he learns sometime that I am his father, he must be

proud of it.

SALA

When he learns it...?

JULIAN

I have no intention to keep it hidden from him forever. Now, when his mother is dead, less than ever. Last time I talked to him, it became clear to me, not only that it would be right, but that it would almost be a duty, to tell him the truth. He has a mind for essentials. He will understand everything. And I shall have a human being who belongs to me, who knows that he belongs to me, and for whose sake it is worth while to keep on living in this world. I shall live near him, and be with him a good deal. Once more I shall have my existence put on a solid basis, so to speak, and not hung in mid-air, as it is now. And then I shall be able to work again—work as I did once—as when I was a young man. Work, that is what I am going to do—and all of you will turn out to have been wrong—all of you!

SALA

But to whom has it occurred to doubt you? If you could only have heard us talk of you a little while ago, Julian. Everybody expects that, sooner or later, you—will find yourself again completely.

JULIAN

Well, that's enough about me, more than enough. Pardon me. Let us hear something about yourself at last. I suppose you have already moved into your new house?

SALA

Yes.

JULIAN

And what plans have you for the immediate future?

SALA

I am thinking of going to Asia with Count Ronsky.

JULIAN

With Ronsky? Are you going to join that expedition about which so much has been written?

SALA

Yes. Some such undertaking has been tempting me for a long time. Are you perhaps familiar with the Rolston report on the Bactrian and Median excavations of 1892?

JULIAN

No.

SALA

Well, it is positively staggering. Think of it—they suspect that under the refuse and the dust lies a monster city, something like the present London in extent. At that time they made their way into a palace, where the most wonderful paintings were found. These were perfectly preserved in several rooms. And they dug out stairways—built of a marble that is nowhere to be found nowadays. Perhaps it was brought from some island which since then has sunk beneath the sea. Three hundred and twelve steps glittering like opals and leading down into unknown depths.... Unknown because they ceased digging after they had reached the three hundred and twelfth step—God only knows why! I don't think I can tell you how those steps pique my curiosity.

JULIAN

But it has always been asserted that the Rolston expedition was lost?

SALA

No, not quite as bad as that. Out of twenty-four Europeans, eight got back after three years in spite of all—and half a dozen of them had been lost before they ever got there. You have to pass through pretty bad fever belts. And at that time they had to

face an attack of the Kurds, too, by which several were done for. But we shall be much better equipped. Furthermore, at the border we shall be joined by a Russian contingent which is traveling under military escort. And here, too, they think of putting a military aspect on the affair. As to the fever—that doesn't scare me—it can't do me any harm. As a young man I spent a number of particularly dangerous Summer nights in the thermae of Caracalla—you know, of course, what boggy ground that is—and remained well.

JULIAN

But that doesn't prove anything.

SALA

Oh yes, a little. There I came across a Roman girl whose home was right by the Appian Way. She caught the fever and died from it.... To be sure, I am not as young as I was then, but so far I have been perfectly well.

JULIAN (who has already smoked several cigarettes, offers one to Sala) Don't you smoke?

SALA

Thanks. Really, I shouldn't. Only yesterday Dr. Reumann told me I mustn't.... Nothing particular—my heart is a little restless, that's all. Well, a single one won't do any harm, I suppose.

VALET (enters)

Miss Herms, sir. She's asking whether she can see you.

JULIAN

Certainly. Ask her to come in.

VALET (goes out)

IRENE HERMS (enters. She is about forty-three, but doesn't look it. Her dress is simple and in perfect taste. Her movements are vivacious, and at times almost

youthful in their swiftness. Her hair is deeply blonde in color and very heavy. Her eyes are merry, good-humored most of the time, and easily filled with tears. She comes in with a smile and nods in a friendly manner to Sala. To Julian, who has gone to meet her, she holds out her hand with an expression on her face that is almost happy) Good evening. Well? (She has the habit of pronouncing that "well" in a tone of sympathetic inquiry) So I did right after all in keeping my patience a couple of days more. Here I've got you back now. (To Sala) Can you guess the length of time we haven't seen each other?

JULIAN

More than three years.

IRENE (nods assent and permits him at last to withdraw his hand from hers) In all our lives that has never happened before. And your last letter is already two months old. I call it "letter" just to save my face. But it was only a view-card. Where in the world have you been anyhow?

JULIAN

Sit down, won't you? I'll tell you all about it. Won't you take off your hat? You'll stay a while, I hope?

IRENE

Of course.—And the way you look! (To Sala) Fine, don't you think? I've always known that a gray beard would make him look awfully interesting.

SALA (to Julian)

Now you'll have nothing but pleasantries to listen to. Unfortunately I shall have to be moving.

IRENE

You're not leaving on my account, I hope?

SALA

How can you imagine such a thing, Miss Herms?

IRENE

I suppose you are bound for the Wegrats'?—What do you think of it, Julian? Isn't it dreadful? (To Sala) Please give them my regards.

SALA

I'm not going there now. I'm going home.

IRENE

Home? And you say that in such a matter-of-fact way? I understand you are now living in a perfect palace.

SALA

No, anything but that. A modest country house. It would give me special pleasure, Miss Herms, if sometime you would make sure of it in person. My garden is really pretty.

IRENE

Have you fruit trees, too, and vegetables?

SALA

In this respect I can only offer you a stray cabbage and a wild cherry tree.

IRENE

Well, if my time permit, I shall make a point of coming out there to have a look at your villa.

JULIAN

Must you leave again so soon?

IRENE

Certainly. I have to get home again. Only this morning I had a letter from my little nephew—and he's longing for me. A little rascal of five, and he, too, is longing

already. What do you think of that?

SALA

And you are also longing to get back, I suppose?

IRENE

It isn't that. But I'm beginning to get accustomed to Vienna again. As I'm going about the streets here, I run across memories at every corner.—Can you guess where I was yesterday, Julian? In the rooms where I used to live as a child. It wasn't easy by any means, as a lot of strangers are living there now. But I got into the rooms just the same.

SALA (with amicable irony)

How did you manage it, Miss Herms?

IRENE

I sneaked in under a pretext. I pretended to believe that there was a room to be let—for a single elderly lady. But at last I fell to weeping so that I could see the people thought me out of my mind. And then I told them the true reason for my coming there. A clerk in the post-office is living there now with his wife and two children. One of these was such a nice little chap. He was playing railroad with an engine that could be wound up, and that ran over one of my feet all the time.... But I can see that all this doesn't interest you very much, Mr. von Sala.

SALA

How can you interrupt yourself like that, Miss Herms, just when it is most exciting? I should have loved to hear more about it. But now I must really go, unfortunately. Good-by, Julian.—Then, Miss Herms, I may count on a visit from you. (He goes out)

IRENE

Thank God!

JULIAN (smiling)

Do you still have the same antipathy for him?

IRENE

Antipathy?—I hate him! Nothing but your incredible kindness of heart would let him come near you. For you have no worse enemy.

JULIAN

Where did you get that idea?

IRENE

My instinct tells me—you can feel such things.

JULIAN

I fear, however, that even now you cannot judge him quite objectively.

IRENE

Why not?

JULIAN

You can't forgive him that you failed in one of his plays ten years ago.

IRENE

Unfortunately it's already twelve years ago. And it wasn't my fault. For my opinion in regard to his so-called poetry is, that it's nonsense. And I am not the only one who thinks so, as you know. But you don't know him, of course. To appreciate that gentleman in all his glory, you must have enjoyed him at a rehearsal. (Imitating Sala) Oh, madam, that's verse—it's verse, dear madam.... Only when you have heard that kind of thing from him can you understand how limitless his arrogance is.... And everybody knows, by the way, that he killed his wife.

JULIAN (amused)

But, girl, who in the world put such horrible ideas into your head?

IRENE

Oh, people don't die willy-nilly like that, at twenty-five....

JULIAN

I hope, Irene, that you don't talk like this to other people?

IRENE

What would be the use? Everyone knows it but you. And I for my part have no reason to spare Mr. von Sala, who for twenty years has pursued me with his jeers.

JULIAN

And yet you are going to call on him?

IRENE

Of course. Beautiful villas interest me very much. And they tell me his is ravishing. If you were only to see people who....

JULIAN

Hadn't killed anybody....

IRENE

Really, we show him too much honor in talking so long about him. That ends it.—Well, Julian? How goes it? Why haven't you written me oftener? Is it possible you didn't dare?

JULIAN

Dare...?

IRENE

Were you forbidden, I mean?

JULIAN

I see.—Nobody can forbid me anything.

IRENE

Honestly? You live all by yourself?

JULIAN

Yes.

IRENE

I'm delighted. I can't help it, Julian, but I am delighted. Although it's sheer nonsense. This day, or the next, there'll be something new going on.

JULIAN

Those days are past.

IRENE

If it were only true!—Can I have a cup of tea?

JULIAN

Certainly. The samovar is right there.

IRENE

Where?—Oh, over there. And the tea?—Oh, I know! (She opens a small cupboard and brings out what she needs; during the next few minutes she is busy preparing the tea)

JULIAN

So you are really going to stay here only a couple of days more?

IRENE

Of course. I have done all my ordering. You understand, in my sister's house out there one doesn't need to dress up.

JULIAN

Tell me about it. How do you like it out there?

IRENE

Splendidly. Oh, it's bliss merely to hear nothing more about the theater.

JULIAN

And yet you'll return to it sometime.

IRENE

That's where you are completely mistaken. Why should I? You must remember that I have now reached the goal of all my desires: fresh air, and woods right by; horseback riding across meadows and fields; early morning seated in the big park, dressed in my kimono, and nobody daring to intrude. To put it plainly: no people, no manager, no public, no colleagues, no playwrights—though, of course, all are not as arrogant as your precious Sala.—Well, all this I have attained at last. I live in the country. I have a country house—almost a little palace, you might say. I have a park, and a horse, and a kimono—to use as much as I please. It isn't all mine, I admit—except the kimono, of course—but what does that matter? In the bargain, I live with the best people one could hope to find in this world. For my brother-in-law is, if possible, a finer fellow than Lora herself even.

JULIAN

Wasn't he rather making up to you once?

IRENE

I should say he was! He wanted to marry me at any cost. Of course!—It was always in me that they were at first—I mean that they always have been in love with me. But as a rule the clever ones have gone over to Lora. In fact, I have always felt a little distrustful toward you because you never fell in love with Lora. And how much she is ahead of me—well, you know, and it's no use talking of it. What all don't I owe to Lora!... If it hadn't been for her...!—Well, it's with them I have been living the last half year.

JULIAN

The question is only how long you are going to stand it.

IRENE

How long...? But, Julian, I must ask you what there could be to make me leave such a paradise and return to the morass where I (in a lowered voice) spent twenty-five years of my life. What could I possibly expect out of the theater anyhow? I am not made for elderly parts. The heroic mother, the shrewish dame and the funny old woman are equally little to my liking. I intend to die as "the young lady from the castle"—as an old maid, you might say—and if everything goes right, I shall appear to the grandchildren of my sister some hundred years from now as the Lady in White. In a word, I have the finest kind of a life ahead of me.—Why are you laughing?

JULIAN

It pleases me to see you so jolly again—so youthful.

IRENE

It's the country air, Julian. You should try it yourself for a good long while. It's glorious! In fact, I think I have missed my true calling. I'm sure the good Lord meant me for a milkmaid or farm girl of some kind. Or perhaps for a young shepherd. I have always looked particularly well in pants.—There now. Do you want me to pour a cup for you at once? (She pours the tea) Have you nothing to go with it?

JULIAN

I think there must still be a few crackers left in my bag. (He takes a small package out of his traveling bag)

IRENE

Thanks. That's fine.

JULIAN

This is quite a new fancy of yours, however.

IRENE

Crackers...?

JULIAN

No, nature.

IRENE

How can you say so? I have always had a boundless love for nature. Don't you recall the excursions we used to make? Don't you remember how once we fell asleep in the woods on a hot Summer afternoon? And don't you ever think of that shrine of the Holy Virgin, on the hill where we were caught by the storm?... Oh, mercy! Nature is no silly illusion. And still later—when I struck the bad days and wanted to kill myself for your sake, fool that I was ... then nature simply proved my salvation. Indeed, Julian! I could still show you the place where I threw myself on the grass and wept. You have to walk ten minutes from the station, through an avenue of acacias, and then on to the brook. Yes, I threw myself on the grass and wept and wailed. It was one of those days, you know, when you had again sent me packing from your door. Well, and then, when I had been lying half an hour in the grass, and had wept my fill, then I got up again—and began to scamper all over the meadow. Just like a kid, all by myself. Then I wiped my eyes and felt quite right again. (Pause) Of course, next morning I was at your door again, setting up a howl, and then the story began all over again.

[It is growing dark.

JULIAN

Why do you still think of all that?

IRENE

But you do it, too. And who has proved the more stupid of us two in the end? Who? Ask yourself, on your conscience. Who?... Have you been more happy with anybody else than with me? Has anybody else clung to you as I did? Has anybody else been

so fond of you?... No, I am sure. And as to that foolish affair into which I stumbled during my engagement abroad—you might just as well have overlooked it. Really, there isn't as much to that kind of thing as you men want to make out—when it happens to one of us, that is to say. (Both drink of their tea)

JULIAN

Should I get some light?

IRENE

It's quite cosy in the twilight like this.

JULIAN

"Not much to it," you say. Perhaps you are right. But when it happens to anybody, he gets pretty mad as a rule. And if we had made up again—it would never have been as before. It's better as it is. When the worst was over, we became good friends once more, and so we have been ever since. And that is a pretty fine thing, too.

IRENE

Yes. And nowadays I'm quite satisfied. But at that time...! Oh, mercy, what a time that was! But you don't know anything about it, of course. It was afterward I began really to love you—after I had lost you through my own thoughtlessness. It was only then I learned how to be faithful in the true sense. For anything that has happened to me since then.... But it's asking too much that a man should understand that kind of thing.

JULIAN

I understand quite well, Irene. You may be sure.

IRENE

And besides I want to tell you something: it was nothing but a well-deserved punishment for both of us.

JULIAN

For both of us?

IRENE

Yes, that's what I have figured out long ago. A well-deserved punishment.

JULIAN

For both of us?

IRENE

Yes, for you, too.

JULIAN

But what do you mean by that?

IRENE

We had deserved no better.

JULIAN

We...? In what way?

IRENE (very seriously)

You are so very clever otherwise, Julian. Now what do you say—do you think it could have happened as it did—do you think I could have made a mistake like that—if we—had had a child? Ask yourself on your conscience, Julian—do you believe it? I don't, and you don't either. Everything would have happened in a different way. Everything. We had stayed together then. We had had more children. We had married. We might be living together now. I shouldn't have become an old-maidish "young lady from the castle," and you wouldn't have become....

JULIAN

An old bachelor.

IRENE

Well, if you say it yourself. And the main thing is this: we had a child. I had a child.

(Pause)

JULIAN (walking back and forth)

What's the use, Irene? Why do you begin to talk of all those forgotten things again...?

IRENE

Forgotten?

JULIAN

... Things gone by.

IRENE

Yes, they are bygone, of course. But out there in the country you have plenty of time. All sorts of things keep passing through your head. And especially when you see other people's children—Lora has two boys, you know—then you get all sorts of notions. It almost amounted to a vision not long ago.

JULIAN

What?

IRENE

It was toward evening, and I had walked across the fields. I do it quite often, all by myself. Far and wide there was nobody to be seen. And the village down below was quite deserted, too. And I walked on and on, always in direction of the woods. And suddenly I was no longer alone. You were with me. And between us was the child. We were holding it by the hands—our little child. (Angrily, to keep herself from crying) It's too silly for anything! I know, of course, that our child would be a gawky youngster of twenty-three by now—that it might have turned into a scamp or a good-for-nothing girl. Or that it might be dead already. Or that it had drifted out into the wide world, so that we had nothing left of it—oh, yes, yes.... But we should have had it once, for all that—once there would have been a little child that seemed rather

fond of us. And.... (She is unable to go on; silence follows)

JULIAN (softly)

You shouldn't talk yourself into such a state, Irene.

IRENE

I am not talking myself into anything.

JULIAN

Don't brood. Accept things as they are. There have been other things in your life—better things, perhaps. Your life has been much richer than that of a mere mother could ever have been.... You have been an artist.

IRENE (as if to herself)

I don't care that much for it.

JULIAN

A great, famous one—that means something after all. And your life has brought you many other exquisite experiences—since the one with me. I am sure of it.

IRENE

What have I got left of it? What does it amount to? A woman who has no child has never been a woman. But a woman who once might have had one—who should have had one, and who—(with a glance at him)—has never become a mother, she is nothing but—oh! But that's what a man cannot understand! It is what not one of them can understand! In this respect the very best one of the lot will always remain something of a cad. Is there one of you who knows how many of his own offspring have been set adrift in the world? I know at least that there are none of mine. Can you say as much?

JULIAN

And if I did know....

IRENE

How? Have you got one really?—Oh, speak, please! You can tell me, Julian, can't you? Where is it? How old is it? A boy? Or a girl?

JULIAN

Don't question me.... Even if I had a child, it wouldn't belong to you anyhow.

IRENE

He has a child! He has a child! (Pause) Why do you permit it to be drifting around in the world then?

JULIAN

You yourself have given the explanation: in this respect the very best of us remains always something of a cad. And I am not the best one at that.

IRENE

Why don't you go and get it?

JULIAN

How could it be any of my concern? How could I dare to make it my concern? Oh, that's enough.... (Pause) Do you want another cup of tea?

IRENE

No, thanks. No more now. (Pause; it is growing darker) He has a child, and I have never known it! (Protracted silence)

VALET (enters)

JULIAN

What is it?

VALET

Lieutenant Wegrat asks if you are at home, sir?

JULIAN

Certainly. Ask him in.

VALET (goes out after having turned on the light)

IRENE

Young Wegrat?—I thought he had already left again.—The poor chap! He seemed utterly stunned.

JULIAN

I can imagine.

IRENE

You visited him at Salzburg?

JULIAN

Yes, I happened to be there a couple of days last August.

FELIX (enters, dressed as a civilian)

Good evening.—Good evening, Miss Herms.

IRENE

Good evening, Lieutenant.

JULIAN

My dear Felix—I was going to call on you—this very evening. It's extremely nice of you to take the trouble.

FELIX

I have to be off again the day after to-morrow, and so I wasn't sure whether I could find any chance at all to see you.

JULIAN

Won't you take off your coat?—Think of it, I didn't have the slightest idea.... It was Sala who told me—less than an hour ago.

[Irene is looking from one to the other.

FELIX

We didn't dream of this when we took that walk in the Mirabell Gardens4 last summer.

JULIAN

Was it very sudden?

FELIX

Yes. And I, who couldn't be with her.... Late that evening I had to leave, and she died during the night.

IRENE

Say rather that she didn't wake up again next morning.

FELIX

We owe a lot of thanks to you, Miss Herms.

IRENE

Oh, please...!

FELIX

It always gave my mother so much pleasure to have you with her, chatting, or playing the piano to her.

IRENE

Oh, don't mention my playing...!

[A clock strikes.

IRENE

Is it that late? Then I have to go.

JULIAN

What's the hurry, Miss Herms?

IRENE

I'm going to the opera. I have to make good use of the few days I shall still be here.

FELIX

Shall we see you at our house again, Miss Herms?

IRENE

Certainly.—You'll have to leave before me, won't you?

FELIX

Yes, my furlough will be up....

IRENE (as if en passant)

How long have you been an officer anyhow, Felix?

FELIX

For three years really—but I didn't apply for a commission until this year—a little too late, perhaps.

IRENE

Too late? Why?—How old are you, Felix?

FELIX

Twenty-three.

IRENE

Oh! (Pause) But when I saw you four years ago as a volunteer, I thought at once you would stay in the service.—Do you remember, Julian, I told you so at the time?

JULIAN

Yes....

FELIX

That must have been in the summer, the last time you called on us.

IRENE

I think so....

FELIX

Many things have changed since then.

IRENE

Indeed! Those were still happy days.—Don't you think so, Julian? For we haven't met either since we spent those beautiful summer evenings in the garden of the Wegrats.

JULIAN (nods assent)

IRENE (stands again looking now at Julian and now at Felix; brief pause) Oh, but now it's high time for me to be gone.—Good-by. Remember me at home, Lieutenant.—Good-by, Julian. (She goes out, accompanied to the door by Julian)

FELIX

Haven't you made some changes here?

JULIAN

Not to my knowledge. And how could you know anyhow? You have only been here two or three times.

FELIX

Yes. But the last time at one of the most important moments in my life. I came here to get your advice.

JULIAN

Well, everything has turned out in accordance with your wish. Even your father has resigned himself to it.

FELIX

Yes, he has resigned himself. Of course, he would have preferred to see me continue

my technical studies. But now he has seen that it is quite possible to lead a sensible life in uniform too—without any debts or duels. In fact, my life is almost too smooth. However, there is at least more to anticipate for one of us than for most people. And that's always something.

JULIAN

And how are things at home?

FELIX

At home.... Really, it's almost as if that word had lost its meaning.

JULIAN

Has your father resumed his duties again?

FELIX

Of course. Two days later he was back in his studio. He is wonderful. But I can't quite understand it.... Am I disturbing you, Mr. Fichtner? You were putting your papers in order, I think.

JULIAN

Oh, there's no hurry about that. They're easily put in order. Most of them I burn.

FELIX

Why?

JULIAN

It's more sensible, don't you think, to destroy things one hardly cares to look at any more?

FELIX

But doesn't it make you rather sad to clean out your past like that?

JULIAN

Sad?... No, it's entirely too natural a process for that.

FELIX

I can't see it that way. Look here. To burn a letter, or a picture, or something of that kind, immediately after you have got it—that seems quite natural to me. But something at all worthy of being kept as a remembrance of some poignant joy or equally poignant sorrow would seem incapable of ever losing its significance again. And especially in the case of a life like yours, that has been so rich and so active.... It would seem to me that at times you must feel something like—awe in the face of your own past.

JULIAN

Where do you get such thoughts—you, who are so young?

FELIX

They just came into my head this minute.

JULIAN

You are not so very much mistaken, perhaps. But there is something else besides, that makes me want to clean house. I am about to become homeless, so to speak.

FELIX

Why?

JULIAN

I'm giving up my rooms here, and don't know yet what my next step will be. And so I think it's more pleasant to let these things come to a decent end rather than to put them in a box and leave them to molder away in a cellar.

FELIX

But don't you feel sorry about a lot of it?

JULIAN

Oh, I don't know.

FELIX

And then you must have mementoes that mean something to other people besides yourself. Sketches of all kinds, for instance, which I think you have saved to some extent.

JULIAN

Are you thinking of those little things I showed you in Salzburg?

FELIX

Yes, of those too, of course.

JULIAN

They are still wrapped up. Would you like to have them?

FELIX

Indeed, I should feel very thankful. They seemed to have a particular charm for me. (Pause) But there's something else I wanted to ask of you. A great favor. If you will let me....

JULIAN

Tell me, please.

FELIX

I thought you might still have left a picture of my mother as a young girl. A small picture in water colors painted by yourself.

JULIAN

Yes, I did paint such a picture.

FELIX

And you have still got it?

JULIAN

I guess it can be found.

FELIX

I should like to see it.

JULIAN

Did your mother remember this picture...?

FELIX

Yes, she mentioned it to me the last evening I ever saw her—the evening before she died. At the time I didn't imagine, of course, that the end was so near—and I don't think she could guess it either. To-day it seems rather peculiar to me that, on that very evening, she had to talk so much of days long gone by.

JULIAN

And of this little picture, too?

FELIX

It's a very good one, I understand.

JULIAN (as if trying to remember)

Where did I put it? Wait now.... (He goes to a book case, the lower part of which has solid doors; these he opens, disclosing several shelves piled with portfolios) I painted it in the country—in the little house where your grandparents used to live.

FELIX

I know.

JULIAN

You can hardly recall the old people, I suppose?

FELIX

Very vaguely. They were quite humble people, were they not?

JULIAN

Yes. (He has taken a big portfolio from one of the shelves) It ought to be in this

portfolio. (He puts it on the writing desk and opens it; then he sits down in front of it)

FELIX (stands behind him, looking over his shoulder)

JULIAN

Here is the house in which they lived—your grandparents and your mother. (He goes through the sketches, one by one) And here is a view of the valley seen from the cemetery.

FELIX

In Summer....

JULIAN

Yes.—And here is the little inn at which your father and I used to stop.... And here.... (He looks in silence at the sketch; both remain silent for a long while)

FELIX (picking up the sketch)

How old was my mother at the time?

JULIAN (who remains seated)

Eighteen.

FELIX (going a few steps away and leaning against the bookcase in order to get better light on the picture)

A year before she was married, then.

JULIAN

It was done that very year. (Pause)

FELIX

What a strange look that meets me out of those eyes.... There's a smile on her lips.... It's almost as if she were talking to me....

JULIAN

What was it your mother told you—that last evening?

FELIX

Not very much. But I feel as if I knew more than she had told me. What a queer thought it is, that as she is now looking at me out of this picture, so she must have been looking at you once. It seems as if there was a certain timidity in that look. Something like fear almost.... In such a way you look at people out of another world, for which you long, and of which you are afraid nevertheless.

JULIAN

At that time your mother had rarely been outside the village.

FELIX

She must have been different from all other women you have met, wasn't she?—Why don't you say anything? I am not one of those men who cannot understand—who won't understand that their mothers and sisters are women after all. I can easily understand that it must have been a dangerous time for her—and for somebody else as well. (Very simply) You must have loved my mother very much?

JULIAN

You have a curious way of asking questions.—Yes, I did love her.

FELIX

And those moments must have been very happy ones, when you sat in that little garden with its overgrown fence, holding this canvas on your knees, and out there on the bright meadow, among all those red and white flowers, stood this young girl with anxiously smiling eyes, holding her straw hat in one hand.

JULIAN

Your mother talked of those moments that last evening?

FELIX

Yes.—It is childish perhaps, but since then it has seemed impossible to me that any

other human being could ever have meant so much to you as this one?

JULIAN (more and more deeply moved, but speaking very quietly) I shall not answer you.—In the end I should instinctively be tempted to make myself appear better than I am. You know very well how I have lived my life—that it has not followed a regulated and direct course like the lives of most other people. I suppose that the gift of bestowing happiness of the kind that lasts, or of accepting it, has never been mine.

FELIX

That's what I feel. It is what I have always felt. Often with something like regret—or sorrow almost. But just people like you, who are destined by their very nature to have many and varied experiences—just such people should, I think, cling more faithfully and more gratefully to memories of a tender, peaceful sort, like this—rather than to more passionate and saddening memories.—Am I not right?

JULIAN

Maybe you are.

FELIX

My mother had never before mentioned this picture to me. Isn't it strange?... That last night she did it for the first time.—We were left alone on the veranda. The rest had already bid me good-by.... And all of a sudden she began to talk about those summer days of long, long ago. Her words had an undercurrent of meanings which she probably did not realize. I believe that her own youth, which she had almost ceased to understand, was unconsciously taking mine into its confidence. It moved me more deeply than I can tell you.—Much as she cared for me, she had never before talked to me like that. And I believe that she had never been quite so dear to me as in those last moments.—And when finally I had to leave, I felt that she had still much more to tell me.—Now you'll understand why I had such a longing to see this picture.—I have almost the feeling that it might go on talking to me as my

mother would have done—if I had only dared to ask her one more question!

JULIAN

Ask it now.... Do ask it, Felix.

FELIX (who becomes aware of the emotion betrayed in the voice of Julian, looks up from the picture)

JULIAN

I believe that it can still tell you a great many things.

FELIX

What is the matter?

JULIAN

Do you want to keep that picture?

FELIX

Why...?

JULIAN

Well ... take it. I don't give it to you. As soon as I have settled down again, I shall want it back. But you shall have a look at it whenever you want. And I hope matters will be so arranged that you won't have far to go either.

FELIX (with his eyes on the picture)

It grows more alive every second.... And that look was directed at you.... That look...? Can it be possible that I read it right?

JULIAN

Mothers have their adventures, too, like other women.

FELIX

Yes, indeed, I believe it has nothing more to hide from me.

[He puts down the picture. Then a long pause follows. At last Felix puts on his coat.

JULIAN

Are you not going to take it along?

FELIX

Not just now. It belongs to you much more than I could guess.

JULIAN

And to you ...

FELIX

No, I don't want it until this new thing has become fully revealed to me. (He looks Julian firmly in the eyes) I don't quite know where I am. In reality, of course, there has been no change whatever. None—except that I know now what I ...

JULIAN

Felix!

FELIX

No, that was something I could never have guessed. (Looks long at Julian with an expression of mingled tenderness and curiosity) Farewell.

JULIAN

Are you going?

FELIX

I need badly to be by myself for a while.—Until to-morrow.

JULIAN

Yes, and no longer, Felix. To-morrow I shall come to your—I'll call on you, Felix.

FELIX

I shall be waiting for you. (He goes out)

JULIAN (stands quite still for a moment; then he goes to the writing desk and stops beside it, lost in contemplation of the picture)

CURTAIN

THE THIRD ACT

A room at the Wegrats' adjoining the veranda. The outlook is, of course, determined by the location.

JOHANNA (is seated on a stool with her hands folded in her lap)

SALA (enters)

Good morning, Johanna.

JOHANNA (rises, goes to meet him, and draws him close to herself) Are you coming for the last time?

SALA

For the last time? What an idea! There has not been the slightest change in our arrangements. To-day is the seventh of October, and the ship will leave Genoa on the twenty-sixth of November.

JOHANNA

Some day you will suddenly have disappeared. And I shall be standing by the garden door, and nobody will come to open it.

SALA

But that sort of thing is not needed between us two.

JOHANNA

No, indeed—bear that in mind.

FELIX (enters)

Oh, is that you, Mr. von Sala? (They shake hands) Well, how far have you got with your preparations?

SALA

There are hardly any needed. I shall pack my trunk, pull down the shades, lock the

doors—and be off for the mysteries of far-away. There is something I want to ask you apropos of that, Felix. Would you care to come along?

FELIX (startled)

If I care.... Are you asking seriously, Mr. von Sala?

SALA

There is just so much seriousness in my question as you wish to put into it.

FELIX

What does it mean anyhow? If I want to go along to Asia? What use could they have for me in a venture of that kind?

SALA

Oh, that's pretty plain.

FELIX

Is the expedition not going to be one of purely scientific character?

SALA

Yes, that's what it is meant for, I suppose. But it is quite possible that various things may happen that would make the presence of some young men like you very desirable.

FELIX

Men like me...?

SALA

When Rolston went out there seven years ago, a lot of things happened which were not provided for in the original program. And they had to fight a regular battle, on a small scale, in the Kara-Kum district, not far from the river Amu-Daria.

REUMANN (who has entered while Sala was speaking)

To those who had to stay behind forever the scale of your battle was probably large

enough. (All greet each other and shake hands without letting the conversation be interrupted)

SALA

In that respect you are probably right, Doctor.

FELIX

Pardon me, Mr. von Sala, but does this come from you alone? Is it just a sudden notion—or something more?

SALA

I have received no direct request from anybody to speak of this. But after the conference which took place at the Foreign Department yesterday, and which I attended, I feel entitled to add a little more.—Oh, no secrets at all!—You have probably read, Felix, that a member of the General Staff as well as several artillery and engineering officers are being sent with us in what might be termed a semi-official capacity. On account of the latest news from Asia—which, however, does not seem very reliable to me, as it has come by way of England—it has been decided to secure the additional cooperation of some young line officers, and all arrangements of this kind must be left to private initiative.

FELIX

And there might be a possibility for me...?

SALA

Will you permit me to speak to Count Ronsky?

FELIX

Have you already mentioned my name to him?

SALA

I have received permission to ask whether you could be prepared to board the ship with the rest at Genoa on the twenty-sixth of November.

REUMANN

Do you mean to leave Vienna as soon as that?

SALA (sarcastically)

Yes. Why did you look at me like that, Doctor? That glance of yours was a little indiscreet.

REUMANN

In what respect?

SALA

It seemed to say: Yes, you can start, of course, but if you ever come back, that's more than doubtful.

REUMANN

Let me tell you, Mr. von Sala, that in the face of a venture like yours one might well express such doubts quite openly. But are you at all interested in whether you get back or not, Mr. von Sala? I don't suppose you belong to the kind of people who care to put their affairs in order.

SALA

No, indeed. Especially not as, in cases of that kind, it is generally the affairs of others which give you needless trouble. If I were to be interested at all in my own chances, it would be for much more selfish reasons.

