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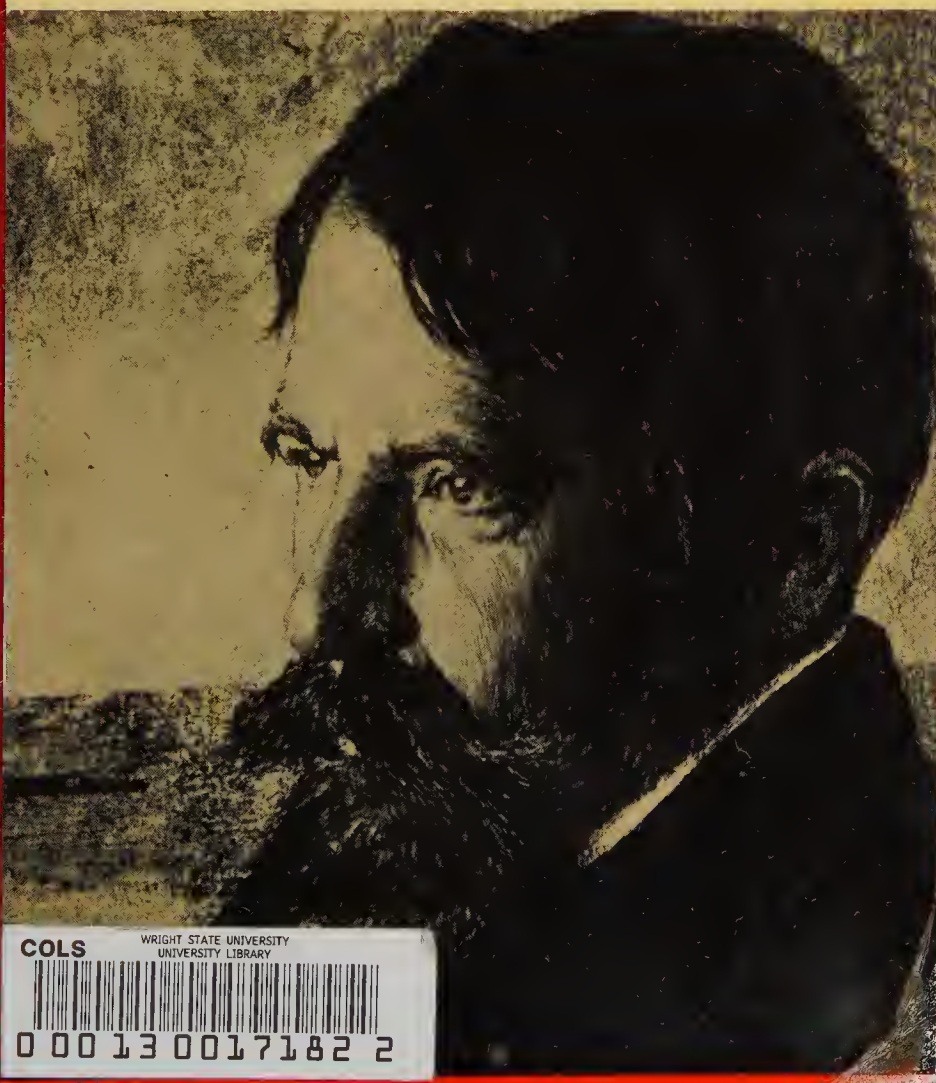
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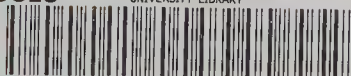
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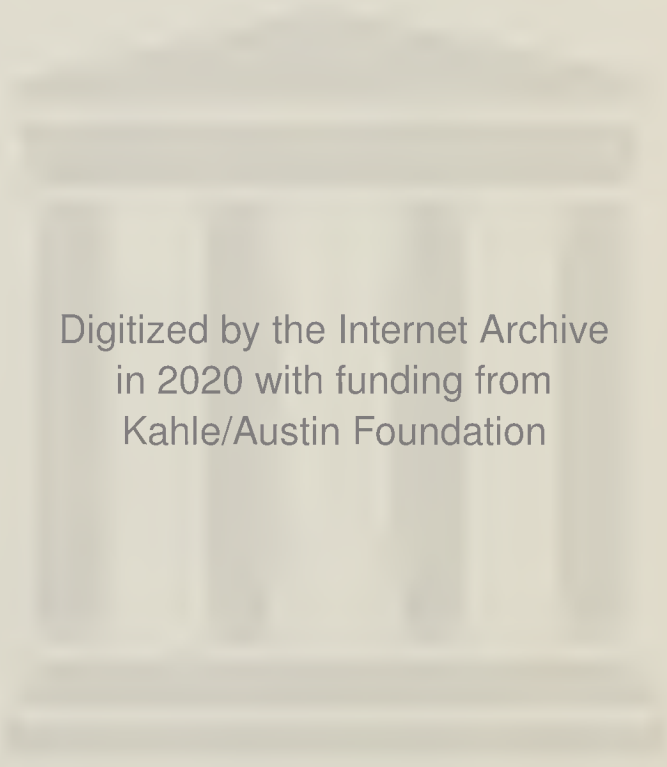


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Arthur Schnitzler

LA RONDE

*A new English version by*  
FRANK and JACQUELINE MARCUS

*Introduced by Frank Marcus*

METHUEN  
LONDON

P 1  
2638  
. N5  
R 413  
1982

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*The etching of Arthur Schnitzler on the front cover is by Emma Löwenstamm (1926) and is reproduced courtesy of Ullstein Bilderdienst.*

## Arthur Schnitzler

- 1862 Born 15 May in Vienna. Parents: Prof. Dr. Johann Schnitzler (1835-93), an eminent doctor, and Louise (née Markbreiter, 1838-1911).
- 1865 Birth of his brother Julius (died 1939).
- 1867 Birth of his sister Gisela (died 1953).
- 1871-79 Attends Akademische Gymnasium.
- 1879 Passes examinations with honours. Visit to Amsterdam. Starts medical studies in Vienna.
- 1880 First publication (*Love Song of a Ballerina*) in Munich. Essay *On Patriotism*.
- 1882 Voluntary military service for a year at Garrison Hospital No. 1 in Vienna.
- 1885 Promotion to Dr. med. Journey to Milan. Assistant doctor at two clinics.
- 1886 Goes to Merano with suspected T.B. Meets the owner of the Thalhof Hotel in Reichenau, Olga Waissnix (1862-97). Assistant to psychiatrist Theodor Meynert. Publication of poems and prose (sketches, aphorisms) in two journals.
- 1887 Joins editorial board of the *International Clinical Review*, founded by his father.
- 1888 Publication of one-act play, *The Adventure of his Life*. Professional visits to Berlin and London. Assistant to his father. Experiments with suggestion and hypnosis.
- 1889 Publication of medical research. Start of his affair with the actress Marie (Mizi) Glümer (1873-1925). Writes *America, The Other Man, My Friend Y, Episode*.
- 1890 Closer contact with literary circles ('Young Vienna'). Meets Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929), Felix Salten (1869-1947), Richard Beer-Hofmann (1866-1945), Hermann Bahr (1863-1934). Publication of *Alkandis Song, The Crucial Question, The Morning of Anatol's Wedding*.
- 1891 Premiere of *The Adventure of his Life* in the Theater der Josefstadt (Vienna). Publications: *The Fairy Tale, Stones of Remembrance, Wealth, Christmas Shopping*.

- 1892 First contact with the satirist Karl Kraus (1874-1936). Publications: *The Son, From A Doctor's Papers* (later utilised for the novel *Therese* in 1928), *Anatol* (with the prologue by 'Loris' (Hofmannsthal)).
- 1893 Death of his father. Schnitzler leaves the clinic and starts in private practice. Premiere of *A Farewell Supper* in Bad Ischl. Premiere of *The Fairy Tale* in Vienna which caused the first scandal around Schnitzler.
- 1894 First meeting with the singing teacher Marie Reinhard (1871-99). Start of correspondence with the Danish critic, historian, and novelist Georg Brandes (1842-1927). Publications: *Flowers* (an attempt, as in *The Fairy Tale*, to give literary expression to his experiences with Marie Glümer), *The Three Elixirs*, *Dying* (which introduced Schnitzler to a wider public) *The Widower*.
- 1895 Premiere of *Liebelei* (*Playing With Love*) at the Burgtheater, Vienna. Start of correspondence with Otto Brahm (1856-1912), director of the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, Publication: *The Little Comedy*.
- 1896 First public performance of *The Crucial Question* in Leipzig. Premiere of *Liebelei* at the Deutsches Theater. Schnitzler meets the critic Alfred Kerr. North Sea journey. Visits Henrik Ibsen in Christiana. Premiere of *Freiwild* (*Free Game*) at the Deutsches Theater. Publications: *Liebelei*, *A Parting*, *A Highly-Strung Person*.
- 1897 Death of Olga Waissnix. Prague premiere of *Freiwild*. Publications: *The Sage's Wife*, *The Day of Honour*, *Half Past One*, *The Dead Are Silent*.
- 1898 Premiere of *Christmas Shopping* in Vienna; premiere of *Episode* in Leipzig. Bicycle tour, partly accompanied by Hofmannsthal, of Austria, Switzerland, Northern Italy. Premiere of *The Legacy* in Berlin and Vienna.
- 1899 Premiere at the Burgtheater of *Paracelsus*, *The Companion*, *The Green Cockatoo*. Marie Reinhard dies of a ruptured appendix. Prize for 'Novels and Dramatic Work'. Schnitzler notes in his diary his first meeting with the actress Olga Gussmann (1882-1970), who later becomes his wife. Publications: *The Green Cockatoo*, *Around One Hour*.
- 1900 Premiere of *The Veil of Beatrice* in Breslau. Publications: *The Blind Geronimo*, *Lieutenant Gustl* (published in the *Neue Freie Presse*), *Reigen* (*La Ronde*), printed privately and not for sale in 200 copies at his own expense.



- 1901 Schnitzler reduced from officer's rank on account of *Lieutenant Gustl*. Premiere of *The Morning of Anatol's Wedding* in Berlin. Publications: *Frau Berta Garlan*, *Living Hours*, *New Year's Eve*.
- 1902 Premiere of one-act cycle *Living Hours* at the Deutsches Theater. Birth of his son Heinrich. Schnitzler and Otto Brahm visit Gerhart Hauptmann in Silesia. Publications: *The Foreign Country*, *Andreas Thameyer's Last Letter*, *The Greek Dancer*, *Eccentricity*, *Living Hours*.
- 1903 Prize for the cycle *Living Hours*. Government sanction against a Munich student theatre, after performance of three of the *Reigen* dialogues. Schnitzler marries Olga Gussmann, already the mother of his son Heinrich. Premiere of *The Puppeteer* at the Deutsches Theater. Publications: *The Puppeteer*, *Reigen*.
- 1904 Premiere of *The Lonely Road* at the Deutsches Theater. The book sale of *Reigen* forbidden in Germany. Premiere of *Gallant Cassian* in Berlin, directed by Max Reinhardt; the intended companion piece, *House Delorme*, suppressed by the censor. Publications: *Gallant Cassian*, *The Fate of Freiherr von Leisenbohg*.
- 1905 Premieres in Vienna of *Freiwild* and *Intermezzo*. Publications: *The New Song*, *The Prediction*, *Zum Grossen Wurstel*.
- 1906 Premiere of *The Call of Life* in Berlin under Otto Brahm, and *Zum Grossen Wurstel* in Vienna.
- 1907 Publications: *The Story of a Genius*, *Dead Gabriel*.
- 1908 Grillparzer Prize for *Intermezzo*. Publications: *The Road to Freedom*, *Countess Mizzi*, *The Death of the Bachelor*.
- 1909 Premiere of *Countess Mizzi* in Vienna. Birth of his daughter Lili. Premiere of *Gallant Cassian* as operetta, with music by Oscar Straus, in Leipzig.
- 1910 Premiere of *The Veil of Pierrette* (pantomime with music by Dohnanyi) in Dresden. Premiere of operatic version of *Liebelei*, with music by Franz Neumann, in Frankfurt. Premiere of *Young Medardus* at the Burgtheater. Publication: *The Veil of Pierrette*.
- 1911 Death of his mother. First performance of *The Wide Country* in Berlin, Breslau, Munich, Prague, Leipzig, Hannover, Bochum, and Vienna. Publications: *The Triple Warning*, *The Murderer*, *The Shepherd's Flute*, *The Diary of Redegonda*.

- 1912 Premiere of *Marionettes (The Puppeteer, Gallant Cassian, Zum Grossen Wurstel)* in Vienna. Performance of *Reigen* in Budapest (in Hungarian) banned. The planned Viennese production of *Professor Bernhardi* cancelled by the censor. Premiere takes place in Berlin. Otto Brahm dies on the opening night. The loss of his friend causes Schnitzler's gradual withdrawal from the theatre. To celebrate his 50th birthday, S. Fischer publish Schnitzler's collected works.
- 1913 Publication of *Frau Beate and her Son*.
- 1914 Premiere of *Elskovsleg* (the first film version of *Liebelei*). Receives Raimund Prize for *Young Medardus*. Publication of *The Greek Dancer* and other novels.
- 1915 Premiere of one-act programme *Comedy of Words (Hour of Recognition, Big Scene, The Feast of Bacchus)* in Vienna, Frankfurt, and Darmstadt.
- 1916 Premiere of *Stones of Remembrance* in aid of war wounded.
- 1917 Premiere of *Fink and Fliederbusch* in Vienna. Publication: *Dr. Gräsler*.
- 1918 Premiere of *Professor Bernhardi* in Vienna (censorship was abolished after the fall of the monarchy). Publication: *Casanova's Return Home*.
- 1919 Publication: *The Sisters, or Casanova in the Spa*.
- 1920 Premiere at the Burgtheater of *The Sisters or Casanova in the Spa*. Prize for *Professor Bernhardi*. Premiere of *Reigen* in Berlin.
- 1921 First performance of *Reigen* in Vienna. After a disturbance, closure by the police (ban lifted in 1922). Schnitzler divorces his wife. Organised tumult during a performance of *Reigen* in Berlin results in famous court case. All the accused — management, directors, and actors — found not guilty. Premiere of American film *The Affairs of Anatol*.
- 1922 First lengthy meeting with Sigmund Freud, following Freud's message of congratulation on Schnitzler's 60th birthday.
- 1923 Viennese premiere of the film version of *Young Medardus*.
- 1924 Premiere of *Comedy of Seduction* at the Burgtheater. Publications: *Comedy of Seduction, Fräulein Else*.
- 1925 Publications: *The Judge's Wife, Dream Novel*.
- 1926 Honoured by the Burgtheater. Last meeting with Freud in Berlin. Premiere of *New Year's Eve*. Publications: *The Path to Consecration, Play at Dawn*.

- 1927 Premiere of film of *Liebelei* in Berlin. Daughter Lili marries an Italian Captain, Arnolfo Capellini. Publications: *Book of Proverbs and Thoughts, The Spirit in the Word and the Spirit in the Deed*.
- 1928 Premiere of the film *Freiwild* (*Free Game*) in Berlin. Daughter Lili commits suicide in Venice; Schnitzler flies to attend funeral. Publications: completion of *Collected Works*, including *Therese, Chronicle of a Woman's Life*.
- 1929 Film version of *Fräulein Else*, with Elisabeth Bergner and Albert Steinrück. Premiere in Vienna of *Playing in the Summer Air*.
- 1930 Publication of *Playing in the Summer Air*.
- 1931 Premiere of *The Path to Consecration* at the Burgtheater. Film (talkie) of *Daybreak* (*Play at Dawn*). 21st October: Arthur Schnitzler dies in Vienna from a cerebral haemorrhage.

## Introduction

'I have been aware for several years of the extensive concurrence which exists between your views and mine regarding some psychological and erotic problems, and have recently mustered sufficient courage to select specifically one such case (*Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, 1905). I have often asked myself in wonder where you could have found this or that secret knowledge which I was able to discover only after arduous examination of the object, and ended up feeling envious of the poet for whom I had always had the deepest admiration.

You can imagine the pleasure and delight I obtained from your lines in which you tell me that you, on your part, have received inspiration from my writings. I feel quite resentful that I had to wait for my fiftieth birthday before discovering such a unique honour.'

This letter, written on 8 May, 1906 by Dr. Sigmund Freud, acknowledged a fiftieth birthday greeting received from Arthur Schnitzler. Incredibly, it was their first overt contact. They lived quite close to each other, and although they were to meet a few times subsequently and continued a sporadic exchange of letters, their relationship was one of deferential formality. Their creative territory was almost too identical; each sensed behind the other a possible *doppelgänger*. Their background — wealthy Jewish middle-class — and their respectable mode of living was of a kind. Schnitzler was a doctor, and Freud had an artist's imagination. They were too alike for comfort.

