

鐵蒂姨母

(英漢對照)



AUNT TITTIE

ONCE upon a time in a small fishing village in Cornwall there lived a devout and angry clergyman named Clement Shore. He was an ex-missionary and had a face almost entirely encircled by whiskers, like a frilled ham. His wife, Mary, was small and weary, and gave birth to three daughters, Christina, Titania, and lastly Amanda, with whose birth she struggled to long and sadly, and died, exhausted by the effort. Amanda was my mother. On Christmas day 1881, Grandfather Clement himself died and my Aunt Christina then aged sixteen, having arranged for what furniture there was to be sold, and the lease of the house taken over, travelled to London with several tin trunks, a fox terrier named Roland and her two younger sisters aged respectively thirteen and eleven. They were met, dismally, at Paddington by their father's spinster sister Ernesta, a grey woman of about fifty, who led them, without protest, to Lupus Street, Pimlico, where with a certain grim efficiency she ran a lodging house for bachelors. Once installed they automatically became insignificant but important cog-wheels in the smooth running machinery of the

house which was very high and respectable. The three of them shared a small bedroom with Roland, from whom they refused to be parted, and lived two years of polite slavery until in the spring of 1883, Christina suddenly married James Rogers, Ernesta Shore's first-floor-front tenant, and went with him to a small house in Camberwell, taking with her Titania and Amanda.

James Rogers was a good man and a piano tuner at the time of his marriage, later he developed into a travelling agent for his firm, so that during my childhood in the house I didn't see much of him, but he was mild tempered and kind when he did happen to be at home and only drank occasionally, and then without exuberance.

Aunt Christina was formidable, even when young and ruled him firmly until the day of his death. She was less successful however with Aunt Titania and my mother. Aunt Titania stayed the course for about a year and then eloped to Manchester with a young music hall comedian, Jumbo Potter, with whom she lived in sin for three years to the bitter shame of Aunt Christina. At the end of this liaison she went on to the stage herself in company with three other girls. They called themselves "The Four Rosebuds" and danced and sang through the music halls of England. Meanwhile my mother, Amanda, continued to live in

Camberwell, helping with the housework, ~~and~~ having very well until 1888, when Titania ~~breached~~ ^{reappeared} in London, swathed in the glamour of the Theatre, and invited her to a theatrical supper party at the Monico. Amanda climbed out of her bedroom window and over the yard fence in order to get there and never returned. Titania on being questioned later by Christina stated that the last she'd seen of Amanda, she was seated on the knee of an Argentine with a paper fireman's cap on her head, blowing a squeaker. Titania's recollections were naturally somewhat vague as she had been drinking a good deal and left the party early on the strength of an unpremeditated reunion with Jumbo Potter. Christina anxiously pursued her enquiries, but could discover nothing about the Argentine; nobody knew his name, he had apparently drifted into the party, entirely uninvited. Finally when two days had elapsed and she was about to go to the police, a telegram arrived from Amanda saying that she was at Ostend and that it was lovely and that nobody was to worry about her and that she was writing. A few weeks later she did write, briefly, this time from Brussels, she said she was staying with a friend, Madame Vautrin, who was very nice and there were lots of other girls in the house and it was all great fun, and nobody was to worry about her as she was very, very happy.

For ~~five~~ years after that, neither Titania nor Christina heard from her at all until suddenly, just before Christmas 1893, she appeared at Christina's house in Camberwell in a carriage and pair. She was dressed superbly and caused a great sensation in the neighbourhood. Christina received her coldly but finally melted when ^{Mrs} Amanda offered to pay off all the instalments on the new drawing-room set and gave her a cheque for twenty-five pounds as well. Titania by this time had married Jumbo Potter and Amanda gave a family Christmas dinner party at the Grosvenor Hotel where she was staying, and as a *bonne bouche* at the end of the meal, produced an Indian Prince who gave everybody jewellery. She stayed in London for six weeks and then went to Paris, still with her Prince, and spent a riotous month or two until finally she accompanied him to Marseilles where he took ship for India leaving her sobbing picturesquely on the dock with a cabuchon emerald and a return ticket for Paris. It was while she was on the platform awaiting the Paris train that she met my father, Sir Eugène ~~name~~-Jones. He was a prosperous-looking man of about fifty, returning on leave from ~~Dum~~ visit his wife and family in Exeter. However, he postponed his homecoming for three weeks in order to enjoy Paris with Amanda. Finally they parted, apparently without much heart-break, he

for England, and she for Warsaw, whither she had been invited by a Russian girl she had met in Brussels, Nadia Kolenska. Nadia had been living luxuriously in Warsaw for a year as the guest of a young attaché to the French Embassy. Upon arrival in Warsaw, Amanda was provided with a charming suite of rooms and several admirers, and was enjoying herself greatly when to her profound irritation, she discovered she was going to have a child.

She and Nadia, I believe, did everything they could think of to get rid of it but without success, and so Amanda decided to continue to enjoy life for as long as she could and then return to England. Unfortunately, however, she left it rather late, and on a frozen morning in January, I was born in a railway carriage somewhere between Warsaw and Berlin. The reason for my abrupt arrival several weeks earlier than was expected was the sudden jolting of the train while my mother was on her way back from the lavatory to her compartment. She fell violently over a valise that someone had left in the corridor, and two hours later, much to everyone's embarrassment and discomfort, I was born and laid in the luggage rack wrapped in a plaid travelling rug.

A week later Aunt Christina arrived in Berlin in response to a telegram, just in time to see my mother die in a hospital ward. With her usual prompt effi-

ciency collected all my mother's personal effects, which were considerable, and having ascertained that there were no savings in any bank, took me back to England with her and ensconced me in her own bedroom in her new house, Number 17, Cranberry Avenue, Kennington. 2

My life until my Uncle James Rogers' death in 1904 was as eventful for me as it is for most children who are learning to walk and talk and become aware of things. A few incidents remain in my memory. Notably, a meeting with my Aunt Titania when I was about three. She smelt strongly of scent and her hair was bright yellow. She bounced me gaily on her knee until I was sick, after which, she seemed to lose interest in me. I remember also, when I was a little older, my Uncle Jim came into my room late at night. I awoke just in time to see him go over to the mantelpiece and throw two green china vases onto the floor. I cried a lot because I was frightened. Aunt Christina cried too and finally soothed me to sleep again by singing hymns softly and saying prayers.

When I was five I was sent to a kindergarten on weekdays, and a Sunday School on Sunday afternoons. A Miss Brace kept the kindergarten. She wore shirt

blouses with puffed sleeves, and tartan skirts. Her hair was done up over a pad. Twice a week we had drawing lessons and were allowed to use coloured chalks. I didn't care for any of the other children, and disliked the little girls particularly because they used to squabble during playtime, and pull each other's hair, and cry at the least thing.

I enjoyed the Sunday School much more because we used to stand in a circle and sing hymns, and the teacher had a large illustrated Bible which had a picture of God the Father throwing a hen out of Heaven, and another one of Jesus, with his apostles, sitting at a large table and eating rolls. Everybody had beards and white nightgowns, and looked very funny.

When I was nine, Uncle Jim died. All the blinds in the house were pulled down, and we walked about softly as though he were only asleep and we were afraid of waking him. Iris, the servant, who had only been with us for two weeks, trailed up and down the stairs miserably with weeping tears streaking her face. Perhaps she cried as a natural compliment to bereavement, however remote from herself, or perhaps she was merely frightened. Even the cat seemed depressed and lay under the sofa for hours at a time in a sort of coma. Aunt Christina took me in to see Uncle Jim lying in bed covered with a sheet up to

his chin his eyes were closed, and his face was yellow like tallow, his nose looked as though someone had pinched it. Aunt Christina walked firmly up to the bed, and having straightened the end of the sheet, bent down and kissed him on the forehead so suddenly that I'm sure he would have jumped if he had been alive. Then she looked across at me and said that his spirit had gone to heaven. Outside in the street a barrel organ was playing and there were some children yelling a little way off, but these sounds seemed faint and unreal as though I were listening to them from inside a box.

I went to the funeral with Aunt Christina and Aunt Titania in a closed carriage which smelt strongly of horses and leather. On the way Aunt Titania wanted to smoke a cigarette but Aunt Christina was very angry and wouldn't let her. I sat with my back to the horse and watched them arguing about it, sitting side by side joggling slightly as the carriage wheels bumped over the road. Finally Aunt Christina sniffed loudly and shut her mouth in a thin line and refused to say another word, whereupon Aunt Titania leaned a little forward and looked grandly out of the window until we reached the Cemetery. I stood under a tree with her while the actual burial was going on and she gave me some peppermints out of her muff. When we got home again we all had tea and Iris

made some dripping toast, but the atmosphere was strained. After tea, I went down to the kitchen to help Iris with the washing up and we listened to the voices upstairs getting angrier and angrier until finally the front door slammed so loudly that all the crockery shook on the dresser. Presently we heard Aunt Christina playing hymns and I didn't see Aunt Titania again for many years.

Soon after this I went to a day school in Stockwell, it wasn't very far away and I used to go there in a 'bus and walk home. There was an enormous horse chestnut tree just inside the school gate and we used to collect the chestnuts and put them on strings and play conkers. They were rich shiny brown when we first picked them up, like the piano in our front room, but afterwards the shine wore off and they weren't nearly so nice. I hated the headmaster who was stout and had a very hearty laugh. He insisted on everybody playing football and used to keep goal himself, shouting loudly as he jumped about. One of the under masters was freckled and kind and used to pinch my behind in the locker room when I was changing. Much as I disliked school, I disliked coming home in the evenings still more, my heart used to sink as I stood outside the front door and watched Aunt Christina wobbling towards me through the coloured glass. She generally let me in without saying a word

and I used to go straight upstairs to my bedroom and read ~~and do~~ my home-work until supper time, because his left at six and there was nobody to talk to. Aunt Christina always said grace before and after meals, and regularly, when we'd cleared away the supper things and piled them up in the kitchen, she used to play hymns and make me sing them with her. Sundays were particularly awful because I had to go to Church morning and evening, as well as to Sunday School in the afternoons. The Vicar was very skinny and while I listened to his throaty voice screeching out the sermon I used to amuse myself by counting how many times his Adam's Apple bobbed up and down behind his white collar. The woman who always sat next to us had bad feet and the whole pew smelt of her.

I used to ask Aunt Christina about my mother, but all she'd say was that Satan had got her because she was wicked, and whenever I asked about my father she said he was dead and that she had never known him.

At the beginning of 1906 when I was eleven, things became even ~~stranger~~. Aunt Christina bought a whole lot of modelling wax and made a figure of Jesus lying down, then she put red ink on it to look like blood, but it soaked in. It wasn't a very good figure anyhow; the face was horrid and the arms much too long, but she used to kiss it and croon over it. Once she tried to

make me kiss it but I wouldn't, so she turned me out into the yard. I stayed all night in the shed and caught cold. After that she wouldn't speak to me for days, I was unhappy and made plans about running away, but I hadn't any money and there was nowhere to run.

One evening in April, I came home from school and she was in bed with a terrible headache; the next morning when I went in to her room she was gasping and saying she couldn't breathe, so I ran out and fetched a doctor. He said she had pneumonia and that we must have a nurse so we did, and the nurse rattled about the house and poked her tongue against her teeth a good deal and washed everything she could. Three days later Mr. Wendell, the Vicar, came and stayed up in Aunt Christina's room for a time, and a short while after he'd gone the nurse came running downstairs and said I was to fetch the doctor. Just as I was leaving the house to fetch him, I met him at the gate on his way in. He went upstairs quickly and an hour later he and the nurse came down and told me that my aunt had passed away.