JOHANNA

What reasons?

SALA

I don't want to be cheated out of the consciousness that certain moments are my final ones.

REUMANN

There are not many people who share your attitude in that respect.

SALA

At any rate, Doctor, you would have to tell me the absolute truth if I ever asked you for it. I hold that one has the right to drain one's own life to the last drop, with all the horrors and delights that may lie hidden at the bottom of it. Just as it is our evident duty every day to commit every good deed and every rascality lying within our capacity.... No, I won't let you rob me of my death moments by any kind of hocus-pocus. It would imply a small-minded attitude, worthy neither of yourself nor of me.—Well, Felix, the twenty-sixth of November then! That's still seven weeks off. In regard to any formalities that may be required, you need have no worry at all.

FELIX

How long a time have I got to make up my mind?

SALA

There's no reason to be precipitate. When does your furlough end?

FELIX

To-morrow night.

SALA

Of course, you are going to talk it over with your father?

FELIX

With my father.... Yes, of course.—At any rate I'll bring you the answer early to-morrow morning, Mr. von Sala.

SALA

Fine. It would please me very much. But you must bear in mind: it will be no picnic. I expect to see you soon, then. Good-by, Miss Johanna. Farewell, Doctor.

[He goes out. A brief pause. Those left behind show signs of emotion.

JOHANNA (rising)

I'm going to my room. Good-by, Doctor. (She goes out)

REUMANN

Have you made up your mind, Felix?

FELIX

Almost.

REUMANN

You'll come across much that is new to you.

FELIX

And my own self among it, I hope—which would be about time.... (Quoting) "The mysteries of far-away ..." And will it really come true? Oh, the thrill of it!

REUMANN

And yet you ask time to consider?

FELIX

I hardly know why. And yet ... The thought of leaving people behind and perhaps never seeing them again—and certainly not as they were when you left them; the thought, too, that perhaps your going will hurt them ...

REUMANN

If nothing else makes you hesitate, then every moment of uncertainty is wasted. Nothing is more sure to estrange you from those dear to you than the knowledge that duty condemns you to stay near them. You must seize this unique opportunity. You must go to see Genoa, Asia Minor, Thibet, Bactria.... Oh, it must be splendid! And my best wishes will go with you. (He gives his hand to Felix)

FELIX

Thank you. But there will be plenty of time for wishes of that kind. Whatever may

be decided, we shall meet more than once before I leave.

REUMANN

I hope so. Oh, of course!

FELIX (looking hard at him)

Doctor ... it seems to me there was a final farewell in that pressure of your hand.

REUMANN (with a smile)

Is it ever possible to tell whether you will meet again?

FELIX

Tell me, Doctor—did Mr. von Sala interpret your glance correctly?

REUMANN

That has nothing to do with your case anyhow.

FELIX

Will he not be able to go with us?

REUMANN (with hesitation)

That's very hard to predict.

FELIX

You have never learned to lie, Doctor.

REUMANN

As the matter stands now, I think you can bring it to a successful conclusion without further assistance.

FELIX

Mr. von Sala called on you a few days ago?

REUMANN

Yes, it was only a while ago. (Pause) Well, you can see for yourself that he is not

well, can't you?—So God be with you, Felix.

FELIX

Will you continue to befriend this house when I am gone?

REUMANN

Why do you ask questions like that, Felix?

FELIX

You don't mean to come here again?—But why?

REUMANN

I assure you ...

FELIX

I understand ...

REUMANN (embarrassed)

What can there be to understand...?

FELIX

My dear Doctor ... I know now ... why you don't want to come to this house any more.... It's another case of somebody else breaking his neck.... Dear friend ...

REUMANN

Good luck to you ... Felix ...

FELIX

And if anybody should call you back ...

REUMANN

Nobody will.... But if I should be needed, I can always be found ...

JOHANNA (comes into the room again)

REUMANN

Good-by ... Good-by, Miss Johanna ...

JOHANNA

Are you going already, Doctor?

REUMANN

Yes.... Give my regards to your father. Good-by.... (He shakes her hand)

JOHANNA (calmly)

Did he tell you that Sala is doomed?

FELIX (hesitates about what to say)

JOHANNA

I knew it. (With an odd gesture of deprecation as Felix wants to say something) And you are going—with or without him?

FELIX

Yes. (Pause) There won't be much doing in this place after this.

JOHANNA (remains unmoved)

FELIX

And how are you going to live, Johanna?... I mean, how are the two of you going to live—you and father?

JOHANNA (gives him a look as if his question surprised her)

FELIX

He is going to be lonely. I think he would feel very grateful if you took a little more interest in him—if you went for a walk for him when there is time for it. And you, too ...

JOHANNA (brusquely)

How could that help me or him? What can he be to me or I to him? I was not made to assist people in days of trial. I can't help it, but that's the way I am. I seem to be

stirred by a sort of hostility against people who appeal to my pity. I felt it like that all the time mother was sick.

FELIX

No, you were not made for that.... But what were you made for then?

JOHANNA (shrugs her shoulders and sits down as before, with hands folded in her lap and her eyes staring straight ahead)

FELIX

Johanna, why do you never talk to me any more as you used to? Have you, then, nothing to tell me? Don't you remember how we used to tell each other everything?

JOHANNA

That was long ago. We were children then.

FELIX

Why can't you talk to me any longer as you did then? Have you forgotten how well we two used to understand each other? How we used to confide all our secrets to each other? What good chums we used to be?... How we wanted to go out into the wide world together?

JOHANNA

Into the wide world.... Oh, yes, I remember. But there is nothing left now of all those words of wonder and romance.

FELIX

Perhaps it depends on ourselves only.

JOHANNA

No, those words have no longer the same meaning as before.

FELIX

What do you mean?

JOHANNA

Into the wide world ...

FELIX

What is the matter, Johanna?

JOHANNA

Once, when we were in the museum together, I saw a picture of which I often think. It has a meadow with knights and ladies in it—and a forest, a vineyard, an inn, and young men and women dancing, and a big city with churches and towers and bridges. And soldiers are marching across the bridges, and a ship is gliding down the river. And farther back there is a hill, and on that hill a castle, and lofty mountains in the extreme distance. And clouds are floating above the mountains, and there is mist on the meadow, and a flood of sunlight is pouring down on the city, and a storm is raging over the castle, and there is ice and snow on the mountains.—And when anybody spoke of "the wide world," or I read that term anywhere, I used always to think of that picture. And it used to be the same with so many other big-sounding words. Fear was a tiger with cavernous mouth—love was a page with long light curls kneeling at the feet of a lady—death was a beautiful young man with black wings and a sword in his hand—and fame was blaring bugles, men with bent backs, and a road strewn with flowers. In those days it was possible to talk of all sorts of things, Felix. But to-day everything has a different look—fame, and death, and love, and the wide world.

FELIX (hesitatingly)

I feel a little scared on your behalf, Johanna.

JOHANNA

Why, Felix?

FELIX

Johanna!—I wish you wouldn't do anything to worry father.

JOHANNA

Does that depend on me alone?

FELIX

I know in what direction your dreams are going, Johanna.—What is to come out of that?

JOHANNA

Is it necessary that something comes out of everything?—I think, Felix, that many people are destined to mean nothing to each other but a common memory.

FELIX

You have said it yourself, Johanna—that you are not made to see other people suffer.

JOHANNA (shrinks slightly at those words)

FELIX

Suffer ... and ...

JULIAN (enters)

How are you? (He shakes hands with Felix)

JOHANNA (who has risen)

Mr. Fichtner. (She holds out her hand to him)

JULIAN

I could hardly recognize you, Johanna. You have grown into a young lady now.—Has your father not come home yet?

JOHANNA

He hasn't gone out yet. He has nothing to do at the Academy until twelve.

JULIAN

I suppose he's in his studio?

JOHANNA

I'll call him.

[Julian looks around. As Johanna is about to leave the room, Wegrat enters, carrying his hat and stick.

WEGRAT (giving his hand to Julian)

I'm delighted, my dear fellow.

JULIAN

I heard of it only after my arrival here yesterday—through Sala. I don't need to tell you ...

WEGRAT

Thank you very much for your sympathy. I thank you with all my heart.—But sit down, please.

JULIAN

You were going out?

WEGRAT

Oh, it's no hurry. I have nothing to do in the Academy until twelve. Johanna, will you please get a carriage for me, just to be on the safe side?

[Johanna goes out. Wegrat seats himself, as does Julian. Felix stands leaning against the glazed oven.

WEGRAT

Well, you stayed away quite a while this time.

JULIAN

More than two years.

WEGRAT

If you had only got here ten days earlier, you could have had a last look at her. It came so very suddenly—although it wasn't unexpected.

JULIAN

So I have heard.

WEGRAT

And now you are going to stay right here, I suppose?

JULIAN

A little while. How long I am not yet able to tell.

WEGRAT

Of course not. The making of schedules has never been your line.

JULIAN

No, I have a certain disinclination for that kind of thing. (Pause)

WEGRAT

Oh, mercy, my dear fellow ... how often have I not been thinking of you recently!

JULIAN

And I....

WEGRAT

No, you haven't had much chance for it.... But I.... As I enter the building where I now hold office and authority, I remember often how we two young chaps used to sit side by side in the model class, full of a thousand plans and hopes.

JULIAN

Why do you say that in such a melancholy tone? A lot of those things have come true, haven't they?

WEGRAT

Some—yes.... And yet one can't help wanting to be young again, even at the risk of

similar sorrows and struggles....

JULIAN

And even at the risk of also having to live through a lot of nice things over again.

WEGRAT

Indeed, those are the hardest things to bear, once they have turned into memories.—You have been in Italy again?

JULIAN

Yes, in Italy too.

WEGRAT

It's a long time now since I was there. Since we made that walk together through the Ampezzo Valley,5 with the pack on our backs—to Pieve, and then right on to Venice. Can you remember? The sun has never again shone as brightly as it did then.

JULIAN

That must have been almost thirty years ago.

WEGRAT

No, not quite. You were already pretty well known at the time. You had just finished your splendid picture of Irene Herms. It was the year before I married.

JULIAN

Yes, yes. (Pause)

WEGRAT

Do you still recall the summer morning when you went with me to Kirchau for the first time?

JULIAN

Of course.

WEGRAT

How the light buggy carried us through the wide, sun-steeped valley? And do you remember the little garden at Hügelhang, where you became acquainted with Gabrielle and her parents?

FELIX (with suppressed emotion)

Father, is the house in which mother used to live still standing?

WEGRAT

No, it's gone long ago. They have built a villa on the spot. Five or six years ago, you know, we went there for the last time to visit the graves of your grandparents. Everything has been changed, except the cemetery.... (To Julian) Can you still remember that cool, cloudy afternoon, Julian, when we sat on the lower wall of the cemetery and had such a remarkable talk about the future?

JULIAN

I remember the day very clearly. But I have entirely forgotten what we were talking about.

WEGRAT

Just what we said has passed out of my mind, too, but I can still remember what an extraordinary talk it was.... In some way the world seemed to open up more widely. And I felt something like envy toward you, as I often did in those days. There rose within me a feeling that I, too, could do anything—if I only wanted. There was so much to be seen and experienced—and the flow of life was irresistible. Nothing would be needed but a little more nerve, a little more self-assurance, and then to plunge in. ... Yes, that was what I felt while you were talking. ... And then Gabrielle came toward us along the narrow road from the village, between the acacias. She carried her straw hat in her hand, and she nodded to me. And all my dreams of the future centered in her after that, and once more the whole world seemed fitted into a

frame, and yet it was big and beautiful enough. ... Why does the color all of a sudden come back into those things? It was practically forgotten, all of it, and now, when she is dead, it comes to life again with a glow that almost scares me. ... Oh, it were better not to think of it at all. What's the use? What's the use? (Pause; he goes to one of the windows)

JULIAN

(struggling to overcome his embarrassment) It is both wise and brave of you to resume your regular activities so promptly.

WEGRAT

Oh, once you have made up your mind to go on living. ... There is nothing but work that can help you through this sense of being alone—of being left alone.

JULIAN

It seems to me that your grief makes you a little unjust toward—much that is still yours.

WEGRAT

Unjust...? Oh, I didn't mean to. I hope you don't feel hurt, children ...! Felix, you understand me fully, don't you? There is so much, from the very beginning, that draws—that lures—that tears the young ones away from us. We have to struggle to keep our children almost from the very moment they arrive—and the struggle is a pretty hopeless one at that. But that's the way of life: they cannot possibly belong to us. And as far as other people are concerned.... Even our friends come into our lives only as guests who rise from the table when they have eaten, and walk out. Like us, they have their own streets, their own affairs. And it's quite natural it should be so.... Which doesn't prevent us from feeling pleased, Julian—sincerely pleased, when one of them finds his way back to us. Especially if it be one on whom we have put great store throughout life. You may be sure of that, Julian. (They shake hands) And as long as you remain in Vienna, I shall see you here quite often, I trust. It will give me

genuine pleasure.

JULIAN

I'll be sure to come.

MAID (enters)

The carriage is here, Professor. (She goes out)

WEGRAT

I'm coming. (To Julian) You must have a lot to tell me. You were as good as lost. You understand it will interest me to hear all you have done—and still more what you intend to do. Felix told us the other day about some very interesting sketches you had showed him.

JULIAN

I'll go with you, if you care to have me.

WEGRAT

Thanks. But it would be still nicer of you to stay right here and take dinner with us.

JULIAN

Well ...

WEGRAT

I'll be through very quickly. To-day I have nothing but a few business matters to dispose of—nothing but signing a few documents. I'll be back in three-quarters of an hour. In the meantime the children will keep you company as they used to in the old days. ... Won't you, children?—So you're staying, are you not? Good-by for a little while then. (He goes out)

[Long pause.

FELIX

Why didn't you go with him?

JULIAN

Your mother was without blame. If any there be, it falls on me alone. I'll tell you all about it.

FELIX (nods)

JULIAN

It had been arranged that we were to go away together. Everything was ready. We meant to leave the place secretly because, quite naturally, your mother shrank from any kind of statement or explanation. Our intention was to write and explain after we had been gone a few days. The hour of our start had already been settled. He ... who later became her husband, had just gone to Vienna for a couple of days in order to get certain documents. The wedding was to take place in a week. (Pause) Our plans were all made. We had agreed on everything. The carriage that was to pick us up a little ways off had already been hired. In the evening we bade each other good-night, fully convinced that we should meet next morning, never to part again.—It turned out differently.—You mustn't keep in mind that it was your mother. You must listen to me as if my story dealt with perfect strangers. ... Then you can understand everything.

FELIX

I am listening.

JULIAN

I had come to Kirchau in June, one beautiful Summer morning—with him.... You know about that, don't you? I meant to stay only a few days. But I stayed on and on. More than once I tried to get away while it was still time. But I stayed. (Smiling) And with fated inevitability we slipped into sin, happiness, doom, betrayal—and dreams. Yes, indeed, there was more of those than of anything else. And after that last farewell, meant to be for a night only—as I got back to the little inn and started to make things ready for our journey—only then did I for the first time become

really conscious of what had happened and was about to happen. Actually, it was almost as if I had just waked up. Only then, in the stillness of that night, as I was standing at the open window, did it grow clear to me that next morning an hour would come by which my whole future must be determined. And then I began to feel ... as if faint shiverings had been streaming down my body. Below me I could see the stretch of road along which I had just come. It ran on and on through the country, climbing the hills that cut off the view, and losing itself in the open, the limitless.... It led to thousands of unknown and invisible roads, all of which at that moment remained at my disposal. It seemed to me as if my future, radiant with glory and adventure, lay waiting for me behind those hills—but for me alone. Life was mine—but only this one life. And in order to seize it and enjoy it fully—in order to live it as it had been shaped for me by fate—I needed the carelessness and freedom I had enjoyed until then. And I marveled almost at my own readiness to give away the recklessness of my youth and the fullness of my existence.... And to what purpose?—For the sake of a passion which, after all, despite its ardor and its transports, had begun like many others, and would be destined to end like all of them.

FELIX

Destined to end...? Must come to an end?

JULIAN

Yes. Must. The moment I foresaw the end, I had in a measure reached it. To wait for something that must come, means to go through it a thousand times—to go through it helplessly and needlessly and resentfully. This I felt acutely at that moment. And it frightened me. At the same time I felt clearly that I was about to act like a brute and a traitor toward a human being who had given herself to me in full confidence.—But everything seemed more desirable—not only for me, but for her also—than a slow, miserable, unworthy decline. And all my scruples were submerged in a monstrous

longing to go on with my life as before, without duties or ties. There wasn't much time left for consideration. And I was glad of it. I had made up my mind. I didn't wait for the morning. Before the stars had set, I was off.

FELIX

You ran away....

JULIAN

Call it anything you please.—Yes, it was a flight, just as good and just as bad, just as precipitate and just as cowardly as any other—with all the horrors of being pursued and all the joys of escaping. I am hiding nothing from you, Felix. You are still young, and it is even possible that you may understand it better than I can understand it myself to-day. Nothing pulled me back. No remorse stirred within me. The sense of being free filled me with intoxication.... At the end of the first day I was already far away—much farther than any number of milestones could indicate. On that first day her image began to fade away already—the image of her who had waked up to meet painful disillusionment, or worse maybe. The ring of her voice was passing out of my memory.... She was becoming a shadow like others that had been left floating much farther behind me in the past.

FELIX

Oh, it isn't true! So quickly could she not be forgotten. So remorselessly could you not go out in the world. All this is meant as a sort of expiation. You make yourself appear what you are not.

JULIAN

I am not telling you these things to accuse or defend myself. I am simply telling you the truth. And you must hear it. It was your mother, and I am the man who deserted her. And there is something more I am compelled to tell you. On the very time that followed my flight I must look back as the brightest and richest of any I have ever experienced. Never before or after have I reveled to such an extent in the splendid

consciousness of my youth and my freedom from restraint. Never have I been so wholly master of my gifts and of my life.... Never have I been a happier man than I was at that very time.

FELIX (calmly)

And if she had killed herself?

JULIAN

I believe I should have thought myself worth it—in those days.

FELIX

And so you were, perhaps, at that time.—And she thought of doing it, I am sure. She wanted to put an end to the lies and the qualms, just as hundreds of thousands of girls have done before. But millions fail to do it, and they are the most sensible ones. And I am sure she also thought of telling the truth to him she took to husband. But, of course, the way through life is easier when you don't have to carry a burden of reproach or, what is worse, of forgiveness.

JULIAN

And if she had spoken....

FELIX

Oh, I understand why she didn't. It had been of no use to anybody. And so she kept silent: silent when she got back from the wedding—silent when her child was born—silent when, ten years later, the lover came to her husband's house again—silent to the very last.... Fates of that kind are to be found everywhere, and it isn't even necessary to be—depraved, in order to suffer them or invoke them.

JULIAN

And there are mighty few whom it behooves to judge—or to condemn.

FELIX

I don't presume to do so. And it doesn't even occur to me that I am now to behold

deceivers and deceived where, a few hours ago, I could only see people who were dear to me and whose relationships to each other were perfectly pure. And it is absolutely impossible for me to feel myself another man than I have deemed myself until to-day. There is no power in all this truth.... A vivid dream would be more compelling than this story out of bygone days, which you have just told me. Nothing has changed—nothing whatever. The thought of my mother is as sacred to me as ever. And the man in whose house I was born and raised, who surrounded my childhood and youth with care tenderness, and whom my mother—loved.... He means just as much to me now as he ever meant—and perhaps a little more.

JULIAN

And yet, Felix, however powerless this truth may seem to you—there is one thing you can take hold of in this moment of doubt: it was as my son your mother gave birth to you....

FELIX

At a time when you had run away from her.

JULIAN

And as my son she brought you up.

FELIX

In hatred of you.

JULIAN

At first. Later in forgiveness, and finally—don't forget it—in friendship toward me.... And what was in her mind that last night?—Of what did she talk to you?—Of those days when she experienced the greatest happiness that can fall to the share of any woman.

FELIX

As well as the greatest misery.

JULIAN

Do you think it was mere chance which brought those very days back to her mind that last evening?... Don't you think she knew that you would go to me and ask for that picture?... And do you think your wish to see it could have any other meaning than of a final greeting to me from your mother?... Can't you understand that, Felix?... And in this moment—don't try to resist—you have it before your eyes—that picture you held in your hand yesterday: and your mother is looking at you.—And the glance resting on you, Felix, is the same one that rested on me that passionate and sacred day when she fell into my arms and you were conceived.—And whatever you may feel of doubt or confusion, the truth has now been revealed to you once for all. Thus your mother willed it, and it is no longer possible for you to forget that you are my son.

FELIX

Your son.... That's nothing but a word. And it's cried in a desert.—Although I am looking at you now, and although I know that I am your son, I can't grasp it.

JULIAN

Felix...!

FELIX

Since I learned of this, you have become a stranger to me. (He turns away)

CURTAIN

THE FOURTH ACT

The garden belonging to Mr. von Sala's house. At the left is seen the white, one-storied building, fronted by a broad terrace, from which six stone steps lead down into the garden. A wide door with panes of glass leads from the terrace into the drawing-room. A small pool appears in the foreground, surrounded by a semi-circle of young trees. From that spot an avenue of trees runs diagonally across

the stage toward the right. At the opening of the avenue, near the pool, stand two columns on which are placed the marble busts of two Roman emperors. A semi-circular stone seat with back support stands under the trees to the right of the pool. Farther back glimpses of the glittering fence are caught through the scanty leafage. Back of the fence, the woods on a gently rising hillside are turning red. The autumnal sky is pale blue. Everything is quiet. The stage remains empty for a few moments.

Sala and Johanna enter by way of the terrace. She is in black. He has on a gray suit and carries a dark overcoat across his shoulders. They descend the steps slowly.

SALA

I think you'll find it rather cool. (He goes back into the room, picks up a cape lying there, and puts it around Johanna's shoulders; little by little they reach the garden)

JOHANNA

Do you know what I imagine?... That this day is our own—that it belongs to us alone. We have summoned it, and if we wanted, we could make it stay.... All other people live only as guests in the world to-day. Isn't that so?... The reason is, I suppose, that once I heard you speak of this day.

SALA

Of this...?

JOHANNA

Yes—while mother was still living.... And now it has really come. The leaves are red. The golden mist is lying over the woods. The sky is pale and remote—and the day is even more beautiful, and sadder, than I could ever have imagined. And I am spending it in your garden, and your pool is my mirror. (She stands looking down into the pool) And yet we can no more make it stay, this golden day, than the water here can hold my image after I have gone away.

SALA

It seems strange that this clear, mild air should be tinged with a suggestion of winter and snow.

JOHANNA

Why should it trouble you? When that suggestion has become reality here, you are already in the midst of another Spring.

SALA

What do you mean by that?

JOHANNA

Oh, I suppose that where you go they have no winter like ours.

SALA (pensively)

No, not like ours. (Pause) And you?

JOHANNA

I...?

SALA

What are you going to do, I mean, when I am gone?

JOHANNA

When you are gone...? (She looks at him, and he stands staring into the distance) Haven't you gone long ago? And at bottom, are you not far away from me even now?

SALA

What are you saying? I am here with you.... What are you going to do, Johanna?

JOHANNA

I have already told you. Go away—just like you.

SALA (shakes his head)

JOHANNA

As soon as possible. I have still the courage left. Who knows what may become of me later, if I stay here alone.

SALA

As long as you are young, all doors stand open, and the world begins outside every one of them.

JOHANNA

But the world is wide and the sky infinite only as long as you are not clinging to anybody. And for that reason I want to go away.

SALA

Away—that's so easily said. But preparations are needed for that purpose, and some sort of a scheme. You use the word as if you merely had to put on wings and fly off into the distance.

JOHANNA

To be determined is—the same as having wings.

SALA

Are you not at all afraid, Johanna?

JOHANNA

A longing free from fear would be too cheap to be worth while.

SALA

Where will it lead you?

JOHANNA

I shall find my way.

SALA

You can choose your way, but not the people that you meet.

JOHANNA

Do you think me ignorant of the fact that I cannot expect only beautiful experiences? What is ugly and mean must also be waiting for me.

SALA

And how are you going to stand it?—Will you be able to stand it at all?

JOHANNA

Of course, I am not going to tell the truth always as I have done to you. I shall have to lie—and I think of it with pleasure. I shall not always be in good spirits, nor always sensible. I shall make mistakes and suffer. That's the way it has to be, I suppose.

SALA

Of all this you are aware in advance, and yet...?

JOHANNA

Yes.

SALA

And why?... Why are you going away, Johanna?

JOHANNA

Why am I going away?... I want a time to come when I must shudder at myself. Shudder as deeply as you can only when nothing has been left untried. Just as you have had to do when you looked back upon your life. Or have you not?

SALA

Oh, many times. But just in such moments of shuddering there is nothing left behind at all—everything is once more present. And the present is the past. (He sits down on the stone seat)

JOHANNA

What do you mean by that?

SALA (covers his eyes with his hand and sits silent)

JOHANNA

What is the matter? Where are you anyhow?

[A light wind stirs the leaves and makes many of them drop to the ground.

SALA

I am a child, riding my pony across the fields. My father is behind and calls to me. At that window waits my mother. She has thrown a gray satin shawl over her dark hair and is waving her hand at me.... And I am a young lieutenant in maneuvers, standing on a hillock and reporting to my colonel that hostile infantry is ambushed behind that wooded piece of ground, ready to charge, and down below us I can see the midday sun glittering on bayonets and buttons.... And I am lying alone in my boat adrift, looking up into the deep-blue Summer sky, while words of incomprehensible beauty are shaping themselves in my mind—words more beautiful than I have ever been able to put on paper.... And I am resting on a bench in the cool park at the lake of Lugano, with Helen sitting beside me; she holds a book with red cover in her hand; over there by the magnolia, Lillie is playing with the light-haired English boy, and I can hear them prattling and laughing.... And I am walking slowly back and forth with Julian on a bed of rustling leaves, and we are talking of a picture which we saw yesterday. And I see the picture: two old sailors with worn-out faces, who are seated on an overturned skiff, their sad eyes directed toward the boundless sea. And I feel their misery more deeply than the artist who painted them; more deeply than they could have felt it themselves, had they been alive.... All this—all of it is there—if I only close my eyes. It is nearer to me than you, Johanna, when I don't see you and you keep quiet.

JOHANNA (stands looking at him with wistful sympathy)

SALA

The present—what does it mean anyhow? Are we then locked breast to breast with the moment as with a friend whom we embrace—or an enemy who is pressing us? Has not the word that just rings out turned to memory already? Is not the note that starts a melody reduced to memory before the song is ended? Is your coming to this garden anything but a memory, Johanna? Are not your steps across that meadow as much a matter of the past as are the steps of creatures dead these many years?

JOHANNA

No, it mustn't be like that. It makes me sad.

SALA (with a return to present things)

Why?... It shouldn't, Johanna. It is in hours like those we know, that we have lost nothing, and that in reality we cannot lose anything.

JOHANNA

Oh, I wish you had lost and forgotten everything, so that I might be everything to you!

SALA (somewhat astonished)

Johanna....

JOHANNA (passionately)

I love you. (Pause)

SALA

In a few days I shall be gone, Johanna. You know it—you have known it right along.

JOHANNA

I know. Why do you repeat it? Do you think, perhaps, that all at once I may begin to clutch at you like a love-sick thing, dreaming of eternities?—No, that isn't my way—oh, no!... But I want to tell you once at least that I am fond of you. May I not for once?—Do you hear? I love you. And I wish that sometime later on you may

hear it just as I am saying it now—at some other moment no less beautiful than this—when we two shall no longer be aware of each other.

SALA

Indeed, Johanna, of one thing you may be sure: that the sound of your voice shall never leave me.—But why should we talk of parting forever? Perhaps we shall meet again sooner or later ... in three years ... or in five.... (With a smile) Then you have become a princess perhaps, and I may be the ruler of some buried city.... Why don't you speak?

JOHANNA (pulls the cape more closely about her)

SALA

Do you feel cold?

JOHANNA

Not at all.—But now I must go.

SALA

Are you in such a hurry?

JOHANNA

It is getting late. I must be back before my father gets home.

SALA

How strange! To-day you are hurrying home, fearful of being too late, lest your father get worried. And in a couple of days....

JOHANNA

Then he will no longer be waiting for me. Farewell, Stephan.

SALA

Until to-morrow, then.

JOHANNA

Yes, until to-morrow.

SALA

You'll come through the garden gate, of course?

JOHANNA

Wasn't that a carriage that stopped before the house?

SALA

The doors are locked. Nobody can get out into the garden.

JOHANNA

Good-by, then.

SALA

Until to-morrow.

JOHANNA

Yes. (She is about to go)

SALA

Listen, Johanna.—If I should say to you now: stay!

JOHANNA

No, I must go now.

SALA

That was not what I meant.

JOHANNA

What then?

SALA

I mean, if I should beg you to stay—for—a long time?

JOHANNA

You have a peculiar way of jesting.

SALA

I am not jesting.

JOHANNA

Do you forget, then, that you—are going away?

SALA

I am not bound in any respect. There is nothing to prevent me from staying at home if I don't feel like going away.

JOHANNA

For my sake?

SALA

I didn't say so. Maybe for my own sake.

JOHANNA

No, you mustn't give it up. You would never forgive me if I took that away from you.

SALA

Oh, you think so? (Watching her closely) And if both of us were to go?

JOHANNA

What?

SALA

If you should risk going along with me? Well, it takes a little courage to do it, of course. But you would probably not be the only woman. The Baroness Golobin is also going along, I hear.

JOHANNA

Are you talking seriously?

SALA

Quite seriously. I ask if you care to go with me on that journey ... as my wife, of course, seeing that we have to consider externals like that, too.

JOHANNA

I should...?

SALA

Why does that move you so deeply?

JOHANNA

With you?—With you...?

SALA

Don't misunderstand me, Johanna. That's no reason why you should be tied to me for all time. When we get back, we can bid each other good-by—without the least ado. It is a very simple matter. For all your dreams cannot be fulfilled by me—I know that very well.... You need not give me an answer at once. Hours like these turn too easily into words that are not true the next day. And I hope I may never hear you speak one word of that kind.

JOHANNA (who has been looking at Sala as if she wanted to drink up every one of his words) No, I am not saying anything—I am not saying anything.

SALA (looking long at her)

You are going to think it over, and you'll let me know to-morrow morning?

JOHANNA

Yes. (She looks long at him)

SALA

What is the matter?

JOHANNA

Nothing.—Until to-morrow. Farewell. (He accompanies her to the garden gate, through which she disappears)

SALA (comes back and stands looking into the pool)

Just as if I wanted to find her image in it.... What could it be that moved her so deeply?... Happiness?... No, it wasn't happiness.... Why did she look at me like that? Why did she seem to shrink? There was something in her glance like a farewell forever. (He makes a sudden movement as of fright) Has it come to that with me?... But how can she know?... Then others must know it too...! (He stands staring into space; then he ascends the terrace slowly and goes into the drawing-room, from which he returns a few moments later accompanied by Julian)

JULIAN

And you want to leave all these splendors so soon?

SALA

They'll be here when I come back, I hope.

JULIAN

I hope you will, for the sake of both of us.

SALA

You say that rather distrustingly....

JULIAN

Well, yes—I am thinking of that remarkable article in the Daily Post.

SALA

Concerning what?

JULIAN

What is going on at the Caspian Sea.

SALA

Oh, are the local papers also taking that up?

JULIAN

The conditions in certain regions through which you have to pass seem really to be extremely dangerous.

SALA

Exaggerations. We have better information than that. According to my opinion there is nothing back of those articles but the petty jealousy of English scientists. What you read had been translated from the Daily News. And it's fully three weeks since it appeared there.—Have you seen Felix, by the way?

JULIAN

He was at my house only last night. And this morning I called on the Wegrats. He wanted to have a look at that picture of his mother which I painted twenty-three years ago.—And one thing and another led to my telling him everything.

SALA

Oh, you did? (Thoughtfully) And how did he take it?

JULIAN

It stirred him rather more than I had thought possible.

SALA

Well, I hope you didn't expect him to fall into your arms as the recovered son does in the play.