Between them, they were the supreme chroniclers of *fin de siècle* Vienna. The morbidity of Mahler and the crude anguish of Egon Schiele belong to this century: the famous charm had turned rancid. The potency of this charm must be recognized. It is easy enough with hindsight to scoff at the tinsel allure of old Vienna. We know all about the corruption, hypocrisy, and latent violence which lay behind the baroque façade. The genial old Emperor Francis Joseph, who seemed to go on forever, suffered the most appalling tragedies in his private life. The whirl of the waltzing couples at the innumerable masked balls brought moments of intoxication, but they were evanescent. The

Cassandra-like voice of the prophet Karl Kraus could barely make itself heard. Soon there would be a scruffy youth at the street corner, laboriously and clumsily painting watercolour sketches of the pretty views. He signed them 'A. Hitler'. The Danube always was brown, not blue.

The *genre* pieces of Arthur Schnitzler belong strictly to their time: *Anatol* appeared scene by scene between 1888 and 1892, and the *Reigen* cycle was completed and printed privately at the author's expense 'to be read among friends' in 1900. ('I spent the whole winter on a row of scenes which are totally unprintable, of no great literary value, but if disinterred after a couple of hundred years, may illuminate in a unique way aspects of our culture.')

Anatol was a self-projection, as evidenced by his autobiographical record *My Youth in Vienna*. No one can accuse him of self-glorification. Dr. Schnitzler wields his scalpel as ruthlessly on himself as on his other characters. Even — or perhaps especially — his hero's megalomania finds expression. He feels himself to be a giant of history, trampling underfoot his pathetic and all-too-willing victims. His self-analysis is Freudian in its total dedication to the truth — although, as a dramatist, he is equally alive to the superb irony inherent in his tragi-comic adventures. The *raisonneur* is not Anatol, but his friend Max.

Anatol is yet another incarnation of Don Juan. Like the Don, he wants to seduce all women, in order to prove their fickleness. In view of Schnitzler's later interest in Casanova (the novel *Casanova's Return Home* and the play *The Sisters, or Casanova in the Spa*, 1918/1919) it should be said that he differentiated between the two supreme sex symbols in much the same way as did Stefan Zweig in his famous comparative study. Essentially, Don Juan was a destroyer who hated women, whereas Casanova, with his inexhaustible potency, was like a God come to earth to satisfy them. According to Zweig, women recommended Casanova to each other without a twinge of jealousy.

But if Anatol's derivation was partly literary, the same cannot be said of his victims. They were picked up in the street, plucked from behind shop counters, discovered in their humble homes as sempstresses, spotted in the opera chorus, or pushing other people's perambulators. They were generous, available, and content to live for the day. They were the embodiments of male fantasies of the perfect mistress. They were also typical of their time and place, instantly recognized by the audience. Schnitzler had invented (or discovered) *das süsse Mädel* (the sweet girl)

with all her abundant charms. Her Viennese lilt, her awareness of her lower social status which ruled out marriage, and her modesty of demeanour made her quite irresistible. She was always utterly sincere — even if it was only for the duration of one evening.

The lordly condescension with which she was treated by her lovers (officers, students, artists, or idle young men-about-town) is enough to make a feminist's hackles rise. A popular song from a slightly later Viennese operetta contains the line: 'She is a sales-girl in a shoe shop, *but* I love her.'

Even the 'sweet girl' was not immune from literary influences. In his tragedy *Liebelei* (1895) Schnitzler created a heroine of such purity, goodness, and nobility that one is inexorably reminded of Faust's Gretchen. It took the daring panache of Wedekind's *Lulu* to oust the virginal heroines from the German stage.

It must not be assumed, however, that there is lack of variety among Anatol's partners. They include married women, a circus artist, and a temperamental Hungarian. It was the popularity of the 'sweet girl' which tied her to her inventor or discoverer till the end of his days — and beyond them. His later works, which included poetic drama (*Young Medardus*), an early study of anti-semitism (*Professor Bernhardt*), and several substantial tragicomedies, could not obliterate the memory of the earlier works. There is about them a veracity which carries total conviction. This, one feels, is what it must have been like to have lived in Vienna in the nineties.

Schnitzler's approach is clinical rather than critical, but criticism is certainly implied. There is about these plays an all-pervading lovelessness. Only Christine, the heroine of *Liebelei*, brims over with love — and it destroys her. She cannot live in a world of trivial rituals, in which her lover is forced by convention to sacrifice his life in a duel with the deceived husband of a former mistress.

*Regien* (*La Ronde*) is Schnitzler's masterpiece. In ten dialogues its ten characters each have one change of partner, until the circle is completed in the room of the prostitute who opened the play. Schnitzler presents a cross section of Viennese society, with sex forming the links. Each sketch — with one exception — contains one or more of the notorious lines of dashes, which denote sexual intercourse.

The sour comedy obtained from this device rests mainly — like Hogarth's visual equivalent — on the 'Before' and 'After' aspect. The men's ardour turns post-coitally into impatience or self-



congratulation, the women yearn for a little tenderness and make the expected dissembling gestures of shame. All are motivated by greed. The total effect, though funny, is also poignant and melancholy.

Schnitzler is sometimes accused of coldness of heart. There is an element of truth in the accusation: it is the price we have to pay for the absence of sentimentality. *Reigen* is a play of profound disillusion. The theory which is sometimes put forward, that it is intended as an illustration of the way in which venereal disease is passed on, is patently nonsensical. There is not a shred of evidence to support it. It is the quest for possession which is transmitted from partner to partner — and this is shown to be by no means an exclusively masculine trait.

The crude realism of the opening scenes gives way to the play-acting of the middle-class protagonists, which in turn leads to the specifically theatrical figures. The grace of the writing does indeed give the play the quality of a dance, but at times it suggests a *Totentanz*. ('One slip and we're in the Danube', the Prostitute warns the Soldier. 'Who cares' is his reply.)

There is nothing procreative about these sexual relationships, and they are certainly not expressions of love. In our own sex-obsessed times, when 'making love' is so often a euphemism for an activity which falls more logically into the category of engineering or athletics, it is chastening to be confronted by Dr. Schnitzler's casebook of nearly a hundred years ago. The explorations of Dr. Freud had therapeutic value too, but arguably uncovered more problems than they solved. The mystery of the human personality remains enigmatic. Even so, the Viennese doctors deserve credit for lifting the veil of ignorance (or opening Pandora's box, according to your convictions).

The notoriety of *Reigen* haunted Schnitzler until the end of his days. After years of suppression of publication and stage performances, the more liberal atmosphere following the First World War allowed productions to be staged. The public appeared to be ready for it, but the authorities were hostile. A disturbance during the Vienna production of 1921 gave the police an excuse to close the play. The ban was lifted in 1922.

In Berlin, the repercussions of the stage performance were sensational. The play became the focus of organised political demonstrations by right-wing extremists, who used it for anti-semitic purposes. In 1921 the cast was arraigned on charges of causing a public nuisance and participating in obscene acts, and the six-day trial captured the headlines. Forty witnesses were

examined, and the testimony of 19 experts was submitted to the Court. The accused comprised the 10 actors, one director, and the two administrative directors of the theatre.

Much was made of the notorious lines of dashes, denoting intercourse. The director dealt with these indications of intimacy by lowering the curtains and playing a few seconds of a *valse triste*. There was nothing objectionable in the staging or in the dialogue, although some witnesses complained about blasphemy (this referred to pictures of the Madonna in the rural retreat used by the Actress and the Poet for their tryst). But the music was the last straw. The prosecution alleged that the rhythm of it attempted to imitate the rhythm of coition. This proved too much for Alfred Kerr, the famous drama critic, who had been called as an expert. 'If this allegation is correct', he shouted out, 'then it is the musicians and not the actors who should stand in the dock!' From this point on, political melodrama turned irrevocably into boulevard farce.

All this was most embarrassing to the by now venerated author. He expressed the wish that *Reigen* should never again be publicly performed. Clearly he felt that it would take all of the couple of hundred years he had originally predicted before the play's illumination of aspects of Viennese culture would be appreciated.

He gravely underestimated his work. Truth is for all time. What he took to be an esoteric exercise in documentary realism turned out to have a poetic and spiritual centre which is capable of reaching us today. There are moments in *Reigen* which are decidedly too close for comfort. They will have validity for as long as men feel impelled to sate their animal passion on women, and women — like the heroine of the Restoration comedy who is being carried off to her seduction by her would-be lover — protest by *whispering* 'Help! Help!'.

Frank Marcus



# La Ronde

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At the time of going to press a production of this translation of *La Ronde* was scheduled for transmission on BBC television in January 1982. Producer: Louis Marks.

### Characters

SOLDIER

YOUNG GENTLEMAN

HUSBAND

POET

COUNT

PROSTITUTE

HOUSEMAID

YOUNG WOMAN

SWEET YOUNG THING

ACTRESS

## The Prostitute and the Soldier

*Late evening, near a bridge by the Danube. The SOLDIER passes on his way home, whistling.*

PROSTITUTE. Hello, angel.

*The SOLDIER turns round, then walks on.*

Want to come with me?

SOLDIER. Oh, I'm the angel?

PROSTITUTE. Of course, who else? Go on — come with me. I'm only round the corner.

SOLDIER. Haven't got time — back to barracks . . .

PROSTITUTE. You'll get back in time. It's nicer at my place.

SOLDIER. *(Close to her.)* I believe you.

PROSTITUTE. Careful — there may be a watchman about.

SOLDIER. Who cares — I'll soon see to him. *(He pats his holster.)*

PROSTITUTE. Come on, then.

SOLDIER. Oh, leave me alone. Anyway, I've got no money.

PROSTITUTE. I don't need any money.

SOLDIER *(stopping beneath a street lamp)*: Don't need any money? Who do you think you are?

PROSTITUTE. I only take money from civilians. The military gets it free.

SOLDIER. You're the girl Huber told me about!

PROSTITUTE. Never heard of him.

SOLDIER. You must be her. You know the café in the Schiffgassen — that's where you picked him up.

- PROSTITUTE. Oh, I've picked up a lot of boys in that café — I'll say I have!
- SOLDIER. All right, let's go, let's go.
- PROSTITUTE. Now you're in a hurry.
- SOLDIER. Well, what are we waiting for? I've got to be back in barracks by ten.
- PROSTITUTE. How long have you been in the services?
- SOLDIER. Mind your own business. How far is it?
- PROSTITUTE. Ten minutes' walk.
- SOLDIER. That's too far. Give us a kiss.
- PROSTITUTE. I like that best if I fancy someone.
- SOLDIER. I don't. No, I won't go with you — it's too far, I tell you.
- PROSTITUTE. I know what — come tomorrow afternoon.
- SOLDIER. All right. Give us your address.
- PROSTITUTE. I bet you don't turn up.
- SOLDIER. If I say I'll come, I'll come.
- PROSTITUTE. Listen, if it's too far for you tonight, how about . . . (*She points towards the river.*)
- SOLDIER. Where?
- PROSTITUTE. It's nice and quiet there — nobody around.
- SOLDIER. Ah — that's not the same.
- PROSTITUTE. With me it's always the same. Come on, who knows if we'll be alive tomorrow.
- SOLDIER. All right, then, but quick.
- PROSTITUTE. Careful, it's dark down here. One slip and you're in the river.
- SOLDIER. Who cares.
- PROSTITUTE. Don't be in such a hurry. There's a bench here.
- SOLDIER. You certainly know your way around.
- PROSTITUTE. I'd like to have someone like you for a lover.

- SOLDIER. I'd be too demanding.
- PROSTITUTE. Soon see about that.
- SOLDIER. Huh!
- PROSTITUTE. Not so loud — someone might hear us.  
You'd never think we were in the middle  
of Vienna . . .
- SOLDIER. Come on, then, come on.
- PROSTITUTE. Careful — we'll be in the water.
- SOLDIER. Oh, you. (*Grabbing her.*)
- PROSTITUTE. Hold on, for God's sake!
- SOLDIER. Don't worry . . .
- 
- PROSTITUTE. It would have been better on the bench.
- SOLDIER. There or here, what's the difference. Well,  
up you get.
- PROSTITUTE. What's the rush?
- SOLDIER. I told you — I've got to get back to  
barracks. I'm late as it is.
- PROSTITUTE. Hey, what's your name?
- SOLDIER. Why do you want to know?
- PROSTITUTE. Mine's Leokadia.
- SOLDIER. Never heard of it.
- PROSTITUTE. Wait . . .
- SOLDIER. What do you want now?
- PROSTITUTE. Give us a little something for the caretaker?
- SOLDIER. You must be joking — I'm not that stupid!  
Well, so long, *Leokadia* . . .
- PROSTITUTE. Bastard! Mean bastard!  
*He has disappeared.*

## The Soldier and the Housemaid

*The Prater on a Sunday evening. A path leading from the Wurstlprater into the dark alleys. One can still hear the distant music from the Wurstlprater, as well as the strains of the Funfkreuzertanz, an ordinary polka, played by a brass band.*

- HOUSEMAID. And now you must tell me why you were so anxious to leave.
- SOLDIER *(laughs stupidly).*
- HOUSEMAID. It was so nice — and I do love dancing.
- SOLDIER *(puts his arm round her waist).*
- HOUSEMAID *(permitting it)*: We're not dancing now. Why do you hold me so tight?
- SOLDIER. What's your name? Kathi?
- HOUSEMAID. You must have Kathi on the brain.
- SOLDIER. I know — don't tell me — Marie.
- HOUSEMAID. Isn't it dark here — I'm getting really frightened.
- SOLDIER. You needn't be frightened; I'm with you.
- HOUSEMAID. But where are we going? There's not a soul about. Let's go back again — it's so dark!
- SOLDIER *(puffs his cigar, making it glow in the darkness)*. It's getting lighter already! *(He laughs.)* You're a little darling, aren't you!
- HOUSEMAID. What are you doing? If I'd have known . . .
- SOLDIER. I'll tell you what. There wasn't a single girl at the café as cuddlesome as you tonight.
- HOUSEMAID. Did you try them all?
- SOLDIER. Just what you notice when you're dancing — and you can 'notice' quite a lot — ha!
- HOUSEMAID. But you danced more often with that blonde with a squint than with me.

- SOLDIER. She's an old acquaintance of one of my friends.
- HOUSEMAID. Of the corporal with the turned-up moustache?
- SOLDIER. No — of the civilian — you know, the one who sat at my table at first. The one who speaks with a frog in his throat.
- HOUSEMAID. Oh, I know — he's a fast worker.
- SOLDIER. Did he try any funny business with you? I'll show him! What did he do to you?
- HOUSEMAID. Oh, nothing — I only noticed how he behaved with the others.
- SOLDIER. Tell me, Miss Marie . . .
- HOUSEMAID. You'll burn me with your cigar!
- SOLDIER. Sorry, Miss Marie. Could I just call you Marie?
- HOUSEMAID. We're not well enough acquainted yet.
- SOLDIER. A lot of people who hate each other's guts call each other by their Christian names.
- HOUSEMAID. Next time, perhaps, if we . . . But Mr Franz —
- SOLDIER. You remembered my name!
- HOUSEMAID. But Mr Franz . . .
- SOLDIER. Just call me Franz, Miss Marie.
- HOUSEMAID. But you mustn't be so naughty. What if somebody comes along?
- SOLDIER. And if someone did come, he would only see two inches in front of his nose.
- HOUSEMAID. Oh dear, where are you taking me?
- SOLDIER. Look — there are two just like us.
- HOUSEMAID. Where? I can't see anything.
- SOLDIER. There . . . in front of us.
- HOUSEMAID. Why do you say 'like us'?

SOLDIER. Well, I — I only mean, that they like each other, too.

HOUSEMAID. Oh, do be careful. What's this? I nearly tripped.

SOLDIER. Only the railings round the lawn.

HOUSEMAID. Don't push me so — I'll fall.

SOLDIER. Ssh — not so loud.

HOUSEMAID. I shall really scream. But what are you doing . . . but . . .

SOLDIER. There isn't a soul in sight.

HOUSEMAID. Let's go back to the crowd.

SOLDIER. We don't need a crowd, do we, Marie — not for that — haha!

HOUSEMAID. But Mr Franz — I beg of you — for God's sake. Look, if I had . . . known . . . oh . . . oh . . .

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SOLDIER (*sublimely happy*): God Almighty! Ah . . .

HOUSEMAID. . . . I can't even see your face.

SOLDIER. Who cares about my face . . .

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SOLDIER. Well, Miss Marie, you can't stay there lying in the grass.