He asked me for Aunt Titania's address, so we looked through Aunt Christina's davenport and found it and sent her a telegram. Late that afternoon Uncle Jumbo Potter arrived and interviewed the nurse, and then took me round to the doctor's house, and he talked to him for ages while I sat in the waiting room, and looked at the people who had come to be cured; one little boy

with a bandage round his head was whimpering and his mother tried to comfort him by telling him stories. Presently Uncle Jumbo came out and took me home with him in a cab. He lived in rooms near Victoria Station. He told me that Aunt Titania wasn't living with him any more and that she was in Paris singing at a place called the Café Bardac, and that he was going to send me to her the next day. That night I went with him to Shoreditch where he was doing his turn at the Empire. I sat in his dressing-room and watched him make up and then he took me down on to the stage and let me stand at the side with the stage manager. Uncle Jumbo was a great favourite and the audience cheered and clapped the moment he walked on to the stage. He wore a very small bowler hat and loose trousers and had a large red false nose. His songs were very quick indeed until it came to the chorus, when he slowed down and let the audience join in too. The last thing he did was a dance in which his trousers kept nearly falling off all the time. At the end he had to go before the curtain and make a speech before they'd let him go. He took me upstairs with him and undressed, still very out of breath. He sat down quite naked and smoked a cigarette, and I watched the hair on his chest glistening with sweat as he breathed. He asked me if I liked his turn and I said I loved it and he said, "Damned hard lot down here, can't get a bloody smile out of 'em, pardon me." After he'd taken his make-

up off and powdered his face and dressed we went to a bar just opposite the Theatre and he drank beer with two gentlemen and a woman with a white fur, then we went home first in a tram and then a 'bus. I went to sleep in the 'bus. When we got to his rooms he gave me a glass of soda water and made up a bed for me on the sofa.

The next morning Uncle Jumbo took me back to Aunt Christina's house. The nurse was still there, and Mrs. Harrison from next door, who kissed me a lot and told me to be a brave little man and asked me if I would like to come upstairs and see my dear Auntie, but Uncle Jumbo wouldn't let me, he said he didn't hold with kids looking at corpses because it was morbid. He helped me pack my clothes and then we got a cab and drove back to his rooms. In the afternoon he went out and left me alone and I amused myself by looking at some magazines and a large album of photographs and press cuttings about Aunt Titania and Uncle Jumbo. When he came back he had a friend with him, Mrs. Rice, who he said would take me to the station, as the train went at eight o'clock and he would be at the Theatre Mrs. Rice was pretty and laughed a lot. We all made toast, and had tea round the fire. Mrs. Rice sat on Uncle's knee for a little and he winked at me playfully over her shoulder and said, "You tell your Aunt Tittie how pretty Mrs. Rice is, won't you?" whereupon she got

up and said, "Leave off, Jumbo, you ought to be ashamed" and looked quite cross for a minute. Uncle Jumbo went off to the Theatre at 5.30; he gave me five pounds and my ticket and said he had telegraphed to Aunt Tittie to meet me at the station. He kissed me quite affectionately and said, "Fancy me being fatherly!" Then he laughed loudly, tickled Mrs. Rice under the arms, and went down the stairs whistling. When he'd gone Mrs. Rice and I went back and sat by the fire. She asked me a lot of questions about Aunt Titania but as I hadn't seen her since Uncle Jim's funeral I couldn't answer them very well. After a while she went to the cupboard and poured herself a whisky and soda, and while she was sipping it she told me all about her husband who used to beat her and one night he tied her to the bed in their rooms in Huddersfield and kept on throwing the wet sponge at her until her nightgown was soaking wet and the landlady came in and stopped him. She said she'd met Uncle Jumbo in Blackpool in the summer and that they used to go out after the show and sit on the sand dunes in the moonlight, and then her husband found out and there was an awful row, and Jumbo knocked her husband down on the pier and brought her to London on the Sunday and she hadn't seen her husband since, but she believed he was still on tour in Miss Mittens and hoped to God he'd stay

in it and not come worrying her. She had several more whiskies and sodas before it was time to go and showed me a scar on her thigh where a collic bit her during her honeymoon in Llanudno. I looked at it politely and then she pulled her skirts down and said I was a bad boy and how old was I anyhow? I said I was eleven and she laughed and asked me if it made me feel naughty to see a pretty girl's bare leg. I said no and she said "Get along with you, I must put some powder on my nose." After a minute she came out of the bedroom, put her hat on and said we must go. We took a cab to the station on account of my trunk and Mrs. Rice told the porter to register through to Paris. She bought me some buns and chocolate and two magazines and put me in the train and waited to tell the guard to keep his eye on me before she kissed me and said good-bye. I waved to her all the way up the platform until she was out of sight and then sat back in my corner feeling very grown up and excited and waiting for the train to start.

That journey to Paris was momentous for me. I was alone and free for the first time, my going was in no way saddened by memories of people I'd left behind. I had left no one behind whom I could possibly miss; my school friendships were casual and I had definitely grown to hate poor Aunt Christina during the last few years of her life. I pressed my face a-

gainst the cold glass of the carriage window and searched for country shapes in the darkness, trees and hills and hedges, and felt as though I should burst with joy. There were two other people in the carriage with me; a man and a woman who slept, sitting up, with their mouths open. When we reached Newhaven, the guard came and led me to the gangway of the ship and gave me in charge of one of the men on board who offered me a ham sandwich and showed me a place in the saloon where I could put my feet up and go to sleep, but I couldn't begin to sleep until the ship started although I was dead tired, so I went up on deck and watched the lights of the town receding, and the red and green harbour lamps reflected in the water and I looked up at the clouds scurrying across the moon, and, suddenly, like a blow in the face, loneliness struck me down. I was chilled through and through with it—I wondered what I should do if when I got to Paris Aunt Titania was dead too. I tried very hard not to cry but it was no use. I had a pretty bad fit of hysteria and everyone crowded round me and patted me and tried to comfort me with eatables, until finally one kind woman took me in charge completely and gave me some brandy which made me choke but pulled me together. Then she put me to sleep in her private cabin and I didn't wake up until we got to Dieppe. I was all right from then on, the woman's name was

Roylat and she was on her way to Ceylon to visit her son who was a rubber planter. I had some tea with her in the station buffet at Dieppe and travelled with her to Paris, sleeping most of the way.

When we arrived at the Gare St. Lazare Aunt Titania was waiting at the barrier wearing a seal-skin coat and a bright red hat with a veil floating from it. I said good-bye to Mrs. Roylat who kissed me, bowed to Aunt Titania and disappeared after her luggage. Aunt Titania and I had to go and sit in the Customs room for three-quarters of an hour until my trunk came in. She was pleased to see me but very cross with Jumbo for having sent me by night instead of day. She said it was damned thoughtless of him because he knew perfectly well that she never got to bed before four o'clock in the morning and to have to get up again at six-thirty was too much of a good thing; then she hugged me and said it wasn't my fault and that we were going to have jolly times together.

At last, when the Customs man had marked my trunk, we got a cab and drove out into Paris. It had been raining and the streets were wet and shiny. The shutters on most of the shops were just being put up and waiters in their vests and trousers were polishing the tables outside the cafés. We drove across the river and along the quai Voltaire with the trees all glistening and freshly green; our cab horse nearly

fall down on the slippery road as we turned up the rue Bonaparte. Aunt Tittie talked all the way about everything she'd been doing and her contract at the Café Barlat which they'd renewed for another month. She asked me if Aunt Christina had left me any money and I said I didn't know, but I gave her a letter that Jumbo had told me to give her. She pursed up her lips when she read it and then said, "It looks like I shall have to find a job for you, duckie, you'd better come along with me and see Monsieur Claude but there's no hurry, we'll talk about that later on." Finally the cab drew up before a very high house, and a little man in a shirt and trousers ran out and helped the driver down with my trunk. Aunt Tittie said something to him in French and took me up four flights of dark stairs and opened the door into a sitting-room which had a large bedroom opening out of it on one side with a feather mattress on the bed that looked like a pink balloon, and a tiny room on the other side which she said I was to have. There were lots of coloured bows on the furniture and hundreds of photographs, lots of them fixed to the blue-striped wallpaper with ordinary pins. There was a small alcove in her bedroom with a wash-hand stand in it and a gas ring, and on the sitting-room table was a tray with some dirty glasses on it and a saucer full of cigarette-ends. Aunt Tittie took off her hat and coat and threw

them on the sofa when she ran her fingers through her hair and said "Well, here we are. Home Sweet Home." Then she went out onto the landing and screamed "Louise!" very loudly and came in again and sat down. "We'll have some coffee and rolls," she said, "then we'll go to bed until **lunch** time, how does that suit you?" I said it suited me very well and we lapsed into silence until Louise came. Louise was about seven or eight with a pallid face, a dirty pink dress turned up under an apron, and green felt slippers, her hair was bristling with curl-papers. Aunt Tittie had a long conversation with her in French and then the little man came clambering upstairs with my trunk and put it in my room. Then Louise and he both disappeared and I was left alone again with Aunt Tittie. I felt rather strange and oddly enough a little homesick, not really homesickness for that dreary house in Kennington, but a longing for something familiar. Aunt Tittie must have sensed that I wasn't feeling too happy because she put her arm round me and hugged me. "It's funny, isn't it?" she said, "you arriving suddenly like this? You must tell me all about poor little Christina and what you've been learning at school and everything, and you haven't got any cause to worry about anything because you're going to be company for me and I shall love having you here." Then she held me close to her for a moment and surprisingly burst out

crying, she fumbled for her handkerchief in her belt and went into the bedroom and shut the door. I didn't know what to do quite, so I started to unpack my trunk. Presently Louise returned with a tray of coffee and rolls and butter; she plumped it down on the table and screamed something at Aunt Tittie through the door and went out again. I sat at the table and waited until Aunt Tittie came out of the bedroom in a long blue quilted satin dressing-gown, with her hair down. She looked quite cheerful again. "I can't think what made me burst out like that," she said as she seated herself at the table. "It came over me all of a sudden about you being all alone in the world and your poor mother dying in childbirth and now Christina. We're the only ones left out of the whole lot and that's a fact. Two lumps?" She poured out coffee for us both and talked volubly all the time, a stream of scattered remarks, beginnings of stories, references to people I'd never heard of, all jumbled together incoherently, but somehow all seeming to fit into a sort of pattern.

She must have been about forty then, her hair had been re-dyed so often that it was entirely metallic, as bright as new brass fire-irons. Her face was pretty with a slightly retroussé nose and wide-set blue-grey eyes, her mouth was generous and large and gay when she laughed. She talked of Jumbo a good deal, irritably, but with underlying tenderness, I suspect that she

always loved him more than anyone else. She asked me if I'd seen Mrs. Rice and said that she was sorry for any man that got tangled up with a clinging vine of that sort. After breakfast, and when she'd smoked two or three cigarettes, she said she was going to bed until one o'clock and that I could do what I liked, but that she strongly advised me to go to bed too as I was probably more tired after my journey than I thought I was.

I went into my little room and when I'd finished unpacking I sat and looked out of the window for a while. It was at the back of the house looking down into a courtyard, the sun was shining into the rooms on the other side of the court, in one of them I saw an old woman in a blue dressing-gown working a sewing machine, the whirr of it sounded very loud, and every now and then there was the noise of rattling crockery far down on the ground floor, and somebody singing.

There were lots of grey roofs and chimney-pots and several birds flying about and perching on the telegraph wires, which stretched right across into the next street and then were hidden by a tall many-windowed building that looked like some sort of factory. I felt very drowsy and quite happy so I went and lay down on the bed and the next thing I knew was that it was lunch time and Aunt Tittie was shaking me gently and telling me to get up. She was still in her

dressing-gown, but her head was done up in a towel because she'd just washed her hair.

We had hot chicken and vegetables and salad for lunch and fresh crusty bread and coffee. When we'd finished Aunt Tittie stretched herself out on the sofa and then moved her legs so as to make room for me on the end of it.

"Now we'd better talk a bit," she said. "I had a good think while I was washing my head and if you'll listen carefully I'll tell you just how things stand and then we'll decide what's best to be done". I settled myself more comfortably and handed her the matches off the table which she was reaching out for. "To begin with," she said, "I haven't got any money except what I earn, but we can both live on that if we're careful anyhow for a bit until you start to make a little on your own. I know I ought to send you to school really but I can't, it's none too easy living in this damned town, because you've got to look smart and have nice clothes otherwise nobody will take any notice of you. Now I've got an idea which I'll have to talk over with Mattie Gibbons, she's my partner. We do a parasol dance, and then she does her skipping rope specialty which is fine, then I sing a ballad, one verse and chorus in English and the second verse and chorus in French and then we do a number together called 'How would you like a rose like me?' and go round to all the

tables giving the men paper roses out of a basket. My idea was that you should be dressed up as a little dandy with a silk hat and a cane and gloves, you know the sort of thing, and flirt with us during the parasol dance and bring on our props for us all through the act. If Mattie agrees we'll ask Monsieur Claude about it. I think he'll say yes because he's a bit keen on me if you know what I mean and you ought to get about fifteen francs a week which would be a help to begin with. Would you like that?"