JULIAN

No, of course not.—I told him everything, without any attempt at sparing myself. And for that reason he seemed to feel the wrong done to his mother's husband more strongly than anything else. But that won't last very long. He'll soon understand that, in the higher sense, no wrong has been done at all. People of Wegrat's type are not made to hold actual possession of anything—whether it be wives or children. They

mean a refuge, a dwelling place—but never a real home. Can you understand what I mean by that? It is their mission to take into their arms creatures who have been worn out or broken to pieces by some kind of passion. But they never guess whence such creatures come. And while it is granted them to attract and befriend, they never understand whither those creatures go. They exist for the purpose of sacrificing themselves unconsciously, and in such sacrifices they find a happiness that might seem a pretty poor one to others.... You are not saying a word?

SALA

I am listening.

JULIAN

And have no reply to make?

SALA

Oh, well—it is possible to grind out scales quite smoothly even when the fiddle has got a crack....

[It is growing darker. Felix appears on the terrace.

SALA

Who is that?

FELIX (on the terrace)

It's me. The servant told me ...

SALA

Oh, Felix! Glad you came.

FELIX (coming down into the garden)

Good evening, Mr. von Sala.—Good evening, Mr. Fichtner.

JULIAN

Good evening, Felix.

SALA

I am delighted to see you.

FELIX

What magnificent old trees!

SALA

Yes, a piece of real woods—all you have to do is to forget the fence.—What brought you anyhow? I didn't expect you until to-morrow morning. Have you really made up your mind already?

JULIAN

Am I in the way?

FELIX

Oh, no. There is nothing secret about it.—I accept your offer, Mr. von Sala, and ask if you would be kind enough to speak to Count Ronsky.

SALA (shaking Felix by the hand)

I am glad of it.... (To Julian) It has to do with our Asiatic venture.

JULIAN

What?—You intend to join the expedition?

FELIX

Yes.

SALA

Have you already talked it over with your father?

FELIX

I shall do so to-night.—But that's a mere formality. I am determined, provided no other obstacles appear....

SALA

I shall speak to the Count this very day.

FELIX

I don't know how to thank you.

SALA

There is no reason at all. In fact, I don't have to say another word. The Count knows everything he needs to know about you.

VALET (appearing on the terrace)

There is a lady asking if you are at home, sir.

SALA

Didn't she give her name?—You'll have to excuse me a moment, gentlemen. (He goes toward the valet, and both disappear into the house)

JULIAN

You are going away?

FELIX

Yes. And I am very happy this occasion has offered itself.

JULIAN

Have you also informed yourself concerning the real nature of this undertaking?

FELIX

It means at any rate genuine activity and the opening of wider worlds.

JULIAN

And couldn't those things be found in connection with more hopeful prospects?

FELIX

That's possible. But I don't care to wait.

[Sala and Irene enter.

IRENE (still on the terrace, talking to Sala)

I couldn't leave Vienna without keeping my promise.

SALA

And I thank you for it, Miss Herms.

IRENE (descending into the garden with Sala)

You have a wonderful place here.—How do you do, Julian? Good evening, Lieutenant.

SALA

You should have come earlier, Miss Herms, so that you could have seen it in full sunlight.

IRENE

Why, I was here two hours ago. But it was like an enchanted castle. It was impossible to get in. The bell didn't ring at all.

SALA

Oh, of course! I hope you pardon. If I had had the slightest idea....

IRENE

Well, it doesn't matter. I have made good use of my time. I went on through the woods as far as Neustift and Salmansdorf.6 And then I got out and followed a road that I remembered since many years ago. (She looks at Julian) I rested on a bench where I sat once many, many years ago, with a close friend. (Smilingly) Can you guess, Mr. Fichtner? The outlook is wonderful. Beyond the fields you have a perfect view of the whole city as far as the Danube.

SALA (pointing to the stone seat)

Won't you sit down here for a while, Miss Herms?

IRENE

Thanks. (She raises her lorgnette to study the busts of the two emperors) It makes one feel quite Roman.... But I hope, gentlemen, I haven't interrupted any conference.

SALA

Not at all.

IRENE

I have that feeling, however. All of you look so serious.—I think I'll rather leave.

SALA

Oh, you mustn't, Miss Herms.—Is there anything more you want to ask me about that affair of ours, Felix?

FELIX

If Miss Herms would pardon me for a minute....

IRENE

Oh, certainly—please!

SALA

You'll excuse me, Miss Herms....

FELIX

It is a question of what I should do in regard to my present commission.—(He is still speaking as he goes out with Sala)

IRENE

What kind of secrets have those two together? What's going on here anyhow?

JULIAN

Nothing that can be called a secret. That young fellow is also going to join the expedition, I hear. And so they have a lot of things to talk over, of course.

IRENE (who has been following Felix and Sala with her eyes) Julian—it's he.

JULIAN (remains silent)

IRENE

You don't need to answer me. The matter has been in my mind all the time.... The only thing I can't understand is why I haven't discovered it before. It is he.—And he is twenty-three.—And I who actually thought when you drove me away: if only he doesn't kill himself!... And there goes his son.

JULIAN

What does that help me? He doesn't belong to me.

IRENE

But look at him! He is there—he's alive, and young, and handsome. Isn't that enough? (She rises) And I who was ruined by it!

JULIAN

How?

IRENE

Do you understand? Ruined....

JULIAN

I have never suspected it.

IRENE

Well, you couldn't have helped me anyhow. (Pause) Good-by. Make an excuse for me, please. Tell them anything you want. I am going away, and I don't want to know anything more.

JULIAN

What's the matter with you? Nothing has changed.

IRENE

You think so?—To me it is as if all these twenty-three years had suddenly undergone a complete change.—Good-by.

JULIAN

Good-by—for a while.

IRENE

For a while? Do you care?—Really?—Do you feel sad, Julian?—Now I am sorry for you again. (Shaking her head) Of course, that's the way you are. So what is there to do about it?

JULIAN

Please control yourself. Here they are coming.

SALA (returns with Felix)

Now we're all done.

FELIX

Thank you very much. I shall have to leave now.

IRENE

And to-morrow you are already going away again?

FELIX

Yes, Miss Herms.

IRENE

You're also going toward the city now, Lieutenant, are you not? If you don't object, I'll take you along.

FELIX

That's awfully kind of you.

SALA

What, Miss Herms...? This is a short visit indeed.

IRENE

Yes, I have still a few errands to do. For to-morrow I must return to the wilderness. And probably it will be some time before I get to Vienna again.—Well, Lieutenant?

FELIX

Good-by, Mr. Fichtner. And if I shouldn't happen to see you again....

JULIAN

Oh, we'll meet again.

IRENE

Now the people will say: look at the lieutenant with his mamma in tow. (She gives a last glance to Julian)

SALA (accompanies Irene and Felix up the steps to the terrace)

JULIAN (remains behind, walking back and forth; after a while he is joined by Sala) Have you no doubt that your appeal to Count Ronsky will be effective?

SALA

I have already received definite assurances from him, or I should never have aroused any hopes in Felix.

JULIAN

What caused you to do this, Sala?

SALA

My sympathy for Felix, I should say, and the fact that I like to travel in pleasant company.

JULIAN

And did it never occur to you, that the thought of losing him might be very painful to me?

SALA

What's the use of that, Julian? It is only possible to lose what you possess. And you

cannot possess a thing to which you have not acquired any right. You know that as well as I do.

JULIAN

Does not, in the last instance, the fact that you need somebody give you a certain claim on him?—Can't you understand, Sala, that he represents my last hope?... That actually I haven't got anything or anybody left but him?... That wherever I turn, I find nothing but emptiness?... That I am horrified by the loneliness awaiting me?

SALA

And what could it help you if he stayed? And even if he felt something like filial tenderness toward you, how could that help you?... How can he or anybody else help you?... You say that loneliness horrifies you?... And if you had a wife by your side to-day, wouldn't you be lonely just the same?... Wouldn't you be lonely even if you were surrounded by children and grandchildren?... Suppose you had kept your money, your fame and your genius—don't you think you would be lonely for all that?... Suppose we were always attended by a train of bacchantes—nevertheless we should have to tread the downward path alone—we, who have never belonged to anybody ourselves. The process of aging must needs be a lonely one for our kind, and he is nothing but a fool who doesn't in time prepare himself against having to rely on any human being.

JULIAN

And do you imagine, Sala, that you need no human being?

SALA

In the manner I have used them they will always be at my disposal. I have always been in favor of keeping at a certain distance. It is not my fault that other people haven't realized it.

JULIAN

In that respect you are right, Sala. For you have never really loved anybody in this world.

SALA

Perhaps not. And how about you? No more than I, Julian.... To love means to live for the sake of somebody else. I don't say that it is a more desirable form of existence, but I do think, at any rate, that you and I have been pretty far removed from it. What has that which one like us brings into the world got to do with love? Though it include all sorts of funny, hypocritical, tender, unworthy, passionate things that pose as love—it isn't love for all that.... Have we ever made a sacrifice by which our sensuality or our vanity didn't profit?... Have we ever hesitated to betray or blackguard decent people, if by doing so we could gain an hour of happiness or of mere lust?... Have we ever risked our peace or our lives—not out of whim or recklessness—but to promote the welfare of someone who had given all to us?... Have we ever denied ourselves an enjoyment unless from such denial we could at least derive some comfort?... And do you think that we could dare to turn to any human being, man or woman, with a demand that any gift of ours be returned? I am not thinking of pearls now, or annuities, or cheap wisdom, but of some piece of our real selves, some hour of our own existence, which we have surrendered to such a being without at once exacting payment for it in some sort of coin. My dear Julian, we have kept our doors open, and have allowed our treasures to be viewed—but prodigal with them we have never been. You no more than I. We may just as well join hands, Julian. I am a little less prone to complain than you are—that's the whole difference.... But I am not telling you anything new. All this you know as well as I do. It is simply impossible for us not to know ourselves. Of course, we try at times conscientiously to deceive ourselves, but it never works. Our follies and rascalities may remain hidden to others—but never to ourselves. In our innermost souls we always know what to think of ourselves.—It's getting cold, Julian. Let's go indoors.

(They begin to ascend the steps to the terrace)

JULIAN

All that may be true, Sala. But this much you have to grant me. If there be anybody in the world who has no right to make us pay for the mistakes of our lives, it is a person who has us to thank for his own life.

SALA

There is no question of payment in this. Your son has a mind for essentials, Julian. You have said so yourself. And he feels that to have done nothing for a man but to put him into the world, is to have done very little indeed.

JULIAN

Then, at least, everything must become as it was before he knew anything at all. Once more I shall become to him a human being like anybody else. Then he will not dare to leave me.... I cannot bear it. How have I deserved that he should run away from me?... And even if all that I have held for good and true within myself—even if, in the end, my very fondness for this young man, who is my son—should prove nothing but self-delusion—yet I love him now.... Do you understand me, Sala? I love him, and all I ask is that he may believe it before I must lose him forever....

[It grows dark. The two men pass across the terrace and enter the drawing-room. The stage stands empty a little while. In the meantime the wind has risen somewhat. Johanna enters by the avenue of trees from the right and goes past the pool toward the terrace. The windows of the drawing-room are illumined. Sala has seated himself at a table. The valet enters the room and serves him a glass of wine. Johanna stops. She is apparently much excited. Then she ascends two of the steps to the terrace. Sala seems to hear a noise and turns his head slightly. When she sees this, Johanna hurries down again and stops beside the pool. There she stands looking down into the water.

CURTAIN

THE FIFTH ACT

The garden at the Wegrats'.

REUMANN (sits at a small table and writes something in his notebook)

JULIAN (enters quickly by way of the veranda)

Is it true, Doctor?

REUMANN (rising)

Yes, it's true.

JULIAN

She has disappeared?

REUMANN

Yes, she has disappeared. She has been gone since yesterday afternoon. She has left no word behind, and she has taken nothing at all with her—she has simply gone away and never returned.

JULIAN

But what can have happened to her?

REUMANN

We have not been able to guess even. Perhaps she has lost her way and will come back. Or she has suddenly made up her mind—if we only knew to what!

JULIAN

Where are the others?

REUMANN

We agreed to meet here again at ten. I visited the various hospitals and other places where it might be possible to find some trace.... I suppose the professor has made a report to the police by this time.

FELIX (enters quickly)

Nothing new?

REUMANN

Nothing.

JULIAN (shakes hands with Felix)

REUMANN

From where do you come?

FELIX

I went to see Mr. von Sala.

REUMANN

Why?

FELIX

I thought it rather possible that he might have a suspicion, or be able to give us some kind of direction. But he knows nothing at all. That was perfectly clear. And if he had known anything—had known anything definite—he would have told me. I am sure of that. He was still in bed when I called on him. I suppose he thought I had come about my own matter. When he heard that Johanna had disappeared, he turned very pale.... But he doesn't know anything.

WEGRAT (enters)

Anything?

[All the others shake their heads. Julian presses his hand.

WEGRAT (sitting down)

They asked me to give more details, something more tangible to go by. But what is there to give?... I have nothing.... The whole thing is a riddle to me. (Turning to Julian) In the afternoon she went out for a short walk as usual.... (To Felix) Was there anything about her that attracted attention?... It seems quite impossible to me

that she could have had anything in mind when she left the house—that she could know already—that she was going away forever.

FELIX

Perhaps though....

WEGRAT

Of course, she was very reserved—especially of late, since the death of her mother.... I wonder if it could be that?... Would you think that possible, Doctor?

REUMANN (shrugs his shoulders)

FELIX

Did any one of us really know her? And who takes a real interest in another person anyhow?

REUMANN

It is apparently fortunate that such is the case. Otherwise we should all go mad from pity or loathing or anxiety. (Pause) Now I must get around to my patients. There are a few calls that cannot be postponed. I shall be back by dinner-time. Good-by for a while. (He goes out)

WEGRAT

To think that you can watch a young creature like her grow up—can see the child turn into girl, and then into a young lady—can speak hundreds of thousands of words to her.... And one day she rises from the table, puts on hat and coat, and goes ... and you have no idea as to whether she has slipped away—if into nothingness or into a new life.

FELIX

But whatever may have happened, father—she wanted to get away from us. And in that fact, I think, we should find a certain consolation.

WEGRAT (shakes his head in perplexity)

Everything is fluttering away—willingly or unwillingly—but away it goes.

FELIX

Father, we can't tell what may have happened. It's conceivable, at least, that Johanna may have formed some decision which she does not carry out. Perhaps she will come back in a few hours, or days.

WEGRAT

You believe ... you think it possible, do you?

FELIX

Possible—yes. But if she shouldn't come—of course, father, I shall give up the plan of which I told you yesterday. Under circumstances like these I couldn't think of going so far away from you for such a long time.

WEGRAT (to Julian)

And now he's going to sacrifice himself for my sake!

FELIX

Perhaps I could arrange to have myself transferred here.

WEGRAT

No, Felix, you know very well that I couldn't accept such a thing.

FELIX

But it's no sacrifice. I assure you, father, that I stay with you only because I can't go away from you now.

WEGRAT

Oh, yes, Felix, you can—you will be able. And you are not to stay here for my sake—you mustn't. I could never be sure that it would prove of any help to me to have you give up a plan which you have taken hold of with such enthusiasm. I think it would be inexcusable of you to draw back, and wicked of me to permit it. You

must be happy at having found a way at last, by which you may reach all you have longed for. It makes me happy, too, Felix. If you missed this opportunity, you would regret it all your life.

FELIX

But so much may have changed since yesterday—such a tremendous lot—for you and for me.

WEGRAT

For me, perhaps.... But never mind. I won't stand it—I will not accept such a sacrifice. Of course, I might accept it, if I could find it of any special advantage to myself. But I shouldn't have you any more than if you were gone away ... less ... not at all. This fate that has descended on us must not add to its inherent power what is still worse—that it makes us do in our confusion what is against our own natures. Sometime we always get over every disaster, no matter how frightful it be. But whatever we do in violation of our innermost selves can never be undone. (Turning to Julian) Isn't that true, Julian?

JULIAN

You are absolutely right.

FELIX

Thanks, father. I feel grateful that you make it so easy for me to agree with you.

WEGRAT

That's good, Felix.... During the weeks you will remain in Europe we shall be able to talk over a lot of things—more perhaps than in the years gone by. Indeed, how little people know about each other!... But I am getting tired. We stayed awake all night.

FELIX

Won't you rest a while, father?

WEGRAT

Rest.... You'll stay at home, Felix, won't you?

FELIX

Yes, I shall wait right here. What else is there to do?

WEGRAT

I'm racking my brain until it's near bursting.... Why didn't she say anything to me? Why have I known so little about her? Why have I kept so far away from her? (He goes out)

FELIX

How that man has been belied—all his life long—by all of us.

JULIAN

There is in this world no sin, no crime, no deception, that cannot be atoned. Only for what has happened here, there should be no expiation and no forgetfulness, you think?

FELIX

Can it be possible that you don't understand?... Here a lie has been eternalized. There is no getting away from it. And she who did it was my mother—and it was you who made her do it—and the lie am I, and such I must remain as long as I am passing for that which I am not.

JULIAN

Let us proclaim the truth then, Felix.—I shall face any judge that you may choose, and submit to any verdict passed on me.—Must I alone remain condemned forever? Should I alone, among all that have erred, never dare to say: "It is atoned"?

FELIX

It is too late. Guilt can be wiped out by confession only while the guilty one is still able to make restitution. You ought to know yourself, that this respite expired long ago.

SALA (enters)

FELIX

Mr. von Sala!—Have you anything to tell us?

SALA

Yes.—Good morning, Julian.—No, stay, Julian. I am glad to have a witness. (To Felix) Are you determined to join the expedition?

FELIX

I am.

SALA

So am I. But it is possible that one of us must change his mind.

FELIX

Mr. von Sala...?

SALA

It would be a bad thing to risk finding out that you have started on a journey of such scope with one whom you would prefer to shoot dead if you knew him completely.

FELIX

Where is my sister, Mr. von Sala?

SALA

I don't know. Where she is at this moment, I don't know. But last evening, just before you arrived, she had left me for the last time.

FELIX

Mr. von Sala....

SALA

Her farewell words to me were: Until to-morrow. You can see that I had every reason to be surprised this morning, when you appeared at my house. Permit me

furthermore to tell you, that yesterday, of all days, I asked Johanna to become my wife—which seemed to agitate her very much. In telling you this, I have by no means the intention of smoothing over things. For my question implied no desire on my part to make good any wrong I might have done. It was apparently nothing but a whim—like so much else. There is here no question of anything but to let you know the truth. This means that I am at your disposal in any manner you may choose.—I thought it absolutely necessary to say all this before we were brought to the point of having to descend into the depths of the earth together, or, perhaps, to sleep in the same tent.

FELIX (after a long pause)

Mr. von Sala ... we shall not have to sleep in the same tent.

SALA

Why not?

FELIX

Your journey will not last that long.

[A very long pause ensues.

SALA

Oh ... I understand. And are you sure of that?

FELIX

Perfectly. (Pause}

SALA

And did Johanna know it?

FELIX

Yes.

SALA

I thank you.—Oh, you can safely take my hand. The matter has been settled in the most chivalrous manner possible.—Well?... It is not customary to refuse one's hand to him who is already down.

FELIX (gives his hand to Sala; then he says)

And where can she be?

SALA

I don't know.

FELIX

Didn't she give you any hint at all?

SALA

None whatever.

FELIX

But have you no conjecture? Has she perhaps established any connections—abroad? Had she any friends at all, of which I don't know?

SALA

Not to my knowledge.

FELIX

Do you think that she is still alive?

SALA

I can't tell.

FELIX

Are you not willing to say anything more, Mr. von Sala?

SALA

I am not able to say anything more. I have nothing left to say. Farewell, and good luck on your trip. Give my regards to Count Ronsky.

FELIX

But we are not seeing each other for the last time?

SALA

Who can tell?

FELIX (holding out his hand to Sala)

I must hurry to my father. I think it my duty to let him know what I have just learned from you.

SALA (nods)

FELIX (to Julian)

Good-by. (He goes out)

[Julian and Sala start to leave together.

JULIAN (as Sala suddenly stops)

Why do you tarry? Let's get away.

SALA

It is a strange thing to know. A veil seems to spread in front of everything.... "Away with you!"—But I don't care to submit to it as long as I am still here—if it be only for another hour....

JULIAN

Do you believe it then?

SALA (looking long at Julian)

Do I believe it...? He behaved rather nicely, that son of yours.... "We shall not have to sleep in the same tent."... Not bad! I might have said it myself....

JULIAN

But why don't you come? Have you perhaps something more to tell after all?

SALA

That's the question I must put to you, Julian.

JULIAN

Sala?

SALA

Because I didn't say anything about a peculiar hallucination I experienced just before coming here. I imagine it was....

JULIAN

Please, speak out!

SALA

What do you think of it? Before I left my house—just after Felix had gone—I went down into my garden—that is to say, I ran through it—in a remarkable state of excitement, as you may understand. And as I passed by the pool, it was exactly as if I had seen on the bottom of it....

JULIAN

Sala!

SALA

There is a blue-greenish glitter on the water, and besides, the shadow of the beech tree falls right across it early in the morning. And by a strange coincidence Johanna said yesterday: "The water can no more hold my image...." That was, in a way, like challenging fate.... And as I passed by the pool, it was as if ... the water had retained her image just the same.

JULIAN

Is that true?

SALA

True ... or untrue ... what is that to me? It could be of interest to me only if I were to

remain in this world another year—or another hour at least.

JULIAN

You mean to...?

SALA

Of course, I do. Would you expect me to wait for it? That would be rather painful, I think. (To Julian, with a smile) From whom are you now going to get your cues, my dear friend? Yes, it's all over now.... And what has become of it?... Where are the thermæ of Caracalla? Where is the park at Lugano?... Where is my nice little house?... No nearer to me, and no farther away, than those marble steps leading down to mysterious depths.... Veils in front of everything.... Perhaps your son will discover if the three-hundred and twelfth be the last one—and if not, it won't give him much concern anyhow.... Don't you think he has been acting rather nicely?... I have somehow the impression that a better generation is growing up—with more poise and less brilliancy.—Send your regards to heaven, Julian.

JULIAN (makes a movement to accompany him)

SALA (gently but firmly)

You stay here, Julian. This is the end of our dialogue. Farewell. (He goes out quickly)

FELIX (entering rapidly)

Is Mr. von Sala gone? My father wanted to talk to him.—And you are still here?... Why did Mr. von Sala go? What did he tell you?—Johanna...! Johanna...?

JULIAN

She is dead ... she has drowned herself in the pool.

FELIX (with a cry of dismay)

Where did he go?

JULIAN

I don't think you can find him.

FELIX

What is he doing?

JULIAN

He is paying ... while it's time....

WEGRAT (enters from the veranda)

FELIX (runs to meet him)

Father....

WEGRAT

Felix! What has happened?

FELIX

We must go to Sala's house, father.

WEGRAT

Dead...?

FELIX

Father! (He takes hold of Wegrat's hand and kisses it) My father!

JULIAN (has left the room slowly in the meantime)

WEGRAT

Must things of this kind happen to make that word sound as if I had heard it for the first time...?

CURTAIN

INTERMEZZO

(Zwischenspiel)

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

1904

PERSONS

Amadeus Adams } A musical conductor Cecilia Adams-Ortenburg } His wife, an opera singer Peter } Their child, five years old Albert Rhon Marie } His wife Sigismund, Prince Maradas-Lohsenstein Countess Frederique Moosheim } An opera singer Governess } At the Adamses Chambermaid

The scene is laid in Vienna at the present day.

INTERMEZZO

THE FIRST ACT

The study of Amadeus. The walls are painted in dark gray, with a very simple frieze. A door in the background leads to a veranda. On either side of this door is a window. Through the door one sees the garden, to which three steps lead down from the veranda. A cabinet stands between the door and the window at the right; a music-stand holds a corresponding position to the left of the door. Antique bas-reliefs are hung above the cabinet as well as the stand. The main entrance is on the right side in the foreground. Farther back at the right is a door leading to Cecilia's room. A door finished like the rest of the wall leads to the room of Amadeus at the left. A tall book case, with a bust of Verrochio on top of it, stands against the right wall. In the corner back of it are several columns with tall vases full of flowers. A fireplace occupies the foreground at the left. Above it is a large mirror. On the mantelshelf stands a French clock of simple design. A table surrounded by chairs is placed in front of the fireplace. Farther back along the same wall are shelves piled with sheet music, and above them engravings of Schumann, Brahms, Mozart, and other composers. A bust of Beethoven occupies the farthermost corner at the left. Halfway down the stage, nearer the left wall, stands a piano with a piano

stool in front of it. An armchair has been moved up close to the piano on the side toward the public. A writing desk holds a similar position at the right. Back of it are an easy-chair and a couch, the latter having been moved close to the table.

AMADEUS (thirty years old, slender, with dark, smooth hair; his movements are quick, with a suggestion of restlessness; he wears a gray business suit of elegant cut, but not well cared for; he has a trick of taking hold of the lapel of his sack coat with his left hand and turning it back; he is seated at the piano, accompanying Frederique)

FREDERIQUE (twenty-eight, is dressed in a bright gray tailor-made suit and a red satin waist; wears a broad-brimmed straw hat, very fashionable; her hair is blonde, of a reddish tint; her whole appearance is very dainty; she is singing an aria from the opera "Mignon") "Ha-ha-ha! Is 't true, really true?" (While singing she is all the time making a motion as if she were beating the dust out of her riding suit with a crop)

AMADEUS (accompanying himself as he gives her the cue) "Yes, you may laugh. I am a fool to ruin my horse ..."

FREDERIQUE

"Maybe you would like ..."

AMADEUS (nervously)

Oh, wait!... You don't know yet why I have ruined my horse.... "To ruin my horse for a quicker sight of you ..."

FREDERIQUE (with the same gesture as before)

"Maybe you would like me to weep?"

AMADEUS

"Oh, I regret already that I came."

FREDERIQUE (as before)

"Well, why...."

AMADEUS

G sharp!

FREDERIQUE (as before)

"Well, why don't you go back? Soon enough I shall see you again."

AMADEUS

You should say that ironically, not tenderly. "Soon enough I shall see you again...."

FREDERIQUE (as before)

"Soon enough I shall see you again...."

AMADEUS

Not angrily, Countess, but ironically.

FREDERIQUE

Call me Frederique, and not Countess, when you are working with me.

AMADEUS

Now, that's the tone Philine should use. Hold on to it.... And that's the right look, too.... If you could do that on the stage, you might almost be an artist.

FREDERIQUE

Oh, mercy, I have sung Philine more than twenty times already.

AMADEUS

But not here, Freder ... Countess. And not when Mrs. Adams-Ortenburg was singing the part of Mignon. (He leans forward so that he can look out into the garden)

FREDERIQUE

No, she isn't coming yet. (With a smile) Perhaps the rehearsal isn't over.

AMADEUS (rising)

Perhaps not.

FREDERIQUE

Is it true that Mrs. Adams-Ortenburg has been requested to sing in Berlin next Fall?

AMADEUS

Nothing has been settled yet. (He goes to the window at the right) If you'll permit.... (Opens the window)

FREDERIQUE

What a splendid day! And how fragrant the roses are. It is almost like....

AMADEUS

Almost like Tremezzo—yes, I know.

FREDERIQUE

How can you—as you have never been there?

AMADEUS

But you have told me enough about it. A villa standing at the edge of the water—radiantly white—with marble steps leading straight down to the blue sea.

FREDERIQUE

Yes. And sometimes, on very hot nights, I sleep in the park, right on the sward, under a plane tree.

AMADEUS

That plane tree is famous.—But time is flying. It would be better to go on with the singing. (He seats himself at the piano again) The polonaise—if you please, Countess. (He begins the accompaniment)

FREDERIQUE (singing)

"Titania, airiest queen of fairies,

Has descended from her blue cloud throne,

And her way across the world is wending

More quickly than the bird or lightning flash..."

AMADEUS (interrupts his playing and lets his head sink forward) No, no—it's no use!... Please tell the director that he will have to look after your part himself. As for me, I have certain regards even for people who go to the opera in Summer. They should not be forced to accept anything. Tell the director, please, that I send him my regards and that—there are more important things to occupy my time. (He closes the score)

FREDERIQUE (quite amicably)

I believe it. How's your opera getting along?

AMADEUS

For the Lord's sake, please don't pretend to be interested in things of that kind! Why, nobody expects it of you.

FREDERIQUE

Will it soon be finished?

AMADEUS

Finished...? How could it be, do you think? I have to conduct two nights a week at least, and there are rehearsals in the morning, not to mention singers that have to be coached.... Do you think a man can sit down after an hour like this and invite his muse?

FREDERIQUE

After an hour like this...? I don't think you feel quite at your ease with me, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

Not at my ease? I? With you?—I don't think you have imagined in your most reckless moments, Countess, that my wife might have anything to fear from you.

FREDERIQUE

You are determined to misunderstand me. (She has gone to the fireplace and turns now to face Amadeus) You know perfectly well why you pretend to be cross with me. Because you are in love with me.

AMADEUS (looks straight ahead and goes on playing)

FREDERIQUE

And that chord proves nothing to the contrary.

AMADEUS

That chord.... Tell me rather what kind of chord it is. (He repeats it in a fury)

FREDERIQUE

A flat major.

AMADEUS (in a tone of boredom)

G major—of course.

FREDERIQUE (close by him, with a smile)

Don't let that semi-tone spoil our happiness.

AMADEUS (rises, goes toward the background and looks out into the garden)

FREDERIQUE

Is it your wife?

AMADEUS

No, my little boy is playing out there. (He stands at the window, waving his hand at somebody outside; pause)

FREDERIQUE

You take life too hard, Amadeus.

AMADEUS (still at the window, but turning toward Frederique) I can't lie—and I don't want to. Which is not the same as taking life hard.

FREDERIQUE

Can't lie...? And yet you have been away from your wife for months at a time—haven't you? And your wife came here while you were still conducting somewhere abroad, didn't she?... So that....

AMADEUS

Those are matters which you don't quite comprehend, Countess. (He looks again toward the main entrance)

FREDERIQUE

No, your wife can't be here yet. She won't give up her walk on a wonderful day like this.

AMADEUS

What you have in mind now is pretty mean, Frederique.

FREDERIQUE

Why so? Of course, I know she takes a walk with you, too, now and then.

AMADEUS

Yes, when my time permits. And often she goes out with Sigismund. To-day she's probably with him—and that's what you wanted to bring home to me, of course.

FREDERIQUE

Why should I? You know it, don't you? And I assure you, it has never occurred to me to see anything wrong in it. He's a friend of yours.

AMADEUS

More than that—or less. He used to be my pupil.

FREDERIQUE

I didn't know that.

AMADEUS

Ten years ago, while still a mere youngster, I used to live in his father's palace. It's

hard to tell where I might have been to-day, had it not been for old Prince Lohsenstein. You see, we men have generally another kind of youth to look back at than you ...

FREDERIQUE

... women artists.

AMADEUS

No, countesses, I meant to say. For three years I spent every summer in the palace at Krumau.1 And there—for the first time in my life—I could work in peace, all by myself, with nothing more to do than to instruct Sigismund.

FREDERIQUE

Did he want to become a pianist?

AMADEUS

Not exactly. He wanted to join some monastic order.

FREDERIQUE

No? Is that really true?—Oh, it's queer how people change!

AMADEUS

They don't as much as you think. He has remained a man of serious mind.

FREDERIQUE

And yet he plays dance music so charmingly...?

AMADEUS

Why shouldn't he? A good waltz and a good hymn are just as acceptable to the powers above.

FREDERIQUE

How delightful those evenings in your house used to be! No farther back than last winter.... The Count and I frequently talk of them.—Have you ceased to invite

Prince Sigismund, as you have me?

AMADEUS

He was here only a fortnight ago, my dear Countess—and spent the whole evening with us. We had supper in the summer-house, and then we came in here and sat chatting for a long while, and finally he improvised some variations on the Cagliostro Waltzes before he left.—And what my wife and he say to each other during their walk, when I am not with them, will no more be hidden from me than I would hide from her what you and I have been talking of here. That's how my wife and I feel toward each other—if you'll please understand, Frederique!

FREDERIQUE

But there are things one simply can't say to each other.

AMADEUS

There can be no secrets between people like my wife and myself.

FREDERIQUE

Oh, of course ... but then ... what you have been saying to me will be only a small part of what you must tell your wife to-day, Amadeus. Good-by.... (She holds out her hand to him)

AMADEUS

What's in your mind now, Frederique?

FREDERIQUE

Why resist your fate? Is it so very repulsive after all? What you are to me, nobody else has ever been!

AMADEUS

And you want me to believe that?