HOUSEMAID. Help me up, Franz.

SOLDIER. Come on, then.

HOUSEMAID. Oh, God, Franz.

SOLDIER. What's up with Franz now?

HOUSEMAID. You are — you're a wicked man, Franz.

SOLDIER. That's right. Wait here a minute.

HOUSEMAID. What are you leaving me for?

SOLDIER. I hope I'm allowed to light my cigar.

HOUSEMAID. It is so dark.



- SOLDIER. Tomorrow morning it will be light again.
- HOUSEMAID. Tell me, at least — are you fond of me?
- SOLDIER. Well, I should have thought you'd have felt that, Miss Marie. (*He laughs.*)
- HOUSEMAID. Where are we going?
- SOLDIER. Back, of course.
- HOUSEMAID. Please don't go so fast.
- SOLDIER. What's up with you? I don't like walking in the dark.
- HOUSEMAID. Tell me, Franz — *are* you fond of me?
- SOLDIER. But I've just told you that I'm fond of you.
- HOUSEMAID. Then — don't you want to give me a kiss?
- SOLDIER. (*graciously*): There . . . listen — you can hear the music!
- HOUSEMAID. Don't tell me you want to go dancing again.
- SOLDIER. Of course — why not?
- HOUSEMAID. Look, Franz, I'll have to go home — they'll tell me off, anyway. My mistress is a . . . she'd prefer me never to go out at all.
- SOLDIER. All right, then — so you'll have to go home.
- HOUSEMAID. I should have thought, Mr Franz, that you'd see me home.
- SOLDIER. See you home? Ha!
- HOUSEMAID. Go on. It's so sad to have to go home alone.
- SOLDIER. Well, where do you live?
- HOUSEMAID. It's not very far — in the Porzellangasse.
- SOLDIER. Oh? Well, in that case we're on the same route . . . But it's too early for me now. I've got extra time today — I don't have to be back at barracks till twelve. I'm still going dancing.
- HOUSEMAID. Of course — I can imagine. It's the blonde

- with the squint this time.
- SOLDIER. Oh, it's not such a bad squint.
- HOUSEMAID. Oh God — how wicked men are. I expect you do the same with everyone.
- SOLDIER. That would be too much of a good thing.
- HOUSEMAID. Franz . . . I beg of you . . . not tonight. Look, stay with me tonight.
- SOLDIER. All right, all right. But at least, you'll let me dance . . .
- HOUSEMAID. I shan't dance with anyone else tonight.
- SOLDIER. There it is . . .
- HOUSEMAID. What?
- SOLDIER. The café. It didn't take us long to get back. They are still playing . . . tadarada, tadarada (*Singing.*) . . . Well, if you want to wait for me, I'll take you home . . . if not . . . so long —
- HOUSEMAID. Yes, I'll wait.
- They enter the dance hall.*
- SOLDIER. Tell you what, Miss Marie — get yourself a glass of beer.
- Turning to a blonde, who is dancing by with a fellow, and addressing her ceremoniously.*
- My dear young lady, may I have the pleasure?

## The Housemaid and the Young Gentleman

*A hot summer afternoon. The YOUNG GENTLEMAN's parents have gone to the country. The cook has her day off. In the kitchen, the HOUSEMAID writes a letter to her lover, the SOLDIER. The bell rings from the YOUNG GENTLEMAN's room. She gets up and goes to his room. He lies on a divan, smoking, and reading a French novel.*

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HOUSEMAID.

Did the young master ring?

YOUNG MAN.

Oh yes, Marie — yes, I did ring, ~~yes~~ . . .

What was it I . . . Oh yes, that's it. Let down the blinds, Marie. It is cooler when the blinds are down . . . yes . . .

*S - act  
JWS*

HOUSEMAID

*(goes to the window and lets down the blind).*

YOUNG MAN

*(reading again).* What are you doing, Marie? Oh, yes. But now I can't see to read.

HOUSEMAID.

The young master is always so — industrious.

YOUNG MAN

*(the remark registers).* That's all. You may go.

HOUSEMAID

*(goes).*

YOUNG MAN

*(tries to read on, but soon drops the book and rings again).*

HOUSEMAID

*(reappears).*

YOUNG MAN.

Oh, Marie . . . Yes, what was I going to say . . . yes . . . Is there any cognac in the house?

HOUSEMAID.

Yes, but I expect it's locked up.

YOUNG MAN.

Well, who has the keys?

HOUSEMAID.

Lini.

YOUNG MAN.

Who is Lini?

HOUSEMAID.

The cook, Master Alfred.

YOUNG MAN.

Well then, ask Lini.

HOUSEMAID.

But it's Lini's day off today.

YOUNG MAN.

Oh.

HOUSEMAID.

Would the young master like me to go to the café?

YOUNG MAN.

Oh, no . . . it's hot enough as it is. I don't really need cognac. I know, Marie — bring me a glass of water. Oh, Marie — let the tap run, so that it's nice and cold.

*She goes. He looks after her. In the doorway she turns round to him; he looks up at the ceiling. She turns on the tap in the kitchen and lets the water run; meanwhile, she goes to her small cabinet, washes her hands, and pats her hair tidy in front of the mirror. She then brings the YOUNG GENTLEMAN his glass of water. She steps to the divan, the YOUNG GENTLEMAN lifts himself onto his elbow, and as the HOUSEMAID gives him the glass, their hands touch.*

YOUNG MAN.

Thanks. Well, what is it? Be careful — put the glass back on the saucer . . .

*He lies down and stretches.*

What time is it?

HOUSEMAID.

Five o'clock, Master Alfred.

YOUNG MAN.

Oh, five o'clock. All right, that will do.

*The HOUSEMAID goes and turns at the door. The YOUNG GENTLEMAN looks after her — she notices it and smiles. The YOUNG GENTLEMAN remains lying down for a while, then suddenly gets up. He goes to the door, back again, and lies down on the divan. He tries to read. After a few minutes, he rings the bell again. The HOUSEMAID appears with a smile which she cannot hide.*

YOUNG MAN.

Oh, Marie — I wanted to ask you — did Dr Schüller drop in this morning?

HOUSEMAID.

No, nobody came this morning.

YOUNG MAN.

Oh, that's strange. So Dr Schüller was not

- here. Do you know who Dr Schüller is?
- HOUSEMAID. Certainly — the big gentleman with the black beard.
- YOUNG MAN. That's him. Are you quite sure he wasn't here?
- HOUSEMAID. Yes — nobody was here, Master Alfred.
- YOUNG MAN. (*decisively*): Come here, Marie.
- HOUSEMAID. Yes. (*Going towards him.*)
- YOUNG MAN. Nearer — that's right. I only thought —
- HOUSEMAID. What did the young master think?
- YOUNG MAN. I thought — I thought — well, it's about your blouses . . . which one is this? Well, come closer — I won't bite you.
- HOUSEMAID. (*nearer to him*). What's wrong with my blouse? Doesn't the young master like it?
- YOUNG MAN. (*touches the blouse, pulls the HOUSEMAID down to him*). Blue? That's a very nice blue. (*Suavely*:) You dress very nicely, Marie.
- HOUSEMAID. But Master Alfred . . .
- YOUNG MAN. Well, what's the matter? (*He has opened her blouse. In a matter-of-fact voice*:) You have very beautiful white skin, Marie.
- HOUSEMAID. The young master flatters me.
- YOUNG MAN. (*kissing her on the breast*): Well, that can't hurt.
- HOUSEMAID. Oh, no — oh, no.
- YOUNG MAN. You sigh so much. Why do you sigh?
- HOUSEMAID. Oh, Master Alfred . . .
- YOUNG MAN. These are nice slippers.
- HOUSEMAID. . . . But . . . Master Alfred . . . if the doorbell should ring . . .
- YOUNG MAN. Who could ring now . . .
- HOUSEMAID. But, Sir . . . look . . . it's so light . . .

- YOUNG MAN. You don't have to be shy in front of me. You don't have to be shy in front of anyone, when you're so pretty. Yes, by Jove, Marie . . . you are . . . even your hair smells agreeable.
- HOUSEMAID. Master Alfred . . .
- YOUNG MAN. Don't make difficulties, Marie. I've seen more than this already. When I came home the other night and got myself some water, the door to your room was open . . . well . . .
- HOUSEMAID (*biding her face*): Oh, God — but I didn't know that Master Alfred would be so naughty.
- YOUNG MAN. I saw quite a lot then . . . this . . . and this . . . and this . . . and —
- HOUSEMAID. But Master Alfred —
- YOUNG MAN. Come here, come here . . . just there . . . that's right.
- HOUSEMAID. But what if someone should ring now?
- YOUNG MAN. Now stop it . . . at worst, we needn't answer the door . . .

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*The doorbell rings.*

- YOUNG MAN. Dash it! And the noise the man's making. Perhaps he rang before and we didn't notice.
- HOUSEMAID. Oh, I kept my ears open all the time.
- YOUNG MAN. Well, go on — go and look through the keyhole.
- HOUSEMAID. Master Alfred — you are . . . oh, so wicked!
- YOUNG MAN. Now please go and have a look.
- The HOUSEMAID goes and the YOUNG GENTLEMAN quickly draws the blinds.*
- HOUSEMAID (*reappearing*): Well, there's nobody there

now. Whoever it was, has gone. Perhaps it was Dr Schüller.

YOUNG MAN (*ill at ease*). All right, that will do.

HOUSEMAID (*approaches him*). But . . .

YOUNG MAN (*retreating from her*). Oh, Marie — I am going to the café now.

HOUSEMAID (*tenderly*): So soon . . . Master Alfred?

YOUNG MAN (*severely*): I am going to the café. If Dr Schüller should call —

HOUSEMAID. He won't come now.

YOUNG MAN (*more severely*): If Dr Schüller should call, I . . . I . . . I am — at the café. —

*He walks into the other room. The HOUSEMAID takes a cigar from the cigar-box, puts it into her pocket, and goes.*

## The Young Gentleman and the Young Woman

*Evening. A salon furnished with banal elegance. The YOUNG GENTLEMAN enters and, without removing his hat and coat, lights the candles. He opens the door into the neighbouring room, and glances into it. The reflection of the candles in the salon is thrown across the parquet floor onto a fourposter bed, standing against the connecting wall. A reddish glow spreads from the fireplace in the corner of the bedroom onto the curtains surrounding the bed. The YOUNG GENTLEMAN inspects the bedroom. He takes the scent-spray from the dressing-table and sprays the pillows with violet perfume. He then sprays both rooms, so that the whole place smells of violets. He takes off his hat and coat and, seating himself in the blue velvet armchair, lights a cigarette. After a short while he rises and ascertains that the blinds are drawn. Suddenly he steps into the bedroom again and opens a drawer of the bedside table. He feels into it and brings out a tortoiseshell hairpin. He looks for a place to hide it, finally deciding on his coat pocket. He goes to his coat again, from which he takes a small*

*white package. He puts it by the cognac, goes to the cupboard and takes out two small plates and pastry forks. He takes a marron glacé from the package, and eats it. Then he pours himself a glass of cognac, which he gulps. He looks at his watch and paces up and down the room. Then he stops in front of the big wall mirror and tidies his hair and small moustache with his pocket-comb. He goes to the entrance door and listens — not a sound. He closes the blue folding doors leading to the bedroom, sits in an armchair, and only rises when the door is opened and the YOUNG WOMAN enters.*

*The YOUNG WOMAN, thickly veiled, closes the door behind her, and remains standing for a moment with her left hand resting on her heart, as though she were trying to conquer a great excitement.*

YOUNG MAN

*(steps towards her, takes her left hand, and presses a kiss onto her glove. Softly):*  
Thank you.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Alfred — Alfred!

YOUNG MAN.

Come, dearest lady . . . come, Frau Emma . . .

YOUNG WOMAN.

Let me be for a while — please . . . oh, please, Alfred!

*She is still standing by the door. The YOUNG MAN stands before her, holding her hand.*

Incidentally, where are we?

YOUNG MAN.

At my place.

YOUNG WOMAN.

This house is dreadful, Alfred.

YOUNG MAN.

But why? It is a very genteel house.

YOUNG WOMAN.

I encountered two gentlemen on the stairs.

YOUNG MAN.

Acquaintances?

YOUNG WOMAN.

I don't know. It's possible.

YOUNG MAN.

Forgive me, dear lady, but surely you know your acquaintances.

YOUNG WOMAN.

I didn't even look at them.



- YOUNG MAN. But even if they were your best friends — they could not have recognised you. Even I . . . if I didn't know it was you . . . this veil —
- YOUNG WOMAN. There are two.
- YOUNG MAN. Wouldn't you like to come inside? At least you can take off your hat.
- YOUNG WOMAN. What are you thinking of, Alfred? I told you; five minutes . . . no, not longer . . . I swear it —
- YOUNG MAN. Well, then, the veil —
- YOUNG WOMAN. There are two.
- YOUNG MAN. All right, — both veils — at least I might be allowed to see you . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN. Do you really love me, Alfred?
- YOUNG MAN. (*deeply hurt*). Emma — can you ask me . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN. It is so hot in here.
- YOUNG MAN. But you're wearing your furs — you will surely catch cold.
- YOUNG WOMAN. (*stepping into the room, throws herself into the armchair*). I am dead tired.
- YOUNG MAN. Permit me. (*He takes off her veil, takes the pin out of her hat, and puts hat, pin and veil aside.*)
- YOUNG WOMAN. (*allows it*).
- YOUNG MAN. (*stands before her, shaking his head*).
- YOUNG WOMAN. What's the matter?
- YOUNG MAN. I have never seen you so beautiful.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Why?
- YOUNG MAN. Alone . . . alone with you — Emma — (*He sinks on one knee beside the armchair and takes both her hands, which he covers with kisses.*)
- YOUNG WOMAN. And now . . . let me go again. I have done what you asked of me.

- YOUNG MAN *(lets his head sink onto her lap)*.  
YOUNG WOMAN. You promised me to be good.  
YOUNG MAN. Yes.  
YOUNG WOMAN. It is suffocating in this room.  
YOUNG MAN *(gets up)*. You still have your cape on.  
YOUNG WOMAN. Put it with my hat.  
YOUNG MAN *(takes her cape and puts it on the divan)*.  
YOUNG WOMAN. And now — adieu.  
YOUNG MAN. Emma — ! Emma — !  
YOUNG WOMAN. The five minutes have long passed.  
YOUNG MAN. Not even one has passed! —  
YOUNG WOMAN. Alfred — will you please tell me exactly what time it is.  
YOUNG MAN. It is exactly a quarter past seven.  
YOUNG WOMAN. I should have been at my sister's long ago.  
YOUNG MAN. You can always see your sister . . .  
YOUNG WOMAN. Oh God, Alfred, why did you persuade me to this?  
YOUNG MAN. Because I . . . worship you, Emma.  
YOUNG WOMAN. To how many others have you said that?  
YOUNG MAN. Since I saw you — to no one.  
YOUNG WOMAN. What an irresponsible person I am! If anyone had foretold this — Even a week ago — even yesterday . . .  
YOUNG MAN. But you had already promised the day before yesterday.  
YOUNG WOMAN. You badgered me so — but I didn't want to do it. God is my witness — I didn't want to do it. Yesterday I had firmly decided . . . do you know that last night I even wrote you a long letter?  
YOUNG MAN. I didn't receive one.  
YOUNG WOMAN. I tore it up. Oh, it would have been

- better if I had sent it to you.
- YOUNG MAN. Surely it's better like this.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Oh no, it is abominable . . . of me. I cannot comprehend myself. Adieu, Alfred — let me leave.
- YOUNG MAN *(embraces her, covering her face with kisses)*.
- YOUNG WOMAN. This is . . . how you keep your word . . .
- YOUNG MAN. One more kiss — one more.
- YOUNG WOMAN. The last — *(He kisses her, she responds. Their lips remain locked together for a long time.)*
- YOUNG MAN. Shall I tell you something, Emma? Only now do I know what happiness is . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN *(sinks back into the armchair)*.
- YOUNG MAN *(sits on the arm and coils his arm lightly round her neck)*. . . rather, only now do I know what happiness could be.
- YOUNG WOMAN *(sighs deeply)*.
- YOUNG MAN *(kisses her again)*.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Alfred, Alfred, what are you making me do?
- YOUNG MAN. It isn't really so uncomfortable here, is it . . . and we are safe here — isn't it a thousand times better than a rendezvous in the open . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, don't remind me of them.
- YOUNG MAN. I shall always think of them with most profound joy. For me every minute I was allowed to spend at your side is a sweet memory.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Do you remember the Industrialists' Ball?
- YOUNG MAN. Oh, how I remember it. Didn't I sit next to you during supper — quite close to you. Your husband drank champagne . . .