I said eagerly that I'd love it better than anything in the world and flung my arms round her neck and kissed her and she said "Here wait a minute, it isn't settled yet, we've got to talk to Mattie and Monsieur Claude and arrange hundreds of things. I shall have to tell you a whole lot you're really too young to know, before I let you loose in the Cafe Bardac, to start with how much do you know?" This was rather a difficult question to answer so I sat looking at her without saying anything. "You know about men and women having babies and all that, don't you?" she said with an obvious effort.

I said "Yes," and blushed.

"Well, that's a good start anyway," she said. "Now then——" she stopped short and blushed herself, and then giggled nervously. "Oh, my God, I don't know how the hell to begin and that's a fact, well——" she pulled

herself together. "Take the plunge, that's always been my motto, so here goes." She crushed out her cigarette and sat up and spoke very fast. "Now listen, Julian, it's a strange world, and it's not a bit of good pretending it isn't. You're only a kid and you ought to have a nice home and go to a nice school and learn history and geography and what not and get to know all about everything gradually, so it wouldn't be a shock to you, but as it happens you haven't got a nice home, you haven't got a home at all, you're alone except for me and Christ knows I'm no Fairy Godmother, but I've got to tell you everything I can so that you don't go and get upset by things and led away through not realising what it's all about. To begin with, dear, you're a bastard, which sounds awful but isn't so bad really, it only means that your mother wasn't married to your father, they just had an affair and that was that, no obligations on either side and then you were born and your mother died and nobody knew who your father was anyhow except by rumour and what Nadia Koleska, who was your mother's friend, wrote to your Aunt Christina. You were brought up on the money that your mother's jewels fetched when your Aunt Christina sold them, and now she's dead too and here you are, alone in Paris with your Aunt Tittie who's not a 'good' woman by any manner of means, but she's all you've got so you'd better make the best of

her." Here she leant back and the cushion fell over the end of the sofa onto the floor, so I picked it up and put it behind her head and sat down again.

"When I say I'm not a good woman," she went on, "I mean I'm not what your Aunt Christina would call good. I take life as I find it and get as much as I can out of it. I always have been like that, it's me all over and I can't help it, tho' many's the row I've had with Christina because she never would see that what was good for her, wasn't necessarily good for me. I'm more like your mother I think really, only not quite so reckless.

"Now if you're going to live with me here, there's a lot of goings on you'll have to open your eyes to wide and then shut 'em tight and not worry, and you mustn't be upset by Mattie's swearing, her flow of language is something fierce when she gets going, but she's a really good friend and you'll like her. As far as the Café Bardac goes you'll have to look out and not be surprised by anything, it's none too refined there after one in the morning. People of all sorts and sizes come and drink at the bar, and sometimes there's a fight and you'll get a good laugh every now and again to see the way those old tarts shriek and yell and carry on. You know what tarts are, don't you?"

I said I wasn't sure, but I thought I did.

"Well," she continued, "they're women who have

affairs with men professionally, if you know what I mean. They take 'em home and cuddle up with 'em and the men pay them for it, though when you've had a look at some of them you'll wonder how the hell they get as much as fourpence. But they're quite decent sorts, most of them. Then there are young men who dance around and get paid by the women, they're called 'macros' and aren't much use to anyone except that they dance well and keep the rich old American ladies happy. Then there are lots of boys and young men who make up their faces like women, they're tarts too, only male ones as you might say. Heaps of men like cuddling up with them much better than women, though I should think personally it must feel rather silly, but after all that's their look-out and no business of mine. They're awfully funny sometimes, you'd die laughing to see them have a row. They scream and slap one another. There's one at the Bardac called Birdie, always in trouble, that one, but he's awfully sweet so long as he doesn't get drunk. If any of the old men come up and ask you to drink or go out with them don't you do it, and if they catch hold of you and start getting familiar just wriggle away politely and come and tell me. I'll let 'em have it all right. It's a queer world and no mistake, and you'd much better get to know all you can about it as soon as may be and then you can stand on your own feet and not give a damn

for anyone."

She finished up with rather a rush and then looked at me anxiously. I felt slightly bewildered but I said I'd try to remember all she'd told me and not be surprised at anything whatever happened; then we talked about other things. She asked me to tell her all the details of Aunt Christina's death which I did and she sighed and shook her head sadly and looked for a moment as if she were going to cry, but fortunately just then there was a loud banging on the door and Mattie Gibbons came in. She was shorter and plumper than Aunt Tittie and very dark, she had a grey dress with grey laced-up boots which showed when she sat down, and a bright green blouse with a small diamond watch pinned on it, her hat was grey felt with a blue bird on it. She was very nice to me and shook hands politely and said she didn't know I was going to be such a big boy. She had a deep husky voice, and I liked her at once.

Aunt Tittie said they wanted to talk privately for a while and would I like to go out for a walk. I said I would, and after she'd warned me about looking to the left first when crossing the road, and told me to mark well the number of the house and street so that I wouldn't get lost, she kissed me and waved me out of the door. I felt my way carefully down the dark stairs and when I got to the front door it wouldn't open,

After I'd struggled with it for a long time, a woman put her head out of a door and screamed something at me and then there was a click and the door opened of its own accord. The street was very narrow and filled with traffic. I walked down it slowly looking into all the shop windows; pastry-cooks with the most beautiful-looking cakes I'd ever seen; several artists' shops with easels and paints and, boxes of coloured pastels, and wooden jointed figures in strange positions; and a toy shop with hundreds of cheap toys jumbled up in cardboard boxes. There were also grocers and green-grocers and one big shop filled with old furniture and china. This was on the corner and half of it faced the river. I crossed over carefully and walked along the other side past all the little boxes on the parapet filled with books and coloured prints and thousands of back numbers of magazines, very tattered and dusty and tied together in bundles with string.

There were lots of people fingering the books and hurrying along the pavement, nearly all the men had long beards and some of them went into round iron places covered with advertisements on the outside, and then came out again doing up their trousers. I was very puzzled by this so I peeped into one of them and saw what it was. After that it amused me a lot, looking at the different kinds of feet standing round underneath.

I crossed over a bridge and leant on the stone rail,

the water was very green and there were several steamers puffing up and down, occasionally a larger one would come along and its funnel would bend in half as it went under the bridge. The river divided a little way further up, leaving an island in the middle with houses on it coming out almost into a point, and there were trees everywhere all along the edges. Everything looked much clearer and cleaner than London and the shadows of the houses stretched right across the road, sharp and definite.

I felt excited and adventurous and went across to the other side and walked for a long way under the trees; every now and then a noisy yellow tram came along. The lines were more like railway lines than tram lines, and grass was growing between them. By the time I got back to the house, the sun was setting and all the windows along the quai looked as though they were on fire.

That evening Mattie came round at about nine o'clock and we all three of us went and had dinner at a café. Our table was right on the pavement and there was a little red-shaded lamp on it. Mattie and Aunt Tittie were very gay and talked very fast in French to the people that they knew and in English to each other and to me. Aunt Tittie told me what lots of things were in French and said I'd better learn to speak it as quickly as I could as it was very useful. They

had had a long talk about me being a "daddy" in their turn and Mattie was pleased with the idea; they said they'd take me that night to the Café Bardac with them and interview Monsieur Claude right away. After dinner we walked along the boulevard to another café where we had coffee in glasses and they had brandy as well, then we went home and Aunt Tittie made me lie down for an hour while she dressed. She said that as I was going to be up late I'd better get as much rest as possible. At about half-past eleven Mattie called for us, she and Aunt Tittie were both in sparkling evening dresses and cloaks and then we all got into a cab and drove a long way through brightly lighted streets. In the cab Aunt Tittie gave me a latch-key and some money and made me repeat the address over and over again, and said that I should always have to come home by myself, even when I was actually acting in the turn with them, because they generally had to stay on and talk to people sometimes nearly all night. She told me how much the cab would cost and then very slowly and clearly what I was to say to the driver. When I repeated it she and Mattie both laughed and said I spoke French like a native. Mattie said she wondered if it was all right to let me wander about Paris alone at night, and Aunt Tittie said I was very sensible for my age and that it was much better for me to get used to managing for

myself and learn independence.

When we arrived at the Café Bardac nobody was there but a lot of waiters and a man behind the bar. We all went upstairs and sat in a small dressing-room which Mattie and Aunt Tittie shared. Their dresses were hanging up on pegs and there were two chairs, two mirrors on a shelf, and a very small wash-basin in the corner with a jug without a handle standing on the floor by the side of it.

Mattie took a bottle out of the cupboard and they both had a drink. Presently Aunt Tittie went downstairs to see Monsieur Claude and left me to talk to Mattie.

Mattie asked me if I didn't feel strange and I said yes but that I was enjoying it. She said, "It's a bloody awful life really, you know, but it has its funny moments. This café's not so bad as some I've been in. I was dancing with a troupe in Antwerp once and they made us dress in a lavatory on the third floor, and the smell was enough to knock you down, I give you my word; this is a little peep at Paradise compared to that and no error!"

Then she took out the bottle again and had another swig and said would I like a taste. I said "yes" and she said "My God, here I go corrupting you already," but she let me have a sip and laughed when I made a face. "It's raw gin, ducks, and don't let anybody ever tell you it's water, but it does make you feel fine,

all ready to go out and fight someone, and believe me or believe me not you need that feeling in this Pavilion d'Amour!"

Aunt Tittie came back, looking very pleased and said Monsieur Claude wanted to see me, so down we went onto the next floor into a little room with a desk in it and a lot of photographs of naked women stuck on the walls. Monsieur Claude was fat and excitable; he kissed me on both cheeks and then held me by the shoulders and pushed me away from him and looked at me carefully, talking all the time very quickly in French. Then he whispered a lot to Aunt Tittie, gave her a smacking kiss on the lips and ushered us out into the passage. Just as I went through the door, he fumbled in his pocket and gave me three francs. Aunt Tittie was frightfully pleased and said didn't I think he was a dear. "Kind as can be, you know, of course he gets a bit excited now and again but he's never downright nasty except when he's had a couple, which isn't often, thank God."

We went upstairs to the dressing-room again and told Mattie all about it. I was to get ten francs a week to begin with and fifteen later on if I was good. Mattie said the mean old bastard might have come across with a bit more, but Aunt Tittie reminded her that after all he did have to think of his business. We all three went downstairs after a little while. Aunt Tittie in-

roduced me to the barman. He spoke English and gave me a high stool to sit on in a corner behind the bar where I could watch all the people. I sat there for ages until my eyes prickled with the smoke. Every now and then Mattie or Aunt Tittie would come and see if I was all right, then they came down dressed as shepherdesses with bare legs and after they'd had a little port at the bar they did their parasol dance. Nobody seemed to watch it very much, but they all applauded and cheered when it was finished. I watched their turn all through and then felt so tired that I decided to go home, so I went upstairs to the dressing-room to fetch my hat. I knocked and went in thinking Aunt Tittie and Mattie were downstairs, but they weren't—at least Aunt Tittie wasn't. She was in there with Monsieur Claude. She was sitting on his knee with hardly any clothes on at all and he was kissing her. They both had their eyes closed and neither of them saw me, so I closed the door again very quietly and went out without my hat. I got a cab quite easily and he drove me home and when I paid him, had a long conversation with me which I didn't understand, so I bowed and said bon soir and he drove away.

I lay in bed for a long while without sleeping. I felt strange, as though none of the things that were happening to me were real. I wondered whether Aunt Tittie liked being kissed by fat Monsieur Claude, and

then all the faces of people I'd seen at the café seemed to go across my eyes very fast until they were all blurred and I fell asleep. I woke up just for a second in the early morning; a cold grey light was showing through the shutters and I heard Aunt Tittie's voice in the next room. Then her bedroom door slammed and I turned over and went to sleep again.