FREDERIQUE

I shall not insist on it. But it is true nevertheless. Good-by now. Until to-morrow, Amadeus. Life is really much easier than you think.... It might be so very pleasant—and so it shall be! (She goes out)

AMADEUS (seats himself at the piano again and strikes a few notes) It is getting serious ... or amusing perhaps...? (He shakes his head)

ALBERT RHON (enters; he is of medium height; his black hair, slightly streaked with gray, is worn long; he is rather carelessly dressed)

AMADEUS

Oh, is that you, Albert? How are you?

ALBERT

I have come to ask how you are getting along with our opera, Amadeus. Have you done anything?

AMADEUS

No.

ALBERT

Again nothing?

AMADEUS

I doubt whether I can get a chance here. We'll have to wait until the season is over. I have too much to do. We are now putting on "Mignon" with new people in some of the parts....

ALBERT

If I'm not very much mistaken, I saw Philine float by—with a rather intoxicated look in her eyes.... Oh, have I put my foot into it again? I beg your pardon!

AMADEUS (turning away from him)

That's right. She was here. Oh, that damned business of private rehearsals! But I

hope it won't last much longer. The coming Winter is going to decide my future once for all. I have already got my leave of absence.

ALBERT

So you have made up your mind about that tour?

AMADEUS

Yes, I shall be gone for two months this time.

ALBERT

Within Germany only?

AMADEUS

I'll probably take in a few Italian cities also. Yes, my dear fellow, they know more about me abroad than here. I shall conduct my Third Symphony, and perhaps also my Fourth.

ALBERT

Have you got that far already?

AMADEUS

No. But I have hopes of the Summer. Once more I mean to do some real work.

ALBERT

Well, it's about time.—I have made out the schedule for our walking tour, by the by. And I brought along the map. Look here. We start from Niederdorf, and then by way of Plätzwiesen to Schluderbach; then to Cortina; then through the Giau Pass to Caprile; then by way of the Fedaja2....

AMADEUS

I leave all that to you. I rely entirely on you.

ALBERT

Then it's settled that we'll don knapsack and alpenstock once more, to wander

through the country as we used to do when we were young...?

AMADEUS

Yes, and I am looking forward to it with a great deal of pleasure.

ALBERT

You need simply to pull yourself together—a few weeks of mountain air and quiet will get you out of this.

AMADEUS

Oh, I haven't got into anything in particular. I am a little nervous. That's all.

ALBERT

Can't you see, Amadeus, how you have to force yourself in order to use this evasion toward me, who, of course, has no right whatever to demand any frankness? Can't you see how you are wasting a part of your mental energy, so to speak, on this slight disingenuousness? No, dissimulation is utterly foreign to your nature, as I have always told you. If you should ever get to the point where you had to deceive one who was near and dear to you, that would be the end of you.

AMADEUS

Your worry is quite superfluous! Haven't you known us long enough—me and Cecilia—to know that our marriage is based, above all else, on absolute frankness?

ALBERT

Many have good intentions, but their courage often deserts them at the critical moment.

AMADEUS

We have never yet kept anything hidden from each other.

ALBERT

Because so far you have had nothing to confess.

AMADEUS

Oh, a great deal, perhaps, which other people keep to themselves. Our common life has not been without its complications. We have had to be parted from each other for months at a time. I have had to rehearse in private with other singers than Philine, and (with an air of superiority) other men than Prince Sigismund must have discovered that Cecilia is pretty.

ALBERT

I haven't said a word about Cecilia.

AMADEUS

And besides, it would be quite hopeless for Cecilia or me to keep any secrets. We know each other too well—I don't think two people ever existed who understood each other so completely as we do.

ALBERT

I can imagine a point where the understanding would have to end, and everything else with it.

AMADEUS

Everything else maybe—but not the understanding.

ALBERT

Oh, well! If nothing is left but the understanding, that means the beginning of the end.

AMADEUS

Those are—chances that every human being must resign himself to take.

ALBERT

You don't talk like one who has resigned himself, however, but like one who has made up his mind.

AMADEUS

Who can be perfectly sure of himself or of anybody else? We two, at any rate, are not challenging fate by feeling too secure.

ALBERT

Oh, when it comes to that, my dear fellow—fate always regards itself challenged—by doubt no less than by confidence.

AMADEUS

To be safe against any surprise brings a certain sense of tranquillity anyhow.

ALBERT

A little more tranquillity would produce a decision to avoid anything that might endanger an assured happiness.

AMADEUS

Do you think anything is to be won by that kind of avoidance? Don't you feel rather, that the worst and most dangerous of all falsehoods is to resist temptation with a soul full of longing for it? And that it is easier to go unscathed through adventures than through desires?

ALBERT

Adventures...! Is it actually necessary, then, to live through them? A painter who has risen above pot-boiling, and who has left the follies of youth behind him, can be satisfied with a single model for all the figures that are created out of his dreams—and one who knows how to live may have all the adventures he could ever desire within the peaceful precincts of his own home. He can experience them just as fully as anybody else, but without waste of time, without unpleasantness, without danger. And if he only possess a little imagination, his wife may bear him nothing but illegitimate children without being at all aware of it.

AMADEUS

It's an open question whether you have the right to force such a part on anybody whom you respect.

ALBERT

It is not wise to let people know what they mean to you. I have put this thought into an aphorism:

If you grasp me, you rasp me;

If I know you, I own you.

MARIE (entering from the garden with little Peter)

Peter wants me absolutely to come in. I wanted to wait for Cecilia in the garden.

AMADEUS

How are you, Marie?

MARIE

I'm not disturbing you, I hope?

GOVERNESS (comes from the garden with the intention of taking the boy away) Peter!

PETER

No, I want to stay with the grown-ups.

AMADEUS

Yes, let him be with us for a while.

GOVERNESS (returns to the veranda, where she remains visible)

MARIE

Well, have you been working a lot?

AMADEUS

Oh, we have just been talking.

ALBERT

Do you know why she asks? Because she is in love with Mr. von Rabagas.

AMADEUS

With whom?

ALBERT

Don't you remember him? He's that interesting young chap who appears in the first act as one of the King's attendants. She used, at least, to fall in love only with the heroes of my plays, but nowadays she can't even resist the subordinate characters.

AMADEUS

That should make you proud.

ALBERT

Proud, you say? But at times you can't help regretting that you must put all the beauties and virtues of the world into the figures you create, so that you have nothing but your wee bit of talent left to get along with personally.

CECILIA (enters from the right)

PETER

There's mamma!

CECILIA

Good afternoon. (She shakes hands with everybody) How are you, Marie? This is awfully nice. If I had only known.... I went for a short walk. It's such a wonderful day.—Well, Peter (kissing him), have you had your meal yet?

PETER

Yes.

GOVERNESS (entering from the veranda)

Good afternoon, Madame. Peter hasn't had his nap yet.

MARIE

Does he still have to sleep in the daytime? Our two children have quit entirely.

ALBERT

Instead they play a most exciting game every afternoon—one invented by themselves. They call it "drums and bugles."

MARIE

You must come and see us soon, Peter, so that you can learn to play that game.

PETER

I've got a music-box, and I'll take it along so we can make more noise.

CECILIA

Now you have to go. But first you must say good-by nicely.

PETER

I'll say "adieu." Good-by is so common.

[Everybody laughs. Peter goes out with the Governess. Marie and Cecilia move slowly toward the fireplace and sit down in front of it.

MARIE

Of course, I have come to ask for something.

CECILIA

Well, go on.

MARIE

There's to be a concert at which they want you to assist.

CECILIA

This season?

MARIE

Yes. But it will be in the country, not in the city ... for a charitable purpose, of course. The committee would be so happy if you would sing two or three songs.

CECILIA

I think I can.

MARIE

And I shall feel very grateful, too.

CECILIA

Don't you find undertakings of that kind a lot of trouble?

MARIE

Well, you must have something to do. If I had any gifts like the rest of you, I am sure I should never bother with "people's kitchens" or "charitable teas"—and then, I suppose, I should feel more indifferent about people, too.

CECILIA (with a smile)

About people, too?

MARIE

Oh, I didn't mean it that way.

ALBERT

You see, Marie, there is something like the charm of meadows and fields in your sweet prattle, and you should never desert it for the thickets of psychological speculations.—Come on, child. These people want their dinner.

CECILIA

No, we won't eat for an hour yet.

AMADEUS

We generally work a little before we eat. To-day we might run through the songs for that concert, for instance.

CECILIA

That would suit me perfectly.

MARIE

Oh, I feel so thankful to you, Cecilia!

CECILIA

And when shall we see each other again?

ALBERT

Oh, that reminds me! We have just been talking about the Summer. Amadeus and I mean to go on a walking tour. How would it be if you two were to go somewhere with the children—some place in the Tirol, say—and wait for us there?

MARIE

Oh, that would be fine!

CECILIA

Did you hear that, Amadeus?

AMADEUS (who has been standing a little way off)

Certainly. It would be very nice.... You can wait for us in the Tirol.

CECILIA

Could you come and see me to-morrow afternoon, Marie? Then we might settle the matter.

MARIE

Yes, indeed. I am always glad when you can spare me a little of your time.—Until to-morrow, then!

ALBERT

Good-by. (He and Marie go out)

AMADEUS (is walking to and fro)

CECILIA (who is sitting on the couch, follows him with her eyes)

AMADEUS (after a turn to the window and back, speaking in a peculiarly dry tone) Well, how did it go? Have you got the finale into shape at last?

CECILIA

Oh, in a manner.

AMADEUS

The day before yesterday it had not yet been brought up to the proper level. I find, for one thing, that they don't let you assert yourself sufficiently. Your voice should be floating above the rest, instead of being submerged in the crowd.

CECILIA

Won't you come to the rehearsal to-morrow—just once more—if you can spare the time?

AMADEUS

Would it please you...?

CECILIA

I always feel more certain of myself when you are within reach. You know that, don't you?

AMADEUS

Yes—I'll come. I'll call off my appointments with Neumann and the Countess.

CECILIA

If it isn't too great a sacrifice....

AMADEUS (with assumed brusqueness)

Oh, I can make her come in the afternoon.

CECILIA

But then there will be no time left for your own work. No, better let it be.

AMADEUS

What had we better let be?

CECILIA

Don't come to the rehearsal to-morrow.

AMADEUS

Just as you say, Cecilia. I won't intrude, of course. But a moment ago you said that you felt more certain of yourself when I was within reach. And as far as my work is concerned, I don't think—Albert and I were just talking of it—nothing will come of it until the season is over.

CECILIA

That's what I suspected.

AMADEUS

But during the summer I'll complete my Fourth. I must have something new to conduct this year. And it's only a question of the final passages, for that matter. All the rest is as good as finished—in my mind at least.

CECILIA

It's a long time since you let me hear anything of it.

AMADEUS

It hasn't quite reached the point where it can be played. But, of course, you know the principal themes ... the Allegro ... and then the Intermezzo.... (He goes to the piano and strikes a few notes)

CECILIA

So you are going next November?

AMADEUS

Yes, for three months.

CECILIA

And during October I shall be in Berlin.

AMADEUS

Oh ... is there any news in that matter?

CECILIA

Yes, I have practically closed. Reichenbach came to see me at the opera-house. I'm to appear in three parts. As Carmen under all circumstances. The other two are left to my own choice.

AMADEUS

And what do you...?

CECILIA

Tatyana,3 I suppose. I have heard that they have such a splendid Onyegin.

AMADEUS

Yes, Wedius. I know him. He was in Dresden when I was there.—Carmen, then, and Tatyana, and...?

CECILIA

I am still considering.... Perhaps we might talk it over?

AMADEUS

Of course. (Pause)

CECILIA

It's going to be a busy Winter.

AMADEUS

Rather. We won't see much of each other.

CECILIA

We'll have to correspond.

AMADEUS

As we have done before.

CECILIA

We're used to it.

AMADEUS

Yes. (Pause) Tell me by the way: do you actually want to assist at that charity concert?

CECILIA

Why not? I couldn't say no to Marie. Have you any objection?

AMADEUS

No—why should I? But we might use the half hour that's left to go over something. (He goes to the music-stand) What do you want to sing?

CECILIA

Oh, something of yours, for one thing ...

AMADEUS

Oh, no, no.

CECILIA

Why not?

AMADEUS

There's nothing within yourself that prompts you to sing it anyhow.

CECILIA

Just as you say, Amadeus.—I don't want to intrude either.

AMADEUS (bending forward and searching among the music) How would

Schumann be—"The Snow-drop?" Or ... "Old Melodies" ... and "Love Betrayed"....

CECILIA

Yes. And perhaps von Wolf's "Concealment," and something by Brahms. "No more to meet you, was my firm decision...."

AMADEUS

Yes, I was just holding it in my hand. (As if casually, and very dryly) So you went for a walk with Sigismund after all?

CECILIA

Yes. He sent his regards to you.

AMADEUS (smiling)

Did he? (As he brings the music sheets to the piano) Why doesn't he come here instead?

CECILIA

One of the things I like about him is that he won't.

AMADEUS

Is that so?—Oh, well!—I'll send him my regards, too. But it's really too bad that he won't come here any more. It was very nice to hear him play his waltzes—those evenings were really very pleasant.... I just happened to mention them to the Countess this afternoon.

CECELIA

Oh, you did?—And I have just seen her picture.

AMADEUS

Her picture?

CECILIA

I went with Sigismund to the Art Gallery.

AMADEUS

Oh.—They tell me it's a great success.

CECILIA

It would be a wonder if it were not. The artist spent six months on it, they say....

AMADEUS

Is that too much for a good picture?

CECELIA

No, but for the Countess.—She will probably sing Philine pretty well, by the way.

AMADEUS

You think so? I fear you are mistaken.... (Pause) Well, Cecilia, what were you talking of to-day—you and Sigismund?

CECILIA

What were we talking of...? (Pause) It's so hard to recall the words.... (As she goes slowly to the fireplace) And they have such a different sound when recalled in that way.

AMADEUS

True indeed. (Coming nearer to her) And I don't suppose it's the words that matter.... Well, Cecilia, can it be possible that you have nothing more to tell me?

CECILIA

Nothing more...? (Hesitatingly) Don't you think, Amadeus, that many things actually change character when you try to put them into words?

AMADEUS

Not for people like us.

CECILIA

That may have been true once. But ... you know as well as I do ... that things are no

longer as they used to be.

AMADEUS

Not quite, perhaps. I know. But this shouldn't be a reason for either one of us to refuse telling the other one. Scruples of that kind would be unworthy of ourselves. This is we, Cecilia—you and me! So you may tell me fearlessly what you have to tell.

CECILIA (rising)

Don't try to encourage me, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

Well...?

CECILIA (remains silent)

AMADEUS

Do you love him?

CECILIA

Do I love him...?

AMADEUS (urgently)

Cecilia...!

CECILIA

Am I to tell you more than I think is true? Wouldn't that be a lie, too—as good or as bad as any other one?... No, I don't think I love him. It is nothing like it was when I became acquainted with you, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

That time is long past.—And you have probably forgotten what it was like. On the whole, it must be the same thing, I suppose. Only you have grown a little older since then, and you have been living with me for seven years.... No matter how far apart

we may have been, you have been living with me—and we have a child....

CECILIA

Well, perhaps that's what makes the difference—but there is a difference.

AMADEUS

What really matters is nothing new, however. You feel attracted to him, don't you?

CECILIA (speaking with genuine feeling and almost tenderly)

But perhaps there is still something that holds back—that could hold me back, if it only wanted.

AMADEUS (after a pause, brusquely)

But it doesn't want to ... it doesn't dare to want it. What sense could there be in it? Perhaps I might prove the stronger to-day—and the next time, perhaps—but sooner or later the day must come nevertheless, when I should suffer defeat.

CECILIA

Why?... It ought not to be necessary!

AMADEUS

And then, even if I remained victorious every time—could that be called happiness for which I must fight repeatedly and tremble all the time? Could that be called happiness in our case, who have known what is so much better?... No, Cecilia, our love should not be permitted to end in mutual distrust. I don't hold you, Cecilia, if you are attracted elsewhere—and you have known all the time that I would never hold you.

CECILIA

Maybe you are right, Amadeus. But is it pride alone that makes you let me slip away so easily?

AMADEUS

Is it love alone that brings you back when almost gone? (Pause; he goes to the window)

CECILIA

Why should we spoil these hours with bitterness, Amadeus? After all, we have nothing to reproach each other for. We have promised to be honest with each other, and my word has been kept so far.

AMADEUS

And so has mine. If you want it, I can tell you exactly what I and the Countess talked of to-day, as I have always done. And for me, Cecilia, it will even be possible to recall the very words.

CECILIA (looking long at him)

I know enough. (Pause)

AMADEUS (walking to and fro until he stops some distance away from her) And what next?

CECILIA

What next...? Perhaps it's just as well that our vacations are soon to begin. Then we may consider in peace, each one by himself, what is to come next.

AMADEUS

It seems almost as if both of us should have expected this very thing. We have made no common plans for the summer, although we have always done so before.

CECILIA

The best thing for me is probably to go with the boy to some quiet place in the Tirol ... as you and Albert suggested.

AMADEUS

Yes.

CECILIA

And you...?

AMADEUS

I...? I shall make that walking tour with Albert. I want to be scrambling about in the mountains once more.

CECILIA

And finally descend into some beautiful valley—is that what you mean?

AMADEUS

That—might happen.

CECILIA (dryly)

But first—we should have to bid each other definite good-by, as there is no return from that place.

AMADEUS

Of course, there isn't! No more than from your place.

CECILIA

From mine...?

AMADEUS

Oh, it might happen that you felt inclined to ... change your plans ... and instead of staying with Marie ... prefer the undisturbed ...

CECILIA

I won't change my plans. And you had better not change yours.

AMADEUS

If that be your wish....

CECILIA

It is my wish. (Pause)

AMADEUS

Can it be possible that now, all at once, the moment should have come?

CECILIA

What moment?

AMADEUS

Well—the one we used to foresee in our happiest days even—the one we have expected as something almost inevitable.

CECILIA

Yes, it has come. We know now that everything is over.

AMADEUS

Over...?

CECILIA

That's what we have been talking of all the time, I suppose.

AMADEUS

Yes, you are right. At bottom it is better that we put it into plain words at last. Our moods have been rather too precarious lately.

CECILIA

Everything will be improved now.

AMADEUS

Improved...? Why?... Oh, of course ... perhaps you are right. I feel almost as if things had already begun to improve. It's strange, but ... one ... seems to breathe more freely.

CECILIA

Yes, Amadeus, now we are reaping the reward of always having been honest. Think

how exhausted most people would be in a moment like this—by all sorts of painful evasions, labored truces, and pitifully sentimental reconciliations. Think of the hostile spirit in which they would be facing each other during their moment of belated candor. We two, Amadeus—we shall at least be able to part as friends. (Pause)

AMADEUS

And our boy?

CECILIA

Is he your sole worry?

AMADEUS

No, there are many things. How is it going to be arranged anyhow?

CECILIA

That's what we shall have to discuss carefully during the next few days—before we go away. Until then everything must remain as before. It can perfectly well remain as it has been during the last year. That involves no wrong to anybody. (Pause)

AMADEUS (seats himself at the piano; the ensuing pause is laden with apprehension; then he begins to play the same theme—a Capriccio—which was heard earlier during the scene)

CECILIA (who has been approaching the door to the veranda, turns about to listen)

AMADEUS (stops abruptly)

CECILIA

Why don't you go on?

AMADEUS (laughs quickly, nervously)

CECILIA

Wasn't that the Intermezzo?

AMADEUS (nods)

CECILIA (still at some distance from him)

Have you made up your mind what you are going to call it? Is it to be Capriccio?

AMADEUS

Perhaps Capriccio doloroso. It is peculiar how one often fails to understand one's own ideas to begin with. The hidden sadness of that theme has been revealed to me by you.

CECILIA

Oh, you would have discovered it yourself, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

Maybe. (Pause) And whom will you get for the studying of your parts next year?

CECILIA

Oh, I'll always find somebody. Those numbers for the concert—you'll help me with those just the same, won't you? And I hope you'll be kind enough to give me the accompaniment at the concert too.

AMADEUS

That's a foregone conclusion.—But I should really like to know who is to assist you with your studies after this.

CECILIA

Do you regard that as the most important problem to be solved?

AMADEUS

No, of course not. The less so, as I don't quite see why I shouldn't go on helping you as before.

CECILIA (with a smile)

Oh, you think...? But then we should have to agree on hours and conditions.

AMADEUS

That was not meant as a joke, Cecilia. Seeing that we are parting in a spirit of perfect understanding, why shouldn't such an arrangement be considered tentatively at least?

CECILIA

Those things will probably settle themselves later on.... That we ... that you play my accompaniment at a concert ... or help me to study a part....

AMADEUS

Why later on?... (He rises and stands leaning against the piano) There can be no reasonable ground for changing our musical relationships. I think both of us would suffer equally from doing so. Without overestimating myself, I don't think it likely that you can find a better coach than I am. And as for my compositions, I don't know of anybody who could understand them better—with whom I would rather discuss them than with you.

CECILIA

And yet that's what you will have to come to.

AMADEUS

I can't see it. After all, we have nobody else to consider—at least, I have not.

CECILIA

Nor have I. I shall know how to preserve my freedom.

AMADEUS

Well, then...?!

CECILIA

Nevertheless, Amadeus.... That we must meet and talk is made necessary by our positions, of course.... But even in regard to our work things cannot possibly remain

as hitherto. I'm sure you must realize that.

AMADEUS

I can't see it. And—leaving our artistic relations entirely aside—there is much else to be considered—things of more importance. Our boy, Cecilia. Why should the youngster all at once be made fatherless, so to speak?

CECILIA

That's entirely out of the question. We must come to an understanding, of course.

AMADEUS

An understanding, you say. But why make difficulties that could be avoided by a little good-will? The boy is mine as much as yours. Why shouldn't we continue to bring him up together?

CECILIA

You suggest things that simply can't be done.

AMADEUS

I don't feel like you about that.—On the contrary! The more I consider our situation calmly, the more irrational it seems to me that we should part ways like any ordinary divorced couple ... that we should give up the beautiful home we have in common....

CECILIA

Now you are dreaming again, Amadeus!

AMADEUS

We have been such good chums besides. And so we might remain, I think.

CECILIA

Oh, of course, we shall.

AMADEUS

Well, then! The things that bind us together are so compelling, after all, that any new

experiences brought by our freedom must seem absolutely unessential in comparison. Don't you realize that as I do? And we shouldn't have to consider what people may say. I think we have the right to place ourselves on a somewhat higher level. In the last instance, we must always belong together, even if a single tie should be severed among the hundreds that unite us. Or are we all of a sudden to forget what we have been to each other—as well as what we may and should be to each other hereafter? One thing remains certain: that no one else will ever understand you as I do, and no one me as you do.... And that's what counts in the end! So why shouldn't we....

CECILIA

No, it's impossible! Not because of the people. They concern me as little as they do you. But for our own sake.

AMADEUS

For our own sake...?

CECILIA

You see, there is one thing you forget: that, beginning with to-day, we shall have secrets to keep from each other. Who knows how many—or how heavy they may prove?... But even the least of them must come between us like a veil.

AMADEUS

Secrets...?

CECILIA

Yes, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

No, Cecilia.

CECILIA

What do you mean?

AMADEUS

That's exactly what must not happen.

CECILIA

But—Amadeus!

AMADEUS

There must never be any secrets between us two. Everything depends on that—you are right to that extent. But why should there be any secrets between us? Remember that after to-day we shall no longer be man and wife, but chums—just chums, who can hide nothing from each other—who must not hide anything. Or is that more than you dare?

CECILIA

More than I dare...? Of course not.

AMADEUS

All right. We'll discuss everything frankly, just as we have been doing—nay, we shall have more things than ever to discuss. Truth becomes now the natural basis of our continued relationship—truth without any reservation whatsoever. And that should prove highly profitable, not only to our mutual relationship, but to each one of us individually. Because ... you don't think, do you, that either one of us could find a better chum than the other one?... Now we shall bring our joys and sorrows to each other. We shall be as good friends as ever, if not better still. And our hands shall be joined, even if chasms open between us. And thus we shall keep all that we have had in common hitherto: our work, our child, our home—all that we must continue to have in common if it is to retain its full value to both of us. And we shall gain many new things for which both of us have longed—things in which I could take no pleasure, by the way, if I had to lose you.

CECILIA (drops him a curtsey)

AMADEUS

That's how you feel, too, Cecilia. I am sure of it. We simply cannot live without each other. I certainly cannot live without you.—And how about you?

CECILIA

It's quite likely I should find it a little difficult.

AMADEUS

Then we agree, Cecilia!

CECILIA

You think so...?!

AMADEUS

Cecilia! (He suddenly draws her closer to himself)

CECILIA (with new hope lighting her glance)

What are you doing?

AMADEUS (putting his arms about her)

I now bid good-by to my beloved.

CECILIA

Forever.

AMADEUS

Forever. (Pressing her hand) And now I am welcoming my friend.

CECILIA

For all time to come—nothing but your friend.

AMADEUS

For all time...? Of course!

CECILIA (draws a deep breath)

AMADEUS

Yes, Cecilia, don't you feel much easier all at once?

CECILIA

The whole thing seems very strange to me—like a dream almost.

AMADEUS

There is nothing strange about it. Nothing could possibly be simpler or more sensible. Life goes right on ... and all is well.... Come on, Cecilia—let us run through those songs.

CECILIA

What songs...?

AMADEUS

Don't you care?

CECILIA

Oh, why not?—With pleasure....

AMADEUS (seating himself at the piano)

Really, I can't tell you how happy this makes me! There has practically been no change whatever. The uneasiness alone is gone ... that uneasiness of the last few weeks.... I have not had a very happy time lately. The sky has seemed so black above our house—and not only above ours. Now the clouds are vanishing. The whole world has actually grown light again. And I am going to write a symphony—oh, a symphony...!

CECILIA

Everything in due time.... Just now let us have one of those songs at least.... Oh, that one...?

AMADEUS

Don't you want it?

CECILIA

Oh, as it's there already....

AMADEUS

Now, then—I start. (He strikes the first chord) Please don't put a lot of sentimentality into the opening words. They should be reserved and ponderous.

CECILIA (singing)

"No more to meet you was my firm...."

AMADEUS

Very fine.

CECILIA

O Amadeus!

AMADEUS

What is it?

CECILIA

I am afraid you will become too lenient now.

AMADEUS

Lenient...? You know perfectly well that, as artist considered, you have no rival in my eyes, and will never have one.

CECILIA

Really, Amadeus, you shouldn't be flirting with all your pupils.

AMADEUS

I have the greatest respect for you.—Now let's go in!

CECILIA

"No more to meet...."

AMADEUS

What's the matter?

CECILIA

Nothing. I haven't tried to sing anything like this for a long time. Go right on!

AMADEUS (begins playing again)

CECILIA

"No more to meet you was my firm and sworn decision, and yet when evening comes, I...."

CURTAIN

THE SECOND ACT

The same room as in the previous act. It is an evening in October. The stage is dark. Marie and the chambermaid enter together. The maid turns on the light.

MARIE

Thank you.—But if your mistress is tired, please tell her she mustn't let me disturb her.

CHAMBERMAID

She hasn't arrived yet. She's not expected until this evening.

AMADEUS (enters from the right, with hat and overcoat on) Who is it?... Oh, is it you, Marie! Glad to see you. Have you been here long?

MARIE

No, I just got here. I meant to call on Cecilia, but I hear....

AMADEUS

Then you can keep me company waiting for her. (Handing overcoat and hat to the maid) Please take these.

CHAMBERMAID (goes out)

AMADEUS

I have also just got home. I had to do a lot of errands. I start the day after to-morrow.

MARIE

So soon!—That'll be a short reunion.

AMADEUS

Yes.—Won't you sit down, please? (Looking at his watch) Cecilia should be here in an hour.

MARIE

She has had a tremendous success again.

AMADEUS

I should say so! Look here—the telegram I got this morning. (He takes it from the writing desk and hands it to Marie) It refers to her final appearance last night.

MARIE

Oh.... Twenty-seven curtain calls...!

AMADEUS

What?... Naw! That flourish belongs to the preceding word. Seven only! Otherwise she wouldn't be coming to-day.

MARIE (reading again)

"Have new offer on brilliant terms."

AMADEUS

On brilliant terms!

MARIE

Then I suppose she'll do it at last?

AMADEUS

Do what?

MARIE

Settle down in Berlin for good.

AMADEUS

Oh, it isn't certain. "Have offer," she says, and not "have accepted offer." No, we'll have to talk it over first.

MARIE

Really?

AMADEUS

Of course. We consult each other about everything, my dear Marie—just as we used to do. And in a much more impersonal spirit than before. As far as I am concerned, I shall be quite free next year, and have no more reason to live in Vienna than in Berlin or in America.

MARIE

But it will be dreadful for me if Cecilia goes away.

AMADEUS

Well, these successes abroad may possibly force the people here to understand what they have in Cecilia, and to act accordingly.

MARIE

I hope so.—Besides, I think really that Cecilia has developed a great deal lately. To me her voice seems fuller and richer—with more soul to it, I might say.

AMADEUS

Yes, don't you think so? That's my feeling, too.

MARIE

But how she does work! It had never occurred to me that a finished artist might be so industrious.

AMADEUS

Might, you say? Must, you should say.

MARIE

Last summer, when I came out mornings in the garden to play with my children, she would be practicing already—just like a young student. With absolute regularity, from nine until a quarter of ten. Then again before lunch, from twelve to half past. And finally another half hour in the evening.... If the weather was good or bad; if she was in good spirits or....

AMADEUS

Or...?

MARIE

She was always in good spirits for that matter. I don't think anything in the world could have kept her from practicing those runs and trills.

AMADEUS

Yes, that's her way. Nothing in the world could keep her from.... But then, what could there be to keep her from it last Summer? In that rustic retreat of yours, where you didn't see anybody ... or hardly anybody....

MARIE

Nobody at all.

AMADEUS

Well, you received a call now and then—or Cecilia did, at least.

MARIE

Oh, I see. You mean—Prince Sigismund. He could hardly be said to call.

AMADEUS (smilingly, with an appearance of unconcern)

Why not?

MARIE

He merely whisked by on his wheel.

AMADEUS (as before)

Oh, he must at least have stopped to lean against a tree for a few moments. He must even have taken time enough—and I am mighty glad he did—to photograph the little house in which you were living. (He takes from the desk a small framed photograph and hands it to Marie, who is seated on the couch)

MARIE (surprised)

And you have that standing on your writing desk?

AMADEUS (slightly puzzled)

Why shouldn't I?

MARIE (studying the photograph)

Just as it was—Cecilia and I sitting on the bench there—yes. And there's the hazel by the garden fence.... How it does bring back the memory of that beautiful, warm Summer day...

AMADEUS (bending over the desk to look at the picture)

I can make out you and Cecilia, but those three boys puzzle me hopelessly.

MARIE

In what way...? That's little Peter, who is doing like this ... (She blinks)

AMADEUS

Oh, is that it?

MARIE

And that's Max—and he with the hoop is Mauritz.

AMADEUS

So that's a hoop?... I took it for one of those cabins used by the watchmen along the railroad. The background comes out much better. The landscape actually looks as if steeped in Summer and stillness.... (Brief pause)

MARIE

It was really nice. The deep shadows of the woods right back of the house, and that view of the mountain peaks—oh, marvelous! And then the seclusion.... It's too bad that you never had a look at that darling place. We thought ... Cecilia did expect you after all....

AMADEUS (has risen and is walking to and fro)

I don't believe it.... And it didn't prove feasible, for that matter. The pull of the South was still on me.

MARIE (smiling)

You call that the South?

AMADEUS (smiling also)

Oh, Marie!

MARIE (a little embarrassed)

I hope you're not offended?

AMADEUS

Why should I be? I didn't make a secret of my whereabouts to anybody.

MARIE (confidentially)

Albert told me about the villa, and the park, and the marble steps....

AMADEUS

So he gave you all those details? And yet he wasn't there more than an hour.

MARIE

I think he intends to use the park for his last act.

AMADEUS

Is that so? If he would only bring it to me... I mean the last act. I want to take it with me on my tour.

MARIE

Do you think you'll find time to work?

AMADEUS

Why not? I am always working. And I have never in my life been more eager about it. I, too, am having a brilliant period. For years I have not been doing better. And I am no less industrious than Cecilia. With the difference that regular hours are not in my line—nine to nine-forty-five, twelve to twelve-thirty, and so on. But you ask Albert! When he threw himself on the bed exhausted, in that inn at the Fedaja Pass, I sat down and finished the instrumentation for the Capriccio in my Fourth.