- YOUNG WOMAN *(looks at him reproachfully).*
- YOUNG MAN. I only wanted to mention the champagne. Tell me, Emma — wouldn't you like a glass of cognac?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Just a drop. But let me have some water first.
- YOUNG MAN. Of course . . . Now where is — oh yes . . . *(He throws back the dividing doors and goes into the bedroom.)*
- YOUNG WOMAN *(looks after him).*
- YOUNG MAN *(returns with a carafe of water and two tumblers).*
- YOUNG WOMAN. Where have you been?
- YOUNG MAN. In . . . next door. *(He pours one glass of water.)*
- YOUNG WOMAN. Now I am going to ask you something, Alfred — swear to me that you will tell me the truth.
- YOUNG MAN. I swear —
- YOUNG WOMAN. Was there ever another woman in these rooms?
- YOUNG MAN. But Emma — this house has been standing for twenty years.
- YOUNG WOMAN. You know what I mean, Alfred — with you, with you!
- YOUNG MAN. With me — here — Emma! It isn't nice of you to think of such a thing.
- YOUNG WOMAN. So you have . . . how shall I . . . no, it's better not to ask you. It's better if I don't ask. After all, it's my own fault. Life has its revenge.
- YOUNG MAN. Now what ails you? What's wrong? What revenge?
- YOUNG WOMAN. No, no, no — I must not become conscious . . . otherwise I should sink into the earth for shame.

- YOUNG MAN *(holding the carafe in his hand, shakes his head sadly)*. Emma, if only you could realise how much you hurt me.
- YOUNG WOMAN *(pours herself a glass of cognac)*.
- YOUNG MAN. I'll tell you something, Emma. If you are ashamed to be here — if I mean nothing to you — if you cannot feel that for me you are all the happiness there is in the world — it would be better for you to go.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, that is just what I am going to do.
- YOUNG MAN *(taking her hand)*. If, however, you can grasp the fact that I cannot live without you, that a kiss on your hand means more to me than all the tenderness which all the women in the whole world can provide . . . Emma, I am not like all the other young men who pay idle compliments — perhaps I am too naive . . . I . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN. But what if you *are* like all the other young men?
- YOUNG MAN. Then you wouldn't be here today — because you are not like other women.
- YOUNG WOMAN. How do you know that?
- YOUNG MAN *(pulls her down onto the divan and seats himself next to her)*. I have thought deeply about you. I know that you are unhappy.
- YOUNG WOMAN *(very pleased)*. Yes.
- YOUNG MAN. Life is so empty — so meaningless — and then — so short — so terribly short! There is only one joy . . . to find a human being who loves one.
- YOUNG WOMAN *(who has taken a glazed pear from the table, puts it in her mouth)*.
- YOUNG MAN. Let me have half! *(She presents it in her lips.)*

- YOUNG MAN *(Swallowing the pear — then, more daringly:)* Life is so short.
- YOUNG WOMAN *(weakly):* But that is no reason —
- YOUNG MAN *(mechanically):* Oh, yes.
- YOUNG WOMAN *(weaker):* Look, Alfred — you promised to be good . . . and it's so light . . .
- YOUNG MAN. Come, come, my only one . . . only one . . .  
*He lifts her up from the divan.*
- YOUNG WOMAN. What are you doing?
- YOUNG MAN. It's darker in there.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Why — is there another room?
- YOUNG MAN *(pulling her along).* A beautiful one — and quite dark.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Let us stay here.
- YOUNG MAN *(already behind the folding doors in the bedroom. He undoes her dress at the waist).*
- YOUNG WOMAN. You are so — oh, God, what are you doing to me! — Alfred!
- YOUNG MAN. I worship you, Emma!
- YOUNG WOMAN. Wait — at least, wait . . . *(Weakly:)* Go . . . I'll call you.
- YOUNG MAN *(stumbling over words):* Let me allow you — allow me to let you — allow-me-to-help-you.
- YOUNG WOMAN. You are tearing everything.
- YOUNG MAN. Don't you wear a corset?
- YOUNG WOMAN. I never wear a corset. You can unbutton my shoes if you like.
- YOUNG MAN *(unbuttons the shoes and kisses her feet).*
- YOUNG WOMAN *(slipping into bed):* Oh, I am so cold.
- YOUNG MAN. It'll get warm soon.
- YOUNG WOMAN *(laughing softly):* Do you think so?
- YOUNG MAN *(piqued, to himself):* She shouldn't have said that.

*He undresses in the dark.*

YOUNG WOMAN (tenderly): Come, come to me. Come.  
 YOUNG MAN (mollified). In a minute.  
 YOUNG WOMAN. It smells of violets here.  
 YOUNG MAN. That's you — yourself . . . yes (to her:) you yourself.  
 YOUNG WOMAN. Alfred . . . Alfred!!!!  
 YOUNG MAN. Emma . . .

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YOUNG MAN. I'm obviously too fond of you . . . yes . . . I am out of my mind.  
 YOUNG WOMAN (beautifully) . . .  
 YOUNG MAN. All these past days, I have been like a madman. I expected this to happen.  
 YOUNG WOMAN. Don't take it to heart.  
 YOUNG MAN. Oh, of course not. It is practically unavoidable when one . . .  
 YOUNG WOMAN. Don't — don't, you're nervous. Calm yourself.  
 YOUNG MAN. Have you read Stendhal?  
 YOUNG WOMAN. Stendhal?  
 YOUNG MAN. The *Psychologie de l'Amour*.  
 YOUNG WOMAN. No. Why do you ask?  
 YOUNG MAN. There is a little story in it, which is very illuminating.  
 YOUNG WOMAN. What story is that?  
 YOUNG MAN. There is a whole company of cavalry officers.  
 YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, yes?  
 YOUNG MAN. And they tell each other about their amorous adventures. And everyone reports that with the woman he loved most — you know, most passionately . . . that with her — that he — well, to cut a long story

short, that with those women every one had the same experience that I had now.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Yes.

YOUNG MAN.

That is very characteristic.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Yes.

YOUNG MAN.

But — that's not all. One of them asserts . . . that it never happened to him in all his life, but, Stendhal adds, he was a notorious liar.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Oh.

YOUNG MAN.

Even so, it annoys me — that's the stupid thing about it — however unimportant it really is.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Certainly. Anyway, you know . . . you had promised me you'd be good.

YOUNG MAN.

Please don't laugh; it doesn't help matters.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Oh, no, I am not laughing. This Stendhal story is really interesting. I'd always thought that only with older . . . or with very . . . you know, with people who have lived very indulgent lives . . .

YOUNG MAN.

What are you thinking of — that has nothing to do with it at all. By the way, I'd quite forgotten to tell you the most charming story out of the Stendhal. One of the cavalry officers there even admits that he spent three nights — or was it six — I don't remember now . . . with the woman he'd passionately desired for weeks, and all through these nights they did nothing but cry for joy . . . both of them . . .

YOUNG WOMAN.

Both of them?

YOUNG MAN.

Yes. Does that surprise you? I find that so understandable — particularly if people love each other.

YOUNG WOMAN.

But I'm sure there are many who don't cry.



- YOUNG MAN                    (*nervously*): Certainly . . . that was an exceptional case, anyway.
- YOUNG WOMAN.            Oh — I thought that Stendhal said that all cavalry officers cry on these occasions.
- YOUNG MAN.                You see — you are making fun of it after all.
- YOUNG WOMAN.            But what are you thinking of? Don't be so childish, Alfred.
- YOUNG MAN.                Well, it does make one nervous. The trouble is that I have the impression that you are thinking about it all the time — that embarrasses me even more.
- YOUNG WOMAN.            I am really not thinking of it.
- YOUNG MAN.                Oh yes, you are. If only I could be convinced that you love me.
- YOUNG WOMAN.            Can you demand more proof?
- YOUNG MAN.                You see — all the time you are making fun of it.
- YOUNG WOMAN.            But why? Come here — give me your sweet little head.
- YOUNG MAN.                Ah — that does me good.
- YOUNG WOMAN.            Do you love me?
- YOUNG MAN.                Oh, I am so happy.
- YOUNG WOMAN.            You don't have to cry as well.
- YOUNG MAN                (*highly irritated — drawing away from her*). Again — again! I have begged of you . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN.            I only told you not to cry.
- YOUNG MAN.                You said: 'Not to cry as well'.
- YOUNG WOMAN.            You are nervous, my darling.
- YOUNG MAN.                I know.
- YOUNG WOMAN.            But you shouldn't be. I even like it that . . . that is, that so to say, as good comrades . . .
- YOUNG MAN.                You are starting on it again.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Don't you remember? That was one of our first conversations. You wanted to be 'good comrades' — nothing more. Oh, that was nice — at my sister's in January, at the great ball, during the quadrille. For God's sake — I should have left long ago — my sister is expecting me — what shall I tell her . . . adieu, Alfred —

YOUNG MAN.

Emma — ! So you want to leave me?

YOUNG WOMAN.

Yes, I must.

YOUNG MAN.

Another five minutes.

YOUNG WOMAN.

All right, another five minutes. But you must promise me . . . that you won't move . . . ? . . . Yes? . . . I'll give you a farewell kiss . . . ssh, quiet . . . no moving, I said — otherwise I'll get up immediately . . . oh, my sweet . . . sweet . . .

YOUNG MAN.

Emma . . . my worsh-

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YOUNG WOMAN.

My Alfred.

YOUNG MAN.

It's heaven with you.

YOUNG WOMAN.

But now I really must go.

YOUNG MAN.

Oh, let your sister wait.

YOUNG WOMAN.

I have to go home. It's much too late for my sister. What time is it, anyway?

YOUNG MAN.

Well, how can I find that out?

YOUNG WOMAN.

You simply have to look at your watch.

YOUNG MAN.

My watch is in my coat pocket.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Well — get it.

YOUNG MAN

(*getting up with a mighty jerk*). Eight.

YOUNG WOMAN

(*rising quickly*): My God! . . . Quick, Alfred, give me my stockings. What shall I say? They must be waiting for me at home already . . . Eight o'clock . . .

YOUNG MAN.

When shall I see you again?

- YOUNG WOMAN. Never.
- YOUNG MAN. Emma! Don't you love me any more?
- YOUNG WOMAN. That's why. Give me my shoes.
- YOUNG MAN. Never again? Here are the shoes.
- YOUNG WOMAN. You'll find a button-hook in my handbag. Please hurry . . .
- YOUNG MAN. Here.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Alfred — this can cost us both our necks.
- YOUNG MAN. (*uncomfortably surprised*). Why?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Well, what shall I say if he asks me, 'Where have you come from?'
- YOUNG MAN. From your sister.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Yes — if I could lie.
- YOUNG MAN. Well, you'll just have to.
- YOUNG WOMAN. And all for such a man! Oh, come here . . . let me kiss you once more. (*She embraces him.*) And now — leave me alone, go into the other room. I can't get dressed while you are here.
- YOUNG MAN. (*goes into the sitting room, where he gets dressed, eats some cakes and drinks some cognac*).
- YOUNG WOMAN. (*calling out*): Alfred!
- YOUNG MAN. Darling?
- YOUNG WOMAN. It's better after all that we didn't cry.
- YOUNG MAN. (*smiling not without pride*). How can you speak so frivolously.
- YOUNG WOMAN. And what will happen if we should meet again by chance — socially?
- YOUNG MAN. By chance . . . surely you'll be at Lobheimer's tomorrow?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Yes. Why, will you?
- YOUNG MAN. Certainly. May I invite you to dance the Cotillon?

- YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, I won't come. Why, what do you think? I would . . . (*She steps, completely dressed, into the sitting-room, and takes an eclair.*) I would sink into the earth.
- YOUNG MAN. Well, tomorrow at Lobheimer's then. That will be nice.
- YOUNG WOMAN. No, no . . . I shall say I am not coming, definitely —
- YOUNG MAN. All right, then — the day after tomorrow . . . here.
- YOUNG WOMAN. What are you thinking of?
- YOUNG MAN. At six . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN. There are carriages standing at the corner, aren't there?
- YOUNG MAN. Yes, as many as you like. The day after tomorrow, then — here, at six. Do say 'yes', my beloved darling.
- YOUNG WOMAN. We can discuss that tomorrow — during the Cotillon.
- YOUNG MAN (*embracing her*). My angel!
- YOUNG WOMAN. Don't ruin my hair again.
- YOUNG MAN. Then it's tomorrow at Lobheimer's, and the day after in my arms.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Good-bye.
- YOUNG MAN (*suddenly worried again*). And what will you — tell him today?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Don't ask me . . . don't ask . . . it's too awful — why do I love you so! Adieu — if I meet people on the stairs again, I'll die — pah!
- YOUNG MAN (*kisses her hand once more*).
- YOUNG WOMAN (*goes*).
- YOUNG MAN (*alone. He sits on the divan and smiles to himself*). So I'm having an affair with a respectable woman!

## The Young Woman and the Husband

*A cosy bedroom. It is 10.30 pm. The YOUNG WOMAN lies in bed, reading. The HUSBAND steps into the room, wearing a dressing-gown.*

YOUNG WOMAN           *(without looking up)*. Aren't you working any more tonight?

HUSBAND.               No, I am too tired. And besides . . .

YOUNG WOMAN.       Well? —

HUSBAND.               I suddenly felt so lonely sitting at my desk. I started longing for you.

YOUNG WOMAN       *(looking up)*. Really?

HUSBAND               *(sitting down beside her)*. Don't read any more. You'll spoil your eyes.

YOUNG WOMAN       *(shutting the book)*. What's the matter with you?

HUSBAND.               Nothing my child. I am in love with you, and you know it.

YOUNG WOMAN.       There are times when I could almost forget it.

HUSBAND.               There are times when one has to forget it.

YOUNG WOMAN.       Why?

HUSBAND.               Because marriage would otherwise be incomplete. It would . . . how can I say it? . . . it would lose its sanctity.

YOUNG WOMAN.       Oh . . .

HUSBAND.               Believe me — that's how it is. If we hadn't sometimes forgotten that we loved each other during the five years we have been married — we might not love each other still.

YOUNG WOMAN.       I don't understand.

HUSBAND.               The essence of the matter is simply this; we have probably already had ten or twelve love affairs with each other . . . doesn't it seem like that to you?

- YOUNG WOMAN. I haven't kept count.
- HUSBAND. If we had tasted all the fruits the first time, if, from the beginning, I had surrendered myself helplessly to my passion for you, we would have shared the fate of millions of other lovers: we would have finished with each other.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, I see what you mean.
- HUSBAND. Believe me, Emma, in the first days of our marriage I was afraid it would be like that.
- YOUNG WOMAN. So was I.
- HUSBAND. You see — wasn't I right? That's why there should always be periods when we live together merely as good friends."
- YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, yes?
- HUSBAND. And so it happens that we can always spend new honeymoons together, because I don't mind extending the weeks of the honeymoon . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN. . . . to months.
- HUSBAND. Exactly.
- YOUNG WOMAN. And now . . . may I take it that one of these periods of platonic friendship is approaching its end?
- HUSBAND. (*pressing her tenderly to him*). You may.
- YOUNG WOMAN. What if . . . I felt differently?
- HUSBAND. You don't feel differently, because you are the cleverest and most enchanting creature in existence. I am very happy to have found you.
- YOUNG WOMAN. How charmingly you flatter me — from time to time.
- HUSBAND. (*gets into bed*). For a man who has seen the world a little — come, put your head on my shoulder — who has seen the world a little — marriage really means

something much more mysterious than it does for you young girls of good family. You come to us pure and — at least to a certain extent — innocent, and have, therefore, a much clearer conception of the true nature of love than we have.

YOUNG WOMAN

(*laughing*): Oh!

HUSBAND.

Certainly. Because we become quite confused and unsure through the various experiences which perforce we endure before marriage. Of course, you hear a lot and know too much, and probably also read too much, but you have no real conception of that which we can experience. To us, what is commonly called 'love' appears thoroughly repulsive, for, after all, look at the creatures on whom we must rely.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Yes — what sort of creatures are they?

HUSBAND

(*kissing her on the forehead*). Be glad, my child, that you have never received a glimpse of their circumstances. Incidentally, most of them are quite pitiable — let us not throw stones at them.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Really, this compassion is hardly called for.

HUSBAND

(*with gentle nobility*): They deserve it. You, who were young girls of good family, who could wait securely for the husbands you desired in the care of your parents — cannot know the wretchedness that drives most of these poor creatures into the arms of sin.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Do they all sell themselves?

HUSBAND.

I wouldn't say that. Anyway, I am not just alluding to material wretchedness. There is also, one might say, a moral wretchedness, an insufficient appreciation of what is right and what is noble.