When I first appeared with Aunt Titania and Mattie Gibbons at the Café Bardac in Paris, I had a great personal success; all the tarts made a tremendous fuss of me and said I was très gentil and très beau gais and gave me sweet cakes, and Monsieur Claude raised my salary from ten francs to fifteen francs a week, quite soon. When the engagement came to an end Mattie and Aunt Tittie had a row and parted company. I think the row somehow concerned Monsieur Claude and it was terrible while it lasted. Aunt Tittie cried a lot and said Mattie was a dirty double-faced bitch and Mattie just sat there laughing until Aunt Tittie completely lost control and threw a vermouth bottle at her, which missed her and went flying through the open door into my bed-room and broke the looking-glass over my wash-basin. After that Mattie stopped laughing and chased Aunt Tittie round the table, swearing loudly. They were both drunk and I got

rather frightened so I ran outside and sat on the stairs with my fingers in my ears. Presently Mattie came rushing out and fell over me; she smacked my face and went on downstairs screaming. I heard her wrestling with the front door and swearing at it, finally she got it open and slammed it behind her so hard that a large bit of plaster fell off the ceiling into a slop pail on the landing. When I went back into the sitting-room Aunt Tittie was lying on the sofa crying; her hair was down and her nose was bleeding, making stains all down the front of her dress. When I came in she got up and stumbled into her bedroom where I heard her being very sick. I shut my door and locked it and opened the shutters to see what the day looked like. It was raining hard and the gutters were gurgling loudly so I went back to bed and slept.

Soon after this Aunt Tittie and I packed up everything and went to Ostend. We appeared at a Café Concert in a side street which led down to the Plage. Aunt Tittie did three songs and I learnt a speech in French to introduce her. Everybody used to laugh and clap when I came on with my silk hat and cane and white gloves. Aunt Tittie thought it would be a good thing if I wore a monocle, but I couldn't keep it in my eye until we stuck it in with spirit gum, then it was a great success. We stayed there for six weeks and I used to play about on the Plage during the day.

We lived in a cheap hotel kept by a very thin woman called Madame Flücher; she was half German and sometimes made chocolate cakes with whipped cream on them which were delicious. She had a lot of sons and used to show me photographs of them. One was a sailor and he was photographed holding an anchor and sticking his chest out. He had the biggest behind I've ever seen.

When we'd finished our engagement in Ostend we went to Brussels and were out of work for nearly five weeks. We used to go and sit in the waiting-room of an agent's office with lots of other people wanting a job. The walls were plastered with posters of celebrated stars very vividly coloured and there was a signed photograph of Sarah Bernhardt looking like a sheep in white lace.

We had to move out of the hotel we were in and go to a still cheaper one. Aunt Tittie got more and more depressed, but one day she met an Austrian officer in some café or other and came home late looking much more cheerful. He was very handsome and took us both to dinner at an open-air restaurant one night; he joked with me a lot and pinched my ear which hurt, but I pretended I liked it. After dinner he put me in a cab and told it to go to the hotel and gave me the money to pay it, but I stopped the driver when we'd got round the corner and paid him a little and walked home; it was further than I thought, but I was three francs

to the good. About a week after this Aunt Tittie got a contract to go to Antwerp for three weeks. After that we went to Amsterdam and then back again to Brussels, where we stayed for two months and played for some part of the time at the Mercedes Music-hall.

It was strange at first, doing our turn on an actual stage, but I liked it much better. It wasn't really a proper theatre because most of the audience sat at tables, but it had footlights and scenery and a drop curtain.

Aunt Tittie taught me a song which I did dressed as a pierrot while she changed her dress. It was called "Keep Off the Grass" and was out of a musical comedy in England. Nobody seemed to pay very much attention to it but I enjoyed doing it enormously.

After this we got a long contract and travelled all over France playing a week in each place, ending up with Lyons and Nice and Marseilles, and then we went over to Algiers where we stayed for three weeks. There was a conjuror on the bill with us who took a great fancy to me. He asked me to have supper with him one night and we sat in a café with lots of Arabs wearing fezzes. I think he was half an Arab himself. Then we went for a drive along by the sea and he said I was "very nice boy" and "very pretty and had naughty eyes." He held my hand for a little and I knew what was coming so I said I felt very sick and started retching. He took me back to the hotel at once. His

turn came on after ours and I always used to wait and watch it; he did card tricks and shot pigeons out of a gun and then to finish up with he used to walk down to the front of the stage and say very solemnly, "Mesdames, Messieurs, maintenant je vous monterai un experiment très, très difficile, un experience de vie," whereupon he would take off his coat and shirt and stand striped to the waist in dead silence for a moment, then, with great deliberation, he'd take a sharp pointed dagger from a table, test it and bend it slightly with his long thin fingers, and then proceed, amid a breathless hush from the audience, to carve out his left nipple. It was very realistically done even to a dark stream of blood which ran down over his ribs. Then suddenly, with a quick jerk, he'd throw the dagger away, whip out a handkerchief, and staunch the blood and cry "Voilà" and the curtain fell. He had, I think, a small rubber squeezer filled with red solution concealed in his hand, and then having made up his own nipple with flesh colour, he stuck a false red one over the top of it. It always brought forth thunders of applause.

After Algiers we went on to Tunis which was very much the same except that the weather was warmer. Then we had a week's engagement in Genoa which was a great failure--all the young Italian men made such a noise that we couldn't make ourselves heard, so we worked our way back to Paris by slow degrees, play-

ing in Geneva and Montreux on the way.

We tried to get the same rooms we'd had before but they were occupied, so we went to a small hotel behind the Invalides and stayed for a few weeks until Aunt Tittie fixed up an autumn contract. Then to fill in the time we went and stayed at a farm near Bordeaux with an old friend of Aunt Tittie's, Madame Irinauk. She had been a dancer and had married and retired; she was fat and kind and had three grown-up stepdaughters and a stepson, who looked after the vines. They were all very vivacious and talked at the top of their voices all through meals. They had a monkey which bit every now and then but could be very affectionate when it liked. We used to fish in the pond for eels and small mud fish, and walk all along through the vine and pinch the grapes to see if they were coming along all right.

We stayed there for six weeks, and it did us a lot of good. Aunt Tittie got quite fat from drinking so much milk and cream and she let her hair go for the whole time without dyeing it so that it looked very odd, yellow at the ends and brownish-grey at the roots.

We spent most of the next year in Germany playing in Frankfurt, Hambourg, Dresden, Nurembourg, Munich, Hanover, Heidelberg and Berlin, where Aunt Tittie met Arthur Wheeler, an acrobat, and fell violently in love with him. We stayed on there for several months, playing sometimes in suburban halls and some-

times in cafés in Potsdam and Berlin itself. Arthur Wheeler was a thick-set bad-tempered little man and he used to beat Aunt Tittie often, but I don't think she minded. He came with us in the summer to a place called Achenzee in the Tyrol and we stayed in a pension hotel and used to go out for picnics on the lake. He taught me to swim and dive. The lake water was ice cold even with the hot sun on it, but I got used to it and often swam seven or eight times a day. Wheeler used to lie on the grass by the side of the water with a towel tied round his middle, and do acrobatics, frequently with such violence that the towel would fall off and Aunt Tittie would laugh until she cried and say: "That's it, Arthur, give the poor Germans a treat!"

Every evening we used to sit outside the pension and have dinner. The tables were set almost in the road and processions of German families would march by, very hot and tired from their climbing. Even the young men had fat stomachs and they all wore shorts, and embroidered braces and small hats.

Every evening at about six o'clock we had beer at an open-air restaurant just by the water. We liked watching the steamer come puffing across the lake and then stop at the pier and land the passengers.

One evening when Wheeler had paid for the beer and we were about to walk back to the pension, he suddenly stood stock still, clutched Aunt Tittie's arm

and said: "Jumping Jesus, that's my wife!"

I looked up and saw a thin woman in a brown dress walking down the pier and staring fixedly at us. We all stood where we were until she came up to us. She looked very angry and was biting her lips nervously.

"Arthur," she said, "I want to talk to you." Her voice was grating and hard, and completely determined.

Arthur Wheeler started to bluster a bit: "Now look here, Amy——" he began, but she cut him short by taking his arm and leading him to the other end of the garden where they sat down at a table. I looked at Aunt Tittie who was very white, she hadn't said a word.

"Shall we go back to the pension?" I said. She shook her head. "No, we'll stay here," so we sat down again at the table we'd just got up from, and waited. The steamer gave a sudden hoot of its siren which made me jump, then it went churning away up the lake. It was twilight and the mountains looked jagged against the sky as though they had been cut out of black paper. On the other side of the lake, lights were already twinkling in the villages. The steamer hooted again a good way off and a flock of birds flew chattering out of the big trees behind the restaurant. I looked at Aunt Tittie. She was staring straight in front of her and her face was set and still except for two little pulses

twitching at her temples.

Presently Mrs. Wheeler came over to us. Aunt Tittie stood up.

"Arthur's leaving with me on the first boat tomorrow morning," said Mrs. Wheeler. "He's going back to your hotel now to pack his things. I've engaged a room here for us for to-night."

"Oh," said Aunt Tittie. "That will be nice, won't it?"

"If you haven't any money," went on Mrs. Wheeler, "I'm sure Arthur'll give you enough to get you back to wherever you come from."

Aunt Tittie gave a little gasp. "Thank you for nothing" she said, her voice sounded high and strained.

"I don't want Arthur's money and you know it."

"You're a low woman," said Mrs. Wheeler. "I don't wish to exchange words with you."

"I'm not so low as to live on a man's earnings for fifteen years and not give him anything in return."

"Your sort couldn't hold a man fifteen years," said Mrs. Wheeler.

"I wouldn't want to hold anyone who didn't want to stay," said Aunt Tittie. "He loves me more than he does you, otherwise he wouldn't be here, would he? And you can put that in your pipe and smoke it."

Mrs. Wheeler trembled. "You're nothing but a low class prostitute," she said hoarsely, whereupon Aunt

Tittie gave her a ringing slap on the face which knocked her hat on the side and left a pink stain on her cheek.

Arthur came running up looking very frightened. "Leave off you two, for Christ's sake," he said, "Everyone's looking at you."

"I'm sorry I hit her," said Aunt Tittie. "I never did know when to control myself. Come on home, Arthur, and pack your bag." She turned and walked away. Arthur followed her rather uncertainly and I came last. I looked back at Mrs. Wheeler who was standing quite still where we'd left her with her hat still on one side. I know she was crying because the lamp by the gate showed wet streaks on her face.

We all walked back to the pension in silence. When we got there I stayed outside and let them go in by themselves. I went and sat on the wall by the lake. The water was completely still and lay along the shore like a glass sheet. Presently Arthur Wheeler came out of the house carrying his suit-case, he waved to me half-heartedly and then walked away quickly.

When I went back into the pension, Aunt Tittie was sitting at the window with her head buried in her arms, sobbing. She didn't take any notice of me so I sat on the bed and said nothing. Presently she pulled herself together and got up and looked in the glass. "I'm a pretty sight and no mistake," she said huskily, and

tried to smile, then she put on her hat and went out. I watched her from the window wandering along in the opposite direction from the village. I waited up until she came back at about half-past ten. She seemed glad I was there and made a great effort to be cheerful. She took off her hat and fluffed out her hair and we made tea on the gas-ring and ate biscuits with it.

She talked a lot but didn't mention Arthur once. She said she'd been thinking things out and had decided to go to Vienna; she said she knew an agent there called Max Steiner and that we'd probably get work right away. She said Vienna was a lovely place and she was longing to see it again, she'd been there once before with Mattie several years ago. When I said good night she suddenly hugged me very tight and said: 'Well, dear, we're on our ownsome again now, so let's enjoy it!'

After this, poor Aunt Tittie was terribly dispirited and unhappy for weeks. We went to Vienna and found that Max Steiner was away so we trudded around to several other agents until we had no more money left. Then I got a job in the Prater Amusement Park at a Houp-la Tooth, I had to jerk the hoops onto a stick after the people had thrown them and then sling them back to the proprietor who was a brass-throated fat little man but quite kind. I made enough money that way to get us food, and Aunt Tittie managed to pay for

our rooms in a very dirty little hotel by picking up men every once in a while, it wasn't really too easy for her because there were so many young and attractive professionals who knew the best cafés and resented intrusion on their beats. I used to be dreadfully tired when I got home every night and I got awful blisters on my feet from standing about all day.

In October, Aunt Tittie met a very rich old man who took her to Budapest. When she'd been gone about a week she telegraphed me some money to come at once so I gave a day's notice to the Houp-la Booth and went. Aunt Tittie met me at the station in a smart motor-car; she was well-dressed and looked much happier. She said she had a small flat overlooking the river and that if only her old man could live for a little longer we'd be on velvet, but that he was very, very old indeed, and she was afraid he wouldn't keep through the winter. We laughed a lot and were delighted to be together again. Her flat really was quite nice and I slept in a little servant's room at the back. There was a Hungarian cook who came in by the day and we did the housework ourselves. The old man didn't trouble us much, he only came to dinner two or three times a week and then didn't stay very late. I used to go out when he came and walk in the town, which was beautiful, and sit about in cafés drinking coffee and listening to the Tziganes.