CHAMBERMAID (enters with a couple of letters and goes out again)

AMADEUS

You'll pardon me, my dear Marie?

MARIE

Please don't mind me. (She rises)

AMADEUS

A letter from Cecilia, written yesterday, before the performance. I have had letters like this every day.

MARIE

Go right on and read it, please.

AMADEUS (having opened the letter)

Oh, there's plenty of time. In another hour Cecilia will be telling me all that's in it....

(He opens the other letter, runs through it, and flings it away) How stupid people are ... how stupid! ... Ugh! And mean! (He glances through Cecilia's letter once more) Cecilia writes me about a reception at the house of the Director.... Sigismund was there, too. Yes, you know, of course, that Sigismund has been in Berlin?

MARIE (embarrassed)

I ... I thought ... Or rather, I knew ...

AMADEUS (with an air of superiority)

Well, well—there is no cause for embarrassment in that. Don't you consider the Prince an uncommonly sympathetic person?

MARIE

Yes, he's very pleasant. But I can assure you, Amadeus, that he came only once to our place in the Pustertal,4 and he didn't stay more than two hours.

AMADEUS (laughing)

And what if he had stayed a week...? Really, Marie, you're very funny!

MARIE (shyly)

May I tell you something?

AMADEUS

Anything you want, Marie.

MARIE

I'm convinced that you two will find each other again in spite of all.

AMADEUS

Find each other...? Who should? Cecilia and I? (He rises) Find each other? (He walks to and fro, but stops finally near Marie) A sensible woman like you, Marie—you ought to understand that Cecilia and I have never lost each other in any way. I think it's very singular.... (He strolls back and forth again) Oh, you must

understand that the relationship between her and me is so beautiful—that now only it has become such that we couldn't imagine anything more satisfactory. We don't have to find each other again! Look here now—here are her letters. She has been writing me from eight to twelve pages every day—frank, exhaustive letters, as you can only write them to a friend—or rather, only to your very best friend. It is simply impossible to imagine a finer relationship.

ALBERT (entering from the right)

Good evening.

AMADEUS

You're rather late in getting here.

ALBERT

Good evening, Marie. (He pats her patronizingly on the cheek)

AMADEUS

There will hardly be time for work now. Cecilia will be here very soon.

ALBERT

Oh, we can always put in half an hour. I have brought along some notes for the third act.

MARIE

I think I shall go home, as the boys will be expecting me soon.

ALBERT

All right, child, you go on home.

AMADEUS

Why don't you stay instead? I am sure Cecilia will be glad to see you. And then Albert can take you home. You might get Peter to entertain you in the meantime.... Or would you prefer to stay here and listen?

ALBERT

No, child, you had better go in to Peter. Especially as Mr. von Rabagas doesn't appear in the third act—so you won't be losing much.

MARIE

I'll leave you alone. Bye-bye! (She goes out)

ALBERT

Now let's fall to! (He brings out some notes from one of his pockets and begins to read) "The stage shows an open stretch of rolling ground that slopes gradually toward the footlights. In the background stands a villa, with marble steps leading up to it. Still farther back, the sea can be felt rather than seen." (Bowing to Amadeus) "A tall plane tree in full leaf stands in the center of the stage."

AMADEUS (laughing)

So you have got it there?

ALBERT

It's meant as a compliment to you.

AMADEUS

Many thanks.

ALBERT (after a pause)

Tell me, Amadeus, is it actually true that the Count has become reconciled with the Countess after his duel with the painter?

AMADEUS

I don't know. For a good long while I haven't seen the Countess except at the opera. (He rises and begins walking to and fro again)

ALBERT (shaking his head)

There's something uncanny about that affair.

AMADEUS

Why? I think it's quite commonplace. A husband who has discovered his wife's (sarcastically) "disloyalty"....

ALBERT

That wasn't the point. But that he discovers it only six months too late, when his wife is already deceiving him with another man.—There would have been nothing peculiar about the Count having a fight with you. But the case is much more complicated. Here we have a young man all but killed because of an affair that is long past. And in the meantime you are left perfectly unmolested—or have been so far, at least.

AMADEUS (walking as before)

ALBERT

Do you know, what I almost regret—looking at it from a higher viewpoint? That the painter is not a man of genius ... and that the Count hasn't really killed him. That would have put something tremendously tragi-comical into the situation. And that's what would have happened, if ... he up there had a little more wit....

AMADEUS

How? What do you mean by that?

ALBERT

I mean, if I had been writing the play....

AMADEUS (makes a movement as if hearing some noise outside)

ALBERT

What is it?

AMADEUS

I thought I heard a carriage, but it was nothing. (He looks at his watch) And it

wouldn't be possible yet.... You read on, please. (Once more he begins walking back and forth)

ALBERT

You're very preoccupied. I'll rather come back to-morrow morning.

AMADEUS

No, go on. I am not at all....

ALBERT (rising)

Let me tell you something, Amadeus. If it would please you—and it would be all one to me, you know—I could go with you.

AMADEUS

Where?... What do you mean?

ALBERT

On your tour. For a week, at least, or a fortnight, I should be very glad to stay by you ... (affectionately) until you have got over the worst.

AMADEUS

But...! Good gracious, do you think it's because of the Countess...? Why, that story is over long ago.

ALBERT

Which I know. And I know, too, that you are now trying other means of making yourself insensible. But I see perfectly well that, under the circumstances, you can't succeed all at once.

AMADEUS

What circumstances are you talking of anyhow?

ALBERT

My dear fellow, I should never have dreamt of forcing myself into your confidence,

but as the matter has already got into the papers....

AMADEUS

What has got into the papers?

ALBERT

Haven't you read that thing in the New Journal to-night?

AMADEUS

What thing?

ALBERT

That Cecilia and Prince Sigismund.... But, of course, you are familiar with the main facts?

AMADEUS

I'm familiar with nothing. What is in the New Journal?

ALBERT

Just a brief notice—without any names, but not to be mistaken.... It reads something like this: "One of our foremost artists, who has just been celebrating triumphs in the metropolis of an adjoining state ... until now the wife of a gifted musician" ... or perhaps it was "highly gifted" ... and so on ... and so on ... "and a well-known Austrian gentleman, belonging to our oldest nobility, intend, we are told ..." and so on....

AMADEUS

Cecilia and the Prince...?!

ALBERT

Yes ... and then a hint that, in such a case, it would not prove very difficult to obtain a dispensation from the Pope....

AMADEUS

Has everybody gone crazy?... I can assure you that not a word of it is true!... You won't believe me?... I hope you don't think I would deny it, if.... Or do you actually mean that Cecilia might have ... from me.... Oh, dear, and you are supposed to be a friend of ours, a student of the human soul, and a poet!

ALBERT

I beg your pardon, but after what has happened it would not seem improbable....

AMADEUS

Not improbable...? It is simply impossible! Cecilia has never thought of it!

ALBERT

However, it ought not to surprise you that such a rumor has been started.

AMADEUS

Nothing surprises me. But I feel as if the relationship between Cecilia and myself were being profaned by tittle-tattle of that kind.

ALBERT

Pioneers like yourself must scorn the judgment of the world. Else they are in danger of being proved mere braggarts.

AMADEUS

Oh, I am no pioneer. The whole thing is a private arrangement between me and Cecilia, which gives us both the greatest possible comfort. Be kind enough, at least, to tell the people who ask you, that we are not going to be divorced—but that, on the other hand, we are not deceiving each other, as it is asserted in these scrawls with which I have been bombarded for some time. (He indicates the letter which arrived at the same time as Cecilia's)

ALBERT (picks up the letter, glances through it, and puts it away again) An anonymous letter...? Well, that's part of it....

AMADEUS

Explain to them, please, that there can be no talk of deceit where no lies have been told. Tell them that Cecilia's and my way of keeping faith with each other is probably a much better one than that practiced in so many other marriages, where both go their own ways all day long and have nothing in common but the night. You are a poet, are you not—and a student of the human soul? Well, why don't you make all this clear to the people who refuse to understand?

ALBERT

To convey all that would prove a rather complicated process. But if it means so much to you, I could make a play out of it. Then they would have no trouble in comprehending this new kind of marriage—at least between the hours of eight-thirty and ten.

AMADEUS

Are you so sure of that?

ALBERT

Absolutely. In a play I can make the case much clearer than it is presented by reality—without any of those superfluous, incidental side issues, which are so confusing in life. The main advantage is, however, that no spectators attend the entr'acts, so that I can do just what I please with you during those periods. And besides, I shall make you offer an analogy illuminating the whole case.

AMADEUS

An analogy, you say...?

ALBERT

Yes, analogies always have a very soothing effect. You will remark to a friend—or whoever may prove handy—something like this: "What do you want me to do anyhow? Suppose that Cecilia and I were living in a nice house, where we felt perfectly comfortable, and which had a splendid view that pleased us very much,

and a wonderful garden where we liked to take walks together. And suppose that one of us should feel a desire sometime to pick strawberries in the woods beyond the fence. Should that be a reason for the other one to raise a cry all at once about faithlessness, or disgrace, or betrayal? Should that force us to sell the house and garden, or make us imagine that we could never more look out of the window together, or walk under our splendid trees? Merely because our strawberries happened to be growing on the other side of the fence..."

AMADEUS

And you would make me say that?

ALBERT

Do you fear it's too brilliant for you?—Oh, that wouldn't occur to anybody. Trust me to fix it. In such a play I can do nothing whatever with your musical talent. You see, I can't let you conduct your symphony for the benefit of the public. And so I get both myself and you out of it by putting into your character a little more sense and energy and consistency....

AMADEUS

Than God has given me originally.

ALBERT

Well, it's not very hard to compete with Him!

AMADEUS

I shall certainly be curious about one thing: how you mean to end that play.

ALBERT (after a brief pause)

Not very happily, my dear fellow.

AMADEUS (a little staggered)

Why?

ALBERT

It is characteristic of all transitional periods, that a conflict which might not exist to a later generation, must end tragically the moment a fairly decent person becomes involved in it.

AMADEUS

But there is no conflict.

ALBERT

I shall not shirk the duty of inventing one.

AMADEUS

Suppose you wait a little while yet...? Perhaps life itself might....

ALBERT

My dear chap, I am not at all interested in what may be done with us by this ridiculous reality which has to get along without stage manager or prompter—this reality which frequently never gets to the fifth act, merely because the hero happens to be struck on the head by a brick in the second. I make the curtain rise when the plot takes a diverting turn, and I drop it the moment I have proved myself in the right.

AMADEUS

Please, my dear fellow, don't forget when writing your play, to introduce a figure on which reality in this case has lavished much more care than on the hero—I mean, the fool.

ALBERT

You can't insult me in that way. I have always regarded myself as closely akin to him.

[Marie enters with little Peter and the Governess.

PETER

Mamma is coming!

MARIE

The carriage has just stopped outside.

GOVERNESS

It was impossible to make the boy stay in bed.

ALBERT

And look at the fine flowers he has got!

PETER

That's for mamma!

AMADEUS (takes a flower out of the bunch)

I hope you permit, sonny ...

CECILIA (enters followed by the Chambermaid)

Good evening!—Oh, are you here, too? That's awfully nice!

PETER

Mamma!—Flowers!

CECILIA (picks him up and kisses him)

My boy! My boy! (Then she shakes hands with the rest)

AMADEUS (handing her the single flower)

Peter let me have one, too.

CECILIA

Thanks. (She shakes hands with him; then to the chambermaid) Get my things out of the carriage, please. The coachman will help you. He has been paid already.

CHAMBERMAID (goes out)

CECILIA (taking off her hat)

Well, Marie?... (To the other two) Can it be possible that you have been working?

ALBERT

We have tried.

CECILIA (to the governess)

Has he behaved like a little man?

PETER

Indeed I have! Have you brought anything for me?

CECILIA

Of course. But you won't get it until to-morrow morning.

PETER

Why not?

CECILIA

Because I am too tired to unpack. To-morrow, when you wake up, you'll find it on your little table.

PETER

What is it?

CECILIA

You'll see by and by....

PETER

Is my little table big enough for it?

CECILIA

We'll hope so.

AMADEUS (who is leaning against the piano, keeps looking at her all the time)

CECILIA (pretends not to notice him)

ALBERT

You're looking splendid.

CECILIA

I'm a little bit worn out.

AMADEUS

You must be hungry.

CECILIA

Not at all. We had something to eat in the dining car. Almost everybody did. But I do want a cup of tea. (To the governess) Will you see to it, please?

AMADEUS

Let me have a cup, too, and please see that I get a few slices of cold meat.

GOVERNESS

I have given orders for it already. (She goes out)

CECILIA

Have you really been waiting for me with the supper?

AMADEUS

No ... I haven't been waiting. I ... simply never thought of it.

CECILIA (to Albert and Marie)

Why don't you sit down?

ALBERT

No, we are going, my dear Cecilia. Let me congratulate you with all my heart—that will be enough for to-day.

MARIE

You have celebrated regular triumphs, they say?

CECILIA

Well, it wasn't bad. (To Amadeus) Did you get my telegram?

AMADEUS

Yes, it pleased me tremendously.

CECILIA

Think of it, children! After the performance I was commanded to appear in the box of His Majesty!

ALBERT

Commanded...? Invited, I hope you mean! Neither emperor nor king has the right to command you.

CECILIA

You old anarchist! But what does it matter? One goes to the box nevertheless. And you would have done that, too.

ALBERT

Why not? One must, if possible, study every form of existence at close quarters.

AMADEUS

And what did the Emperor have to say?

CECILIA

He was very complimentary. Had never seen a better Carmen.

ALBERT

The very next thing he'll order an opera for you from some Spaniard.5

GOVERNESS (enters)

The tea will be here in a moment.

AMADEUS

Now you must get back to bed, Peter. It's late.

GOVERNESS (wants to take the boy away)

PETER

No, mamma must take me to bed as when I was a little baby.

CECILIA

Come on then!—Mercy me, how heavy you have grown. (Goes out with Peter and the governess)

MARIE

My, but she is pretty!

AMADEUS

Haven't you discovered that before?

ALBERT

Well, good-by then!

AMADEUS

Until to-morrow. I shall be expecting you early—between nine and ten.

MARIE (to Amadeus as she is going out)

Don't you regret having to leave her again at once?

AMADEUS

Duty, my dear Marie....

CECILIA (returning)

Oh, are you really going?—Good-by then—for a little while!

[Albert and Marie go out.

CECILIA (going to the fireplace)

Home again! (She sits down)

AMADEUS (near the door and speaking rather shyly)

It's a question whether it can please you as much as it does me.

CECILIA (holds out her hand to him)

AMADEUS (takes her hand and kisses it; then he seats himself) Tell me all about it.

CECILIA

What am I to tell? I haven't left anything untold—or hardly anything.

AMADEUS

Well....

CECILIA

Getting home every night—and it was quite late at times, as you know—I sat down and wrote to you. I wish you had been equally explicit.

AMADEUS

But I have written you every day, too.

CECILIA

Nevertheless, my dear, it seems to me you must have lots to add. (With a laugh) To many things you have referred in a strikingly casual fashion.

AMADEUS

I might say the same to you.

CECILIA

No, you can't. My letters have practically been diaries. And that's more than could be said of yours.—Well, Amadeus...? Without frankness the whole situation becomes meaningless, I should say.

AMADEUS

What is there to be cleared up?

CECILIA

Is it really all over with Philine?

AMADEUS

That was all over—(rising) before you left. And you know it. I really don't think it's necessary to discuss bygone matters.

CECILIA

Will she be able to stay in the company, by the way—after this scandal in connection with your—pardon me!—predecessor?

AMADEUS

Everything has been arranged, I hear. And she has even made up with her husband again.

CECILIA

Is that so?—That's rather unpleasant, don't you think? At bottom, it matters very little then to have the story all over. In the case of a man who has the disconcerting habit of not finding out certain things until months afterward....

AMADEUS

It is better not to think of such things.

CECILIA

Has she any letters of yours?

AMADEUS (having thought for a moment)

Only the one in which I bade her farewell.

CECILIA

That might be enough. Why haven't you demanded it back?

AMADEUS

How could I?

CECILIA

How frivolous you are! Yes, frivolous is just the word. (Putting her hand on his shoulder) Now it's possible to talk of a thing like this, Amadeus. Formerly you might have misunderstood such a remark—taking it for jealousy, or something like that.... But, really, I do hope you don't get mixed up in any more affairs of that kind. I don't like to be scared to death all the time on behalf of my best friend. There is nothing in the world I begrudge you—of that you may be sure. But getting killed for the sake of somebody else—that's carrying the joke a little too far!

AMADEUS

I promise you, that you'll no longer have to be scared to death on my behalf.

CECILIA

I hope so. Otherwise I must leave you to take care of yourself.—And seriously speaking, Amadeus, I hope you don't forget that your life has been preserved for more sensible and more important things—that you have a lot more to do in this world.

AMADEUS

Yes, that's what I feel. I don't think I have ever felt it so strongly in all my life. (Radiantly) My symphony ...

CECILIA (eagerly)

... is done?

AMADEUS

It is, Cecilia. And ... I didn't mean to tell you about it to-day, but it leaves me no peace....

CECILIA

Well, what is it?

AMADEUS

The chorus in the final passage—you know the principal theme of it already—it is led and dominated by a soprano solo. And that solo has been written for you.

CECILIA

My revered Master! How proud your trust in me makes me!

AMADEUS

Don't make fun of it, Cecilia, I beg you. There is nobody in the world who can sing that solo like you.... That solo is yours—and only yours. While writing it, the ring of your voice was in my mind. Next February, as soon as I get back, I shall have the symphony put on, and then you must sing that solo.

CECILIA

Next Feb...? With pleasure, my dear Amadeus—provided I am still here.

AMADEUS

Why?

CECILIA

Oh, you haven't heard everything yet. After the performance last night the Director had a talk with me.

AMADEUS (disturbed)

Well?!—There was a hint in the telegram about brilliant conditions.... But, of course, they could only refer to the next season?

CECILIA

If I can break away from here, they want me in Berlin from the beginning of the year.

AMADEUS

But you can't break away!

CECILIA

Oh, if I really want to. The Director does not care to enforce the contract.

AMADEUS

But you don't want to, Cecilia!

CECILIA

That's a matter for careful consideration. I shall be doing a great deal better there.

AMADEUS

Beginning next Fall, I shall—probably be free. You might wait that long, I should think. Then we could make the move together. But....

CECILIA

It doesn't have to be settled to-day, Amadeus. To-morrow we shall have time to discuss the whole matter thoroughly. Really, I am not in a condition to do so to-night.

AMADEUS

You are tired...?

CECILIA

Of course, you must understand that. In fact, I should very much prefer.... (She looks in direction of the door leading to her own room)

CHAMBERMAID (brings in the tea tray and puts it on a small table)

CECILIA

Oh, that's right!—May I pour you a cup, too?

AMADEUS

If you please.

CECILIA (pours the tea; to the chambermaid)

Open one of the windows a little, will you. There's such a lot of cigarette smoke in here.

CHAMBERMAID (opens the window at the right)

AMADEUS

Won't it be too cold for you?

CECILIA

Cold? It has turned very warm again.

AMADEUS

And how did last night's performance go otherwise?

CECILIA

Very well. Wedius in particular proved himself inimitable again.

AMADEUS

You have mentioned him several times in your letters.

CECILIA

You know him since your Dresden period, don't you?

AMADEUS

Yes. He has great gifts.

CECILIA

He thinks a great deal of you, too.

AMADEUS

I'm pleased to hear it.

CHAMBERMAID (goes out)

AMADEUS (helping himself to the cold meat)

Can I help you to some?

CECILIA

No, thanks. I have had all I want.

AMADEUS

Yes, you have had your supper already—all of you, or "everybody," as you put it a while ago.

CECILIA (ingenuously)

I had my supper with Sigismund.

AMADEUS

Was he in Berlin all the time?

CECILIA

He got there two days after me, as I told you in my letters.

AMADEUS

Of course—you have told me everything. Once he accompanied you to the National Gallery.

CECILIA

He also took me to see the Pergamene marbles.6

AMADEUS (facetiously)

You're doing a lot for his general education, I must say.—But I should like to know by what fraud Sigismund got himself into that reception of the Director's.

CECILIA

By what fraud?

AMADEUS

Well, you wrote me that he created a regular sensation with those waltzes of his.

CECILIA

So he did. But he didn't have to use fraud to get in. Being a nephew of the Baroness, there was no reason why he should resort to such methods.

AMADEUS

Oh, yes, I didn't remember that.

CECILIA

And by the way, the Director asked very eagerly about you.

AMADEUS

He thinks a great deal of me....

CECILIA (with a smile)

Yes, he really does. The moment your new opera is ready....

AMADEUS

And so on! (He goes on eating) It surprises me, however, that he should ask you about me.

CECILIA

Why does that surprise you?

AMADEUS (as if meaning no offense)

Well, it rather surprises me that he should connect our respective personalities to that extent. Hasn't Berlin heard yet that we are going to be divorced?

CECILIA

Why ... what does that mean?

AMADEUS (laughing)

Rumors to that effect are afloat.

CECILIA

What? Well, I declare!

AMADEUS

Yes, it's incredible what the popular gossip can invent. It's even in the newspapers. His Highness the Prince Sigismund Maradas-Lohsenstein is going to lead you to the altar. The necessary dispensation will be furnished by the Pope. Idiotic—isn't it?

CECILIA

Yes.—But, my dear, you say nothing about what is still more idiotic.

AMADEUS

And what can that be?

CECILIA

That you are on the verge of believing this piece of idiocy.

AMADEUS

I...? How can you.... Oh, no!

CECILIA

You haven't considered, for instance, that I am three years older than he.

AMADEUS (startled)

Well, if it's nothing but those three years of difference in....

CECILIA

No, it isn't that. No, indeed! Even if I were younger than he, I should never think of it.

AMADEUS

But if his devotion should prove more deeply rooted than you have supposed so far?

CECILIA

Not even then.

AMADEUS

Why?

CECILIA

Why...? I know that it couldn't last forever anyhow.

AMADEUS

Have you the end in mind already?

CECILIA

I am not saying that I have it in mind.... But I don't doubt it must come, as it always comes.

AMADEUS

And then...?

CECILIA (shrugs her shoulders)

AMADEUS

And then?

CECILIA

How could I know, Amadeus? There are prospects of so many kinds.

AMADEUS (cowering a moment before those words)

Yes, that's true. Life is full of prospects. Everywhere, wherever you turn, there are temptations and promises—when you have determined to be free, and to take life lightly, as we have done.... That's what you meant, was it not?

CECILIA

Yes, precisely.

AMADEUS

Tell me, Cecilia.... (He draws closer to her) There is one thing I should like to know—whether Sigismund has any idea that your mind is harboring such thoughts—which, after all, would appear rather weird to the other party concerned.

CECILIA

Sigismund...? How can you imagine?! Such things you admit only to your friends. (She gives her hand to him)

AMADEUS (in the same friendly manner)

But if he should notice anything ... although I think it very improbable that he is the kind of man who would.... But let us suppose that he concluded from various signs that some such thoughts were passing through your head—would you deny them, if he asked you?

CECILIA

I believe myself capable of it.

AMADEUS (with a shrinking)

Oh.... Let me tell you, Cecilia.... You are having something definite in mind.... Yes, I am sure of it.... It's a question of some definite prospect.

CECILIA (smiling)

That might be possible.

AMADEUS

What has happened, Cecilia?

CECILIA

Nothing.

AMADEUS

Then there is danger in the air.

CECILIA

Danger...? What could that mean to us? To him who has no obligations there can be no cause for fear.

AMADEUS (taking her lightly by the arm)

Stop playing with words! I can see through the whole thing just the same.—I know! It has been brought home to me by a number of passages in your letters—although they ceased long ago to have the frankness due to our friendship. That new prospect is Wedius!

CECILIA

In what respect did my letters fail to be frank? Didn't I write you immediately after the "Onyegin" performance, that there was something fascinating about his personality?

AMADEUS

So you have said before, of many people. But there was never any such prospect implied in it.

CECILIA

Everything begins to take on new meanings when you are free.

AMADEUS

You are not telling me everything.... What has happened?

CECILIA

Nothing has happened, but (with sudden decision) if I had stayed ... who knows....

AMADEUS (seems to shrink back again; then he walks to and fro; finally he remains standing in the background, near one of the windows) Poor Sigismund!

CECILIA

Why pity him? He knows nothing about it.

AMADEUS (resuming his superior tone)

Is that what draws you to Berlin?

CECILIA

No!... Indeed, no! The spell has been broken ... it seems....

AMADEUS

And yet you talk of going about New Year....

CECILIA (rising)

My dear Amadeus, I am really too tired to discuss that matter to-day. Now I shall

say good-night to you. It is quite late. (She holds out her hand to him)

AMADEUS (faltering)

Good-night, Cecilia!... (He clings to her hand) You have been gone three weeks. I shall leave early the day after to-morrow—and when I return, you will be gone, I suppose.... There can't be so very much to your friendship, if you won't stay and talk a while with me under such circumstances.

CECILIA

What's the use of being sentimental? Leave-takings are familiar things to us.

AMADEUS

That's true. But nevertheless this will be a new kind of leave-taking, and a new kind of home-coming also.

CECILIA

Well, seeing that it had to turn out this way....

AMADEUS

But neither of us ever imagined that it would turn out this way.

CECILIA

Oh?

AMADEUS

No, Cecilia, we did not imagine it. The remarkable thing has been that we retained our faith in each other in the midst of all doubts, and that, even when away from each other, we used to feel calm and confident far beyond what was safe, I suppose. But it was splendid. Separation itself used to have a sort of charm of its own—formerly.

CECILIA

Naturally. It isn't possible to love in that undisturbed fashion except when you are

miles apart.

AMADEUS

You may be able to make fun of it to-day, Cecilia, but there will never again be anything like it—neither for you nor for me. You can be sure of that.

CECILIA

I know that as well as you do.—But why should you all at once begin to talk as if, somehow, everything would be over between us two, and as if the best part of our life had been irretrievably lost? That's not the case, after all. It cannot possibly be the case. Both of us know that we remain the same as before—don't we—and that everything else that has happened to us, or may happen to us, can be of no particular importance.... And even if it should become important, we shall always be able to join hands, no matter what chasms open between us.

AMADEUS

You speak very sensibly, as usual.

CECILIA

If you seduce ladies by the dozen, and if gentlemen shoot each other dead for my sake—as they do for the sake of Countess Philine—what has that to do with our friendship?

AMADEUS

That's beyond contradiction. Nevertheless, I hadn't expected—in fact, I think it nothing less than admirable—your ability to adjust yourself to everything—your way of remaining perfectly calm in the midst of any new experiences or expectations.

CECILIA

Calm...? Here I am ... by our fireplace ... taking tea in your company. Here I can and shall always be calm. That's the significance of our whole life in common. Whatever

may be my destiny in the world at large will slip off me when I enter here. All the storms are on the outside.

AMADEUS

That's more than you can be sure of, Cecilia. Things might happen that would weigh more heavily on you than you can imagine at this moment.

CECILIA

I shall always have the strength to throw off things according to my will before I come to you. And if that strength should ever fail me, I shall come to the door and no farther.

AMADEUS

Oh, no, you mustn't! That would not be in keeping with our agreement. It is just when life grows heavy that I'll be here to help you bear it.

CECILIA

Who knows whether you will always be ready to do so?

AMADEUS

Always—on my oath! No matter what befall you, whether it be sad or wretched, you can always find refuge and sympathy with me. But with all my heart I wish you may be spared most of those things.

CECILIA

That I be spared...? No, Amadeus, a wish like that I can't accept. Hitherto—I have lived so little hitherto. And I am longing for it. I long for all that's sad and sweet in life, for all that's beautiful and all that's pitiful. I long for storms, for perils—for worse than that, perhaps.

AMADEUS

No, Cecilia, that's nothing but imagination!

CECILIA

Oh, no!

AMADEUS

Certainly, Cecilia. You don't know very much as yet, and you imagine many things simpler and cleaner than they are. But there are things you couldn't stand, and others of which you are not capable.—I know you, Cecilia.

CECILIA

You know me?—You know only what I have been to you—what I have been as your beloved and your wife. And as you used to mean the whole world to me—as all my longing, all my tenderness, was bounded by you—we could never guess in those days what might prove my destiny when the real world was thrown open to me.—Even to-day, Amadeus, I am no longer the same as before.... Or perhaps I have always been the same as I am now, but didn't know it merely. And something has fallen away, that used to cover me up in the past.... Yes, that's it: for now I can feel all those desires that used to pass me by as if deflected by a cuirass of insensibility.... Now I can feel how they touch my body and my soul, filling me with qualms and passions. The earth seems full of adventure. The sky seems radiant with flames. And it is as if I could see myself stand waiting with wide-open arms.

AMADEUS (as if calling to somebody in flight)

Cecilia!

CECILIA

What is the matter?

AMADEUS

Nothing.... The words you speak cannot estrange me after all that I have learned already. But there is a new ring in your voice that I have never heard until to-day. Nor have I ever seen that light in your eyes until to-day.

CECILIA

That's what you imagine, Amadeus. If that were really the case, then I should feel the same in regard to you. But I can see no difference in you at all. And I can't imagine how you possibly could come to seem different. To other women you may appear a mischiefmaker—or a silly youth—which has probably happened many times: but to me you will always remain the same as ever. And I have a feeling that, in the last instance, nothing can ever happen to the Amadeus I am thinking of.

AMADEUS

If I could only feel the same—in regard to you! But such assurance is not mine. The recklessness and greed with which you make your way into an unknown world are filling me with outright fear on your behalf. The idea that there are people who know as little of you as you of them at this moment, and to whom you are going to belong...

CECILIA

I shall belong to nobody ... now, that I am free ...

AMADEUS

... who are part of your destiny already, as you of theirs ... it seems to me uncanny. And you are no more the Cecilia I used to love—no! You resemble closely one who was very dear to me, and yet you are not at all the same as she. No, you are not the woman that was my wife for years. I could feel it the moment you entered the place.... The connection between the young girl who sank into my arms one evening seven years ago and the woman who has just returned from abroad to dwell for a brief while in this house seems quite mysterious. For seven years I have been living with another woman—with a quiet, kindly woman—with a sort of angel perhaps, who has now disappeared. She who came to-day has a voice that I have never heard, a look that I am foreign to, a beauty that is strange to me—a beauty not surpassing what the other had, except in being more cruel possibly—and yet a beauty that

should confer much greater happiness, I think.

CECILIA

Don't look at me like that!... Don't talk to me like that!... That's not the way to talk to a friend! Don't forget I am no more the one I used to be. When you talk to me like that, Amadeus, it is as if here, too, I should be fanned by those cajoling breaths that nowadays so often touch me like caresses—breaths that make life seem incredibly light, and that make you feel ready for so much that formerly would have appeared incomprehensible.

AMADEUS

If you could guess, Cecilia, how your words hurt me and excite me at the same time!

CECILIA (brusquely)

You must not talk like that, Amadeus. I don't want it. Be sensible, for my sake as well as your own. Good-night.

AMADEUS

Are you going, Cecilia?

CECILIA

Yes. And bear in mind that we are friends and want to remain such.

AMADEUS

Bear in mind that we have always wanted to be honest. And it is not honest—either for you or me—to say that we stand face to face as friends in this moment.... Cecilia—the one thing I can feel at this moment is that you are beautiful ... beautiful as you have never been before!

CECILIA

Amadeus, Amadeus, are you forgetting all that has happened?

AMADEUS

I could forget it—and so could you.

CECILIA

Oh, I remember—I remember! (She wants to leave)

AMADEUS

Stay, Cecilia, stay! The day after to-morrow I shall be gone—stay!

CECILIA

Please don't speak to me like that! I am no longer what I used to be—no longer proud, or calm, or good. Who knows how little might be needed to make me the victim of a certain unscrupulous seducer!

AMADEUS

Cecilia!

CECILIA

Have you so many friends to lose? One is all I have.—Good-night. (She tries to get away)

AMADEUS (seizing her by the hand)

Cecilia, we have long ago bidden each other good-by as man and wife—but we have also made up our minds to take life lightly, to be free, and to lay hold of every happiness that comes within our reach. Should we be mad enough, or cowardly enough, to shrink from the highest happiness ever offered us...?