YOUNG WOMAN.

But why should one pity them — they

- seem to do quite well for themselves.
- HUSBAND. You have peculiar ideas, my dear. You must never forget that these creatures are intended by nature to sink lower and lower. There is no turning back.
- YOUNG WOMAN (*snuggling up to him*). Obviously, they sink quite painlessly.
- HUSBAND (*pained*). How can you say that, Emma? I should have thought that to you decent women particularly nothing could appear more despicable than those who aren't.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Quite, Karl, quite. I only said it for fun. Go on — tell me some more. It's no nice when you talk to me like this. Tell me more . . .
- HUSBAND. What?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Well — about these creatures.
- HUSBAND. What are you thinking of?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Look, I have asked you before — you know, even in the beginning I was always asking you to tell me some stories of your youth.
- HUSBAND. Why does it interest you?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Aren't you my husband? And isn't it downright unfair that I should really know nothing of your past?
- HUSBAND. I hope you wouldn't think me so tasteless as to . . . enough, Emma, this is profanation.
- YOUNG WOMAN. And yet — you have held who knows how many women in your arms, just as you hold me now.
- HUSBAND. Don't say 'woman'. You are a woman.
- YOUNG WOMAN. But one question you must answer me . . . otherwise . . . otherwise . . . no honeymoon.
- HUSBAND. What a way to speak. Remember that you are a mother . . . that our little girl is lying in there . . .



- YOUNG WOMAN            (*snuggling up to him*). But I should also like a little boy.
- HUSBAND.                Emma!
- YOUNG WOMAN.        Oh, don't be so . . . of course, I am your wife, but in a way I'd also like to be . . . your mistress.
- HUSBAND.                You would like that?
- YOUNG WOMAN.        Well, then — firstly, my question.
- HUSBAND                (*capitulating*). Well?
- YOUNG WOMAN.        Was there . . . a married woman among them?
- HUSBAND.                What? — How do you mean?
- YOUNG WOMAN.        You know what I mean.
- HUSBAND                (*slightly uncomfortable*). What made you ask such a question?
- YOUNG WOMAN.        I should like to know whether . . . that is — there are such women . . . I know that . . . but have you . . .
- HUSBAND                (*earnestly*). Do you know such a woman?
- YOUNG WOMAN.        Well, I — don't really know.
- HUSBAND.                Is there such a woman among your friends, perhaps?
- YOUNG WOMAN.        Well, how could I say that with any certainty — or deny it, either?
- HUSBAND.                Perhaps one of your friends — women speak about many things among themselves — did one confess to you?
- YOUNG WOMAN        (*uncertainly*). No.
- HUSBAND.                Have you any suspicion that any of your friends . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN.        Suspicion — oh no, not suspicion!
- HUSBAND.                It looks like it.
- YOUNG WOMAN.        Surely not, Karl — certainly not. When I really think about it — I shouldn't think anyone would do it.

- HUSBAND. None of them?
- YOUNG WOMAN. None of my friends.
- HUSBAND. Will you promise me something, Emma?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Well?
- HUSBAND. That you will never associate with a woman about whom you have the slightest suspicion that her conduct is not beyond reproach.
- YOUNG WOMAN. I have to promise you that?
- HUSBAND. I know, of course, that you would not have social contact with such a woman, but chance could ordain that you . . . yes, it happens very frequently that these very women whose reputations are not perfect seek the company of decent women, partly to lighten their consciences, partly out of a certain . . . how shall I say it . . . out of a certain nostalgia for virtue.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Oh.
- HUSBAND. Yes, I think what I've said is really true. Nostalgia for virtue. You can take my word for it, that at heart all these women are most unhappy.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Why?
- HUSBAND. You ask 'why', Emma? How can you ask? Imagine what sort of existence they have: full of lies, treachery, deceit — and full of dangers.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, of course, you are quite right there.
- HUSBAND. Indeed. They pay for that little bit of happiness — that little . . .
- YOUNG WOMAN. Pleasure.
- HUSBAND. What pleasure? What gave you the idea of calling that pleasure?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Well, there must be something in it — otherwise they wouldn't do it.

- HUSBAND. It is nothing . . . intoxication.
- YOUNG WOMAN (*thoughtfully*). Intoxication . . .
- HUSBAND. No, it isn't even intoxication. However, it's dearly paid for, that's certain.
- YOUNG WOMAN. So you *have* been through it, have you?
- HUSBAND. Yes, Emma, it is my saddest memory.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Who is it? Tell me! Do I know her?
- HUSBAND. What are you thinking of?
- YOUNG WOMAN. Was it long ago? . . . Was it very long ago? Before you married me?
- HUSBAND. Don't ask . . . I beg of you, don't ask.
- YOUNG WOMAN. But Karl!
- HUSBAND. She is dead.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Seriously?
- HUSBAND. Yes . . . it sounds almost ludicrous, but I have the impression that all these women die young.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Did you love her very much?
- HUSBAND. One does not love liars.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Then why . . .
- HUSBAND. Intoxication.
- YOUNG WOMAN. So you admit it after all.
- HUSBAND. Don't talk about it anymore, I beg you. All that is long past. I have only ever loved one — and that is you. One can only love where there is purity and truth.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Karl.
- HUSBAND. Oh, how secure, how comfortable one feels in your arms. Why didn't I know you as a child? I don't think I would have looked at any other women at all.
- YOUNG WOMAN. Karl!

HUSBAND.

How beautiful you are! . . . Beautiful . . .  
(*He switches out the light.*)

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YOUNG WOMAN.

Do you know what I am thinking now?

HUSBAND.

What, my beloved?

YOUNG WOMAN.

Of . . . of . . . Venice.

HUSBAND.

The first night . . .

YOUNG WOMAN.

Yes . . . so . . .

HUSBAND.

What is it — ? Tell me!

YOUNG WOMAN.

That's how much you love me today.

HUSBAND.

Yes — so much.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Oh . . . if you could always . . .

HUSBAND

(*in her arms*). What?

YOUNG WOMAN.

My Karl.

HUSBAND.

What did you mean? If I could always . . . ?

YOUNG WOMAN.

Well —

HUSBAND.

Well, what would happen if I could  
always . . . ?

YOUNG WOMAN.

Then I would always know that you love  
me.

HUSBAND.

Yes, but you must know it like this as  
well. One can't always be the loving  
husband. At times, one must go out into  
a hostile world, striving for achievement.  
Never forget that, my child. There is time  
for everything in marriage — that's the  
beautiful thing about it. There aren't  
many who, after five years, can remember  
their — Venice.

YOUNG WOMAN.

How true.

HUSBAND.

And now . . . goodnight, my child.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Goodnight.

## The Husband and the Sweet Young Thing

*The cabinet particulier in the Riedhof. Comfortable subdued elegance. The gas fire is burning. On the table, the remains of a meal: fruit, cheese, etc. The wine glasses are filled with Hungarian white wine.*

- HUSBAND *(smoking a Havana cigar, leans back in a corner of the divan).*
- GIRL *(sits next to him on the armchair, finishing a plate of ice-cream, which she guzzles greedily).*
- HUSBAND. Enjoying it?
- GIRL *(undisturbed).* Oh!
- HUSBAND. Want another?
- GIRL. No — I've eaten too much already.
- HUSBAND. There's no wine left in your glass. *(He pours some in.)*
- GIRL. No! . . . Really — I shall only leave it.
- HUSBAND. Come here . . . Sit next to me.
- GIRL. In a minute. I haven't finished yet.
- HUSBAND *(gets up, stands behind the armchair and embraces her, turning her head towards him).*
- GIRL. Now what?
- HUSBAND. I want a kiss.
- GIRL *(kissing him).* Oh, you are a naughty man.
- HUSBAND. Have you only just discovered that?
- GIRL. Oh, no. I discovered it before — in the street, in fact. You must think — goodness-knows-what — about me.
- HUSBAND. But why?
- GIRL. Well, I went with you at once into a *chambre séparée*.
- HUSBAND. Well, not quite at once.

- GIRL. It's only because you asked me so nicely.  
HUSBAND. Did I?  
GIRL. And after all — what's wrong with it?  
HUSBAND. Quite.  
GIRL. Whether one goes for a walk —  
HUSBAND. It was much too cold to go for a walk, anyway.  
GIRL. Yes, much too cold.  
HUSBAND. But it's nice and warm here, eh? (*He has seated himself again. He embraces the SWEET YOUNG THING and draws her to his side.*)  
GIRL. (*weakly*). Yes.  
HUSBAND. Now tell me something — you had noticed me already, hadn't you?  
GIRL. Yes, I had — in the Singerstrassen.  
HUSBAND. I don't mean today. I mean the day before yesterday and the day before that — when I followed you.  
GIRL. Lots of men follow me.  
HUSBAND. I can believe that. But did you notice *me*?  
GIRL. Do you know what happened to me the other day? My cousin's husband followed me in the dark and didn't recognise me.  
HUSBAND. Did he speak to you?  
GIRL. What do you think? Not everyone is as forward as you.  
HUSBAND. But it does happen.  
GIRL. Of course it happens.  
HUSBAND. Well, what do you do in such cases?  
GIRL. Nothing — I just don't give an answer.  
HUSBAND. Hmmm . . . you did give me an answer.  
GIRL. Well, do you object?

- HUSBAND (kissing her ardently). Your lips taste of the whipped cream.
- GIRL. Oh, they're sweet by nature.
- HUSBAND. How many men have you told that?
- GIRL. Many? You're imagining things again.
- HUSBAND. Now, be honest. How many have kissed this mouth before?
- GIRL. Why ask me? You wouldn't believe me anyway, even if I told you.
- HUSBAND. Why not?
- GIRL. Guess!
- HUSBAND. Well, let's say — er — but you mustn't be angry with me —
- GIRL. Why should I be angry?
- HUSBAND. Well, I should say . . . twenty.
- GIRL (pushing him away). Why not say a hundred while you're about it?
- HUSBAND. It was only a guess.
- GIRL. You didn't guess very well, then.
- HUSBAND. All right — ten.
- GIRL (offended). Of course, no wonder, if you allow yourself to be spoken to in the street, and go straight into a *chambre séparée* . . .
- HUSBAND. Don't be so childish. Whether one runs about in the street or sits in a room . . . after all, we are in a hotel — any moment the waiter could come in — so it's really quite innocuous.
- GIRL. That's exactly what I thought.
- HUSBAND. Have you ever been in a *chambre séparée*?
- GIRL. Well, if you want to know the truth — yes.
- HUSBAND. You see, that's what I like. That you are really open with me.

- GIRL. Oh, it wasn't what you're thinking. I was in a *chambre séparée* with a girl friend and her fiancé during the carnival this year.
- HUSBAND. Well, it wouldn't have been such a tragedy if you had been with your lover —
- GIRL. Of course it wouldn't have been a tragedy, but I don't happen to have a lover.
- HUSBAND. Go on!
- GIRL. Honour bright, I haven't.
- HUSBAND. Surely you're not trying to tell me that I . . .
- GIRL. What of it . . . ? Haven't had one for six months.
- HUSBAND. Oh, I see . . . But before that? Who was it?
- GIRL. What do you want to know for?
- HUSBAND. I want to know because I love you.
- GIRL. Is that true?
- HUSBAND. Certainly. Don't you believe me? Go on — tell me. (*He presses her to him.*)
- GIRL. What do you want me to tell you?
- HUSBAND. Don't make me ask so often. I want to know who it was.
- GIRL. (*laughing*). Well — a man.
- HUSBAND. A man — all right, all right — but who?
- GIRL. He looked a teeny bit like you.
- HUSBAND. Oh?
- GIRL. If you hadn't looked so much like him —
- HUSBAND. What then?
- GIRL. Don't say you don't know what I mean . . .
- HUSBAND. (*understanding*). So that's why you let me speak to you.
- GIRL. Well — yes.
- HUSBAND. Now I really don't know whether I should be pleased or angry.



- GIRL. Well, in your place I'd be pleased.
- HUSBAND. Hmm.
- GIRL. And in the way you talk you also remind me of him, and in the way you look at me . . .
- HUSBAND. What was he?
- GIRL. The eyes, too. —
- HUSBAND. What was his name?
- GIRL. No, don't look at me like that — I beg you.
- HUSBAND. *(embraces her — a long ardent kiss).*
- GIRL. *(shaking him off, tries to get up).*
- HUSBAND. What's the matter?
- GIRL. It's nearly time to go home.
- HUSBAND. Later.
- GIRL. No, I really must go home — what do you think my mother will say?
- HUSBAND. You live with your mother?
- GIRL. Of course I live with my mother. What did you think?
- HUSBAND. Oh — with your mother. Do you live alone with her?
- GIRL. Alone! There are five of us — two boys and two more girls.
- HUSBAND. Don't sit so far away from me. Are you the eldest?
- GIRL. No, I'm the second. First comes Kati, she works in a florist's, and then me.
- HUSBAND. Where do you work?
- GIRL. Well — I am at home.
- HUSBAND. Always?
- GIRL. Somebody's got to be at home.
- HUSBAND. Yes, of course — and — er — tell me — what do you say to your mother when you come home — so late?

- GIRL. It happens so rarely.
- HUSBAND. Well, — today, for example. Your mother will ask where you've been.
- GIRL. Of course she'll ask me. I can be as careful as I like, but when I get home she'll still be up.
- HUSBAND. And what will you tell her?
- GIRL. Well — I expect I'll have been to the theatre.
- HUSBAND. And she believes that?
- GIRL. Why shouldn't she believe it? I often go to the theatre. Only on Sunday I went to the opera with my friend and her fiancé — and my elder brother.
- HUSBAND. Where did you get your tickets from?
- GIRL. My brother's a hairdresser.
- HUSBAND. Ah, yes — a hairdresser . . . probably a theatrical hairdresser.
- GIRL. Why do you keep questioning me?
- HUSBAND. I am interested. And what's your other brother?
- GIRL. He's still at school — would you believe, he wants to be a teacher!
- HUSBAND. And then you have a younger sister?
- GIRL. Yes — she's such a little flirt — we have to keep an eye on her already. You've no idea how spoiled the girls get at school. What do you think — the other day I found out that she had a date!
- HUSBAND. What?
- GIRL. Yes, she went for a walk at half past seven at night with a boy from the school opposite — what a flirt.
- HUSBAND. So what did you do?
- GIRL. I gave her a spanking.
- HUSBAND. You are as strict as all that.

- GIRL. Who else should do it? The eldest is in a shop, mother does nothing but nag, and everything falls on me.
- HUSBAND. God — you're sweet! (*He kisses her and becomes more tender.*) You remind me of someone, too.
- GIRL. Oh, of whom?
- HUSBAND. Oh, no-one in particular . . . of the time . . . well, of my youth . . . Go on, my child, drink up.
- GIRL. How old are you? . . . I don't even know your name.
- HUSBAND. Karl.
- GIRL. Honestly? Your name is Karl?
- HUSBAND. Why — was he called Karl too?
- GIRL. What a coincidence! The eyes . . . that look . . . (*She shakes her head.*)
- HUSBAND. And you still haven't told me who he was.
- GIRL. He was a bad man — that much is certain, otherwise he wouldn't have left me.
- HUSBAND. Did he mean very much to you?
- GIRL. Of course he meant a lot to me.
- HUSBAND. I know what he was — a lieutenant.
- GIRL. No, he wasn't in the army. They wouldn't take him. His father has a house in the . . . but why do you want to know all this?
- HUSBAND. (*kissing her*). Your eyes are really grey — at first I thought they were black.
- GIRL. Perhaps they are not good enough for you.
- HUSBAND. (*kisses her eyes*).
- GIRL. No, no — I can't bear that — oh, please — oh, God . . . no, let me get up . . . just for a moment — I beg of you.
- HUSBAND. (*more and more tenderly*). No.
- GIRL. Oh, please, Karl . . .

- HUSBAND. How old are you — eighteen, eh?
- GIRL. Gone nineteen.
- HUSBAND. Nineteen. And I —
- GIRL. You are thirty . . .
- HUSBAND. And a few years more — let's not talk about it . . .
- GIRL. He was thirty-two when I met him.
- HUSBAND. How long ago was that?
- GIRL. I don't remember. You know — they must have put something in the wine . . .
- HUSBAND. Why?
- GIRL. I feel quite . . . you know . . . everything's turning round.
- HUSBAND. Just hold on to me — there . . . (*He presses her to him more and more ardently; she hardly resists.*) Shall I tell you something, darling: we could really go now . . .
- GIRL. Yes . . . go home.
- HUSBAND. Not quite home . . .
- GIRL. What do you mean? Oh, no — oh, no. I wouldn't go anywhere — what are you thinking of?
- HUSBAND. Listen to me, my child. Next time we meet, we'll arrange it in such a way . . . that . . . (*He has sunk to the floor and has his head in her lap.*) This is lovely — oh, this is lovely.
- GIRL. What are you doing? (*She kisses his hair.*) Oh — they must have put something in the wine — I am so sleepy. What would happen if I couldn't get up again? Oh, but — but look, Karl . . . if somebody should come in . . . please . . . the waiter . . .