After we'd been there a few weeks Aunt Tittie

met an old friend of hers from Paris in the Hungaria Hotel. He was a Frenchman, and was running a small café on the other side of the river. He came to tea at the flat two days later and we did our turn for him and he said he would engage us. Aunt Tittie was really looking very well just then and had a lot of nice clothes. We started work the following Monday and stayed there the whole winter, we changed our songs every fortnight, and saved quite a lot of money.

In April, Aunt Tittie's old man had to go and do a cure at Baden Baden. He decided to go quite suddenly and wrote a letter to her saying good-bye and enclosing enough money to pay the last month's rent and a bit over besides. We were both very relieved really and never saw him again. A year later we read in the paper that he had died.

We left Budapest in May and went back to Vienna where we stayed a few days, then went to Prague where we played in an open-air café for six weeks. Then we came back to Paris with enough money to keep us for the summer at least, if we lived cheaply.

That autumn we started again on our travels, we got return engagements in some of the towns we had played before. I was now fourteen and getting very tall. For the next two years our lives went along pretty evenly. We met Arthur Wheeler once in Nice on the Promenade des Anglais; he looked spruce and well and was wearing

a straw hat, which he lifted politely, but Aunt Tittie cut him dead, and as we were leaving the next day we didn't see him again. In the summer of 1911 we were back in Paris. Aunt Tittie wasn't well and complained of pains inside. We didn't work for a few weeks and then went away.

In the January following, I had my seventh birthday. It came on a Sunday and we were travelling to Spain where we'd neither of us been before. We got out at Bayonne and bought a bottle of champagne and had a celebration all to ourselves in the cabaret. We finished the bottle between us and I got drunk for the first time in my life and went shouting up and down the corridor. Aunt Tittie was too weak with laughter to stop me.

We played in a Café Chénant in San Sebastian; it had only just opened and was new and gaily and smelt of paint. The proprietor was a fat Belgian Jew who wore an enormous diamond and sapphire ring on his little finger. We had been recommended to him by Demaire, our agent in Paris, as a novelty. He didn't seem to think we were very novel and was rude to Aunt Tittie when she asked for the band to play more quietly, but it mattered little as hardly anybody came to the café anyhow and we were paid our salary and dismissed after the first week. We played in several different places in Spain but without much success. The Spaniards

were polite and applauded our turn perfunctorily and that was all; there was no enthusiasm, and when Aunt Tittie went from table to table singing "How would you like a little Rose like Me?" they generally sat quite silently and looked at her, and very seldom even held out their hands for the paper roses, so poor Aunt Tittie had to put them down on the table and go on to the next one. It was very discouraging for her; of course, she was beginning to look rather old, and her smile lacked the gaiety it used to have.

When we got to Barcelona we played in a very dirty music-hall which was a bit better because the floor of the auditorium was uncarpeted wood and the people stamped their feet instead of clapping, which made a tremendous noise and made everything we did seem like a triumphant success. We went to a big bull fight one afternoon which upset us both horribly. Aunt Tittie cried all the way back to the hotel, thinking about the horses, and how they trotted into the ring so amicably with a bandage over one eye to prevent them from seeing the bull coming. Some of them screamed dreadfully when they were gored and the memory of it haunted us for days.

④ We sat outside a café on the way home and had Ocha'a which is an iced sweet drink made of nuts, and looks like very thick milk. Aunt Tittie kept on bursting into tears and then laughing at herself hysterically,

altogether she was in such a state that she had to have some brandy and lie down before the show. Two nights after that when we had finished our turn and I was waiting outside the dressing-room under the stage, while Aunt Tittie dressed, there was suddenly a terrific crash up above and a loud scream and the orchestra stopped dead. I rushed up on to the stage to see what had happened. Everyone was running about and yelling. One of the big limelight lamps had exploded and fallen down and set fire to the curtains, which were blazing.

A conjuror who had been doing his turn when the thing fell came rushing past me and knocked me against the wall; his wife, who was his assistant, was shut up in his magic cabinet in the middle of the stage and was hammering on the inside of it to be let out. The stage manager ran towards it to open it, but before he could reach it a whole length of blazing curtain fell right across it.

I ran quickly downstairs to fetch Aunt Tittie and met her coming up in her dressing-gown with grease all over her face. We heard the conjuror's wife shrieking horribly as the cabinet started to burn, but there was no chance of rescuing her because by this time the whole stage was blazing. We tried to beat our way through the thick smoke to the stage-door. Aunt Tittie was choking, and a stage-hand, mad with fright, knocked her down and stumbled right over her; one of his boots

cut her face. I helped her up and we finally got out into the alley. There was a terrific crash behind us as part of the roof fell in. Aunt Tittie gave a little gasp and collapsed, so I grabbed her under the arms and dragged her along the alley with her heels scraping over the cobblestones. There were hundreds of people running about screaming and I was terrified that we'd be thrown down and trampled to death. When I got Aunt Tittie out of the alley into the street I suddenly thought of the conjuror's wife trapped inside that cabinet, and I laid Aunt Tittie on the ground and was violently sick in the gutter. When I'd finished, I sat down on the kerb by her side. Then I noticed that her face was bleeding, so I dabbed it with my handkerchief and she opened her eyes. The fire engines had arrived by this time. I could hear them in the next street. A man came up and we both helped Aunt Tittie to her feet; she stood swaying for a moment with our arms supporting her and then gave a scream and clutched her side and fainted again. I didn't know what to do, the man couldn't speak French or English, and I only knew a few words of Spanish. He helped me carry her along to the street corner and I signed to him to wait with her while I got a taxi. I ran very fast but couldn't see one anywhere. Suddenly I saw a motor ambulance coming out of a side street, I stopped it and directed it back to where I'd left Aunt

Tittie. The two ambulance men lifted her into it and I said good-bye to the strange man and thanked him very much and he raised his bowler hat and bowed and we drove away to the hospital leaving him standing there.

When we arrived at the hospital they took Aunt Tittie into the emergency ward and I sat by her for ages before anyone came near us. She came to after a little and started to cry; she said she had a terrible pain in her stomach at the side! Her voice sounded very weak and husky. There were lots of other people lying on beds and groaning. One man's face was almost black and all the hair on the top of his head was burnt away leaving mottled red patches. He kept on giving little squeaks like a rabbit, and clutching at the sheet with his hands which were dreadfully burned.

Presently two Sisters of Mercy came in and went round to all the beds and tried to make people a little more comfortable. Finally two doctors came with several nurses; and they went from bed to bed and talked a lot, in low voices. When they got to us I stood up and explained in French about Aunt Tittie's pain. Fortunately one of them understood all right and felt her stomach with his fingers, then he sent one of the nurses away and she came back in a few minutes with a stretcher on wheels. We all got Aunt Tittie on to it and I walked behind it with the doctor through miles of passages.

Eventually we got to a very quiet ward with only a few beds occupied. A Sister of Mercy was sitting reading at a table with a shaded lamp on it. She got up when we came in. Then the doctor took me downstairs to the waiting-room and said that he was afraid Aunt Tittie had a very bad appendix but that he was going to give her a thorough examination and make sure and that I'd better go home and come back in the morning. I said I'd rather stay in case Aunt Tittie wanted me, so he said "very well" and left me. I lay on a bench all night and slept part of the time. In the early morning two cleaners came in and clattered about with pails. I got up and found my way to the main entrance and finally found a nurse who spoke a little French. She said it was too early to find out anything and that I'd better have some coffee and come back, so I went out into the street and found a café that was just opening and drank some coffee and ate a roll. When I got back I met the doctor coming down the steps, he took me into an office and a Sister of Mercy took down particulars about Aunt Titania which I gave her in French, and the doctor translated into Spanish. When that was done he told me that the only chance of saving Aunt Tittie's life was to operate immediately. I asked if I could see her and he said no, that she was almost unconscious and that if I was agreeable he would operate right away. I said he'd better do what he thought best

and that I'd wait, so I went back to the waiting-room. A lot of people had come in, several were relatives of people who had been in the fire, most of them moaned and wailed and made a great noise. About three hours later a nurse came and called out my name. I stood up, and she took me into the office again. After a minute or two the doctor came in looking very serious. He told me that there was scarcely any hope of Aunt Tittie living, as when they operated they discovered that the appendix had burst. He said she hadn't come to yet from the anaesthetic, but that I could see her when she did. I asked when that would be and he said he couldn't tell for certain, but that I'd better wait. They let me stay in the office which was nicer than the waiting room, and the Sister of Mercy gave me some dry biscuits out of a tin on her desk. She had a round face, and glasses, and peered at me through them sympathetically. Presently a nurse appeared and signed to me to follow her. We went several floors in a lift. There was a wheel stretcher in it with a man lying on it and an orderly standing by the side. The man didn't move at all and his head was covered with bandages.

⊗ This time Aunt Tittie was in a private room which was very dim and there was a screen round the head of the bed and another near the door. When I went in I could hardly see for a minute; the nurse drew up a chair and I sat down by the bed. Aunt Tittie was ly-

ing quite still with her eyes closed. Her face was dead white and she had a nightdress on of thick flannel which was buttoned up to the chin. She looked terribly, terribly tired and every now and then her mouth gave a little twitch. I felt a longing to put my arms round her and hold her tight and tell her how much I loved her, but when I thought about that I wanted to cry, so I looked away for a moment and tried to control myself. Presently she opened her eyes and moved her head to one side; she saw me and said "Hello dearie," in a whisper. Then she frowned and closed her eyes again. I took her hand which was outside the coverlet, and held it. It felt dry and hot. After a little while she moved again and tried to speak, her hand-clutched mine very hard and then relaxed. I put my head down close to hers and she said: "Take care of yourself." I started crying then, hopelessly, but I was careful not to make any noise and her eyes were still shut so she couldn't see. Suddenly she gave a little moan and the nurse came out from behind the screen and motioned me to go out of the room. I disengaged my hand from Aunt Tittie's very gently; she didn't seem to notice, and I went out into the passage. There was a window at the end and I stood and looked out across the hospital grounds to the town. It was a very windy day and there was a flagstaff upon the hill with the flag standing straight out from it looking as though it were made of wood. Every

now and then it fluttered and subsided for a moment and then blew out straight again.

I waited about all day in the hospital, but they wouldn't let me in to see Aunt Tittie again, because they said she was unconscious, and in the evening at about seven o'clock she died. I went back to the hotel and lay on my bed, trying to be sensible and think things out, but I wasn't very successful and finally gave way and cried for a long time until I dropped off to sleep. When I woke up it was about eleven o'clock and I felt better, but I couldn't sleep any more so I went out and wandered about the town. I walked right down to the harbour and watched the ships. There was a big liner, standing a little way out, all the decks were brilliantly lighted and I could hear music faintly. I suddenly realised that I hadn't had anything to eat all day, so I went into a restaurant which was filled with sailors, and had a plate of stew and some coffee, everything was very greasy and I couldn't eat much of it.

The next day I went through all Aunt Tittie's things and discovered that she had twenty sovereigns locked in her jewel-case, also a brooch with diamonds and two rings, one with very small rose diamonds, and the other plain gold. I myself had fourteen pounds saved, mostly in francs. I went back to the hospital and interviewed the doctor about the operation and funeral expenses. He was very kind, and when I told him how much

I had said that he wouldn't charge for the operation. In spite of this, however, I had to pay out a good deal and when the whole business was over I had about seventeen pounds left. Aunt Tittie was buried two days later. An English clergyman appeared and did it all. He was officious, and kept on asking me questions about her. I bought a bunch of flowers and put them on the grave, and I went back and packed up everything and bought a ticket for Paris.

The Paris train was crowded, and I sat in the corridor all night and thought about Aunt Tittie, until my heart nearly burst with loneliness and I pressed my head against the window and longed to be dead, too.