CECILIA

And what would it lead to ... my friend?

AMADEUS

Don't call me that! I love you and I hate you, but in this moment I am not your friend. What you have been to me—wife, comrade ... what do I care! To-day I want to be—your lover!

CECILIA

You mustn't...! You can't ... no....

AMADEUS

Not your lover then ... but what is both worse and better ... the man who takes you away from another one—the one with whom you are betraying someone else—the one who means to you both bliss and sin at once!

CECILIA

Let me loose, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

No more beautiful adventure will ever blossom by the wayside for either one of us, Cecilia, as long as we may live!

CECILIA

And none more dangerous, Amadeus!

AMADEUS

Wasn't that what you were longing for...?

CECILIA

Good-night, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

Cecilia! (He holds her fast and draws her closer to himself)

CURTAIN

THE THIRD ACT

The same room. It is the morning of the following day. The stage is empty at first. Then Amadeus enters from his room at the left. He wears a dressing-gown, but is otherwise fully dressed. He passes slowly and pensively across the room to the writing desk, from which he picks up the waiting pile of letters. Then he puts the

letters down again. He feels chilly, looks around, notices that a window is open, and goes to close it. Then he stands listening for a while at the door to Cecilia's room. Finally he returns to the writing desk and begins to pull out manuscripts from its drawers.

AMADEUS

Let's get things in order.... I wonder how this is going to turn out?—I'll write her from some place along my route. I shall never come back here any more.... I couldn't stand it ... no, I couldn't! (Holding a manuscript in his hand) The Solo—her Solo! Well, I shall not be present to hear her sing it.

CHAMBERMAID (entering)

The men are here to take away the trunk. Here's the check from the expressman.

AMADEUS

All right. Tell them to use the back stairs in taking out the things.

CHAMBERMAID (goes out)

AMADEUS

... When I say good-by to-morrow, she won't guess it is forever.... And the boy ... the boy...? (He walks back and forth) ... But it has to be. (Abruptly) I'll leave this very evening—not to-morrow. Yes, this very evening. (He begins to pile up sheet music) I'll have a talk with the Director. If he says no, I'll simply break away. I won't come back here. (He goes to Cecilia's door again) I suppose she's still asleep. (He comes forward and sits down on the couch, leaning his head in his hands) We have to take lunch together, and she won't guess that it is for the last time.... She won't guess.... And why not? Let her find out ... right now ... I am going to have it out with her. Yes, indeed. (Rising) One can't write a thing of that kind. I'll tell her everything. I'll tell her that I can't bear it—that it drives me crazy to think of the other fellow. And she'll understand. And even if she should plead with me to forgive her ... even if she

... oh! (He goes to her door) I must tell her at once.... Oh, I feel like choking her!... Cecilia! (He knocks at her door, but gets no answer) What does that mean? (He goes into her room) She's gone! (He stays away for about half a minute and comes back by way of the door leading to the garden; then he rings) Where can she....

CHAMBERMAID (enters)

AMADEUS (with pretended unconcern)

Has my wife gone out?

CHAMBERMAID

Yes, sir—quite a while ago.

AMADEUS

Oh...?

CHAMBERMAID

It must be nearly two hours now. She said she would be back about one o'clock.

AMADEUS

All right. Thank you.

CHAMBERMAID

Can I bring in your breakfast now, sir?

AMADEUS

Oh, yes—I had almost forgotten. And a cup of tea, please.

CHAMBERMAID (goes out)

AMADEUS (alone)

Gone!... Well, there is nothing peculiar in that.... Probably to the opera.... But why didn't she tell me...? (He cowers suddenly) To him...? No, that couldn't be possible! Oh, no!... And why not?... A woman like her.... There is nothing to keep her from going to him.... (With a threatening gesture) If I only had him here!... (With sudden

inspiration) But that's what I might ... that would be.... To confront him—that's it! To stand face to face with him!... Thus more than one thing might be straightened out.... No, she is not with him.... Where did I get that idea?... That's all over!... But that's what I'll do!... Either I or he!... Many things might then ... everything might then be set right.... He or I!... But to live on like this, while he ... I'll go to Albert. It must be done this very day! (He disappears into his own room)

ALBERT (enters)

CHAMBERMAID (follows him, carrying the breakfast tray) I'll tell the Master at once, sir. (She puts the tray on a small table and goes out to the left)

ALBERT (picks up a moon-shaped roll from the tray and begins to nibble at one of its tips)

AMADEUS (enters, having changed his dressing-gown for a coat)

CHAMBERMAID (follows him, passes quickly across the room and goes out)

AMADEUS

Oh, there you are!

ALBERT

Yes. I'm not too early, I hope? Are you ready? I want to read you the third act. (He takes some papers from his overcoat pocket) You know the setting, of course—the park, the villa, the plane tree. But first of all I must tell you something. Do you remember Mr. von Rabagas, with whom my wife fell in love? I have retouched him slightly. He's going to be cross-eyed. And now I am curious to see what Marie's attitude will be toward him.

AMADEUS (nervously)

All right—later. For the moment there are more important things.

ALBERT

More important...?

AMADEUS

Yes, I want you to do me a great service ... a service that will brook no delay. You have to act as my second.

ALBERT (rising)

Your...? Twaddle! You'll simply refuse the challenge! You're not going to let yourself be killed for the sake of Madame Philine—oh, no!

AMADEUS

It is not a question of Philine. And I have not been challenged. I shall issue the challenge. And for that reason I want you to look up our friend Winter at once, and then I must trouble both of you to call on Prince Sigismund, and tell him....

ALBERT (interrupting him and breaking into laughter)

Oh, Prince Sigismund!—Thank you ever so much!

AMADEUS (surprised)

What's the matter with you?

ALBERT

How obliging! You mean to present me with an ending for the play we concocted yesterday. Thanks. But it's too banal for me—nobody would take any stock in it. I have thought of something much better. You are to be poisoned—yes, sir. And can you guess by whom?—By a brand-new character—one of the secret lovers of your wife.

AMADEUS (furiously)

It doesn't interest me in the least. Stop it, please! I'm not making up endings for your fool comedies! This is real life ... we are right in the midst of it!

ALBERT

You don't mean...?! Well, if I have to stand this unseemly and ridiculous interruption

... what do you want of me anyhow?

AMADEUS

Haven't you understood? The two of you are to challenge Prince Sigismund on my behalf.

ALBERT

Prince Sigismund ... on your behalf.... (He bursts into laughter)

AMADEUS

You seem to think it very funny, but I assure you....

ALBERT

The point is not that you seem funny to me. It's probably balanced by the fact that a lot of people who have thought you funny until now, will all of a sudden think you very sensible ... though they ought to ask themselves, if they had a little logic: why should Mr. Amadeus Adams become jealous on this particular day?... Up to the twenty-third of October he was not, and all at once, on the twenty-third, he is....

AMADEUS

A lot of things have changed since yesterday.

ALBERT

Have changed...? Since yesterday...? Well, I declare!

AMADEUS (after a pause)

So that you didn't believe it either?

ALBERT

To confess the truth—no.

AMADEUS

Which means that I am living among a lot of people who....

ALBERT

Will be in the right ultimately. Why should that arouse your indignation? If we were to live long enough, every lie that's floating about would probably become true. Listen to those who belie you, and you will know the truth about yourself. Gossip knows very rarely what we are doing, but almost always whither we are drifting.

AMADEUS

We didn't know we were drifting this way—that much you will admit, I hope.

ALBERT

And yet it had to come. Friendship between two people of different sexes is always dangerous—even when they are married. If there is too much mutual understanding between our souls, many things are swept along that we would rather keep back; and when our senses are attracted mutually, the suction affects much more of our souls than we would care to have involved. That's a universal law, my dear chap, for which the profound uncertainty of all earthly relations between man and woman must be held responsible. And only he who doesn't know it, will trust himself or anybody else.—If you don't mind? (He begins to butter one of the rolls)

AMADEUS

So you think you understand...?

ALBERT

Of course! That's my specialty, don't you know?

AMADEUS

Well, if you understand what has happened, and understand it must have happened—then you will also understand that I must face the logical consequences.

ALBERT

Logical consequences...? Here I am talking wisdom, and you clamor for nonsense. And that's what you call logical consequences?... My opinion is rather, that you are about to behave like a perfect fool. Anybody else might do what you now propose:

you are the only one who mustn't. For when you propose such a thing, it becomes illogical, ungenerous, not to say dishonest. You want to call a man to account for something which, as he sees it, has been declared explicitly permissible.... In his place I should laugh in your face. If anybody has the right to be indignant here, and to demand an account, it is the Prince himself, and nobody else—as he has not deceived you, but you him.

AMADEUS

Well, that's all one, as he undoubtedly will demand an account.

ALBERT

To do so, he must know.

AMADEUS

I'll see to that.

ALBERT

You mean to tell him?

AMADEUS

If you hold it the shortest road to what I have in mind...?

ALBERT

There's a man of honor for you! And is that the discretion you owe the woman you love, do you think?

AMADEUS

Call me illogical, ungenerous, indiscreet—anything you please! I can't help myself! I love Cecilia—do you hear? And I want to go on living with her. But I can't do so until some sort of amends have been made for the past—in my own eyes, in hers, and—I confess it—in the eyes of the world. Sigismund and I must meet, man to man—nothing else can end my trouble.

ALBERT

And how can it make the slightest difference that you two shoot off your guns in the air?

AMADEUS

One of us must out of the way, Albert!... Won't you understand at last?

ALBERT

Now, my dear chap, that's carrying it a little too far! All the time I have thought you were talking of a duel—and now I find that you are after his life!

AMADEUS

Later on you may feel sorry that you could not refrain from inept jesting in a moment like this even. The case is urgent, Albert. Please make up your mind.

ALBERT

And suppose he should refuse?

AMADEUS

He is a nobleman.

ALBERT

He is religious. His father is one of the leaders of the Clerical Party in the Upper House and a vice-president of the Society for the Prevention of Dueling.

AMADEUS

Well, such things are not inherited. And if he won't, I shall know how to make him. There's no other way out of it. There can be no other alternative, if I am to go on living—with or without her. That will set everything right, but nothing else will. It's the one thing that can clear the air about us. Until it is over, we dare not belong to each other again or—be happy.

ALBERT

I hope Cecilia won't insist on killing off Philine and a few others. That would be just as sensible, but would complicate the situation a great deal.

AMADEUS

Won't you go, please!

ALBERT

Yes, I am going.... And how about our opera?

AMADEUS

Oh, we'll have plenty of time to talk of that. However, just to reassure you—all that is finished lies here in the second drawer, everything properly arranged.

ALBERT

And who is to compose the third act?

AMADEUS

It can be given as a fragment, with some kind of ballet as a filler.

ALBERT

Right you are! Something like "Harlequin as Electrician," or "Forget-me-not." (He goes out)

AMADEUS (remains alone for a while; at first he seems to ponder on something; then he returns to the writing desk and falls to work on his papers; a knock is heard at the door leading to the garden) What is it?

PETER (outside)

It's me, papa. Can I come in?

AMADEUS

Certainly, Peter. Come on.

GOVERNESS (entering with Peter)

Good morning.

AMADEUS

Good morning. (He kisses Peter) Is it not a little too cold for him out there?

GOVERNESS

He's very warmly dressed, and besides the sun is shining beautifully.

PETER

Papa, have you seen what mamma brought me?

AMADEUS

What is it?

PETER

A theater—a big theater!

AMADEUS

Is that so? And you have got it already?

PETER

Of course. It's over there in the summer-house. Would you care to look at it?

AMADEUS (glances inquiringly at the governess)

GOVERNESS

Madame brought it to our room quite early, while Peter was still asleep.

AMADEUS

I see.

PETER

I can play theater already. There is a king, and a peasant, and a bride, and a devil—one that's all red—almost as red as the king himself. And in the back there is a mill, and a sky, and a forest, and a hunter.... Won't you come and look at it, papa?

AMADEUS (seated on the couch, with the boy standing between his knees;

speaking absentmindedly) Of course I must come and look at it.

CHAMBERMAID (entering)

Sir....

AMADEUS

What is it?

CHAMBERMAID

His Highness asks if you'll see him.

AMADEUS

What highness?

CHAMBERMAID

His Highness, the Prince Lohsenstein.

AMADEUS (rising)

What?

GOVERNESS

Come, Peter—we'll go back and play in the summer-house. (She goes out with Peter)

AMADEUS (with dignity)

Tell the Prince.... (Turning away from her) One moment, please. (To himself) What can that mean...? (Abruptly) Ask him to come in.

CHAMBERMAID (goes out)

AMADEUS (walks quickly to and fro, but stops at some distance from the door when Sigismund enters)

SIGISMUND (is slender, blonde, twenty-six, elegantly dressed, but appears in no respect foppish; he bows to Amadeus) Good-morning.

AMADEUS (takes a few steps forward to meet him and nods politely)

SIGISMUND (looks around a little shyly, but wholly free from any ridiculous embarrassment; his manner is in every respect dignified; there is a slight smile on his face) We have not seen each other for some time, and you'll probably assume that my visit to-day has a special reason.

AMADEUS

Naturally. (Pointing to a chair) Please.

SIGISMUND

Thank you. (He comes nearer, but remains standing) I have decided to take this step—which has not come easy to me, I can assure you—because I find the situation in which we ... in which all of us have been placed, untenable and, in a certain sense, ridiculous ... and because I think that, in one way or another, it should be brought to an end. The sole object of my visit is to put before you a proposition.

AMADEUS

I'm listening.

SIGISMUND

I don't want to waste any words. My proposition is that you get a divorce from your wife.

AMADEUS (shrinks back for a moment, staring at Sigismund; then, after a pause he says calmly) You wish to marry Cecilia?

SIGISMUND

There is nothing I wish more eagerly.

AMADEUS

And what is the attitude of Cecilia toward your intentions?

SIGISMUND

Not encouraging so far.

AMADEUS (puzzled)

Cecilia is absolutely in a position to decide for herself. And of course, she would also have the right to leave me—whenever and howsoever it might please her to do so. For that reason you must pardon me if I find the object of your visit incomprehensible, to say the least.

SIGISMUND

You'll soon find it comprehensible, I think. The discouraging attitude of Mrs. Adams-Ortenburg proves nothing at all in this connection, I must say. As long as Mrs. Adams-Ortenburg has not been set free by you—even if that be done against her own will—she is, in a sense, bound to you. To get this matter fully cleared up, it seems to me necessary that you yourself, my dear Master, insist on a divorce. Mrs. Adams-Ortenburg will not be in a position to choose freely until she has been divorced from you. Until then the struggle between us two will not be on equal terms—as, I trust, you would like to have it.

AMADEUS

There can be no talk of any struggle here. You misunderstand the actual state of affairs in a manner that seems to me incomprehensible. For I have no right to suppose that Cecilia has made any secret of the more deep-lying reasons that have so far prevented us from considering a dissolution of our marriage.

SIGISMUND

Certainly, I am aware of those reasons, but to me they don't by any means seem sufficiently pressing—not even from your own viewpoint—to exclude all thought of a divorce. And I am anxious to assure you that, under all circumstances, I shall feel bound to treat those reasons with the most profound respect.

AMADEUS

What do you mean?

SIGISMUND

You know, my dear Master, that the reverence I have for your art, even if I am not always capable of grasping it, equals the admiration I feel for the singing of Mrs. Adams-Ortenburg. I know how much you two mutually owe to each other, and how you—if I may say so—complement each other musically. And it would never occur to me to put any difficulties whatsoever in the way of your continued artistic relationship. I am equally aware of the tenderness with which you regard your child—for whom, by the way, as you probably know, I have a great deal of devotion—and I can give you my word that the doors leading to the quarters of little Peter will always stand open to you.

AMADEUS

In other words, you would have no objection to seeing the former husband of your—of the wife—of the Princess Lohsenstein, admitted to your house as a friend?

SIGISMUND

Any such objection would be regarded by me as an insult to your—to my—to Mrs. Cecilia Adams-Ortenburg, as well as to you, my dear Master. With those provisions made, the new arrangement, which I am taking the liberty to suggest, would be more sensible and—if you'll allow me a frank expression—more decent than the one to which all of us now have to submit. I am convinced, my dear Master, that, when you have had chance to consider the matter calmly, you will not only agree with me, but you will be surprised that this simple solution of an unbearable situation has not occurred to yourself long ago. As for me, I want to add that, to me personally, this solution seems the only possible one. Yes, I don't hesitate to say that I would leave the city, without hope of ever seeing Mrs. Cecilia again, rather than keep on compromising her in a manner that must be equally painful to all of us.

AMADEUS

Oh, has it come to that all at once? Well, if the matter doesn't trouble Cecilia or me,

I think you might well regard it with indifference. I hope you know that we have arranged our life to suit ourselves, without the least regard for popular gossip, and that I don't care at all whether or no Cecilia be compromised—as you call it.

SIGISMUND

I know you don't. But I feel differently. A lady to whom I'm so devoted, and whom I respect so highly that I would lead her to the altar, must appear spotless to God and man alike.

AMADEUS

You might have kept that in mind before. Your previous behavior has given no indication of such a view. You have been waiting for my wife in the immediate vicinity of the opera; you have been walking with her for hours at a time; you have visited her in the country; you have followed her to Berlin and come back here in her company....

SIGISMUND (surprised)

But it was in your power to stop all those things, if they didn't suit you....

AMADEUS

Stop them ... because they didn't suit...? What has that to do with what I am talking of?—I am not the person who has found this situation unbearable and compromising.

SIGISMUND

Oh, I understand. Considering, however, that you have placed such emphasis on your indifference to popular gossip, I must say that your tone sounds pretty excited. But permit me to assure you that this impresses me rather pleasantly. Bear in mind that I am merely human. What young man in my place would have refrained from meeting the adored one, when everything was rendered so easy for him? And nevertheless I didn't visit the Pustertal or make the tour to Berlin without an inward

struggle—in fact, I have often had to struggle with myself while waiting for her near the opera. And I cannot tell you how I have suffered under the searching glances directed at Mrs. Adams-Ortenburg and myself when we were having supper together after one of the Berlin performances, for instance, or when we went for an afternoon drive in the Tiergarten.7 Not to speak of the painful impression my aunt's remarks made on me when I called to bid her good-by! Really, I can't find words to express it.

AMADEUS

How much longer do you mean to keep up this remarkable comedy, my dear Prince?

SIGISMUND (drawing back)

Do you mean....

AMADEUS

What in the world makes you appear before me in a part which I don't know whether to call tasteless or foolhardy?

SIGISMUND

Sir!... Oh...! You think.... I see now.... And you imagine that I would have crossed your threshold again under such circumstances?

AMADEUS

Why should that particular thing not be imagined?

SIGISMUND

Later on we shall get back to what you think of me. But a third person is concerned in this matter, and I am not going to stand....

AMADEUS

May I ask whether you have been equally angry with everyone who has dared to question the virtue of Mrs. Adams-Ortenburg?

SIGISMUND

You are at least the first one who has dared to question it to my face, and the last one who may dare to do so unpunished.

AMADEUS

Do you think the punishment threatening the impertinent one in your mind will be apt to restore the reputation of Cecilia? Do you think it would put an end to the gossip if you, of all people, tried to champion the honor of Mrs. Adams-Ortenburg?

SIGISMUND

Who could, if not I?

AMADEUS

If it is not a comedy you are now playing, then you haven't the right even!

SIGISMUND

Do you mean to say that Cecilia is the only woman in the world who must stand unprotected against any slander?

AMADEUS

If you are telling the truth, Prince Sigismund, then there is only one person in the world who has the right to protect Cecilia, and that person am I.

SIGISMUND

Considering what has happened, I have excellent reason to think that you will neither avail yourself of that right nor fulfill that duty.

AMADEUS

You are mistaken. And if you will take the trouble of returning home, you will soon be convinced of your mistake.

SIGISMUND

What do you mean?

AMADEUS

I mean simply that two of my friends are now on their way to your house on my behalf....

SIGISMUND

Well...?

AMADEUS

To demand reparation for what ... (looking Sigismund straight in the eye) I believed you guilty of.

SIGISMUND (takes a step back; a pause ensues during which they stare hard at each other) You have challenged.... (Reaching out his hand) That's fine!

AMADEUS (does not accept the proffered hand)

SIGISMUND

But it's splendid! I can assure you that the whole matter now assumes quite a different aspect. And, of course, I shall be at your disposal just the same, if you insist.

AMADEUS (draws a deep breath, looks long at Sigismund, and shakes his head at last) No, I won't any longer. (He shakes hands with him, and then begins walking to and fro, muttering to himself) Cecilia.... Cecilia...! (Returning to Sigismund and addressing him in a totally different tone) Won't you please be seated, Sigismund?

SIGISMUND

No, thank you.

AMADEUS (feeling repelled and suspicious again)

Just as you please.

SIGISMUND

Don't misunderstand me, please. But I suppose this ends our conference, my dear

Master. (Looking around) And yet I must admit that your rude treatment has made me feel a great deal more at ease. Isn't that strange? And in spite of the fact that, after this unexpected turn, my hopes must be held practically—I beg your pardon!—completely disposed of.... In spite of this I feel actually in much better spirits than I have done for a long time. Even if I am not to have the happiness of which I have foolishly dared to dream so long....

AMADEUS

Was it so very foolish?

SIGISMUND (good-humoredly)

Oh, yes. But this is at least an acceptable conclusion. (Shaking his head) It seems queer! If I hadn't come here at this very moment, you might never have learned—you might never have believed—might have believed that Cecilia.... And one of us might perhaps—must perhaps have.... (He makes a gesture to complete the sentence)

AMADEUS

It was indeed a strange coincidence that made you choose this particular moment....

SIGISMUND

Coincidence, you say? Oh, no, there are no coincidences—as you will discover sooner or later. (Pause) Well, good-by then, and give my regards to Mrs. ... Adams ...

AMADEUS

You can safely call her Cecilia.

SIGISMUND

... and tell her, please, that she mustn't be angry with me for having taken such a step without her knowledge. Of course, my going away won't surprise her. When leaving her yesterday, I told her that I couldn't continue this kind of existence.

AMADEUS

And she...? What did she say?

SIGISMUND (hesitatingly)

She....

AMADEUS (excited again)

She tried to keep you here...?

SIGISMUND

Yes.

AMADEUS

So that after all...!

SIGISMUND

Now she won't try any longer, my dear Master. (With a wistful smile) I have served my purpose.

AMADEUS

What do you mean?

SIGISMUND

Oh, I can see now why she needed me—of course, you were not at all aware of it!

AMADEUS

Why did she need you?

SIGISMUND

Simply and solely as a means of winning you back.

AMADEUS

What makes you think...?

SIGISMUND

What...? That she has succeeded.

AMADEUS

No, Sigismund—she hadn't lost me—in spite of all that had happened. In fact, I feel as if I had rather lost her than she—me.

SIGISMUND

That's awfully kind of you. But now—God be with you!

AMADEUS (with something like emotion)

And when shall we see you again?

SIGISMUND

I don't know. Perhaps never.—-Please don't imagine that I might take my own life. I shall get over it, being still young.—Oh, my dear Master, if things could only become what they used to be, so that I could sit here at the fireplace while Cecilia was singing—or hammer away at the piano after supper...!

AMADEUS

Don't be quite so modest, please! The fame of your piano playing has reached Berlin even, I hear.

SIGISMUND

So she has told you that, too?!—But you see, dear Master, all that can never come back—we could no longer feel at ease with each other.... So—never to meet again!

AMADEUS

Never.... Why? Perhaps I shall see you very soon alone. I am also—going away.

SIGISMUND

I know. We were talking of it yesterday, in the dining car. You are to conduct your—number-which-one is it now?

AMADEUS

The fourth.

SIGISMUND

So you have got that far already?—And where are you going anyhow?

AMADEUS

To the Rhine district first of all; then by way of Munich to Italy—Venice, Milan, Rome.

SIGISMUND

Rome...? There we may possibly meet. But you'll have to pardon me for not coming to your concerts. So far I have not been able to understand your symphonies.... But I am sure I shall sometime! One does grow more and more clever, and sorrow and experiences in particular have a maturing influence.... "Now he's making fun of it," I suppose you are thinking. But, really, I am not in a very humorous mood. Farewell, my dear Master—and my most respectful compliments to your wife. (He goes out)

AMADEUS (walks back and forth; takes a few deep breaths, as if relieved; goes out into the garden; returns; sits down at the piano and plays a few improvisations; gets up and goes to the writing desk, where he begins to look for something among the papers) Where's that Solo? ... She's going to sing it, and I shall be present...! (He seats himself at the piano again, apparently in a very happy mood) Cecilia!... Cecilia!

CECILIA (enters)

AMADEUS (rising)

Ah, there you are at last, Cecilia!

CECELIA (very calmly)

Good-morning, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

A little late.

CECILIA (smiling)

Yes. (She takes off her hat and goes to the mirror to arrange her hair)

AMADEUS

What made you get out so early?

CECILIA

Various things I had to attend to.

AMADEUS

And may one ask...?

CECILIA

One may.—Look here, what I have got for you. (She takes a letter from a small bag)

AMADEUS

What's that? (He takes it) What...? My letter to Philine...! Did you go to her, Cecilia?

CECILIA

Well, I felt a little nervous about it. Now I think it was rather silly of me.

AMADEUS

And how...?

CECILIA

Oh, the simplest thing in the world! I asked her for it, and she gave it to me. It was lying in an open drawer in her writing desk—with others. I think you can call yourself lucky.

AMADEUS

Cecilia! (He tears the letter to pieces and throws these into the fireplace)

CECILIA

Well, you would never have made up your mind to demand it of her, and that would

have kept me in a state of irritation. I can't have anything like that on my mind when I want to work.—And now that's settled. (She turns away) Then I went to the opera, too. I have had a talk with the Director. He's going to indorse my request to be set free.

AMADEUS

Your request to be set free...?

CECILIA

Yes, I shall go to Berlin on the first of January.

AMADEUS

But, Cecilia, we haven't talked it over yet....

CECILIA

What's the use of postponing a thing that's already settled in my own mind?—You know I never like to do that.

AMADEUS

But it means a whole year of separation!

CECILIA

To start with. But I think it might be just as well to prepare ourselves for a still longer period.

AMADEUS

Do you mean to leave me, Cecilia?!

CECILIA

What else can I do, Amadeus? That ought to be as clear to you as it is to me.

AMADEUS

So it would have been a little while ago, Cecilia. But I have come to see our future in a different light.... Cecilia ... Sigismund has been here!

CECILIA

Sigismund?!... You have talked with him?... What did he want?

AMADEUS

What did he want...? Your hand.

CECILIA

And you refused...?

AMADEUS

He is sending you his farewell greetings through me, Cecilia.

CECILIA

So that's what has put you in such a good humor all at once! (Pause) And if he hadn't come here?

AMADEUS

If he hadn't come here....

CECILIA

Speak out, please!

AMADEUS (remains silent)

CECILIA

You didn't mean to ... to fight him?

AMADEUS

I did. Albert was on his way to him at the time.

CECILIA

What vanity, Amadeus!

AMADEUS

No, not vanity, Cecilia. I love you.

CECILIA (remains wholly unresponsive)

AMADEUS

You can't guess, of course, what took place within me while his words were gradually bringing home the truth to me! Once more the doors of heaven have been thrown open to me!

CECILIA

The only thing you forget is that they must remain closed to me forever.

AMADEUS

Don't say that, Cecilia. What has happened to me in the past seems so very insignificant, after all.

CECILIA

Insignificant, you say?—And if it had happened to me, it would have been so significant that people should have had to kill or be killed on that account? How can you think then, that I might get over it so easily?

AMADEUS

How can I...? Because you have proved it already. You knew just what had happened, and yet you became mine again.... You knew that I had been faithless, while you had kept your faith, and yet....

CECILIA

You say that I have kept my faith?—No, I haven't! And even if I should seem faithful to you, I have long ago ceased to be so in my own mind. I know the desires that have burned within me.... I know how often my body has trembled and yearned in the presence of some man.... And what I told you last night—that I am waiting with wide-open arms, full of longings and expectations—that's true, Amadeus—no less true than it is that I am standing face to face with you now.

AMADEUS

If that be true, what has kept you from satisfying all your longings—you, who have been as free as I have?

CECILIA

I am a woman, Amadeus. And we seem to be like that. Something makes us hesitate even when we have already made up our minds.

AMADEUS

And because you seemed guilty in your own mind, you remained silent?... And for no other reason have you left me—me, whose sufferings you might have relieved by a single word—to believe you as guilty as myself?

CECILIA

Perhaps....

AMADEUS

And how long did you mean to let me go on believing that?

CECILIA

Until it became true, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

But there has been enough of it now, Cecilia. It will never become true ... never after this.

CECILIA

Where do you get that idea, Amadeus? It is going to be true. Do you think, perhaps, that all this was meant as a kind of ordeal for you? Do you think I was playing a childish comedy in order to punish you, and that now, when you have discovered the truth prematurely, I shall sink into your arms and declare everything right again? Have you really imagined that everything could now be forgotten, and that we might resume our marriage relations at the exact point where they were interrupted? How can you possibly have wished that such might be the case—so that our marriage

would be like thousands of others, where both deceive each other, and become reconciled, and deceive each other again—just as the moment's whim happens to move them?

AMADEUS

We have neither deceived each other, nor become reconciled—we have been free, and have merely found each other again.

CECILIA

Each other, you say?... As if that were possible! What is it then, that has made me seem so desirable to you all at once? Not the fact that I am Cecilia—oh, no! But the fact that I seem to have come back another woman. And have I really become yours again? Not at all! Not unless you have grown so modest all at once that you can be satisfied with a happiness that might have fallen to somebody else perhaps, if he had merely chanced to be on hand at that particular moment.

AMADEUS (shrinking back)

But even if last night be sacrificed to this fixed idea of yours, Cecilia—it is daylight now—we are awake—and in this moment of clear light you must feel, no less than I, that we love each other, Cecilia—love as we have never loved before.

CECILIA

This moment might prove deceptive—and I am sure it would. No other moment would be more apt to prove such. Do you think those many moments in which we felt our tenderness gradually ebbing away—those many moments when we felt the lure of other loves—do you think them less worthy of consideration than this one? The only thing urging us together now is our fear of the final leave-taking. And our feelings at this moment make a pretty poor sample upon which to base an eternity. I don't trust them. What has happened once, may ... nay, must repeat itself—to-morrow—or two years from now—or five ... in a more indiscreet manner, perhaps, or in a manner more tragical—but certainly in a manner to be much more

regretted.

AMADEUS

Oh, no—never again! Now—after what I have felt and experienced lately, I can vouch for myself.

CECILIA

I don't feel equally certain of myself, Amadeus.

AMADEUS

That doesn't scare me, Cecilia, for now I'm prepared to fight for you—now I'm worthy and capable of fighting for you. Hereafter you shall never more be left unprotected as you were in the past—my tenderness will guard you.

CECILIA

But I don't want to be guarded! I shall no longer permit you to guard me! And I can no more give you any promises than I care to accept yours.

AMADEUS

And if I should forgo them myself—if I should risk it on a mere uncertainty?

CECILIA

That's more than I dare—whether the risk concern you or myself ... more than I would risk even with certainty in mind. (She turns away from him)

AMADEUS

Then I cannot possibly understand you, Cecilia. What is it you want to make us pay for so dearly—yes, both of us? Is it our guilt or our happiness?

CECILIA

Why should either one of them be paid for? What's the use of such a word between us? Neither one of us has done anything that requires atonement. Neither one of us has any right to reproach the other one. Both of us have been free, and each one has

used his freedom in accordance with his own desire and ability. I think nothing has happened but what must happen. We have trusted each other too much—or too little. We were neither made to love each other faithfully forever nor to maintain a pure friendship. Others have become resigned—I can't—and you mustn't allow yourself, Amadeus. Our experiment has failed. Let us admit our disillusionment. That can be borne. But I have no curiosity to find how it tastes when everything comes to an end in sheer loathing.

AMADEUS

Comes to an end, you say?—But that can't be possible, Cecilia! It can't be possible that we should really leave each other—part from each other like strangers! We are still face to face—each of us can feel the closeness of the other one—and that's why you cannot yet realize what it would mean. Consider all the things that might come into your life as well as into mine during a separation of that kind—so prolonged and so void of responsibility—things that now have no place in your imagination even, and for which there could be no reparation.