- HUSBAND. No waiter . . . will come here . . . in a million years.
- 
- GIRL *(leans on the corner of the divan with closed eyes.)*
- HUSBAND *(walks up and down the room, after having lit a cigarette. Lengthy silence . . . To himself, after looking at the Girl for a long time):* Who knows what sort of person she really is — dash it all, so quickly . . . should have been more careful . . . hmm . . .
- GIRL *(with her eyes shut).* They must have put something in the wine.
- HUSBAND. Why?
- GIRL. Otherwise . . .
- HUSBAND. Why hold the wine responsible?
- GIRL. Where are you? Why are you so far away from me? Come here to me.
- HUSBAND *(sits by her).*
- GIRL. Now tell me that you really love me.
- HUSBAND. You should know . . . *(He interrupts himself quickly.)* Of course I do.
- GIRL. You know . . . it's so . . . go on, tell me the truth — was there something in the wine?
- HUSBAND. Do you believe that I — that I'd drug you?
- GIRL. I simply can't understand it. I'm not really like that . . . we've only known each other since . . . you know I'm not like that . . . by all that's holy — if you thought that of me —
- HUSBAND. What are you worrying about? I don't think badly of you at all. I simply think that you love me.
- GIRL. Yes . . .

- HUSBAND. After all, if two young people are alone in a room together, having supper — it's not necessary to put anything in the wine.
- GIRL. I didn't really mean it.
- HUSBAND. Then why did you say it?
- GIRL (*somewhat stubbornly*): Because I was ashamed of myself.
- HUSBAND. That's ridiculous. There's no reason for that at all. All the more as I remind you of your first lover.
- GIRL. Yes.
- HUSBAND. Of the *first*.
- GIRL. Well, yes . . .
- HUSBAND. Now it would really interest me to know who the others were!
- GIRL. No one.
- HUSBAND. That's not true, that can't be true.
- GIRL. Oh, please, don't torture me —
- HUSBAND. Would you like a cigarette?
- GIRL. No, thank you.
- HUSBAND. Do you know what time it is?
- GIRL. Well?
- HUSBAND. Half past eleven.
- GIRL. Is it?
- HUSBAND. Well . . . what about your mother? She's used to it, eh?
- GIRL. Do you really want to send me home already?
- HUSBAND. You yourself said before —
- GIRL. You are so different, suddenly. What have I done to you?
- HUSBAND. What are you thinking of, child?
- GIRL. And it was only because of the look in

your eyes — as true as I live — otherwise . . . plenty of others have begged me to go to a *chambre séparée* with them.

HUSBAND.

Well, would you like to . . . come here with me again soon . . . or some other place —

GIRL.

I don't know.

HUSBAND.

What do you mean, you don't know?

GIRL.

Well, what do you expect me to say?

HUSBAND.

All right. When? But before anything else, I want to make it clear to you that I don't live in Vienna. I only come here for a few days from time to time.

GIRL.

Go on — you're not Viennese?

HUSBAND.

Oh — I am Viennese, but I live further out now.

GIRL.

Where?

HUSBAND.

Oh, God, it's all the same thing!

GIRL.

Oh, don't be afraid. I shan't go there.

HUSBAND.

Good heavens, if you want to, you can go there. I live in Graz.

GIRL.

Seriously?

HUSBAND.

Of course — what's surprising about that?

GIRL.

You are married, aren't you?

HUSBAND

(*very surprised*). How do you make that out?

GIRL.

It looks like that to me.

HUSBAND.

That wouldn't disturb you at all.

GIRL.

Of course, I'd prefer it if you were single — but I can see you are married.

HUSBAND.

Will you please tell me how you make that out?

GIRL.

If someone says he doesn't live in Vienna, and hasn't always got time —

- HUSBAND. That's not so unlikely.
- GIRL. I don't believe it.
- HUSBAND. And you wouldn't have a bad conscience at all — seducing a married man?
- GIRL. Fiddlesticks! I bet your wife's no better than you.
- HUSBAND (*very angry*). I forbid you to talk like that. What a thing to say.
- GIRL. I thought you didn't have a wife.
- HUSBAND. Whether or not I have one — one shouldn't make such remarks. (*He has got up.*)
- GIRL. Karl, Karl — what's the matter? Are you angry? Look, I really didn't know that you were married. It was just talk. Come here and be friends again.
- HUSBAND (*turning to her after a few seconds*). What strange creatures you are . . . you women. (*Getting tender again.*)
- GIRL. No . . . don't — it's too late, anyway.
- HUSBAND. Now, please listen to me — let's talk seriously with each other. I should like to see you again — see you again often.
- GIRL. Do you mean it?
- HUSBAND. But to do so it is essential . . . well, that I should be able to trust you. I can't keep an eye on you.
- GIRL. Oh, I keep an eye on myself.
- HUSBAND. You are . . . well, one can hardly say inexperienced — but you are young, and men are an unscrupulous lot on the whole.
- GIRL. Oh, dear!
- HUSBAND. I don't only mean this from the moral point of view — I am sure you understand me.
- GIRL. Tell me — what sort of girl do you think I am?



- HUSBAND. Well then — if you want to love me — only me — we could probably arrange it, although I live in Graz most of the time. This place isn't really suitable — with people apt to come in at any moment.
- GIRL *(snuggles up to him)*.
- HUSBAND. Next time . . . we'll go somewhere else, shall we?
- GIRL. Yes.
- HUSBAND. Where we are quite undisturbed.
- GIRL. Yes.
- HUSBAND *(embracing her ardently)*. All the other things we'll discuss on the way home. *(He gets up and opens the door.)* Waiter! . . . the bill!

## The Sweet Young Thing and the Poet

*A small room, comfortable and tastefully furnished. The curtains are drawn and the room is in semi-darkness. A large writing-desk with papers and books strewn all over it, and a pianino, stand against the wall. The SWEET YOUNG THING and the POET enter together. The POET locks the door.*

- POET. Here we are, my love. *(Kisses her.)*
- GIRL *(with hat and coat on)*. Oh, what a nice place, but it's so dark.
- POET. Your eyes will have to get used to it — those sweet eyes. *(He kisses her eyes.)*
- GIRL. There won't be time for the sweet eyes to do that.
- POET. Why?
- GIRL. Because I am only staying a minute.
- POET. You can take your hat off.

- GIRL. For one minute?
- POET. *(taking the hat-pin from her hat, and putting the hat aside).* And your coat.
- GIRL. What are you doing? I've got to leave again, anyway.
- POET. You should rest awhile. We've been walking for three hours.
- GIRL. We didn't walk.
- POET. No, not home. But we did walk for a full three hours in Weidling. So sit down nicely, my child — wherever you like — here at the desk — no, that's not comfortable. Sit on the divan there. *(He presses her down.)* If you're very tired, you can lie down. There. *(He lays her down.)* There — your little head on the cushion.
- GIRL. *(laughing).* But I'm not tired at all.
- POET. That's what you think. There — and if you're sleepy, you can go to sleep. I shall be quite still. Or I can play you a lullaby — one of my own . . . *(He goes to the pianino.)*
- GIRL. One of yours?
- POET. Yes.
- GIRL. I thought you were a doctor, Robert.
- POET. Why? Didn't I tell you that I was a writer?
- GIRL. But aren't all writers doctors?
- POET. No, not all. For instance, I'm not. But what made you think of that?
- GIRL. Well — because you said that the piece you were going to play is one of yours.
- POET. Perhaps it's not exactly mine . . . what's the difference. Anyway, it doesn't matter at all who created it as long as it's beautiful — isn't that so?

- GIRL. Of course . . . it must be beautiful — that's the main thing.
- POET. Do you know how I meant that?
- GIRL. Meant what?
- POET. Well, what I've just said.
- GIRL. (*sleepily*). Yes, of course.
- POET. (*gets up, goes to her and strokes her hair*). You haven't understood a word.
- GIRL. I'm not as stupid as all that.
- POET. Of course you are. That's why I love you. Oh, it's wonderful when girls are stupid — I mean in the way that you are.
- GIRL. What are you criticising me for?
- POET. Little angel — isn't it nice lying on the soft Persian rug?
- GIRL. Yes. Aren't you going on playing the piano?
- POET. No, I prefer to be with you. (*He caresses her.*)
- GIRL. Wouldn't it be better to switch the light on?
- POET. Oh, no . . . this semi-darkness is so comforting. The whole day long we have bathed in sunbeams, we have stepped, as it were, out of the bath, and now we swathe ourselves in dusk — as in a bath-robe. (*He laughs.*) No, we'll have to put that differently — don't you agree?
- GIRL. Don't know.
- POET. (*withdrawing slightly*). Oh, what divine stupidity!
- He takes out a notebook and writes a few words in it.*
- GIRL. What are you doing? What are you writing there?

- POET (softly). Sun — bath — dusk — robe . . . there . . . (*He puts the notebook in his pocket and says aloud.*) Nothing . . . now tell me, my dearest, would you like something to eat or drink?
- GIRL. I am not really thirsty — but I could eat something.
- POET. Hmm . . . I'd prefer it if you were thirsty. Because I have cognac here. But I'd have to go out for food.
- GIRL. Can't you get anything?
- POET. It's difficult — my help won't be here — wait — I'll go myself . . . What would you like?
- GIRL. It's really not worth it. I'll have to go home, anyway.
- POET. Don't say that child. I'll tell you what, when we leave, let's go somewhere and have supper.
- GIRL. No, I haven't time. Anyway, where should we go? We might be seen.
- POET. Have you so many friends?
- GIRL. If just one should see us — the cat's out of the bag!
- POET. Would that be such a tragedy?
- GIRL. What do you think, if mother should hear . . .
- POET. We could go somewhere where no one will see us. There are places with private rooms.
- GIRL. You mean a *chambre séparée*?
- POET. Have you ever been in a *chambre séparée*?
- GIRL. Well, to tell you the truth — yes.
- POET. Who was the lucky man?
- GIRL. Oh, it wasn't what you mean. I went with my friend and her fiancé — they took me along.

- POET. Do you really ask me to believe that?
- GIRL. You don't have to.
- POET. Did you blush just now? One can't see anything. I can't tell from your expression . . . (*Touching her cheeks with his hands:*) But even so — I recognise you.
- GIRL. You'd better be careful that you don't mistake me for someone else.
- POET. Isn't it strange — I can't remember what you look like.
- GIRL. Thank you.
- POET. (*seriously*): Do you know, this is almost sinister. I can't visualise you — in a certain sense I have already forgotten you. Just think — if I didn't remember the sound of your voice either, what would you be? At the same time near and far away . . . uncanny!
- GIRL. What are you talking about?
- POET. Nothing, my angel, nothing. Where are your lips? (*He kisses her.*)
- GIRL. Hadn't you better switch the light on?
- POET. No . . . (*He becomes very tender.*) Tell me whether you love me.
- GIRL. Yes . . . oh yes!
- POET. Have you ever loved anyone as much as me?
- GIRL. I've already told you — no.
- POET. But — (*He sighs.*)
- GIRL. Well — that was my fiancé.
- POET. I'd rather you didn't think of him now.
- GIRL. No . . . what are you doing? . . . Look . . .
- POET. We could really imagine now that we are in a castle in India.
- GIRL. I'm sure people there aren't as naughty as you.

- POET. How stupid! Sublime — oh, if only you could guess what you mean to me . . .
- GIRL. Well?
- POET. Don't always push me away — I'm not doing you any harm — yet.
- GIRL. Oh, my stays are hurting me.
- POET. Take them off!
- GIRL. All right — but you mustn't get naughty because of that.
- POET. Promise.
- GIRL. (*gets up, takes off her stays in the dark*).
- POET. (*who has remained on the divan*). Tell me, doesn't it interest you at all what my surname is?
- GIRL. Yes, what is it?
- POET. I'd better not tell you what I'm called, but rather what I call myself.
- GIRL. What's the difference?
- POET. Well, what I call myself as a writer.
- GIRL. Oh, you don't write under your real name?
- POET. (*close to her*).
- GIRL. Oh . . . go away . . . don't.
- POET. I feel embraced by a sweet perfume. (*He kisses her bosom.*)
- GIRL. You are tearing my petticoat.
- POET. Off with it . . . off with it . . . all this is superfluous.
- GIRL. But Robert —
- POET. And now let us enter our Indian castle!
- GIRL. First, tell me if you really love me.
- POET. But I worship you (*He kisses her ardently.*) I adore you — my darling . . . my spring . . . my . . .

- GIRL. Robert . . . Robert! . . .
- 
- POET. That was sublime . . . I call myself . . .
- GIRL. Robert, oh, my Robert!
- POET. I call myself Biebitz.
- GIRL. Why are you called Biebitz?
- POET. I am not called Biebitz — that's what I call myself . . . Don't tell me you don't know the name!
- GIRL. No.
- POET. You don't know the name Biebitz? Ha! Delicious! Really? You are only pretending, aren't you?
- GIRL. On my honour — I have never heard of it.
- POET. Don't you ever go to the theatre?
- GIRL. Oh, yes. I went only recently, with a — you know with my girl friend's uncle. Went to the opera, to *Cavalleria*.
- POET. Hmm, but you don't go to the Burgtheater?
- GIRL. I'm never given tickets for that . . .
- POET. One of these days I'll send you a ticket.
- GIRL. Oh, please! You won't forget? But make it for something nice and cheerful.
- POET. Cheerful . . . well. Don't you want to see something sad?
- GIRL. Not really.
- POET. Not even if it's a play written by me?
- GIRL. Go on! — A play by you. You write for the theatre?
- POET. Excuse me while I light the candle. I haven't seen you since you became my mistress — angel! (*He lights a candle.*)
- GIRL. Don't — I'm shy. At least give me a blanket.

- POET. Later. (*He walks up to her with the light and looks at her for a long time.*)
- GIRL. Oh, Robert.
- POET. You are beautiful. You are beauty. Perhaps you are even Nature itself — you are the holy simplicity.
- GIRL. Oh dear, you are dripping wax on me. Why can't you be more careful?
- POET (*putting down candle*). You are the one I have sought for a long time. You love only me — you would even love me if I were a draper's assistant. That's a comforting thought. I'll confess to you that up to this moment I couldn't rid myself of a slight suspicion. Tell me truthfully, didn't you guess that I was Biebitz?
- GIRL. I don't know what you mean. I don't know any Biebitz!
- POET. What is fame! Never mind — forget what I have just said. Forget the very name I told you. To you I am Robert — and that's what I want to remain. I was only joking. (*Airily.*) I am not really a writer at all. I am a shop assistant. And in the evening I play the piano at the local.
- GIRL. Now I don't know where I am . . . oh, the way you look at me. What's the matter? What's got into you?
- POET. It is very strange — something that has hardly ever happened to me, my sweet — I am almost in tears — you move me deeply. Let us remain together, shall we? We shall love each other very much.
- GIRL. Is that really true about playing the piano in the local?
- POET. Yes, but don't ask me any more. If you love me, don't ask me anything. Tell me, could you make yourself quite free for a few weeks?



- GIRL. Why 'quite free'?
- POET. Well, away from home.
- GIRL. Oh!! How can I! What would my mother say! And then — everything would be in a mess without me.
- POET. I imagined everything so beautifully. To live together with you for a few weeks. Alone with you — somewhere out in the wilderness — in a forest — nature . . . in nature. And then, one day — adieu — parting — and going one knows not where.
- GIRL. Already you speak of parting — and I'd thought that you loved me.
- POET. That's just why. (*He leans towards her and kisses her on the forehead.*) You charming creature.
- GIRL. Hold me tight — I feel cold.
- POET. It's time for you to get dressed. Wait — I'll light a few more candles for you.
- GIRL. No peeping!
- POET. Very well. (*At the window.*) Tell me, child, are you happy?
- GIRL. How do you mean?
- POET. I mean are you, on the whole, happy?
- GIRL. Things could be better.
- POET. You misunderstand me. You have already told me enough about your domestic circumstances. I know you are no princess. I mean — if you turn away from all that — when you feel yourself living. Do you feel yourself living?
- GIRL. Have you got a comb?
- POET. (*goes to the dressing table, gives her a comb, and looks at her*). God, how enchanting you look!
- GIRL. No, don't.