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鐵蒂姨母

一

從前在康華爾地方的一個小漁村裏，住着一個虔敬而嚴厲的教士，他的名字叫克蘭孟脫·許亞。他是個退職的傳教士，臉上長滿了鬍子，像一塊裝飾着紙做流蘇邊的火腿。他的妻子瑪莉身材纖小，精神疲勞。她生下三個女兒，克利斯蒂娜、鐵姐妮亞和最小的一個阿曼達。在分娩阿曼達時，她掙扎得太長久而可悲，最後因精力耗盡而去世。阿曼達是我的母親。在一八八一年的聖誕日，克蘭孟脫外祖父自己也逝世了，那時我的克利斯蒂娜姨母才十六歲。她安排好把遺下的家具出售，等房子的租契轉讓之後，便帶了幾只馬口鐵箱，一只叫羅蘭的狐狸，同十三歲和十一歲的兩個妹妹上倫敦去了。她們的姑母安乃斯泰悽涼地在拍丁頓車站迎接她們。安乃斯泰是一個五十歲的灰髮老處女，她一無抗議地領她們到賓立司的倫潑斯街——她用某種堅毅的辦事效力，在那邊開了一個未婚男子的公寓。這三姊妹一經安頓後，便自然而然地成爲公寓這一付轉動平滑的機器中底不注目的，但是重要的齒輪了。這公寓是極高貴而名譽很好的。她們三人帶着羅蘭合住在一間小臥室裏。不肯同這狐狸分開。她們在公寓裏過了兩年客氣的奴役生活，直到一八八三年春，克利斯蒂娜突然和傑姆斯·勞權結了婚——勞權是安乃斯泰·許亞的二樓前房房客——和他一同到肯勃韋爾去，在一座小房子裏住下，她還帶着鐵姐妮亞和阿曼達同去。

傑姆斯·勞權是一個好人。在結婚時，他是一個鋼琴調整師。後

來他發展成公司裏的旅行經紀人，因此在我的童年時期，我不大看見他，但是當他湊巧在家時，他總是柔順而溫和。他只偶或飲酒，且也喝得不多。

克利斯蒂娜姨母在年輕時，性情就極暴燥，一直到傑姆斯·勞權去世的那天，她都把他管理得極緊。可是對於鐵姐妮亞和我母親，她可就沒有那末成功了。鐵姐妮亞姨母寄居了一年光景，便和一個年青的歌舞場丑角金博·包脫私奔到孟却斯脫去了。她和包脫祕密同居了有三年，這件事使克利斯蒂娜姨母感到極大的恥辱。在同居期終了後，她便同另外三個女孩過舞台生活去了。她們自稱為「四朵玫瑰花苞」，在英國各地的歌舞場裏歌舞。其時，我的母親阿曼達繼續在肯勃韋爾居住，幫助處理家務，很守規矩，直到一八八八年鐵姐妮亞重來倫敦為止。那時，鐵姐妮亞正被舞台的魔力所迷，邀請阿曼達參加蒙尼谷的一個演劇晚餐會。阿曼達從臥室的窗洞裏爬出來，越過院中的籬笆去參加宴會。但是她就從此沒有回家。後來鐵姐妮亞被克利斯蒂娜盤問時，才說她最後一次看見阿曼達時，她正坐在一個阿根廷人的膝上；她頭上戴着一個紙做的救火員帽子，口裏吹着一個叫子。鐵姐妮亞的回憶自然有點模糊，因為她已經喝了好多酒，又因為和金博·包脫發生未曾預計的幽會而離席比較早一點。克利斯蒂娜焦急地繼續她的查問，但是關於這個阿根廷人的來歷，却發現不出什麼來。誰都不知道他的姓名，顯然的，他完全未經邀請，就隨便跑到這晚會裏來。最後，兩天過去了之後，正當克利斯蒂娜快要去報告警察的時候，阿曼達的電報來了，說她是在比利時的俄斯坦德，生活得很開心，誰都不必掛心她，她就會有信來的。幾星期之後，她的確寫信來了，寫得極簡短。這一次是從比京布魯塞爾寫來的，她說她住在一個朋友佛特林太太的家中，那位太太為人非常之好，同住的還有許多別的女孩子們，日子過得非常有趣，誰都不必掛心她，她是非常、非常的快樂。

● 來了這封信之後，有五年之久，鐵姐妮亞和克利斯蒂娜都得不到她的信息；一直到一八九三年，恰巧在聖誕節之前，她突然坐了雙馬馬車，出現在肯勃韋爾克利斯蒂娜的家門前。她穿着得非常華麗，使附近一帶的隣居大為哄動。克利斯蒂娜冷淡地接待她，但是最後當阿

曼達自認把客室裏的一套新家具底全部欠款付清，並且又給了她一張二十五英鎊的支票時，她的心便軟下來了。這時候鐵姐妮亞已經和金博·包脫結了婚。阿曼達在她所住的格羅斯文納酒店裏舉行了一個家庭聖誕晚餐會。在晚餐末了，她引出一個印度王子來，作為飯後的珍美食品。他把珠寶送給每一個人。她在倫敦住了六個星期，便到巴黎去，仍舊和她的王子在一起，過了一兩個月的放蕩生活，直到她最後跟他到奧賽去，他在那裏上船去印度，剩下她在碼頭上動人地吸泣着，帶着一個琢成無刻面的綠寶石和一張回巴黎的來回票。就當她在月台上等待回巴黎去的火車時，她碰見了我的父親，邁格拉思·康——瓊斯爵士。他是一個五十歲光景的發福樣子的人，從印度德里請假回家來，來看看他住在愛克西脫的妻子和家裏人。可是他為要和阿曼達延遊巴黎，把返家之期延擱了三星期。最後他們分離了，他到英國去，她到華沙去，顯然彼此沒有多少傷心。她在布魯塞爾時，曾碰見一個叫納笛亞·科倫司格的俄國女子，約過她到華沙去的。納笛亞在華沙已經過了一年的奢華生活，作法國大使館的一個年青參贊的佳賓。阿曼達到了華沙之後，便被邀住在一套漂亮的房間裏，還有幾個愛慕者，日子過得非常快樂，一直等到她發懶得要命她發現她快要生孩子了。

我相信她和納笛亞會試盡各種她們所能想到的方法來弄掉這孩子，但是沒有成功。因此阿曼達決心要在她還能夠的時候，繼續享樂，然後再回到英國去。可是不幸的，她離開華沙太遲了一點，在正月的一個冰凍的早晨，我在華沙柏林間某地在火車上出世了。我之所以猝然入世，比預期的時候早到，就因為當我母親從廁所回到她的房間裏時，火車突然震動了一下，她跌在不知道誰留在走廊裏的提包上，跌得很重。兩小時之後，我便被生下來了，使車上所有的人都極騷擾不安。我被裹在格子旅行毯裏，擱在行李架中。

一星期後，克利斯蒂娜母親接到電報，便來到柏林，正巧趕上時候，看我母親死在一間醫院病房裏。她用謹慎有的敏速辦事效力，收集了我母親所有的相當大的動產，確定了在任何銀行裏都沒有存款之後，便把我帶到英國去，安頓在新屋裏她自己的臥室中，她的葬屍在

開寧登的克倫培蘭道十七號。

二

一直到一九〇四年我的姨父傑姆斯·勞權故世時為止，我的生活裏有很多事故，也就像大多數學習走路講話，開始知道事物的小孩子一般，生活裏總是有許多事故的。有一些小事還留在我記憶裏。特別是在三歲光景時我和織姐妮亞姨母的會面。她聞來香味很濃，她的頭髮鮮黃。她把我放在她膝上快樂地跳動着，直等到我作嘔，過後她似乎對我失掉了興趣。我也記得當我稍稍長大一點時，我的姨父傑姆在深夜裏走到我房裏來。我醒來時正看見他走到壁爐架邊去，把兩只綠色的瓷花瓶擲在地板上。我哭了好一陣，因為我受了驚嚇，克利斯蒂娜姨母也哭了，她輕輕地唱着讚美詩，念着禱告，終於又把我把撫慰入睡了。

當我五歲的時候，星期一到星期六，我被送到幼稚園去，星期日下午到安息日學校去。一位勃露絲小姐管理幼稚園。她穿寬袖短衣和格子花呢裙子。她的頭髮捲在一個髮墊上。每星期我們有兩次圖畫課，准許用顏色粉筆畫圖。我不大喜歡任何別的孩子，特別討厭那些小女孩，因為她們在遊玩時常常爭吵，互相拉着頭髮，為了一點小小的事情就大哭起來了。

我比較喜歡安息日學校，因為我們常常站成一個圓圈兒，唱着讚美詩。先生有一本大的有插畫的聖經，其中有一張畫着天父從天國裏拋出一只雞來；另一張畫上耶蘇和他的門徒坐在一張大桌子邊吃麵包捲。每個人都有鬍子，穿着白色的長睡衣，樣子很滑稽。

我九歲時，傑姆姨父去世了。屋子裏所有百葉窗都拉了下來。我們輕輕地走着，好像他祇在睡覺，而我們怕驚醒他一試。到我們家裏來才只兩個星期的女僕伊麗絲悲愁地拖着腳在樓梯上走上走下，臉上掛着一條條傷心的眼淚。也許她只是為了照例哀悼主人去世而哭泣，不管死者對於她是多麼疏遠；也許她不過是因為恐懼而哭泣。連貓兒也似乎悶悶不樂，昏昏沉沉地在沙發底下躺着，一躺就是幾個鐘頭。

克利斯蒂娜姨母領我去看傑姆姨父，他躺在床上，被單一直蓋到額邊，眼睛緊閉着，臉色和牛脂一樣的黃，鼻子的模樣兒就好像被人痛捻了一把似的。克利斯蒂娜姨母脚步穩重地走到床邊，她把被單的一端弄整齊一點，俯下身去吻他的前額。她吻得那樣的突兀，如果他還活潑的話，我敢說他一定會跳起來的。於是她朝我望着，說他的靈魂已經昇天了。在外面的街上，有人在拉手風琴，稍遠一點，有幾個孩子在叫嚷，但是這些聲音似乎微弱而不真實，就像我在一隻箱子裏聽着它們一般。

我同克利斯蒂娜姨母和鐵姐妮亞姨母坐在轎式的馬車裏送葬去，車子裏充滿了強烈的馬臭和皮臭。在路下時，鐵姐妮亞姨母要抽香煙，但是克利斯蒂娜姨母很生氣，不讓她抽。我背對着馬坐着，看她們並坐着爲這件事爭鬧。當馬車輪子在路面上猛烈地顛簸時，她們稍稍擺動着。最後克利斯蒂娜姨母大聲地噴着鼻子，雙唇緊閉成一條直線，不肯再說一句話。於是鐵姐妮亞姨母把身子稍稍傾向前面，莊嚴地望着窗外，直到我們抵達墓地。當屍體下葬的時候，我和她站在一棵樹底下，她從暖手筒裏拿出一些薄荷糖給我。當我們回到家裏時，大家一同吃下茶，伊麗絲還做了些塗羊脂的麵包，但是空氣很緊張。吃了茶後，我到樓下廚房裏去幫助伊麗絲洗杯碟，我們傾聽着樓上的爭吵聲愈來愈大，直到最後前門砰的一聲碰得那樣的響，竟使飲食器廚上的盤碟都震動了。不一會兒，我們聽見克利斯蒂娜姨母在奏讚美詩，而有好幾年我們都不會再看見鐵姐妮亞姨母。

不久我便到斯篤克韋爾的走讀學校裏去。學校離家不很遠，我時常坐公共汽車去，散學後走回家來。一進學校的大門，便有一棵巨大的馬栗樹，我們時常採拾馬栗，穿成一串玩馬栗戲。馬栗剛被採拾下來時，顏色淺褐鮮亮，就像我們客廳裏的鋼琴一樣，但是過後光澤消失，就沒有什麼好看了。我憎惡那個校長，他身材肥碩，笑時總是打着哈哈。他堅持每調人都得玩足球，他自己時常守在球門口，大聲地叫嚷着，跳來跳去。有一個雀斑臉助教很和氣，當我在衣櫃室裏更衣的時候，他時常捻我的臀部。雖然我很討厭學校，但是我更討厭晚上回到家裏來。當我站在大門外，窺望着克利斯蒂娜姨母從顏色玻璃窗