CECILIA

Could they be worse than what has already befallen me? Faithfulness to each other in the ordinary sense matters least of all, I should think. And we could probably more easily find our way back to each other sometime from almost any other experience than that adventure of last night, or from a moment of self-deception like this one.

AMADEUS

Find our way back, you say...?

CECILIA

It's also possible that, after a couple of years, we won't care to do so—that everything may be over between us to such an extent that we cannot imagine it now. That's possible, I say. But if we stayed together now, everything would be over

within the next few seconds. For then we should be no better than all those we have despised hitherto—the one difference being that we had arranged ourselves more comfortably than the rest.

ALBERT (entering)

I beg your pardon for coming in unannounced like this, but....

CECILIA (withdraws toward the background)

AMADEUS (going to meet Albert)

Yes, I know—you didn't find the Prince—he has been here himself.

ALBERT

What does that mean?

AMADEUS

That there was no reason why I should want to kill him.

ALBERT

I see.—Well, I'll be hanged if I haven't suspected something of the kind myself!—Then I suppose everything is once more in perfect order in this house?

AMADEUS

Yes, in perfect order. When I return, Cecilia will be in Berlin, and I shall not follow her.

ALBERT

What? Then you are going to ask for a separation after all?

CECILIA (approaching them)

No, we are not going to ask for a separation. We'll just separate.

ALBERT

What?... (He looks from one to the other; pause) Really I like that. Indeed, I do. I think both of you are splendid—but especially you, Cecilia—and, of course, there is

nothing else left for you to do now.

PETER (enters, carrying some of his puppets)

Papa! Mamma! I can play theater beautifully. Won't you come and look? Oh, please come!

CECILIA (strokes his hair)

AMADEUS (remains standing at some distance from them)

ALBERT

Well, isn't this just like life—the life you are always talking of! This should be the moment when you had to fall into each others' arms with absolute certainty, if you had had the luck to be imaginatively created—that is, not by me, of course.

CECILIA

No, the boy means too much to both of us to make that possible—don't you think so, Amadeus?

AMADEUS (losing control of himself after a glance at Peter) All at once to be alone in the world again—it's a thought I can hardly face!

CECILIA

But we shall be somewhere in that world, you know—your child, and the mother of your child. We are not parting as enemies, after all.... (With a smile) I am even ready to come here and sing that Solo of yours—although we shall not be able to study it together.

AMADEUS

It's more than I can bear...!

CECILIA

It will have to be borne. We must work—both of us.

ALBERT (to Amadeus)

Yes, and it remains to be seen what effect a real sorrow like this may have on you. It's just what you have lacked so far. I expect you'll get a lot out of it. In a sense, I might almost envy you.

PETER

What's the matter?... Look here, mamma, how they jump about! That's the king, and this is the devil.

ALBERT

Come on, sonny, and play your piece to me. But I insist that the hero must either marry in the end, or be carried off by the devil. In either case you can go home quite satisfied when the curtain drops. (He goes out with Peter)

CECILIA (after a glance at Amadeus, starts to follow them)

AMADEUS

Cecilia!

CECILIA (turns back)

AMADEUS (passionately)

Why didn't you show me the door, Cecilia, when you knew...?

CECILIA

Well, did I know?... I have loved you, Amadeus. And all I wanted, perhaps, was that the inevitable end should be worthy of our love—that we should part after a final moment of bliss, and with a pang.

AMADEUS

With a pang, you say...? Do you really feel anything like that?

CECILIA (coming close to him and speaking very gently)

Why don't you try to understand me, Amadeus? I feel it just as keenly as you do. But there is another thing I feel more strongly than you, and it is well for us both that I

do. It is this, Amadeus, that we have been so much to each other that we must keep the memory of it pure. If that was nothing but an adventure last night, then we have never been worthy of our past happiness.... If it was a farewell, then we may expect new happiness in the future ... perhaps.... (She starts toward the garden)

AMADEUS

And that's our reward, then, for having always been honest to each other!

CECILIA (turning toward him again)

Honest, you call it...? Have we always been that?

AMADEUS

Cecilia!

CECILIA

No, I can't think so any longer. Let everything else have been honest—but that both of us should have resigned ourselves so promptly when you told me of your passion for the Countess and I confessed my affection for Sigismund—that was not honest. If each of us had then flung his scorn, his bitterness, his despair into the face of the other one, instead of trying to appear self-controlled and superior—then we should have been honest—which, as it was, we were not. (She walks across the veranda outside and disappears into the garden)

AMADEUS (to himself)

All right—then we were not honest. (After a pause) And suppose we had been?! (For a moment he seems to consider; then he goes to the writing desk and puts the manuscript music lying there into the little handbag; after a glance into the garden, he goes into his own room, returning at once with his hat and overcoat; then he opens the handbag again and picks out a manuscript, which he places on the piano; then he goes out rapidly, taking hat, overcoat and handbag with him; a brief pause follows)

CECILIA (enters and notices that the handbag is gone; she goes quickly into Amadeus' room, but returns immediately; she crosses the room to the main entrance and remains standing there, opening her arms widely at first, and then letting them sink down again; going to the piano, she catches sight of the manuscript lying there and picks it up; while looking at it, she sinks down on the piano stool)

PETER (appears on the veranda with Albert and calls from there) Mother!

CECILIA (does not hear him)

ALBERT (observing that Cecilia is alone and sunk in grief, takes Peter with him into the garden again)

CECILIA (begins to weep softly and lets her head sink down on the piano)

CURTAIN

COUNTESS MIZZIE

OR

THE FAMILY REUNION

(Komtesse Mizzi oder der Familientag)

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

1907

PERSONS

Count Arpad Pazmandy Mizzie } His daughter Prince Egon Ravenstein Lolo Langhuber Philip Professor Windhofer Wasner The Gardener The Valet

COUNTESS MIZZIE

The garden of Count Arpad. In the background, tall iron fence. Near the middle of this, but a little more to the right, there is a gate. In the foreground, at the left, appears the façade of the two-storied villa, which used to be an imperial hunting

lodge about 180 years ago and was remodeled about thirty years ago. A narrow terrace runs along the main floor, which is raised above the ground. Three wide stairs lead from the terrace down to the garden. French doors, which are standing open, lead from the terrace into the drawing-room. The windows of the upper floor are of ordinary design. Above that floor appears a small balcony, to which access is had through a dormer window. This balcony holds a profusion of flowering plants. A garden seat, a small table and an armchair stand under a tree at the right, in the foreground.

COUNT (enters from the right; he is an elderly man with gray mustaches, but must still be counted decidedly good-looking; his bearing and manners indicate the retired officer; he wears a riding suit and carries a crop)

VALET (entering behind the Count)

At what time does Your Grace desire to have dinner to-day?

COUNT (who speaks with the laconism affected by his former colleagues, and who, at that particular moment, is engaged in lighting a huge cigar) At two.

VALET

And when is the carriage to be ready, Your Grace?

MIZZIE1 (appearing on the balcony with a palette and a bunch of brushes in one hand, calls down to her father) Good morning, papa.

COUNT

Morning, Mizzie.

MIZZIE

You left me all alone for breakfast again, papa. Where have you been anyhow?

COUNT

Most everywhere. Rode out by way of Mauer and Rodaun.2 Perfectly splendid day. And what are you doing? At work already? Is there anything new to be seen soon?

MIZZIE

Yes, indeed, papa. Nothing but flowers though, as usual.

COUNT

Isn't the professor coming to see you to-day?

MIZZIE

Yes, but not until one.

COUNT

Well, don't let me interrupt you.

MIZZIE (throws a kiss to him and disappears from the balcony)

COUNT (to the valet)

What are you waiting for? Oh, the carriage. I'm not going out again to-day. Joseph can take a holiday. Or wait a moment. (He calls up to the balcony) Say, Mizzie....

MIZZIE (reappears on the balcony)

COUNT

Sorry to disturb you again. Do you think you'll want the carriage to-day?

MIZZIE

No, thank you, papa. I can think of nothing.... No, thanks. (She disappears again)

COUNT

So Joseph can do what he pleases this afternoon. That's—oh, see that Franz gives the nag a good rubbing down. We got a little excited this morning—both of us.

VALET (goes out)

COUNT (sits down on the garden seat, picks up a newspaper from the table and begins to read)

GARDENER (enters)

Good morning, Your Grace.

COUNT

Morning, Peter. What's up?

GARDENER

With Your Grace's permission, I have just cut the tea roses.

COUNT

Why all that lot?

GARDENER

The bush is full up. It ain't wise, Your Grace, to leave 'em on the stem much longer. If maybe Your Grace could find some use....

COUNT

Haven't got any. Why do you stand there looking at me? I'm not going to the city. I won't need any flowers. Why don't you put them in some of those vases and things that are standing about in there? Quite the fashion nowadays, isn't it? (He takes the bunch of flowers from the gardener and inhales their fragrance while he seems to be pondering something) Wasn't that a carriage that stopped here?

GARDENER

That's His Highness' pair of blacks. I know 'em by their step.

COUNT

Thanks very much then. (He hands back the roses)

PRINCE (comes in by the gate)

COUNT (goes to meet him)

GARDENER

Good morning, Your Highness.

PRINCE

Hello, Peter.

GARDENER (goes out toward the right)

PRINCE (wears a light-colored Summer suit; is fifty-five, but doesn't look it; tall and slender; his manner of speech suggests the diplomat, who is as much at home in French as in his native tongue)

COUNT

Delighted, old chap. How goes it?

PRINCE

Thanks. Splendid day.

COUNT (offers him one of his gigantic cigars)

PRINCE

No, thank you, not before lunch. Only one of my own cigarettes, if you permit. (He takes a cigarette from his case and lights it)

COUNT

So you've found time to drop in at last. Do you know how long you haven't been here? Three weeks.

PRINCE (glancing toward the balcony)

Really that long?

COUNT

What is it that makes you so scarce?

PRINCE

You mustn't mind. But you are right, of course. And even to-day I come only to say good-by.

COUNT

What—good-by?

PRINCE

I shall be off to-morrow.

COUNT

You're going away? Where?

PRINCE

The sea shore. And you—have you made any plans yet?

COUNT

I haven't given a thought to it yet—this year.

PRINCE

Well, of course, it's wonderful right here—with your enormous park. But you have to go somewhere later in the Summer?

COUNT

Don't know yet. But it's all one.

PRINCE

What's wrong now?

COUNT

Oh, my dear old friend, it's going downhill.

PRINCE

How? That's a funny way of talking, Arpad. What do you mean by downhill?

COUNT

One grows old, Egon.

PRINCE

Yes, and gets accustomed to it.

COUNT

What do you know about it—you who are five years younger?

PRINCE

Six almost. But at fifty-five the springtime of life is pretty well over. Well—one gets resigned to it.

COUNT

You have always been something of a philosopher, old chap.

PRINCE

Anyhow, I can't see what's the matter with you. You look fine. (Seats himself; frequently during this scene he glances up at the balcony; pause)

COUNT (with sudden decision)

Have you heard the latest? She's going to marry.

PRINCE

Who's going to marry?

COUNT

Do you have to ask? Can't you guess?

PRINCE

Oh, I see. Thought it might be Mizzie. And that would also.... So Lolo is going to marry.

COUNT

She is.

PRINCE

But that's hardly the "latest."

COUNT

Why not?

PRINCE

It's what she has promised, or threatened, or whatever you choose to call it, these last three years.

COUNT

Three, you say? May just as well say ten. Or eighteen. Yes, indeed. In fact, since the very start of this affair between her and me. It has always been a fixed idea with her. "If ever a decent man asks me to marry him, I'll get off the stage stante pede." It was almost the first thing she told me. You have heard it yourself a couple of times. And now he's come—the one she has been waiting for—and she's to get married.

PRINCE

Hope he's decent at least.

COUNT

Yes, you're very witty! But is that your only way of showing sympathy in a serious moment like this?

PRINCE

Now! (He puts his hand on the Count's arm)

COUNT

Well, I assure you, it's a serious moment. It's no small matter when you have lived twenty years with somebody—in a near-marital state; when you have been spending your best years with her, and really shared her joys and sorrows—until you have come to think at last, that it's never going to end—and then she comes to you one fine day and says: "God bless you, dear, but I'm going to get wedded on the sixteenth...." Oh, damn the whole story! (He gets up and begins to walk about) And I can't blame her even. Because I understand perfectly. So what can you do about it?

PRINCE

You've always been much too kind, Arpad.

COUNT

Nothing kind about it. Why shouldn't I understand? The clock has struck thirty-eight for her. And she has said adieu to her profession. So that anybody can sympathize with her feeling that there is no fun to go on as a ballet dancer retired on half pay and mistress on active service to Count Pazmandy, who'll be nothing but an old fool either, as time runs along. Of course, I have been prepared for it. And I haven't blamed her a bit—'pon my soul!

PRINCE

So you have parted as perfect friends?

COUNT

Certainly. In fact, our leave-taking was quite jolly. 'Pon my soul, I never suspected at first how tough it would prove. It's only by degrees it has come home to me. And that's quite a remarkable story, I must say....

PRINCE

What's remarkable about it?

COUNT

I suppose I had better tell you all about it. On my way home that last time—one night last week—I had a feeling all of a sudden—I don't know how to express it ... tremendously relieved, that's what I felt. Now you are a free man, I said to myself. Don't have to drive to Mayerhof Street3 every night God grants you, merely to dine and chatter with Lolo, or just sit there listening to her. Had come to be pretty boresome at times, you know. And then the drive home in the middle of the night, and, on top of it, to be called to account when you happened to be dining with a friend in the Casino or taking your daughter to the opera or a theater. To cut it short—I was in high feather going home that night. My head was full of plans already.... No, nothing of the kind you have in mind! But plans for traveling, as I

have long wanted to do—to Africa, or India, like a free man.... That is, I should have brought my little girl along, of course.... Yes, you may well laugh at my calling her a little girl still.

PRINCE

Nothing of the kind. Mizzie looks exactly like a young girl. Like quite a young one. Especially in that Florentine straw hat she was wearing a while ago.

COUNT

Like a young girl, you say! And yet she's exactly of an age with Lolo. You know, of course! Yes, we're growing old, Egon. Every one of us. Oh, yes.... And lonely. But really, I didn't notice it to begin with. It was only by degrees it got hold of me. The first days after that farewell feast were not so very bad. But the day before yesterday, and yesterday, as the time approached when I used to start for Mayerhof Street.... And when Peter brought in those roses a moment ago—for Lolo, of course—why, then it seemed pretty plain to me that I had become a widower for the second time in my life. Yes, my dear fellow. And this time forever. Now comes the loneliness. It has come already.

PRINCE

But that's nonsense—loneliness!

COUNT

Pardon me, but you can't understand. Your way of living has been so different from mine. You have not let yourself be dragged into anything new since your poor wife died ten years ago. Into nothing of a serious nature, I mean. And besides, you have a profession, in a sense.

PRINCE

Have I?

COUNT

Well, as a member of the Upper House.

PRINCE

Oh, I see.

COUNT

And twice you have almost been put into the cabinet.

PRINCE

Yes, almost....

COUNT

Who knows? Perhaps you will break in some time. And I'm all done. Had myself retired three years ago in the bargain—like a fool.

PRINCE (with a smile)

That's why you are a free man now. Perfectly free. With the world open before you.

COUNT

And no desire to do a thing, old man. That's the whole story. Since that time I haven't gone to the Casino even. Do you know what I have been doing the last few nights? I have sat under that tree with Mizzie—playing domino.

PRINCE

Well, don't you see? That's not to be lonely. When you have a daughter, and particularly such a sensible one, with whom you have always got on so well.... What does she say about your staying at home nights anyhow?

COUNT

Nothing. Besides, it has happened before, quite frequently. She says nothing at all. And what could she say? It seems to me she has never noticed anything. Do you think she can have known about Lolo?

PRINCE (laughing)

Man alive!

COUNT

Of course. Yes, I know. Of course, she must have known. But then, I was still almost a young man when her mother died. I hope it hasn't hurt her feelings.

PRINCE

No, that wouldn't. (Casually) But being left so much alone may have troubled her at times, I should think.

COUNT

Has she complained of me? There's no reason why you shouldn't tell me.

PRINCE

I am not in her confidence. She has never complained to me. And, heavens, it may never have troubled her at all. She has so long been accustomed to this quiet, retired life.

COUNT

Yes, and she seems to have a taste for it, too. And then she used to go out a good deal until a few years ago. Between you and me, Egon, as late as three years ago—no, two years ago—I still thought she might make the plunge after all.

PRINCE

What plunge? Oh, I see....

COUNT

If you could only guess what kind of men have been paying attention to her quite recently....

PRINCE

That's only natural.

COUNT

But she won't. She absolutely won't. What I mean is, that she can't be feeling so very lonely ... otherwise she would ... as she has had plenty of opportunity....

PRINCE

Certainly. It's her own choice. And then Mizzie has an additional resource in her painting. It's a case like that of my blessed aunt, the late Fanny Hohenstein, who went on writing books to a venerable old age and never wanted to hear a word about marriage.

COUNT

It may have some connection with her artistic aspirations. At times I'm inclined to look for some psychological connection between all these morbid tendencies.

PRINCE

Morbid, you say? But you can't possibly call Mizzie morbid.

COUNT

Oh, it's all over now. But there was a time....

PRINCE

I have always found Mizzie very sensible and very well balanced. After all, painting roses and violets doesn't prove a person morbid by any means.

COUNT

You don't think me such a fool that her violets and roses could make me believe.... But if you remember when she was still a young girl....

PRINCE

What then?

COUNT

Oh, that story at the time Fedor Wangenheim wanted to marry her.

PRINCE

O Lord, are you still thinking of that? Besides, there was no truth in it. And that was eighteen or twenty years ago almost.

COUNT

Her wanting to join the Ursuline Sisters rather than marry that nice young fellow, to whom she was as good as engaged already—and then up and away from home all at once—you might call that morbid, don't you think?

PRINCE

What has put you in mind of that ancient story to-day?

COUNT

Ancient, you say? I feel as if it happened last year only. It was at the very time when my own affair with Lolo had just begun. Ah, harking back like that...! And if anybody had foretold me at the time...! You know, it really began like any ordinary adventure. In the same reckless, crazy way. Yes, crazy—that's it. Not that I want to make myself out worse than I am, but it was lucky for all of us that my poor wife had already been dead a couple of years. Lolo seemed ... my fate. Mistress and wife at the same time. Because she's such a wonderful cook, you know. And the way she makes you comfortable. And always in good humor—never a cross word.... Well, it's all over. Don't let us talk of it.... (Pause) Tell me, won't you stay for lunch? And I must call Mizzie.

PRINCE (checking him)

Wait—I have something to tell you. (Casually, almost facetiously) I want you to be prepared.

COUNT

Why? For what?

PRINCE

There is a young man coming here to be introduced.

COUNT (astonished)

What? A young man?

PRINCE

If you have no objection.

COUNT

Why should I object? But who is he?

PRINCE

Dear Arpad—he's my son.

COUNT (greatly surprised)

What?

PRINCE

Yes, my son. You see, I didn't want—as I'm going away....

COUNT

Your son? You've got a son?

PRINCE

I have.

COUNT

Well, did you ever...! You have got a young man who is your son—or rather, you have got a son who is a young man. How old?

PRINCE

Seventeen.

COUNT

Seventeen! And you haven't told me before! No, Egon ... Egon! And tell me ... seventeen...? My dear chap, then your wife was still alive....

PRINCE

Yes, my wife was still alive at the time. You see, Arpad, one gets mixed up in all sorts of strange affairs.

COUNT

'Pon my soul, so it seems!

PRINCE

And thus, one fine day, you find yourself having a son of seventeen with whom you go traveling.

COUNT

So it's with him you are going away?

PRINCE

I am taking that liberty.

COUNT

No, I couldn't possibly tell you.... Why, he has got a son of seventeen!... (Suddenly he grasps the hand of the Prince, and then puts his arms about him) And if I may ask ... the mother of that young gentleman, your son ... how it happens ... as you have started telling me....

PRINCE

She's dead long ago. Died a couple of weeks after he was born. A mere slip of a girl.

COUNT

Of the common people?

PRINCE

Oh, of course. But a charming creature. I may as well tell you everything about it. That is, as far as I can recall it myself. The whole story seems like a dream. And if it were not for the boy....

COUNT

And all that you tell me only now! To-day only—just before the boy is coming here!

PRINCE

You never can tell how a thing like that may be received.

COUNT

Tut, tut! Received, you say...? Did you believe perhaps ... I'm something of a philosopher myself, after all.... And you call yourself a friend of mine!

PRINCE

Not a soul has known it—not a single soul in the whole world.

COUNT

But you might have told me. Really, I don't see how you could.... Come now, it wasn't quite nice.

PRINCE

I wanted to wait and see how the boy developed. You never can tell....

COUNT

Of course, with a mixed pedigree like that.... But you seem reassured now?

PRINCE

Oh, yes, he's a fine fellow.

COUNT (embracing him again)

And where has he been living until now?

PRINCE

His earliest years were spent a good way from Vienna—in the Tirol.

COUNT

With peasants?

PRINCE

No, with a small landowner. Then he went to school for some time at Innsbruck. And during the last few years I have been sending him to the preparatory school at Krems.4

COUNT

And you have seen him frequently?

PRINCE

Of course.

COUNT

And what's his idea of it anyhow?

PRINCE

Up to a few days ago he thought that he had lost both his parents—his father as well—and that I was a friend of his dead father.

MIZZIE (appearing on the balcony)

Good morning, Prince Egon.

PRINCE

Good morning, Mizzie.

COUNT

Well, won't you come down a while?

MIZZIE

Oh, if I am not in the way.... (She disappears)

COUNT

And what are we going to say to Mizzie?

PRINCE

I prefer to leave that to you, of course. But as I am adopting the boy anyhow, and as a special decree by His Majesty will probably enable him to assume my name in a few days ...

COUNT (surprised)

What?

PRINCE

... I think it would be wiser to tell Mizzie the truth at once.

COUNT

Certainly, certainly—and why shouldn't we? Seeing that you are adopting him.... It's really funny—but, you see, a daughter, even when she gets to be an old maid, is nothing but a little girl to her father.

MIZZIE (appears; she is thirty-seven, but still very attractive; wears a Florentine straw hat and a white dress; she gives the Count a kiss before holding out her hand to the Prince) Well, how do you do, Prince Egon? We don't see much of you these days.

PRINCE

Thank you.—Have you been very industrious?

MIZZIE

Painting a few flowers.

COUNT

Why so modest, Mizzie? (To the Prince) Professor Windhofer told her recently that she could safely exhibit. Won't have to fear comparison with Mrs. Wisinger-Florian herself.5

MIZZIE

That's so, perhaps. But I have no ambition of that kind.

PRINCE

I'm rather against exhibiting, too. It puts you at the mercy of any newspaper scribbler.

MIZZIE

Well, how about the members of the Upper House—at least when they make speeches?

COUNT

And how about all of us? Is there anything into which they don't poke their noses?

PRINCE

Yes, thanks to prevailing tendencies, there are people who would blackguard your pictures merely because you happen to be a countess, Mizzie.

COUNT

Yes, you're right indeed.

VALET (entering)

Your Grace is wanted on the telephone.

COUNT

Who is it? What is it about?

VALET

There is somebody who wishes to speak to Your Grace personally.

COUNT

You'll have to excuse me a moment. (To the Prince, in a lowered voice) Tell her now—while I am away. I prefer it. (He goes out followed by the valet)

MIZZIE

Somebody on the telephone—do you think papa can have fallen into new bondage already? (She seats herself)

PRINCE

Into new bondage, you say?

MIZZIE

Lolo used always to telephone about this time. But it's all over with her now. You know it, don't you?

PRINCE

I just heard it.

MIZZIE

And what do you think of it, Prince Egon. I am rather sorry, to tell the truth. If he tries anything new now, I'm sure he'll burn his fingers. And I do fear there is something in the air. You see, he's still too young for his years.

PRINCE

Yes, that's so.

MIZZIE (turning so that she faces the Prince)

And by the way, you haven't been here for ever so long.

PRINCE

You haven't missed me very much ... I fear.... Your art ... and heaven knows what else....

MIZZIE (without affectation)

Nevertheless....

PRINCE

Awfully kind of you.... (Pause)

MIZZIE

What makes you speechless to-day? Tell me something. Isn't there anything new in the world at all?

PRINCE (as if he had thought of it only that moment)

Our son has just passed his examinations for the university.

MIZZIE (slightly perturbed)

I hope you have more interesting news to relate.

PRINCE

More interesting....

MIZZIE

Or news, at least, that concerns me more closely than the career of a strange young man.

PRINCE

I have felt obliged, however, to keep you informed about the more important stages in the career of this young man. When he was about to be confirmed, I took the liberty to report the fact to you. But, of course, we don't have to talk any more about it.

MIZZIE

He pulled through, I hope?

PRINCE

With honors.

MIZZIE

The stock seems to be improving.

PRINCE

Let us hope so.

MIZZIE

And now the great moment is approaching, I suppose.

PRINCE

What moment?

MIZZIE

Have you forgotten already? As soon as he had passed his examinations, you meant to reveal yourself as his father.

PRINCE

So I have done already.

MIZZIE

You—have told him already?

PRINCE

I have.

MIZZIE (after a pause, without looking at him)

And his mother—is dead...?

PRINCE

She is—so far.

MIZZIE

And forever. (Rising)

PRINCE

As you please.

[The Count enters, followed by the valet.

VALET

But it was Your Grace who said that Joseph could be free.

COUNT

Yes, yes, it's all right.

VALET (goes out)

MIZZIE

What's the matter, papa?

COUNT

Nothing, my girl, nothing. I wanted to get somewhere quick—and that infernal Joseph.... If you don't mind, Mizzie, I want to have a few words with Egon.... (To the Prince) Do you know, she has been trying to get me before. I mean Lolo. But she couldn't get the number. And now Laura telephones—oh, well, that's her maid, you know—that she has just started on her way here.

PRINCE

Here? To see you?

COUNT

Yes.

PRINCE

But why?

COUNT

Oh, I think I can guess. You see, she has never put her foot in this place, of course, and I have been promising her all the time that she could come here once to have a look at the house and the park before she married. Her standing grievance has always been that I couldn't receive her here. On account of Mizzie, you know. Which she has understood perfectly well. And to sneak her in here some time when Mizzie was not at home—well, for that kind of thing I have never had any taste. And so she sends me a telephone message, that the marriage is set for the day after to-morrow, and that she is on her way here now.

PRINCE

Well, what of it? She is not coming here as your mistress, and so I can't see that you have any reason for embarrassment.

COUNT

But to-day of all days—and with your son due at any moment.

PRINCE

You can leave him to me.

COUNT

But I don't want it. I'm going to meet the carriage and see if I can stop her. It makes me nervous. You'll have to ask your son to excuse me for a little while. Good-by, Mizzie. I'll be back right away. (He goes out)

PRINCE

Miss Lolo has sent word that she's coming to call, and your papa doesn't like it.

MIZZIE

What's that? Has Lolo sent word? Is she coming here?

PRINCE

Your father has been promising her a chance to look over the place before she was married. And now he has gone to meet the carriage in order to steer her off.

MIZZIE

How childish! And how pathetic, when you come to think of it! I should really like to make her acquaintance. Don't you think it's too silly? There is my father, spending half his lifetime with a person who is probably very attractive—and I don't get a chance—don't have the right—to shake hands with her even. Why does he object to it anyhow? He ought to understand that I know all about it.

PRINCE

Oh, heavens, that's the way he is made. And perhaps he might not have minded so much, if he were not expecting another visit at this very moment....

MIZZIE

Another visit, you say?

PRINCE

For which I took the liberty to prepare him.

MIZZIE

Who is it?

PRINCE

Our son.

MIZZIE

Are you ... bringing your son here?

PRINCE

He'll be here in half an hour at the most.

MIZZIE

I say, Prince ... this is not a joke you're trying to spring on me?

PRINCE

By no means. On a departed ... what an idea!

MIZZIE

Is it really true? He's coming here?

PRINCE

Yes.

MIZZIE

Apparently you still think that nothing but a whim keeps me from having anything to do with the boy?

PRINCE

A whim...? No. Seeing how consistent you have been in this matter, it would hardly

be safe for me to call it that. And when I bear in mind how you have had the strength all these years not even to ask any questions about him....

MIZZIE

There has been nothing admirable about that. I have had the strength to do what was worse ... when I had to let him be taken away ... a week after he was born....

PRINCE

Yes, what else could you—could we have done at the time? The arrangements made by me at the time, and approved by you in the end, represented absolutely the most expedient thing we could do under the circumstances.

MIZZIE

I have never questioned their expediency.

PRINCE

It was more than expedient, Mizzie. More than our own fate was at stake. Others might have come to grief if the truth had been revealed at the time. My wife, with her weak heart, had probably never survived.

MIZZIE

Oh, that weak heart....

PRINCE

And your father, Mizzie.... Think of your father!

MIZZIE

You may be sure he would have accepted the inevitable. That was the very time when he began his affair with Lolo. Otherwise everything might not have come off so smoothly. Otherwise he might have been more concerned about me. I could never have stayed away several months if he hadn't found it very convenient at that particular moment. And there was only one danger connected with the whole story—that you might be shot dead by Fedor Wangenheim, my dear Prince.

PRINCE

Why I by him? It might have taken another turn. You are not a believer in judgment by ordeal, are you? And the outcome might have proved questionable from such a point of view even. You see, we poor mortals can never be sure how things of that kind are regarded up above.

MIZZIE

You would never talk like that in the Upper House—supposing you ever opened your mouth during one of its sessions.

PRINCE

Possibly not. But the fundamental thing remains, that no amount of honesty or daring could have availed in the least at the time. It would have been nothing but useless cruelty toward those nearest to us. It's doubtful whether a dispensation could have been obtained—and besides, the Princess would never have agreed to a divorce—which you know as well as I do.

MIZZIE

Just as if I had cared in the least for the ceremony...!

PRINCE

Oh....

MIZZIE

Not in the least. Is that new to you? Didn't I tell you so at the time? Oh, you'll never guess what might ... (her words emphasized by her glance) what I ... of what I might have been capable at that time. I would have followed you anywhere—everywhere—even as your mistress. I and the child. To Switzerland, to America. After all, we could have lived wherever it happened to suit us. And perhaps, if you had gone away, they might never even have noticed your absence in the Upper House.

PRINCE

Yes, of course, we might have run away and settled down somewhere abroad.... But do you still believe that a situation like that would have proved agreeable in the long run, or even bearable?

MIZZIE

No, I don't nowadays. Because, you see, I know you now. But at that time I was in love with you. And it is possible that I—might have gone on loving you for a long time, had you not proved too cowardly to assume the responsibility for what had happened.... Yes, too much of a coward, Prince Egon.

PRINCE

Whether that be the proper word....

MIZZIE

Well, I don't know of any other. There was no hesitation on my part. I was ready to face everything—with joy and pride. I was ready to be a mother, and to confess myself the mother of our child. And you knew it, Egon. I told you so seventeen years ago, in that little house in the woods where you kept me hidden. But half-measures have never appealed to me. I wanted to be a mother in every respect or not at all. The day I had to let the boy be taken away from me, I made up my mind never more to trouble myself about him. And for that reason I find it ridiculous of you to bring him here all of a sudden. If you'll allow me to give you a piece of good advice, you'll go and meet him, as papa has gone to meet Lolo—and take him back home again.

PRINCE

I wouldn't dream of doing so. After what I have just had to hear from you again, it seems settled that his mother must remain dead. And that means that I must take still better care of him. He is my son in the eyes of the world too. I have adopted him.

MIZZIE

Have you...?

PRINCE

To-morrow he will probably be able to assume my name. I shall introduce him wherever it suits me. And of course, first of all to my old friend—your father. If you should find the sight of him disagreeable, there will be nothing left for you but to stay in your room while he is here.

MIZZIE

If you believe that I think your tone very appropriate....

PRINCE

Oh, just as appropriate as your bad temper.

MIZZIE

My bad temper...? Do I look it? Really, if you please ... I have simply permitted myself to find this fancy of yours in rather poor taste. Otherwise my temper is just as good as ever.

PRINCE

I have no doubt of your good humor under ordinary circumstances.... I am perfectly aware, for that matter, that you have managed to become reconciled to your fate. I, too, have managed to submit to a fate which, in its own way, has been no less painful than yours.

MIZZIE

In what way? To what fate have you had to submit...? Everybody can't become a cabinet minister. Oh, I see ... that remark must refer to the fact that His Highness did me the honor ten years ago, after the blissful departure of his noble spouse, to apply for my hand.