- POET. Go on — stay a little longer — stay here.  
I'll fetch some supper and . . .
- GIRL. It's far too late.
- POET. It isn't nine o'clock yet.
- GIRL. Well — I ask you! Now I must be on my way.
- POET. When shall we see each other again?
- GIRL. When would you like to see me again?
- POET. Tomorrow.
- GIRL. What day is tomorrow?
- POET. Saturday.
- GIRL. Oh — I can't manage that. I have to take my little sister to her godmother's.
- POET. All right, then — Sunday . . . Hmm . . .  
Sunday . . . On Sunday . . . Now I must confess — I am not Biebitz at all, but Biebitz is a friend of mine. I'll introduce you to him one day. On Sunday they are doing one of Biebitz's plays. I'll send you a ticket, and fetch you from the theatre. Then you can tell me how you like the play. All right?
- GIRL. All this business with this Biebitz. I'm all mixed up.
- POET. I shall only really know you when I know how you felt when seeing this play.
- GIRL. All right . . . I'm ready.
- POET. Come, my sweet.  
*They go.*

## The Poet and the Actress

*A room in a country inn. A spring evening. Moonshine over meadows and hills. The windows are open. A long silence — the POET and the ACTRESS enter. As they come in, the light which the POET is holding in his hand goes out.*

POET. Oh . . .

ACTRESS. What's the matter?

POET. The candle. But we don't need one. Look — it's quite light. Wonderful.

ACTRESS *(suddenly sinks down by the window with folded hands).*

POET. What's wrong with you?

ACTRESS *(is silent).*

POET *(going to her).* What are you doing?

ACTRESS. I'm hurt — indignant. Can't you see that I am praying?

POET. Do you believe in God?

ACTRESS. Certainly. I'm devoutly religious.

POET. Oh.

ACTRESS. Come to me. Kneel here by my side. It won't hurt you to pray once in a while.

POET *(kneels by her and embraces her).*

ACTRESS. Libertine! *(She rises.)* Do you know to whom my prayer was addressed?

POET. To God, I presume.

ACTRESS *(with great disdain).* Indeed. It was to you I prayed.

POET. Then why did you look out of the window?

ACTRESS. Where have you dragged me, seducer?

POET. But darling — this was your idea. You wanted to go to the country and to this place.

ACTRESS. Well, wasn't I right?

- POET. Of course, it's charming here. Just think of it — two hours from Vienna — and complete solitude. And what surroundings!
- ACTRESS. I should think you could write many a poem here, if by chance you had talent.
- POET. Have you been here before?
- ACTRESS. Have I been here before — ha, I lived here for years!
- POET. With whom?
- ACTRESS. With Fritz, of course.
- POET. Oh!
- ACTRESS. How I worshipped that man.
- POET. You've told me that already.
- ACTRESS. I beg your pardon. I shall leave if I bore you.
- POET. You bore me! . . . You have no idea what you mean to me . . . You're a world apart . . . You're the divine, you are genius . . . you are . . . you are really the holy simplicity . . . yes, you . . . but you should not speak of Fritz.
- ACTRESS. A faux pas.
- POET. It's nice of you to admit it.
- ACTRESS. Kiss me.
- POET. (*kisses her*).
- ACTRESS. Now let us bid each other goodnight. Farewell, my love.
- POET. How do you mean?
- ACTRESS. Well — I am going to bed.
- POET. Yes, of course. But as far as bidding you goodnight is concerned — where shall I stay?
- ACTRESS. I'm sure there are many other rooms in this house.
- POET. But the other have no attraction for me.

- I'd better light the candle now, hadn't I.
- ACTRESS. Yes.
- POET (*lighting the candle which stands on the bedside table*). What a pretty room . . . and how pious these people are. All these saints . . . it would be interesting to live with such people for a time . . . it seems a world apart. We really know so little about them.
- ACTRESS. Don't talk poppycock. Hand me my bag from the table instead.
- POET. Here, my own.
- ACTRESS (*takes a small framed picture from the bed, which she puts on the bedside table*).
- POET. What's that?
- ACTRESS. That's the madonna.
- POET. Do you always carry it around with you?
- ACTRESS. It's my mascot. And now, Robert, go.
- POET. What kind of a joke is this? Can't I help you?
- ACTRESS. No — I want you to go.
- POET. And when shall I come back?
- ACTRESS. In ten minutes' time.
- POET (*kissing her*): Au revoir.
- ACTRESS. Where will you go?
- POET. I shall walk up and down outside the window. I love walking around at night in the open. My best ideas come to me then. And now — in close proximity to you . . . breathed upon, so to speak, by your longing . . . weaving in your art . . .
- ACTRESS. You speak like an idiot.
- POET (*pained*). Some women might have said . . . like a poet.

- ACTRESS. And now, for the last time, go. But don't start an affair with the waitress.
- POET *(goes)*.  
*The ACTRESS undresses. She listens to the POET going down the wooden staircase and then to his steps under her window. As soon as she is undressed, she goes to the window and looks down. He stands there. She calls down in a whisper.*
- ACTRESS. Come.
- POET *(rushes upstairs, flies to the ACTRESS, who has meanwhile gone to bed and switched out the light. He locks the door)*.
- ACTRESS. Sit down here and talk to me.
- POET *(sits on her bed)*. Shall I close the window? Aren't you cold?
- ACTRESS. Oh, no!
- POET. What do you want me to say?
- ACTRESS. Tell me who you are being unfaithful to at this moment.
- POET. Unfortunately, I am not — yet.
- ACTRESS. Never mind, console yourself. I, too, am being unfaithful to someone.
- POET. I can imagine that.
- ACTRESS. And who do you think it is?
- POET. How do you expect me to know?
- ACTRESS. Guess!
- POET. Wait . . . well — your director.
- ACTRESS. My dear — I'm not a chorus girl.
- POET. Well — it was just a thought.
- ACTRESS. Guess again.
- POET. Well then — you're deceiving your leading man . . . Benno . . .
- ACTRESS. Ha! that man does not love any woman —

didn't you know that? He's having an affair with the postman.

POET. Would you believe it?

ACTRESS. So you had better kiss me.

POET. (*embraces her*).

ACTRESS. What are you doing?

POET. Don't keep torturing me.

ACTRESS. Listen, Robert — I'll make you a proposition. Come to bed with me.

POET. Agreed!

ACTRESS. Come quickly — come quickly!

POET. Well . . . if I had a say in the matter, I would have . . . listen . . .

ACTRESS. What is it?

POET. Outside, crickets are chirping.

ACTRESS. You must be suffering from delusions, dear, there are no crickets here.

POET. But you can hear them!

ACTRESS. Come on.

POET. Here I am. (*Going to her.*)

ACTRESS. There. Now lie there nice and quiet . . . ssh . . . don't move.

POET. What's the idea?

ACTRESS. I suppose you'd like to have an affair with me?

POET. That should be obvious by now.

ACTRESS. Well, there are several who wouldn't mind . . .

POET. But surely there can be no doubt that at the moment I am head of the field.

ACTRESS. Then come, my cricket. From now on I shall call you cricket.

POET. Very well.

- ACTRESS. Now then — whom am I deceiving?
- POET. Whom? . . . Perhaps me.
- ACTRESS. My child — you are mentally deranged.
- POET. Or one . . . you've never seen yourself . . . one you don't know . . . one who is ordained for you and whom you can never find . . .
- ACTRESS. I beseech you — don't talk such divine rubbish.
- POET. Isn't it strange . . . you, too . . . one would have thought — but no, it would mean robbing you of your best quality — if one wanted to . . .
- ACTRESS. Stop talking.

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- ACTRESS. This is even better than appearing in stupid plays . . . what do you think?
- POET. Well — I think it's a good thing that now and again you have to play in decent ones.
- ACTRESS. I suppose — arrogant pup that you are — you mean your own.
- POET. Naturally.
- ACTRESS. (*seriously*). It is indeed a beautiful work.
- POET. Well, then!
- ACTRESS. Yes, you have great genius, Robert.
- POET. By the way, in that connection you might as well tell me why you said you couldn't come the day before yesterday. There was absolutely nothing wrong with you.
- ACTRESS. I wanted to annoy you.
- POET. Whatever for? What had I done to you?
- ACTRESS. You were arrogant.
- POET. In what way?



- ACTRESS.                   Everybody in the theatre said so.
- POET.                     Oh.
- ACTRESS.                 But I said to them, 'The man has a right to be arrogant'.
- POET.                     And what did the others reply?
- ACTRESS.                 What should they say to me? I never speak to them.
- POET.                     Oh, I see.
- ACTRESS.                 They'd like to poison me — but they won't succeed.
- POET.                     Don't think of other people now. Be glad that we're here, and tell me that you love me.
- ACTRESS.                 Do you ask for greater proof?
- POET.                     That kind of thing can't be proved at all.
- ACTRESS.                 My, my! What more do you want?
- POET.                     To how many others have you tried to prove it in this way . . . did you love them all?
- ACTRESS.                 Oh, no — I loved only one.
- POET                     (*embracing her*). My . . .
- ACTRESS.                 Fritz.
- POET.                     My name is Robert. Tell me, what am I to you if you can think of Fritz now?
- ACTRESS.                 You're a mood.
- POET.                     That's nice to know.
- ACTRESS.                 Well — aren't you proud?
- POET.                     Why should I be proud?
- ACTRESS.                 I should think you have ample reason.
- POET.                     Oh — because of that.
- ACTRESS.                 Yes, because of that, my little cricket! — Now, about the chirping — do they still chirp?

- POET. Can't you hear it?
- ACTRESS. Of course I can — but they are frogs, my cricket.
- POET. You are mistaken — frogs croak.
- ACTRESS. Of course they croak.
- POET. But not here, my child. This is chirping.
- ACTRESS. You are the most stubborn creature I have ever come across. Kiss me, frog.
- POET. Please don't call me that. It irritates me.
- ACTRESS. Well, what shall I call you?
- POET. I have a name — Robert.
- ACTRESS. Oh, that's too ordinary.
- POET. Nevertheless, I would appreciate it if you simply called me by my own name.
- ACTRESS. Well, then, Robert — kiss me . . . ah! (*She kisses him.*) Are you satisfied now, frog? Hahahaha.
- POET. Would you mind if I lit a cigarette? (*He takes a cigarette case from the bedside table, gets two cigarettes out of it — lights both and gives her one.*)
- ACTRESS. By the way, you haven't said a word about my performance yesterday.
- POET. About which performance?
- ACTRESS. Which do you think?
- POET. Oh, I see. I wasn't in the theatre.
- ACTRESS. It amuses you to joke.
- POET. Not at all. As you said you couldn't come to rehearsal the day before yesterday — I presumed that you wouldn't be in full possession of your faculties, and, therefore, abstained from coming.
- ACTRESS. You certainly missed something.
- POET. Oh?

- ACTRESS. It was sensational. The blood drained from people's faces.
- POET. That was noticeable to you?
- ACTRESS. Benno said, 'Child, you played like a goddess'.
- POET. Hm . . . and so ill the day before!
- ACTRESS. I was ill. And do you know why? Out of longing for you.
- POET. You've just told me you wanted to annoy me . . . that's why you couldn't come.
- ACTRESS. What do you know of my love for you. Everything leaves you cold. For whole nights I lay fever-ridden — forty-two degrees.
- POET. That's rather high for a mood.
- ACTRESS. You call that a mood? I die of love for you — and you call it a mood —
- POET. And Fritz . . . ?
- ACTRESS. Fritz? . . . Don't talk to me about that galley slave!

### The Actress and the Count

*The ACTRESS's bedroom. Very lavishly furnished. It is twelve noon. The blinds are still down and a candle is burning on the bedside table. The ACTRESS lies in her canopy bed. Several newspapers are scattered on the covers. The COUNT enters in the uniform of captain of a cavalry regiment. He remains standing in the doorway.*

- ACTRESS. Ah, Count!
- COUNT. Your lady mother has permitted me, otherwise I wouldn't —

- ACTRESS. Please come in.
- COUNT. My respects. Forgive me — coming in from the street — it is difficult to distinguish — ah, there we are! (*Kisses her hand.*)
- ACTRESS. Do sit down, Count.
- COUNT. Your lady mother tells me that Madame is indisposed — . . . nothing serious, I hope.
- ACTRESS. Nothing serious! I've been close to death.
- COUNT. Good God — how's that?
- ACTRESS. At any rate, it's very kind of you to take the trouble to visit me.
- COUNT. Close to death! And only last night you played like a goddess.
- ACTRESS. It was indeed a great triumph.
- COUNT. Amazing! People were positively shattered — not to mention myself.
- ACTRESS. Thank you for the lovely flowers.
- COUNT. Oh, a mere —
- ACTRESS (*indicating a large basket of flowers standing on the table by the window*). There they are!
- COUNT. Last night you were practically buried in wreaths — and flowers.
- ACTRESS. They are still in my dressing-room. Only yours did I bring home with me.
- COUNT (*kissing her hand*). That was jolly gracious of you.
- ACTRESS (*suddenly takes his hand and kisses it*).
- COUNT. But — Madame!
- ACTRESS. Don't be afraid, Count, this puts you under no obligation.
- COUNT. You're a strange creature. One might go so far as to say — puzzling.
- ACTRESS. Miss Birken is, no doubt, easier to solve.

- COUNT. Yes — the little Birken girl is no problem — although . . . in any case, I only know her superficially.
- ACTRESS. Ha!!!
- COUNT. Please believe me. But you're a problem — I've always longed for one. Last night I missed a great joy — through seeing you act for the first time.
- ACTRESS. Oh! How's that?
- COUNT. Er — well — you see — it's so beastly difficult with the theatre. I am used to dining very late . . . so, well, by the time you get there — the best is over, don't you agree?
- ACTRESS. Then from now on you'll have to eat earlier.
- COUNT. Yes, I thought of that. Or not at all — under such circumstances, there is no pleasure in dining.
- ACTRESS. And what do you know of pleasure — you're a mere boy.
- COUNT. That's what I ask myself sometimes. But I am no boy. There must be another reason.
- ACTRESS. Do you think so?
- COUNT. Oh, yes. Ludo, for instance, says that I'm a philosopher. You know — he's of the opinion that I think too deeply . . . about things.
- ACTRESS. Yes . . . thinking can be a great misfortune.
- COUNT. I've got too much time on my hands, that's why I think — I think. Shall I tell you something? I thought things would be better when I was transferred to Vienna. It's diverting here and stimulating — but at heart it's no different from up there.
- ACTRESS. And where, might I ask, is 'up there'?

- COUNT. Well — down there — you know — in Hungary. In the Nestar, where I was stationed most of the time.
- ACTRESS. What were you doing in Hungary?
- COUNT. Well — as I have told you — service.
- ACTRESS. Yes, but why so long in Hungary?
- COUNT. Just happened like that.
- ACTRESS. It must have driven you mad.
- COUNT. Oh, I don't know — one's busier there than here — training recruits, breaking in horses. And the district and surroundings aren't as bad as all that. It's really beautiful in the plains. With a sunset — I've sometimes thought it's a pity I'm not a painter — I'd paint it. We had a chap in the regiment who could. But here I am, dear lady, boring you with my stories.
- ACTRESS. Oh, please — I'm amusing myself royally.
- COUNT. You know, dear lady, one can really talk to you — Ludo had already told me that — and one does find that so rarely.
- ACTRESS. Especially in Hungary.
- COUNT. But it's as bad in Vienna. People are the same everywhere. The only difference is that the more the people, the greater the crowd. Tell me, dear lady — do you like people?
- ACTRESS. Like them — ?? I hate them. I don't want to see anyone. I don't see anyone. I'm always alone — no one enters this house.
- COUNT. You see — I thought so — I thought that you were really a recluse. I expect that often happens in Art. Up there in the higher regions . . . well, you're lucky, at least you know why you're alive.
- ACTRESS. Who told you that — I've no idea why I'm alive.

- COUNT. But my dear lady — famous — fêted —
- ACTRESS. Do you think that means happiness?
- COUNT. Happiness! I tell you, dear lady — happiness does not exist. Particularly non-existent are the things one always talks about — for instance, love — that's the worst of all.
- ACTRESS. You may be right there.
- COUNT. Pleasure — intoxication — well, there's nothing to be said against them — they are tangible. Now if I enjoy something . . . well — I know I enjoy it — or if I am intoxicated — that's tangible too. And when it's over, well — it's over.
- ACTRESS. (*theatrically*). It is over.
- COUNT. But as soon as — how shall I put it — as soon as one stops living for the moment, thinking of what comes after or went before . . . then one's finished. What comes after . . . is sad. What went before is uncertain . . . in short, one gets confused. Am I right or am I not?
- ACTRESS. (*nodding seriously*). You have indeed put it in a nutshell.
- COUNT. Well, you see, dear lady, once that's become clear to one it doesn't matter whether one lives in Vienna, or in the Puszta — or in Steinamanger. Look, for instance — where can I put my cap? — oh, thanks. What were we talking about?
- ACTRESS. About Steinamanger.
- COUNT. Oh, yes. Well, as I was saying, there's no great difference. Whether I spend the evening in a casino or a club — it's all the same thing.
- ACTRESS. And how does Love stand?
- COUNT. If one believes in it — there'll always be a girl.