裏蹣跚著朝我走來時，我的心時常沉落下去。她時常一句話也不說地開門放我進去，我也時常一直跑到樓上我自己的臥室裏去讀書，做課外作業，直到晚飯時候；因為伊麗絲六點鐘便走了，我沒有人可以談話。在吃飯的前後，克利斯蒂娜姨母總要做禱告，當我們把晚飯的杯碟撤開，疊放在廚房裏之後，她總照例要奏讀美詩，叫我和她一起合唱，星期日特別可怕，因為我在早上和晚上都得到教堂裏去，下午又得到安息日學校裏去。在持教堂的牧師是一個極消瘦的人，當我聽他拉尖喉音講道的時候，我時常數着在他白硬領後面的結喉嚨上擺下一共有多少次以娛樂我自己。常坐在我們旁邊的女人裏面，整個坐席都嗅得到她的腳臭。

我時常詢問克利斯蒂娜姨母關於我母親的事，但是她只說因為她邪惡，閻羅王把她抓去了。不論什麼時候我問到父親時，她總說他死了，她從來不會認識他。

在一九〇六年初，當我十一歲時，家裏的情況更來得黯淡了。克利斯蒂娜姨母買了好許多做模型的蠟膏，做了一個耶穌騎着的蠟像。她把紅墨水放在蠟像上作血，但墨水浸到蠟裏去。這個蠟像做得一點也不好，面孔可怕得很，手臂太長了，但是她時常吻着他，對他低聲歌唱着。有一次她想叫我吻他，但是我不肯，所以她把我趕到院子裏去。我在棚下獸了一整夜，着了涼。經過這件事之後，她有好幾天都不和我說話。我很不快活，計劃着逃跑，但是我一點錢也沒有，又沒有地方可投奔。

在四月裏一天晚上，我從學校裏回家來，她病在床上，頭病得利害。第二天早上，我到她的臥室裏去時，她氣喘着，說她不能呼吸，因此我奔跑出去請醫生。醫生說她患肺炎，說我們非得請個看護不可。因此我們請了一個看護，她在屋子裏叮叮咚咚地響着。老是咯咯地用舌頭彈着牙齒，把她所能洗的東西都洗乾淨。三天之後，溫台爾牧師到我們家裏來，在克利斯蒂娜姨母的房裏留了些時。等他去了不一會兒，看護奔跑着到樓下來，叫我去請醫生。正當我走出屋子去請他時，醫生正進來，我在大門口碰到他。他急忙跑上樓去。一小時之後，他和看護走下樓來，告訴我說我的姨母已經逝世了。

他問我鐵姐妮亞姨母的地址，因此我們在克利斯蒂娜姨母的整個寫字盤上找尋着，找到了，打了一個電報給她。那一天傍晚時，金博·包脫姨父來了，和看護談了一陣，於是領我到醫生家裏去，他和醫生講了好久好久，我坐在候診室裏，望着那些來看病的人。一個頭上綁着綢帶的幼小的男孩嗚咽着，他的母親想法子安慰他，講故事給他聽。不久，金博姨父出來了，雇了馬車帶我到他家裏去。他住在靠近維多利亞車站的公寓房子裏。他告訴我鐵姐妮亞姨母已經不和他住在一起了，她在巴黎一家叫巴達克酒店裏歌唱，他下一天便要把我送到她那裏去的。那一夜我同他到許亞溝去，他在帝國戲院裏表演。我坐在他的化裝室裏看他化裝，於是他領我下樓到台上去，讓我站在台邊，和舞台監督在一起。金博姨父是個紅伶，當他走上舞台時，觀眾們歡呼鼓掌。他頭戴一頂極小的低頂氈帽，穿着寬大的褲子，裝着一個很大的紅色假鼻頭。他的歌唱得真快，直到合唱的時候他才慢下來，讓觀眾們也加入同唱。他的最後一個節目是跳舞，在舞時他的褲子都像快要掉下來的樣子。到末了，舞完後他不得不到幕後去作一個演講，他們才放他退場。他帶我到樓上去，他脫下衣服，但是還喘息着。他赤裸着身子坐下抽煙，我注視着當他呼吸時，他胸部黑毛上的汗珠閃爍着。他問我可喜歡他的表演，我說我喜歡得很，他說，「這裏真他媽的非常艱難呢，引他們一個發笑都不容易，對不住。」他把化裝用具卸除後，撲些粉在臉上，穿上衣服，我們便到正對着戲院的一家酒排間裏去。他同兩個紳士和一個穿白色皮大衣的女人一起喝啤酒，於是我們先坐電車再坐公共汽車回家去。我在公共汽車裏睡着了，當我們到了他的房間裏時，他給我喝一杯汽水，替我在沙發上鋪好被褥。

第二天早上，金博姨父領我回到克利斯蒂娜姨母家裏去。看護還在那裏，隔壁的掃星孫太太走來吻了我好一陣，叫我做一個勇敢的小大人，問我要不要上樓去看看我親愛的姨母，但是金博姨父不讓我去，說他不贊成孩子們去看屍體，因為這是不適宜的。他替我把衣服裝在箱子裏，於是我們雇了一輛馬車回到他的寓所去。下午他出去了，留我一個人在家裏，我開看一些雜誌和一本關於鐵姐妮亞姨母和金博

姨父的大照片簿和新聞剪貼以消遣。當他回家時，他同他的朋友叫勞哀絲太太的一同回來。他說勞哀絲太太會帶我到車站去，因為火車八點鐘開，那時他正該在戲院裏。勞哀絲太太生得很漂亮，時常大笑。我們一同烤麵包，在火爐邊飲茶。勞哀絲在姨父的膝頭上坐了一忽兒，他在她肩膀上遊戲地對我鬚鬚眼睛說道，『你告訴鐵蒂姨母說勞哀絲太太多麼漂亮，好不好？』於是她便站起來說，『別說下去了，金博，你該難為情呢。』她似乎很生氣了一陣子。五點半點，金博姨父到戲院裏去了，他給我五個英鎊和一張車票，說他已經打電報給鐵蒂姨母，叫她到車站上來接我。他溫和愛地吻着我說，『想不到我竟作父親樣子了！』於是他大聲笑着，搔着勞哀絲太太的腋下，吹着口囁走着根去。當他走了後，勞哀絲太太和我回到房裏來，在火爐邊坐下。她問了我好些關於鐵蒂姨母的話，但是自從傑姆姨父的葬禮以後，我不會看見過她，因此這些問題我不大回答得出來。過了一忽兒，她走到食櫃邊，替自己斟了一杯蘇打水沖威士忌酒。當她啜飲着時，她告訴我所有關於她丈夫的事情，說他時常打她，有一天晚上他把她綁在他們在赫特福德斯場的房裏床上，不斷的把洗澡用的濕海綿朝她丟去，直到她的睡衣濕透，房東太太進來止住他，他才住手。她說夏天時候她在黑潭認識了金博姨父，他們時常在表演後一同出去，在月光裏坐在沙岡上，於是她的丈夫發覺了，發生了一場可怕的爭吵，金博在碼頭上把她的丈夫打倒，在星期六把她帶到倫敦來。從那時起，她不會看見過她的丈夫，但是她相信他還在密頓斯小姐的班裏巡演，願上帝保佑她，讓他仍舊留在那戲班裏，不來煩擾她。在該起身之前，她又喝了幾杯蘇打水沖威士忌酒。她還給我看她大腿上的一個疤痕，說當她在浪社特諾過蜜月時，一只牧羊狗在那上面咬了一口。我斯文地看它，於是她把裙子拉下來，說我是一個壞孩子，又問我到底有多大？我說我十一歲，她大笑着，問我看見了一個漂亮女孩子的赤裸裸的大腿，我會不會邪惡起來。我說不，她便說：『給我滾開吧。』我付在鼻子上撲些粉。隔了一忽兒，她又臥室裏走出來，戴上帽子，講我們應當走了。爲了我的箱子，我們雇了一輛馬車到車站，勞哀絲太太叫驢夫把行李直接掛到巴黎去。她買了一些甜香糕，利格力羅和

兩本雜誌給我，把我安頓在火車裏，等車警來了叫他留心我之後，才吻我同我告別。我朝月台上向她一路揮着手，直到她看不見了，我才坐在車廂角落裏，覺得非常的像大人樣，非常興奮，等待火車開駛。

到巴黎去的旅行對我是很重要的。我生平第一次獨自一人，自由自在。和我別誰的人底記憶一點也不使我的離去蒙上悲哀。我所遺下的，沒有一個是我覺得要懷念的人。學校裏的朋友們是淡忘的，並且在可憐的克利斯蒂娜姨母最後幾年的生活裏，我的確恨起她來了。我把面龐壓在車窗的冷玻璃上，在黑暗裏搜尋着田野的形像，樹木，小山和顏色，好像覺得我應該狂歡大樂。在車廂裏還有兩個人同我在一起，一個男的和一個女的，他們張開嘴巴坐着入睡。到了新港時，車警走來引我到輪船的通道上，把我付託給一個在船上的人，那人請我吃一塊火腿夾心麵包，領我到大菜間的一個地方，那裏我能夠擱起腳來睡覺。雖然我疲乏得要命，但是在開船之前，我不能入睡，因此我走到甲板上去，眺望着城裏的燈火在後退，海港上紅綠色的燈光反映在水裏。我抬頭望着飛雲疾馳過明月，於是突然的，就像一拳打在臉上，孤單把我打倒了。這孤單之感侵襲我整個身心——我思量着如果當我到巴黎時鐵姐妮亞姨母也已經去世了，那我該怎麼辦呢。我竭力使自己不要哭，但是沒有用，我發了一陣頗利害的嘔吐的里亞，弄得每個人都擠在我身邊，撫愛我，試着用吃的東西來安慰我，直到最後一個好心腸的女人全權照管我，給我喝一些白蘭地酒，這使我窒息，但也使我恢復過來。於是她讓我在她的私人房艙裏弄我入睡，到第愛普地方時我才醒來。從那時起，我完全復原了，那女人姓羅拉脫，她正要去錫蘭探望她的兒子——他是一個橡皮種植場主。我和她在第愛普車站的食堂裏喝了些茶，和她一同坐車到巴黎，睡過了大半的路程。

當我們抵達聖拉薩爾車站時，鐵姐妮亞姨母正在欄柵邊等待我。她穿着一件海豹皮外衣，戴着一頂鮮紅帽子，上面有一個網在飄着。我和羅拉脫太太告別，她吻着我，對鐵姐妮亞姨母鞠躬，跟在她的行李後面不見了。鐵姐妮亞姨母和我須得到海關的轉候室裏坐了三刻鐘，等我們的箱子送來。她見了我很高興，但是她因為金博叫我坐夜車不

坐日車來而對他非常生氣。她說他簡直他媽的不經心，因為他知道得清清楚楚的，她從不會在清晨四點鐘前上床，而她又得在六點半鐘就起身，那簡直太受不了。於是她擁抱我，說這不是我的過錯，說我們就學一起過着愉快的日子哩。

最後，當海關上的人查驗完了我的箱子後，我們雇了一輛馬車，開到巴黎去。天已經在下雨，街上濕而發亮，多數店舖的窗板剛收起來。侍者們穿了背心和襪子，正在擦着咖啡店外面的桌子。我們駛過河面，又沿着伏爾泰碼頭行駛，路邊的樹木都閃耀着，顏色鮮綠。當我們轉灣上布乃派脫路時，我們的馬兒幾乎在滑濕的路上跌了一交。一路上鐵蒂姨母不斷的講着她幾年來所幹的事和她在巴達克酒店的合作——那合同又延長了一個月。她問我克利斯蒂娜姨母有沒有留下一些錢給我，我說我不知道，不過我給了她一封金博姨父叫我交給她的信。當她讀着時，她曲起嘴唇，接着說：「看來我得替你找個活兒幹呢，寶貝，你還是同我一起去看克勞特先生去，不過也不用忙，我們以後再談吧。」最後馬車在一座極高大的房子前停了下來，一個穿襪衣長襪的小男人跑出來幫助車夫把我的箱子搬下來。鐵蒂姨母用法語對他說了些話，引我走了四只階梯，開門到一間客室裏。客室的一邊通一間大臥室，床上鋪着一張鴨毛墊子，看來像個粉紅色的汽球。還有一邊通到一間小房間裏，她說這就是我的房間。家具上有許多彩色的結子，還有幾百張相片，其中好許多用普通圖釘按在藍條的絨牆紙上。她的臥室裏有一角放着一個臉盆架，一個煤氣噴射環。在客室的桌子上有一個盤子，盤裏放着幾只醜陋的玻璃杯和一只堆滿了香煙頭的碟子。鐵蒂姨母脫下帽子和大衣，把它們丟在沙發上，於是她把手指梳着頭髮說，「哦，我們到這裏了，家裏，真是到了甜蜜的家裏呢。」於是她跑出去走到樓梯口，大聲尖叫着：「露意斯！」又走進來坐下。「吃了一些咖啡和麵包卷兒，」她說，「我們就上床一直睡到午飯時刻。這可合你的意？」我說這很合我的意，於是我們大家沉默着，直到露意斯走進來。露意斯年約十七歲，臉色蒼白，一件靛藍的淡紅色衣服在圍裙裏面捲起來，腳上穿着綠氈鞋，頭髮用捲髮紙直捲起來。鐵蒂姨母同她用法國話談了好久，於是那小男人背着鐵箱爬上樓