PRINCE

And again seven years ago, if you'll be kind enough to remember.

MIZZIE

Oh, yes, I do remember. Nor have I ever given you any cause to question my good memory.

PRINCE

And I hope you have never ascribed my proposals to anything like a desire to expiate some kind of guilt. I asked you to become my wife simply because of my conviction that true happiness was to be found only by your side.

MIZZIE

True happiness!... Oh, what a mistake!

PRINCE

Yes, I do believe that it was a mistake at that moment. Ten years ago it was probably still too early. And so it was, perhaps, seven years ago. But not to-day.

MIZZIE

Yes, to-day too, my dear Prince. Your fate has been never to know me, never to understand me at all—no more when I loved you than when I hated you, and not even during the long time when I have been completely indifferent toward you.

PRINCE

I have always known you, Mizzie. I know more about you than you seem able to guess. Thus, for instance, I am not unfamiliar with the fact that you have spent the last seventeen years in more profitable pursuits than weeping over a man who, in all likelihood, was not worthy of you at the time in question. I am even aware that you have chosen to expose yourself to several disillusionments subsequent to the one suffered at my hands.

MIZZIE

Disillusionments, you say? Well, for your consolation, my dear Prince, I can assure

you that some of them proved very enjoyable.

PRINCE

I know that, too. Otherwise I should hardly have dared to call myself familiar with the history of your life.

MIZZIE

And do you think that I am not familiar with yours? Do you want me to present you with a list of your mistresses? From the wife of the Bulgarian attaché in 1887 down to Mademoiselle Therese Grédun—if that be her real name—who retained the honors of her office up to last Spring at least. It seems likely that I know more than you even, for I can give you a practically complete list of those with whom she has deceived you.

PRINCE

Oh, don't, if you please. There is no real pleasure in knowledge of that kind when you don't uncover it yourself.

[A carriage is heard stopping in front of the house.

PRINCE

That's he. Do you want to disappear before he comes out here? I can detain him that long.

MIZZIE

Don't trouble yourself, please. I prefer to stay. But don't imagine that there is anything astir within me.... This is nothing but a young man coming to call on my father. There he is now.... As to blood being thicker than water—I think it's nothing but a fairy tale. I can't feel anything at all, my dear Prince.

PHILIP (comes quickly through the main entrance; he is seventeen, slender, handsome, elegant, but not foppish; shows a charming, though somewhat boyish, forwardness, not quite free from embarrassment) Good morning. (He bows to

Mizzie)

PRINCE

Good morning, Philip.—Countess, will you permit me to introduce my son? This is Countess Mizzie, daughter of the old friend of mine in whose house you are now.

PHILIP (kisses the hand offered him by Mizzie; brief pause)

MIZZIE

Won't you be seated, please?

PHILIP

Thank you. Countess. (All remain standing)

PRINCE

You came in the carriage? Might just as well send it back, as mine is here already.

PHILIP

Won't you come back with me instead, papa? You see, I think Wasner does a great deal better than your Franz with his team of ancients.

MIZZIE

So Wasner has been driving you?

PHILIP

Yes.

MIZZIE

The old man himself? Do you know that's a great honor? Wasner won't take the box for everybody. Up to about two years ago he used to drive my father.

PHILIP

Oh....

PRINCE

You're a little late, by the way, Philip.

PHILIP

Yes, I have to beg your pardon. Overslept, you know. (To Mizzie) I was out with some of my colleagues last night. You may have heard that I passed my examinations a couple of weeks ago, Countess. That's why we rather made a night of it.6

MIZZIE

You seem to have caught on to our Viennese ways pretty quickly, Mister....

PRINCE

Oh, dear Mizzie, call him Philip, please.

MIZZIE

But I think we must sit down first of all, Philip. (With a glance at the Prince) Papa should be here any moment now. (She and the Prince sit down)

PHILIP (still standing)

If you permit me to say so—I think the park is magnificent. It is much finer than ours.

MIZZIE

You are familiar with the Ravenstein park?

PHILIP

Certainly, Countess. I have been living at Ravenstein House three days already.

MIZZIE

Is that so?

PRINCE

Of course, gardens cannot do as well in the city as out here. Ours was probably a great deal more beautiful a hundred years ago. But then our place was still

practically outside the city.

PHILIP

It's a pity that all sorts of people have been allowed to run up houses around our place like that.

MIZZIE

We are better off in that respect. And we shall hardly live to see the town overtake us.

PHILIP (affably)

But why not, Countess?

MIZZIE

A hundred years ago these grounds were still used for hunting. The place adjoins the Tiergarten, you know. Look over that wall there, Philip. And our villa was a hunting lodge once, belonging to the Empress Maria Theresa. The stone figure over there goes back to that period.

PHILIP

And how old is our place, papa?

PRINCE (smiling)

Our place, sonny, dates back to the seventeenth century. Didn't I show you the room in which Emperor Leopold spent a night?

PHILIP

Emperor Leopold, 1648 to 1705.

MIZZIE (laughs)

PHILIP

Oh, that's an echo of the examinations. When I get old enough.... (He interrupts himself) I beg your pardon! What I meant to say was simply—all that stuff will be

out of my head in a year. And, of course, when I learned those dates, I didn't know Emperor Leopold had been such a good friend of my own people.

MIZZIE

You seem to think your discovery enormously funny, Philip?

PHILIP

Discovery, you say.... Well, frankly speaking, it could hardly be called that. (He looks at the Prince)

PRINCE

Go on, go on!

PHILIP

Well, you see, Countess, I have always had the feeling that I was no Philip Radeiner by birth.

MIZZIE

Radeiner? (To the Prince) Oh, that was the name...?

PRINCE

Yes.

PHILIP

And, of course, it was very pleasant to find my suspicions confirmed—but I have really known it all the time. I can put two and two together. And some of the other boys had also figured out—that I.... Really, Countess, that story about Prince Ravenstein coming to Krems merely to see how the son of his late friend was getting along—don't you think it smacked a little too much of story book ... Home and Family Library, and that sort of thing? All the clever ones felt pretty sure that I was of noble blood, and as I was one of the cleverest....

MIZZIE

So it seems.... And what are your plans for the future, Philip?

PHILIP

Next October I shall begin my year as volunteer with the Sixth Dragoons, which is the regiment in which we Ravensteins always serve. And what's going to happen after that—whether I stay in the army or become an archbishop—in due time, of course....

MIZZIE

That would probably be the best thing. The Ravensteins have always been strong in the faith.

PHILIP

Yes, it's mentioned in the Universal History even. They were Catholic at first; then they turned Protestant in the Thirty Years War; and finally they became Catholic again—but they always remained strong in their faith. It was only the faith that changed.

PRINCE

Philip, Philip!

MIZZIE

That's the spirit of the time, Prince Egon.

PRINCE

And an inheritance from his mother.

MIZZIE

You have been working hard, your father tells me, and have passed your examinations with honors.

PHILIP

Well, that wasn't difficult, Countess. I seem to get hold of things quickly. That's

probably another result of the common blood in me. And I had time to spare for things not in the school curriculum—such as horseback riding and ...

MIZZIE

And what?

PHILIP

Playing the clarinet.

MIZZIE (laughing)

Why did you hesitate to tell about that?

PHILIP

Because.... Well, because everybody laughs when I say that I play the clarinet. And so did you, too, Countess. Isn't that queer? Did anybody ever laugh because you told him that you were painting for a diversion?

MIZZIE

So you have already heard about that?

PHILIP

Yes, indeed, Countess—papa told me. And besides, there is a floral piece in my bedroom—a Chinese vase, you know, with a laburnum branch and something purplish in color.

MIZZIE

That purplish stuff must be lilacs.

PHILIP

Oh, lilacs, of course. I saw that at once. But I couldn't recall the name just now.

VALET (entering)

There is a lady who wishes to see the Count. I have showed her into the drawing-room.

MIZZIE

A lady...? You'll have to excuse me for a moment, gentlemen. (She goes out)

PHILIP

That's all right, papa—if it's up to me, I have no objection.

PRINCE

To what? Of what are you talking?

PHILIP

I have no objection to your choice.

PRINCE

Have you lost your senses, boy?

PHILIP

But really, papa, do you think you can hide anything from me? That common blood in me, you know....

PRINCE

What put such an idea into your head?

PHILIP

Now look here, papa! You have been telling me how anxious you were to introduce me to your old friend, the Count. And then the Count has a daughter—which I have known all the time, by the way.... The one thing I feared a little was that she might be too young.

PRINCE (offended, and yet unable to keep serious)

Too young, you say....

PHILIP

It was perfectly plain that you had a certain weakness for that daughter.... Why, you used to be quite embarrassed when talking of her. And then you have been telling

me all sorts of things about her that you would never have cared to tell otherwise. What interest could I have in the pictures of a Countess X-divided-by-anything, for instance—supposing even that you could tell her lilacs from her laburnums by their color? And, as I said, my one fear was that she might be too young—as my mother, that is, and not as your wife. Of course, there is not yet anybody too young or beautiful for you. But now I can tell you, papa, that she suits me absolutely as she is.

PRINCE

Well, if you are not the most impudent rogue I ever came across...! Do you really think I would ask you, if I should ever....

PHILIP

Not exactly ask, papa ... but a happy family life requires that all the members affect each other sympathetically ... don't you think so?

[Mizzie and Lolo Langhuber enter.

MIZZIE

You must look around, please. I am sure my father would be very sorry to miss you. (She starts to make the usual introductions) Permit me to....

LOLO

Oh, Your Highness.

PRINCE

Well, Miss Pallestri....

LOLO

Langhuber, if you please. I have come to thank the Count for the magnificent flowers he sent me at my farewell performance.

PRINCE (introducing)

My son Philip. And this is Miss ...

LOLO

Charlotta Langhuber.

PRINCE (to Philip)

Better known as Miss Pallestri.

PHILIP

Oh, Miss Pallestri! Then I have already had the pleasure....

PRINCE

What?

PHILIP

You see, I have Miss Pallestri in my collection.

PRINCE

What ... what sort of collection is that?

LOLO

There must be some kind of mistake here, Your Highness. I can not recall....

PHILIP

Of course, you can't, for I don't suppose you could feel that I was cutting out your picture from a newspaper at Krems?

LOLO

No, thank heaven!

PHILIP

It was one of our amusements at school, you know. There was one who cut out all the crimes and disasters he could get hold of.

LOLO

What a dreadful fellow that must have been!

PHILIP

And there was one who went in for historical personalities, like North Pole explorers and composers and that kind of people. And I used to collect theatrical ladies. Ever so much more pleasant to look at, you know. I have got two hundred and thirteen—which I'll show you sometime, papa. Quite interesting, you know. With a musical comedy star from Australia among the rest.

LOLO

I didn't know Your Highness had a son—and such a big one at that.

PHILIP

Yes, I have been hiding my light under a bushel so far.

PRINCE

And now you are trying to make up for it, I should say.

LOLO

Oh, please let him, Your Highness. I prefer young people like him to be a little vif.

PHILIP

So you are going to retire to private life, Miss Pallestri? That's too bad. Just when I might have the pleasure at last of seeing you on those boards that signify the world....

LOLO

That's awfully kind of Your Highness, but unfortunately one hasn't time to wait for the youth that's still growing. And the more mature ones are beginning to find my vintage a little out of date, I fear.

PRINCE

They say that you are about to be married.

LOLO

Yes, I am about to enter the holy state of matrimony.

PHILIP

And who is the happy man, if I may ask?

LOLO

Who is he? Why, he is waiting outside now—with that carriage.

MIZZIE

Why—a coachman?

LOLO

But, Countess—a coachman, you say?! Only in the same manner as when your papa himself—beg your pardon!—happens to be taking the bay out for a spin at times. Cab owner, that's what my fiancé is—and house owner, and a burgess of Vienna, who gets on the box himself only when it pleases him and when there is somebody of whom he thinks a whole lot. Now he is driving for a certain Baron Radeiner—whom he has just brought out here to see your father, Countess. And I am having my doubts about that Baron Radeiner.

PHILIP

Permit me to introduce myself—Baron Radeiner.

LOLO

So that's you, Your Highness?

PHILIP

I have let nobody but Wasner drive me since I came here.

LOLO

And under an assumed name at that, Your Highness? Well, we are finding out a lot of nice things about you!

COUNT (appears, very hot)

Well, here I am. (Taking in the situation) Ah!

LOLO

Your humble servant, Count! I have taken the liberty—I wanted to thank you for the magnificent flowers.

COUNT

Oh, please—it was a great pleasure....

PRINCE

And here, old friend, is my son Philip.

PHILIP

I regard myself as greatly honored, Count.

COUNT (giving his hand to Philip)

I bid you welcome to my house. Please consider yourself at home here.—I don't think any further introductions are required.

MIZZIE

No, papa.

COUNT (slightly embarrassed)

It's very charming of you, my dear lady. Of course, you know better than anybody that I have always been one of your admirers.... But tell me, please, how in the world did you get out here? I have just been taking a walk along the main road, where every carriage has to pass, and I didn't see you.

LOLO

What do you take me for, Count? My cab days are past now. I came by the train, which is the proper thing for me.

COUNT

I see.... But I hear that your fiancé himself....

LOLO

Oh, he has more pretentious customers to look after.

PHILIP

Yes, I have just had the pleasure of being conducted here by the fiancé of Miss Pallestri.

COUNT

Is Wasner driving for you? Well, that settles it—of course—clear psychological connection! (Offers his cigar case) Want a smoke?

PHILIP (accepting)

Thank you.

PRINCE

But, Philip...! A monster like that before lunch!

COUNT

Excellent. Nothing better for the health. And I like you. Suppose we sit down.

[The Count, the Prince and Philip seat themselves, while Mizzie and Lolo remain standing close to them.

COUNT

So you'll be off with your father to-morrow?

PHILIP

Yes, Count. And I'm tremendously pleased to think of it.

COUNT

Will you be gone long?

PRINCE

That depends on several circumstances.

PHILIP

I have to report myself at the regiment on the first of October.

PRINCE

And it's possible that I may go farther south after that.

COUNT

Well, that's news. Where?

PRINCE (with a glance at Mizzie)

Egypt, and the Sudan maybe—for a little hunting.

MIZZIE (to Lolo)

Let me show you the park.

LOLO

It's a marvel. Ours isn't a patch on it, of course. (She and Mizzie come forward)

MIZZIE

Have you a garden at your place, too?

LOLO

Certainly. As well as an ancestral palace—at Ottakring.7 The great-grandfather of Wasner was in the cab business in his days already.—My, but that's beautiful! The way those flowers are hanging down. I must have something just like it.

COUNT (disturbed)

Why are the ladies leaving us?

MIZZIE

Never mind, papa, I'm merely explaining the architecture of our façade.

PHILIP

Do you often get visits of theatrical ladies, Count?

COUNT

No, this is merely an accident.

[The men stroll off toward those parts of the garden that are not visible.

MIZZIE

It seems strange that I have never before had a chance of meeting you. I am very glad to see you.

LOLO (with a grateful glance)

And so I am. Of course, I have known you by sight these many years. Often and often have I looked up at your box.

MIZZIE

But not at me.

LOLO

Oh, that's all over now.

MIZZIE

Do you know, I really feel a little offended—on his behalf.

LOLO

Offended, you say...?

MIZZIE

It will be a hard blow for him. Nobody knows better than I how deeply he has been attached to you. Although he has never said a word to me about it.

LOLO

Do you think it's so very easy for me either, Countess? But tell me. Countess, what else could I do? I am no longer a spring chicken, you know. And one can't help hankering for something more settled. As long as I had a profession of my own, I could allow myself—what do they call it now?—to entertain liberal ideas. It goes in

a way with the position I have held. But how would that look now, when I am retiring to private life?

MIZZIE

Oh, I can see that perfectly. But what is he going to do now?

LOLO

Why shouldn't he marry, too? I assure you, Countess, that there are many who would give all their five fingers.... Don't you realize, Countess, that I, too, have found it a hard step to take?

MIZZIE

Do you know what I have been wondering often? Whether he never thought of making you his wife?

LOLO

Oh, yes, that's just what he wanted.

MIZZIE

Why...?!

LOLO

Do you know when he asked me the last time, Countess? Less than a month ago.

MIZZIE

And you said no?

LOLO

I did. It would have done no good. Me a Countess! Can you imagine it? I being your stepmother, Countess...! Then we could not have been chatting nicely as we are doing now.

MIZZIE

If you only knew how sympathetically you affect me....

LOLO

But I don't want to appear better than I am. And who knows what I might....

MIZZIE

What might you?

LOLO

Well, this is the truth of it. I have gone clear off my head about Wasner. Which I hope won't make you think the worse of me. In all these eighteen years I have had nothing to blame myself with, as far as your dear papa is concerned. But you can't wonder if my feelings began to cool off a little as the years passed along. And rather than to make your dear papa—oh, no, no, Countess ... I owe him too much gratitude for that.... Lord!

MIZZIE

What is it?

LOLO

There he is now, looking right at me.

MIZZIE (looks in the direction indicated)

WASNER (who has appeared at the entrance, raises his tall hat in salute)

LOLO

Don't you think me an awful fool, Countess? Every time I catch sight of him suddenly, my heart starts beating like everything. Yes, there's no fool like an old one.

MIZZIE

Old...? Do you call yourself old? Why, there can't be much difference between us.

LOLO

Oh, mercy.... (With a glance at Mizzie)

MIZZIE

I am thirty-seven.—No, don't look at me with any pity. There is no cause for that. None whatever.

LOLO (apparently relieved)

I have heard some whispers. Countess—of course, I didn't believe anything. But I thank heaven it was true. (They shake hands)

MIZZIE

I should like to congratulate your fiancé right now, if you'll permit me.

LOLO

That's too sweet of you—but what about the Count—perhaps he wouldn't like...?

MIZZIE

My dear, I have always been accustomed to do as I pleased. (They go together toward the entrance)

WASNER

You're too kind, Countess....

[The Count, the Prince and Philip have reappeared in the meantime.

COUNT

Look at that, will you!

WASNER

Good morning, Count. Good morning, Highness.

PRINCE

I say, Wasner, you may just as well take your bride home in that trap of yours. My son is coming with me.

WASNER

Your son...?

PHILIP

Why haven't you told me that you were engaged, Wasner?

WASNER

Well, there are things you haven't told either ... Mr. von Radeiner!

COUNT (to Lolo)

Thank you very much for your friendly visit, and please accept my very best wishes.

LOLO

The same to you, Count. And I must say, that when one has such a daughter....

MIZZIE

It's too bad I haven't come to know you before.

LOLO

Oh, really, Countess....

MIZZIE

Once more, my dear Miss Lolo, good luck to you! (Mizzie embraces Lolo)

COUNT (looks on with surprise and some genuine emotion)

LOLO

I thank you for the kind reception, Count—and good-by!

COUNT

Good-by, Miss Langhuber. I trust you'll be happy ... indeed I do, Lolo.

LOLO (gets into the carriage which has driven up to the gate in the meantime)

WASNER (is on the box, hat in hand; they drive off)

MIZZIE (waves her hand at them as they disappear)

PHILIP (who has been standing in the foreground with the Prince) Oh, my dear papa, I can see through the whole story.

PRINCE

You can?

PHILIP

This Miss Lolo must be the natural daughter of the Count, and a sister of the Countess—her foster-sister, as they say.

PRINCE

No, you would call that a step-sister. But go on, Mr. Diplomat.

PHILIP

And of course, both are in love with you—both the Countess and the ballet dancer. And this marriage between the dancer and Wasner is your work.

PRINCE

Go on.

PHILIP

You know—there's something I never thought of until just now!

PRINCE

What?

PHILIP

I don't know if I dare?

PRINCE

Why so timid all at once?

PHILIP

Supposing my mother was not dead....

PRINCE

H'm....

PHILIP

And, through a remarkable combination of circumstances, she should now be going back to the city in the very carriage that brought me out here...? And suppose it should be my own mother, whose picture I cut out of that newspaper...?

PRINCE

My lad, you'll certainly end as a cabinet minister—Secretary of Agriculture, if nothing better.—But now it's time for us to say good-by.

[The Count and Mizzie are coming forward again.

PRINCE

Well, my dear friend, this must be our farewell call, I am sorry to say.

COUNT

But why don't you stay.... That would be delightful ... if you could take lunch with us....

PRINCE

Unfortunately, it isn't possible. We have an appointment at Sacher's.8

COUNT

That's really too bad. And shall I not see you at all during the Summer?

PRINCE

Oh, we shall not be entirely out of touch.

COUNT

And are you starting to-morrow already?

PRINCE

Yes.

COUNT

Where are you going?

PRINCE

To the sea shore—Ostend.

COUNT

Oh, you are bound for Ostend. I have long wanted to go there.

PRINCE

But that would be fine....

COUNT

What do you think, Mizzie? Let's be fashionable. Let's go to Ostend, too.

MIZZIE

I can't answer yet. But there's no reason why you shouldn't go, papa.

PHILIP

That would be delightful, Countess. It would please me awfully.

MIZZIE (smiling)

That's very kind of you, Philip. (She holds out her hand to him)

PHILIP (kisses her hand)

COUNT (to the Prince)

The children seem to get along beautifully.

PRINCE

Yes, that's what I have been thinking. Good-by then. Good-by, my dear Mizzie. And good-by to you, my dear old fellow. I hope at least to see you again at Ostend.

COUNT

Oh, she'll come along. Won't you, Mizzie? After all, you can get studios by the sea shore, too. Or how about it, Mizzie?

MIZZIE (remains silent)

PRINCE

Well, until we meet again! (He shakes hands with the Count and Mizzie)

PHILIP (kisses the hand of Mizzie once more)

COUNT (giving his hand to Philip)

It has been a great pleasure.

[The Prince and Philip go out through the gate and step into the carriage which has been driving up in the meantime, and which now carries them off. The Count and Mizzie come forward again and seat themselves at the table under the tree. Pause.

COUNT

Hasn't this been a queer day?

MIZZIE

All life is queer—only we forget it most of the time.

COUNT

I suppose you're right. (Pause)

MIZZIE

You know, papa, you might just as well have brought us together a little earlier.

COUNT

Who? Oh, you and....

MIZZIE

Me and Miss Lolo. She's a dear.

COUNT

So you like her? Well, if it were only possible to know in advance.... But what's the use? Now it's all over.

MIZZIE (takes hold of his hand)

COUNT (rises and kisses her on the forehead; strolls about aimlessly for a few seconds) Tell me, Mizzie, what you think.... How do you like the boy?

MIZZIE

Philip? Oh, rather fresh.

COUNT

Fresh, perhaps, but smart. I hope he'll stay in the army. That's a much more sensible career than the diplomatic service. Slow, but sure. All you need is to live long enough in order to become a general. But a political career.... Now look at Egon ... three times he has almost become a minister.... And suppose he had succeeded? (Walking back and forth) Yes, yes ... we shall be rather lonely this Summer.

MIZZIE

But why shouldn't you go to Ostend, papa?

COUNT

Yes, why not...? Really, won't you come along? It would be rather ... without you, you know.... It's no use looking at me like that. I know! I haven't paid as much attention to you in the past as I should have....

MIZZIE (taking his hand again)

Oh, papa, you're not going to apologize, are you? I understand perfectly.

COUNT

Oh, well. But, you see, I shall not get much joy out of that trip without you. And what would you be doing here, all by yourself? You can't paint all day long.

MIZZIE

The only trouble is ... the Prince has asked me to marry him.

COUNT

What? Is it possible? No, you don't mean.... And ... and you said no?

MIZZIE

Practically.

COUNT

You did...? Oh, well.... After all, I have never tried to persuade you. It must be as you.... But I can't understand why. I have noticed for a long time, that he.... As far as age is concerned, you wouldn't be badly matched. And as for the rest ... sixty millions are not to be despised exactly. But just as you say.

MIZZIE (remains silent)

COUNT

Or could it possibly be on account of the boy? That would be to exaggerate the matter, I assure you. Things of that kind occur in the very best families. And particularly when you consider that his heart always remained with his wife.... All of a sudden you get dragged into an affair of that kind without exactly knowing how.

MIZZIE

And some poor girl of the people is thrown aside and allowed to go to the dogs.

COUNT

Oh, please, that's only in the books. And how could he help it? That kind of women seem always to die off early. And who knows what he might have done, if she hadn't died.... I really think that his action in regard to the boy has been pretty decent. That took courage, you know. I could tell you more than one case.... But don't let us talk of it. If that should be the only thing against him, however.... And besides, our being together at Ostend wouldn't commit you in any way.

MIZZIE

No, that's true.

COUNT

Well, then ... I tell you what. You make the trip with me. And if the place suits you,

you can stay. If not, you can go on to London for a visit with Aunt Lora. I mean simply, that there is no sense in your letting me go away alone.

MIZZIE

All right.

COUNT

What do you mean?

MIZZIE

I'll go with you. But without any obligation—absolutely free.

COUNT

You'll come with me, you say?

MIZZIE

I will, papa.

COUNT

Oh, I'm so glad. Thank you, Mizzie.

MIZZIE

Why should you thank me? It's a pleasure to me.

COUNT

You can't imagine, of course ... without you, Mizzie.... There would be so much to remember—this time in particular.... You know, of course, that I took Lolo to Normandy last year?

MIZZIE

Of course, I know....

COUNT

And as far as Egon is concerned ... not that I want to persuade you by any means ... but in a strange place like that you often get more acquainted with a person in a

couple of days than during many years at home.

MIZZIE

It's settled now that I go with you, papa. And as for the rest, don't let us talk of it—for the time being.

COUNT

Then, you know, I'm going to telephone to the ticket office at once and reserve sleeping car compartments for the day after to-morrow—or for to-morrow.

MIZZIE

Are you in such a hurry?

COUNT

What's the use of sitting about here, once we have made up our minds? So I'll telephone.... Does that suit you?

MIZZIE

Yes.

COUNT (puts his arms about her)

PROFESSOR WINDHOFER (appears at the garden gate)

COUNT

Why, there's the professor. Have you a lesson to-day?

MIZZIE

I had forgotten it, too.

PROFESSOR (handsome; about thirty-five; his beard is blond and trimmed to a point; he is very carefully dressed, and wears a gray overcoat; he takes off his hat as he enters the garden and comes forward)

Good morning, Countess. How do you do, Count?

COUNT

Good morning, my dear Professor, and how are you? You have to pardon me. I was just about to go to the telephone—we are going away, you know.

PROFESSOR

Oh, are you going away? Please, don't let me detain you.

COUNT

I suppose I shall see you later, Professor. (He goes into the house)

PROFESSOR

So you are going away, Countess?

MIZZIE

Yes, to Ostend.

PROFESSOR

That's rather a sudden decision.

MIZZIE

Yes, rather. But that's my way.

PROFESSOR

That means an end to the lessons for the present, I suppose? Too bad.

MIZZIE

I don't think I shall be able to-day even ... I am feeling a little upset.

PROFESSOR

Do you?—Well, you look rather pale, Maria.

MIZZIE

Oh, you think so?

PROFESSOR

And how long will you be gone?

MIZZIE

Until the Fall probably—perhaps until very late in the Fall even.

PROFESSOR

Then we can resume our lessons next November at the earliest, I suppose?

MIZZIE (smiling)

I don't think we shall....

PROFESSOR

Oh, you don't think so? (They look hard at each other)

MIZZIE

No, I don't.

PROFESSOR

Which means, Maria—that I am discharged.

MIZZIE

How can you put it that way, Rudolph? That is not quite fair.

PROFESSOR

Pardon me. But it really came a little more suddenly than I had expected.

MIZZIE

Better that than have it come too slow. Don't you think so?

PROFESSOR

Well, girl, I have no intention whatever to make any reproaches.

MIZZIE

Well, you have no reason. And it wouldn't be nice either. (She holds out her hand to him)

PROFESSOR (takes her hand and kisses it)

Will you please excuse me to the Count?

MIZZIE

Are you going already...?

PROFESSOR (unconcernedly)

Isn't that better?

MIZZIE (after a pause, during which she looks straight into his eyes) Yes, I think so. (They shake hands)

PROFESSOR

Good luck, Maria.

MIZZIE

Same to you.... And remember me to your wife and the children.

PROFESSOR

I won't forget, Countess. (He goes out)

MIZZIE (remains on the same spot for a little while, following him with her eyes)

COUNT (on the terrace)

Everything is ready. We'll leave at nine-thirty to-morrow night.—But what has become of the professor?

MIZZIE

I sent him away.

COUNT

Oh, you did?—And can you guess who has the compartment between yours and mine?... Egon and his young gentleman. Won't they be surprised though?

MIZZIE

Yes ... won't they? (She goes into the house)

CURTAIN

Footnotes

THE LONELY WAY

1 The Prater is at once the Central Park and the Coney Island of Vienna, plus a great deal more—a park with an area of 2,000 acres bounded by the Danube on one side and by the Danube Canal on the other, full of all kinds of amusement places.

2 The place where the Turks fortified themselves before driven from Vienna by John Sobieski in 1683 is now a small park, "Türkenschanz-Park," located in Döbling, one of the northwestern quarters of Greater Vienna. Only a little ways south of this park, and overlooking it, stands the Astronomical Observatory, not far from which Schnitzler has been living for a number of years. Numerous references to localities in this play indicate that he has placed the Wegrat home in that very villa quarter of Währing, where he himself is so thoroughly at home.

3 A suburb near the western limits of Vienna and not far from the location indicated for the Wegrat home.

4 The palace of Mirabell is one of the sights of Salzburg, the city near the Bavarian border, where Felix's regiment was stationed. It is now used as a museum. The gardens adjoining it are of the formal type so dear to, and so characteristic of, the eighteenth century.

5 One of the main routes through the Dolomites, leading from Southern Tirol into Italy. It is in part identical with the route outlined by Albert in "Intermezzo," but parts from it at Cortina to run straight south.

6 Former villages, now suburbs of Vienna, lying still nearer the city limits than Dornbach, where Sala is living.

INTERMEZZO

1 A small Bohemian city near the border of Upper Austria. On a high rock, with a

wonderful view along the river Moldau, stands the Schwarzenberg castle, which the author seems to have had in mind.

2 The names used in this passage occur a number of times in the various plays, indicating that their author probably has been drawing on experiences obtained during his own walking tours through the Dolomites. As far as Cortina, the route is identical with the one mentioned by Wegrath in "The Lonely Way." The Giau Pass is a little known footpath across Monte Giau, showing that the intention of Albert is to avoid the routes frequented by tourists.

3 Tatyana and Onyegin are characters in the opera "Eugène Onyegin," by Tschaikovsky, which is founded on Pushkin's famous poem of the same name.

4 A valley along the river Rienz, marking the northern limit of the Dolomite ranges in the Tirol.

5 This refers to a habit of Emperor William's, from whom the Italian composer, Leoncavallo, among others, once received such an order.

6 A large collection of art works and other antiquities, recovered by excavations on the site of the ancient city of Pergamon in Asia Minor, are kept in the Pergamene Museum, Berlin.

7 A large park in the center of Berlin, corresponding to the Central Park of New York or the Hyde Park of London.

COUNTESS MIZZIE

1 Diminutive of Maria.

2 Small towns south of Vienna. The subsequent reference to the Tiergarten shows that the Pazmandy residence must be in the little suburb of Lainz, at the extreme southwestern corner of Vienna. Near the Tiergarten there is actually an imperial hunting lodge, which the playwright seems to have appropriated for his purpose.

3 A street in the district of Wieden, near one of the principal shopping districts and

leading to the great Theresian Riding Academy.

4 Innsbruck is the capital of the province of Tirol. Krems is a small city on the Donau, not so very far from Vienna, having a fine high school or "gymnasium." The idea is, of course, that as the boy grew up, his father became more and more interested and wanted to have him within easier reach.

5 "Neben der Wiesinger-Florian." The name is slightly misspelt in the German text. It is that of Mrs. Olga Wisinger-Florian, a well-known Viennese painter of floral pieces, whose work is represented in many of the big galleries in Europe. She was born in 1844, made her name in the early eighties, and is still living.

6 "... Ein bissel gedraht." The term is specifically Viennese and implies not only "making a night of it," but also making the contents of that night as varied as the resources of the locality will permit.

7 One of the factory districts of Vienna, known chiefly because of the big insane asylum located there.

8 A fashionable restaurant near the Imperial Palace in the Inner City.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LONELY WAY—INTERMEZZO—COUNTESS MIZZIE ***

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