- ACTRESS. Miss Birken, for example.
- COUNT. I really don't know, dear lady, why you always come back to Miss Birken.
- ACTRESS. Because she is your mistress.
- COUNT. Who says so?
- ACTRESS. Everybody knows.
- COUNT. Except me. Isn't it strange.
- ACTRESS. You fought a duel on her account.
- COUNT. Perhaps I was even shot dead — and didn't notice.
- ACTRESS. Well, Count, you are a man of honour. Come a little closer.
- COUNT. With your permission.
- ACTRESS. Here. (*She draws him to her, running her fingers through his hair.*) I knew you'd come today.
- COUNT. How do you make that out?
- ACTRESS. I knew last night in the theatre.
- COUNT. Could you see me from the stage?
- ACTRESS. But Count — didn't you notice that I played only for you?
- COUNT. How's that?
- ACTRESS. I simply trod on air when I saw you sitting in the front row.
- COUNT. Trod on air? Because of me! I'd no idea that you'd noticed me.
- ACTRESS. Your air of distinction can drive one to distraction.
- COUNT. But dear lady . . .
- ACTRESS. 'But dear lady'. Unbuckle your sword.
- COUNT. If you'll permit me. (*He unbuckles his sword and leans it against the bed.*)
- ACTRESS. And now — kiss me.



- COUNT *(kisses her — she holds onto him).*
- ACTRESS. I wish I'd never seen you.
- COUNT. But it's better like this!
- ACTRESS. Count — you are a poseur.
- COUNT. I? Why?
- ACTRESS. Can you imagine how happy some men would be if they were in your place?
- COUNT. I am happy.
- ACTRESS. Oh, I thought there was no happiness. The way you look at me — I think you're afraid of me, Count.
- COUNT. I repeat, dear lady, you are a problem.
- ACTRESS. Oh, you and your philosophy — leave me alone. Come to me. And now — whatever you ask you shall have. You are too beautiful.
- COUNT. Then may I beg for permission (*Kissing her hand:*) to return again tonight?
- ACTRESS. Tonight . . . I am playing.
- COUNT. After the theatre.
- ACTRESS. And you don't ask for anything else?
- COUNT. I'll ask for anything else after the theatre.
- ACTRESS. (*burt*). You'll ask in vain — wretched poseur!
- COUNT. Yes, but look. Up to now we have been honest with each other — I'd find all that much nicer in the evening after the theatre — more comfortable than now, when I always feel the door might open.
- ACTRESS. It doesn't open from outside.
- COUNT. Look, I don't think we should squander something frivolously, when it might turn out to be very beautiful.
- ACTRESS. *Might* turn out!

- COUNT. To tell you the truth, I find love revolting in the morning.
- ACTRESS. Well, you're the oddest person I've ever come across . . .
- COUNT. I'm not speaking of just any kind of woman. After all — it usually makes no difference. But women like you . . . No — you can call me a fool one hundred times — women like you . . . should not be enjoyed before breakfast. And so . . . you know . . . so . . .
- ACTRESS. Oh God, you're sweet!
- COUNT. You do see the point, don't you. I imagine the whole thing . . .
- ACTRESS. Well, how do you imagine it?
- COUNT. I imagine . . . I'd wait for you in a cab after the theatre — then we'd have supper together somewhere . . .
- ACTRESS. I'm not Miss Birken.
- COUNT. I didn't say you were. Only I think you should always be in the right mood for everything. I only get in the right mood at supper — that's the best — to go home after supper and then . . .
- ACTRESS. And then?
- COUNT. Well, then . . . that depends on how things develop.
- ACTRESS. Come closer . . . closer . . .
- COUNT *(sitting on her bed)*. Oh, I say . . . *(Sniffs.)* Mignonette, isn't it?
- ACTRESS. It's very hot here, don't you think?
- COUNT *(leans over to kiss her neck)*.
- ACTRESS. Oh, Count — that's not on the programme!
- COUNT. Who says. There is no programme.
- ACTRESS *(draws him closer)*.

COUNT. It really is hot.

ACTRESS. Do you think so? And dark — as though it were evening . . . (*Pulling him to her.*) It is evening . . . it is night . . . close your eyes if it's too light for you . . . come . . . come . . .

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ACTRESS. Now what of the right mood — you poseur.

COUNT. You're a little devil.

ACTRESS. What sort of expression is that?

COUNT. Well, then — an angel.

ACTRESS. You should have been an actor! Really! You know women. Do you know what I am going to do now?

COUNT. Well?

ACTRESS. I am going to tell you that I am never going to see you again.

COUNT. But why?

ACTRESS. No, no. You are too dangerous for my liking. You'd drive a woman mad. Now you suddenly stand before me as though nothing had happened.

COUNT. But . . .

ACTRESS. Please — may I ask His Highness to remember — that I have just become his mistress . . .

COUNT. I shall never forget it.

ACTRESS. And how about tonight?

COUNT. How do you mean?

ACTRESS. Well, you were going to wait for me after the theatre.

COUNT. Yes. All right, then — let's say — the day after tomorrow?

ACTRESS. What do you mean, the day after tomorrow? We spoke of today.

- COUNT. There wouldn't really be any sense in that.
- ACTRESS. Weakling!
- COUNT. You don't understand. I'm really referring more to — er — how shall I put it — to the state of my soul.
- ACTRESS. What has your soul got to do with me?
- COUNT. Believe me, they go together. I think it's quite the wrong attitude to differentiate between the two.
- ACTRESS. Please don't inflict your philosophy on me. If I want that, I can get it from books.
- COUNT. One learns nothing from books.
- ACTRESS. That's quite true. That's why you'll wait for me tonight. I'm sure we'll come to an agreement about your soul — you rascal!
- COUNT. Well, then — with your permission — I shall wait with my carriage --
- ACTRESS. You'll wait for me here in my flat —
- COUNT. After the theatre?
- ACTRESS. Naturally.
- COUNT. *(buckles on his sword).*
- ACTRESS. What are you doing?
- COUNT. I think it's time to go. I've really stayed rather a long time for a duty call.
- ACTRESS. Well, tonight it won't be a duty call.
- COUNT. You think not?
- ACTRESS. Let that be my worry. And now, kiss me again, my little philosppher . . . There, you seducer you . . . sweet child. You . . . pedlar of souls! You polecat you! *(Having kissed him vigorously a few times, she pushes him away.)* Your Highness — it was a great honour . . .

- COUNT. Dear lady — I kiss your hand. (*At the door.*) Au revoir!
- ACTRESS. Adieu, Steinamanger!

## The Count and the Prostitute

*About 6 am. A poorly furnished room with one window. The yellowish-dirty blinds are still drawn: torn green curtains; a chest of drawers on which a few photographs stand, and a strikingly cheap and tasteless woman's hat lies on it. Behind the mirror are cheap Japanese fans. On the table, which is covered with a reddish cloth, stands a paraffin lamp, which is flickering; a yellow lampshade; next to it a jug containing dregs of beer and next to it a glass. On the floor beside the bed, women's clothes are scattered untidily, as though hurriedly thrown off. The PROSTITUTE lies in bed asleep, breathing quietly. On the divan, covered with a great-coat, lies the COUNT, fully dressed. His hat lies on the floor at the head of the divan.*

- COUNT (*moves, rubs his eyes, rises quickly, sits up and looks round*). Heavens, how did I . . . Oh, yes . . . so I really went home with the girl (*He rises hurriedly and notices her bed.*) Why, there she lies . . . the things that can happen to one at my age . . . I can't remember a thing — did they carry me up? No . . . I remember seeing . . . coming into the room . . . yes, I was still awake then, or had woken up . . . or . . . or . . . perhaps it's only that the room reminds me of something . . . well, well, well . . . so I did see it last night . . . (*He looks at his watch.*) What! Last night! A few hours ago. But I knew something would happen . . . I felt it . . . when I started drinking I felt that . . . but what did happen? . . . nothing, obviously . . . or did it? By Gad! such a thing hasn't happened to me in . . . ten years . . .

that I shouldn't remember . . . well, the long and the short of it is that I was drunk. If only I knew when . . . I can still remember quite clearly going into that whores' café with Ludo and . . . no, no — we left there . . . and on the way . . . that's right — I drove in my carriage with Ludo . . . why am I searching my brain — it doesn't matter . . . better be getting along. *(He gets up and the lamp wobbles.)* Oh! *(He looks at sleeping girl.)* She's certainly in a sound sleep. Although I don't remember anything, I'll put some money on her bedside table . . . and off I go . . . *(He stands before her, looking at her for a long time.)* If I didn't know what she is! *(He regards her intently.)* I know a lot of girls who don't manage to look so virtuous asleep. My word . . . I expect Ludo would say I was philosophising. But it's true — it seems to me that sleep makes all equal — like his brother, death. If only I knew whether . . . but no, I would have remembered it . . . no, no — I dropped straight onto this divan here, and nothing happened . . . it's incredible how alike women are sometimes . . . well, let's go . . . *(He is about to go.)* oh, yes. *(He takes his wallet and is drawing out a note.)*

PROSTITUTE

*(waking up).* Oh . . . who's here at this hour of the morning? *(Recognises him.)* Hello, sonny.

COUNT.

Good morning. Did you sleep well?

PROSTITUTE

*(stretching).* Come here — give us a little kiss.

COUNT

*(leans down to her and pulls up short).* I was just leaving.

PROSTITUTE.

Leaving?

COUNT.

It's really time.

- PROSTITUTE. You want to go away?  
COUNT *(almost embarrassed)*. Well . . .
- PROSTITUTE. All right, then, goodbye. Come another time.
- COUNT. Good-bye, then. Well, aren't you going to shake hands?
- PROSTITUTE *(pulls her hands from under the blanket)*.  
COUNT *(takes her hand, which he kisses mechanically, notices it, and laughs)*. As though you were a princess! Do you know, if one only . . .
- PROSTITUTE. Why do you look at me like that?  
COUNT. When one only sees your little head, like when you woke up — everyone looks innocent . . . Yes, indeed, one could imagine all sorts of things, if there wasn't such a smell of paraffin . . .
- PROSTITUTE. These lamps are always a nuisance.  
COUNT. How old are you?
- PROSTITUTE. Guess.  
COUNT. Twenty-four.
- PROSTITUTE. *(sarcastically)*. Oh, I am, am I?  
COUNT. Why, are you older than that?
- PROSTITUTE. I'm in my twentieth year.  
COUNT. And how long have you been . . .
- PROSTITUTE. I've been on the game a year now.  
COUNT. You certainly started early.
- PROSTITUTE. Better too early than too late.  
COUNT *(sitting on her bed)*. Tell me, are you happy?
- PROSTITUTE. What?  
COUNT. Well, I mean — er — are you doing well?
- PROSTITUTE. On the whole, I'm doing all right.  
COUNT. Oh . . . tell me, has it never occurred to you to try your hand at something else?

- PROSTITUTE. What else could I do?
- COUNT. Well, you're a very pretty girl. You could, for instance, take a lover.
- PROSTITUTE. Do you think I haven't got one?
- COUNT. Yes, I know. I mean the sort, you know, the sort that looks after you so that you don't have to go with every other man.
- PROSTITUTE. I don't go with every other man. Thank God I don't have to do that — I can choose the ones I like.
- COUNT. *(looks round the room).*
- PROSTITUTE. Next month we're moving right into town.
- COUNT. *We? Who?*
- PROSTITUTE. The woman and the other girls who live here.
- COUNT. There are others living —
- PROSTITUTE. Yes, next door . . . can't you hear? . . . that's Milly — she was in the café too.
- COUNT. Someone does seem to be snoring.
- PROSTITUTE. That's Milly all right. She'll go on snoring all day until ten o'clock tonight. Then she gets up and goes to the café.
- COUNT. What a revolting life.
- PROSTITUTE. Of course — that's why Madame is always after her. I'm already on the streets at twelve noon.
- COUNT. Why?
- PROSTITUTE. Why do you think? I'm on my beat.
- COUNT. Oh, yes, of course . . . naturally. *(He gets up, gets out his wallet and puts a note on the table.)* Adieu.
- PROSTITUTE. Going already? Bye bye. Come again soon. *(She turns on her side.)*



- COUNT *(stopping)*. I suppose it doesn't mean a thing to you any more, does it.
- PROSTITUTE. What?
- COUNT. I mean — you don't enjoy it.
- PROSTITUTE. *(yawning)*. God, I'm sleepy.
- COUNT. It's all the same to you whether they're young or old . . .
- PROSTITUTE. Why do you ask?
- COUNT. Well — *(Suddenly snaps his fingers.)* Good heavens — now I remember who you reminded me of . . .
- PROSTITUTE. I look like someone?
- COUNT. Unbelievable! Quite incredible! Now please — stop talking — just for a minute — *(He looks at her.)* Exactly the same face — exactly the same face *(Suddenly catches his breath.)*
- PROSTITUTE. Well? . . .
- COUNT. By Jove — it's a pity that you . . . aren't anything else . . . you could make your fortune.
- PROSTITUTE. You talk just like Franz.
- COUNT. Who's Franz?
- PROSTITUTE. He's the waiter in our café.
- COUNT. Why do I talk like Franz?
- PROSTITUTE. He always says I could make my fortune and I should marry him.
- COUNT. Why don't you?
- PROSTITUTE. No, thanks — I wouldn't marry at any price. Later perhaps.
- COUNT. The eyes . . . exactly the same eyes . . . I'm sure Ludo would say I'm a fool — but I shall kiss your eyes once more — there . . . and now, God bless you, for I'm going.

- PROSTITUTE. Bye bye.
- COUNT (*turning in the doorway*). Tell me — aren't you surprised . . .
- PROSTITUTE. About what?
- COUNT. That I don't want anything from you?
- PROSTITUTE. There are lots of men who don't feel like it in the morning.
- COUNT. Well, yes . . . (*To himself*;) isn't it stupid of me that I want her to be surprised . . . well, good-bye. (*On the threshold*;) I'm really annoyed. After all, I know such women are only concerned with money . . . why am I saying 'such'? It's refreshing that she doesn't pretend — one should really be pleased . . . I say . . . I shall come to you again soon . . .
- PROSTITUTE. Good.
- COUNT. When are you generally at home?
- PROSTITUTE. I'm always at home. You need only ask for Leokadia.
- COUNT. Leokadia . . . all right. Farewell. (*Again in the door*;) My head isn't clear yet. Isn't this the limit. I stay with such a girl and do nothing but kiss her eyes because she reminds me of someone . . . (*To her*;) Leokadia — does someone leave you like this often?
- PROSTITUTE. How?
- COUNT. Well — like me.
- PROSTITUTE. In the morning?
- COUNT. No . . . Did anyone ever stay with you and not want anything?
- PROSTITUTE. No, that's never happened to me.
- COUNT. Well, then — what are you thinking? That you don't appeal to me?
- PROSTITUTE. Why shouldn't I appeal to you? I appealed to you last night.

- COUNT. I like you now, too.
- PROSTITUTE. But you like me better at night.
- COUNT. What makes you think so?
- PROSTITUTE. Oh, don't ask stupid questions.
- COUNT. At night . . . didn't I drop onto the divan at once?
- PROSTITUTE. You certainly did — with me.
- COUNT. With you?
- PROSTITUTE. Yes, don't you remember?
- COUNT. I thought . . . we were together . . . oh!
- PROSTITUTE. But you fell asleep soon after.
- COUNT. Soon after I . . . oh . . . so that's what happened.
- PROSTITUTE. Yes, sorry. You must have been pretty drunk not to remember.
- COUNT. Well . . . and yet . . . there is a faint resemblance . . . goodbye . . . (*Listening:*) What's that?
- PROSTITUTE. The chambermaid! Give her something as you go out. The door is open, so you can save on the porter.
- COUNT. All right. (*In the lounge:*) Wouldn't it have been beautiful if I had only kissed her eyes. That would almost have been an adventure. It was not to be. (*A chambermaid opens the door.*) Ah — there you are . . . good night.
- CHAMBERMAID. Good morning.
- COUNT. Oh, of course . . . good morning . . . good morning . . .







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