梯，把它放在我的房裏。於是露意斯和他一同走出去。我又獨個兒和鐵帶姨母在一起。我覺得稍有點陌生，并且很古怪的，有一點想家：並不是真的想念那在開甯登的可怕的房子，而是渴求着一些熟悉的事物。鐵帶姨母一定覺察到我不大快樂，因為她把臂兒摟住我，擁抱着我。「有點奇怪，不是嗎？」她說，「你就這樣的突然到了這裏？你一定要把可憐的克利斯蒂娜姨母底事統統告訴我，你在學校裏學些什麼，和其餘一切的事情。你也沒有理由要出心什麼的，因為你就要和我做伴了，我真喜歡有你在這裏呢。」於是她把我緊抱了一忽兒，出人意料地大哭起來。她在腰帶裏摸着手帕，跑到臥室裏去，關上了門。我真不知道該怎樣辦才好，所以開始卸行李。不久露意斯回來了，拿着一盤咖啡，麵包捲和奶油。她把盤兒砰的一聲放在桌上，隔門對鐵帶姨母尖叫了些什麼，又走了出去。我坐在桌邊，一直等到鐵帶姨母從臥室裏出來，她穿着一件棉的藍緞子長罩衣，頭髮下垂。她的神色又愉快了。「我真想不出爲什麼我會那樣哭起來，」她一面在桌邊坐下，一面說着。「我突然想到你在世界上孤單單的一個人，你那可憐的母親在生產時死了，而現在克利斯蒂娜又故世了。千真萬確的，一家人現在只剩下我們兩個了。兩塊糖？」她替我們兩人倒了咖啡，整個時候都流利的談着，講着一聯串這兒那兒隨便想起的話。故事的起端，關於我從未聽見過的人底事，一切都不聯貫地雜湊在一起，但是看來又似乎都能湊合成一個模型。

她一定有四十歲光景了，她的頭髮已經一再染了那末許多次，所以完全帶金屬色彩，像新的黃銅火鐘一樣的光亮。她的面龐長得漂亮，鼻尖稍稍向上，兩只距離廣闊的藍灰色眼睛。當她大笑時，她的嘴巴顯得仁慈闊大而愉快。她激怒地講了好些關於金博的話，但是帶着潛隱的溫柔。我猜想她一直都愛着他，比愛誰都更深。她問我有沒有看見勞哀絲太太，說無論誰和那末謀一個像爬牆藤試的女人發生糾纏，她都要替他惋惜的。吃了早飯，在抽了兩三根香煙之後，她說要睡覺去，睡到一點鐘；又說我可以隨便怎麼辦，但是她竭力勸我也睡覺去，因為在旅行之後，也許我實在比自己所想的更來得疲乏呢。

我到自己的小房間裏去，把箱子整理好之後，坐着向窗外眺望了

一會。窗子開在屋背後，望下去是一個院子，太陽照到院子的另一邊底房間裏去。在一個房間裏，我看見一個穿藍色長罩衣的老婦人正在縫衣機上工作，機器達達急轉的聲音極響，從遙遠的樓下，不時傳來杯盤的叮噠聲，還有人在唱歌。

窗外還有許多灰色屋頂和煙囪管，還有幾隻鳥兒飛來飛去，棲息在電線上。電線一直伸展到隔壁一條街去，於是被一座有許多窗子的高房子掩沒，那高房子看來像一個工廠。我覺得非常睏倦而且十分快樂。因此我就上床睡覺去，待醒轉來時，已經是吃午飯的時候了，鐵蒂姨母正輕輕地搖着我，叫我起身。她還是穿着長罩衣，但是她的頭髮在毛巾裏，因為她才洗了頭髮。

午餐我們吃熟燒雞，蔬菜和生菜，還有新鮮的硬麵包和咖啡。我們吃完之後，鐵蒂姨母躺在沙發上，又把腿兒移過一邊，在腳邊讓出一點地位給我。

『現在我們稍稍談一會吧，』她說。『當我在洗頭髮時，我想了很久。如果你小心地聽着，我會告訴你現在實際的情形怎樣，於是我們就可以決定最好的辦法了。我讓自己坐得更舒適一點。她正要伸手去取火柴，我便把桌上的火柴遞給她。『第一，』她說，『我除了所賺的以外，一點錢也沒有。但是無論如何，只要我們能够節省，我們就可以靠這點錢生活一些時候，等你自己開始賺些錢。我知道，實在我應該把你送進學校去，但是我不能够。在這混賬的城市裏找生活已經不太容易了，因為你必須要打扮得時髦，有漂亮的衣服，否則誰都不會理睬你的。現在我有一個辦法，我就要和馬蒂·葛本絲商量一下，她是我的伙伴。我們合跳陽傘舞，接着她單獨表演跳繩專技，表演得很好的。於是我用英文唱一只民歌，一節歌和合唱，又用法文唱第二節歌和合唱，接着我們一起合唱一只叫「像我這樣的一朵玫瑰，你怎樣的喜歡我？」再到看客的桌子邊去，從籃子裏分紙做的玫瑰花給他們。我的想法是你打扮成一個小的花花公子，戴着禮帽，手套，拿一根手杖，你知道，就是那種樣子的，在我們跳陽傘舞時，和我們調情，在整個表演時期，把表演時應用的東西遞給我們。如果馬蒂同意了，我們就去問問克勞特先生看。我想他會答應的，因為他對我稍為有

點意思，如果你懂得我所指的是什麼。那樣你每星期可以賺十五個法郎，這在開頭也可以有點幫助了。你喜歡這辦法嗎？」

我熱切地說我最最喜歡不過了，雙臂抱住她的頸項吻着她，她便說，「等一會兒，這邊沒有定當哩，我們還必須伺馬蒂和克勞特先生談一下，此外還有很多很多事情要安排哩。在我放你在巴達克酒店任情生活之前，我還得告訴你一大堆實際上你還太年輕而不知道的事。第一，你知道了多少了？」這是一個相當不容易回答的問題，因此我坐着看住她，一句話也不說。「你知道男人女人生孩子這種事情的，是嗎？」她顯然用勁地說。

我說「是的，」便臉紅起來了。「哦，這總是一個好開頭，」她說。「現在，讓我們——」她突然不講下去，自己也臉紅了，於是神態質地咯咯笑着。「喔，我的天呀，千真萬確的，他媽的我真不知道怎樣開頭才是哩，咳——」她恢復過來。「大咀的幹一下吧，這是我家常的格言，所以我講下去吧。」她捻熄了香烟，坐起來很快地講着。「現而你聽着，球林，這是一個古怪的世界，如果我們假裝說它不古怪是一點好處也沒有的。你不過是一個小孩子罷了，你應該有一個好的家，到一個好學校裏去，念歷史地理和各種功課，每一件事都慢慢的知道起來，不致使你驚嚇，但是現在實情是，你就沒有一個好家，你連一個家都沒有，除了我之外，世界上只你孤孤單單一個人了，并且老天都曉得的，我又不是什麼神仙天母，但是我不得不盡我所得的把一切事情都告訴你，那樣你才可以不至驚惶失措，被領錯了路而還什麼都不明白。第一，親愛的，你是一個私生子，這聽來極難聽，實際上却沒有那末壞。這不過說你的母親沒有和你的父親結婚，他們發生了關係，就是那樣罷了，雙方都沒有責任，你就這樣生了下來，你的母親死了，除了謠言和你母親的朋友納雷亞，科倫司格寫給你克利斯蒂娜姨母的話之外，沒有人知道你的父親是誰。你就是靠克利斯蒂娜姨母把你母親的珠寶變賣得來的錢養育起來的，現在她也死了，你就是這個樣兒，獨個兒和鐵匠妮亞姨母一起在巴黎。隨便怎樣來說，你的鐵匠姨母都不是一個「好」女人，但是現在她是你唯一的親人，因此你不如儘量利用她吧。」說

到這裏，她把背靠在沙發上，坐墊落在沙發的一端，又掉在地上；於是我把它拾起來，放在她的頭背後，重新坐下來。

「當我說我不是一個好女人的時候，」她繼續說下去，「我的意思是說我不是你的克利斯蒂娜姨母所謂的「好」女人。我就按命運所安排的生活，儘量享受生活。我一向都是如此，我身心都是這樣，我自己也沒有辦法。雖然我和克利斯蒂娜姨母有了好幾場爭吵，因為她從來都不明白對於她是好的，對於我却不一定是好的。我總覺得我和你母親相像一點，不過我還沒有她那樣的輕率。」

「現在如果你在這裏和我一起生活的話，對於好些發生的事情，你得先把眼睛睜得大大的，然後又把它們閉得緊緊的劃去擔憂。你必須不要因為馬蒂的咒罵而受不住，當她一上勁，她的話兒可真有點凶猛，不過她實在是一個好朋友，你會喜歡她的。至於巴達克酒店呢，你得留心着，別被任何事情驚嚇了，清早一點鐘之後，那邊可不大斯文呢。各色各樣的人都到酒排間來喝酒，有時來一場打架，你看了那些老娼妓尖叫着，大嚷着，爭吵着，你不時會有一陣好笑的。你知道娼妓是什麼，是嗎？」

我說我不大敢確定，但是我相信我知道的。

「哦，」她繼續說，「她們是那種和男人發生關係并且以此為職業的女人，如果你懂得我的意思是什麼。她們把男人帶到家裏去，和男人睡覺，男人們付錢給她們，雖然當你對其中有些人看一眼的時候，你會奇怪他媽的她們怎麼能夠每次賺到四個辨士。但是她們大半都是些好人。還有一種年青人，他們和女人跳舞，由女人們給他們錢。他們叫作「男伴舞」，對誰都沒有什麼用處，除了他們舞得好，使那些有錢的美國太太們開心。此外還有許多男孩們和年青男人們，他們臉上打扮得同女人一樣，他們也是娼妓，你可以說他們不過是男的罷了。好多男人與其和女人睡覺，倒更喜歡和他們睡覺，雖然我個人以為這似乎有點無聊，但是這畢竟是他們自己的看法，不關我的事。有時他們非常的有趣，你看他們吵鬧時真要笑死。她們尖叫着，互相打着各人的耳光。在巴達克有一個叫小鳥兒的，那傢伙時常同人爭吵的，但是只要他不喝醉酒，他是非常可愛的。如果有什麼年青的男人走

來叫你去喝酒，或者叫你和他們一同出去，你千萬別聽他們，如果他們抓住你，開始和你親暱起來，那你就客氣地推脫，跑來告訴我。我會對付他們的。這真是一個古怪的世界，的的確確的，你不如趕早儘你所能的多知道一些，倒要好得多。這樣子你可以獨立自主，別人怎樣說怎樣做你都給它個健腦的四不管。」

她很急忙地把話兒說完，於是朝我焦急地望着。我覺得稍稍有點迷惑，但是我說我將試着把她所告訴我的都記住，對於任何發生的事情都不受驚嚇。於是我們講着別的事情。她叫我把克利斯蒂娜姨母故世的詳情都告訴她，我照她的吩咐說了，她嘆息着，悲傷地搖着頭，有一會兒似乎便要哭出來了。但幸虧正巧那時候有人砰砰地敲着門，馬蒂·葛本絲進來了。她比鐵蒂姨母矮胖一點，皮膚很黑。她穿着一件灰色衣服，灰色的結帶長統靴，當她坐下來時，靴子露在外面。她還穿了一件鮮綠色寬衫，扣着一只小鑽石鑽。她的帽子是灰色氈製的，上面有一只藍鳥。她對我很好，和我客氣地握手，說她不曉得我會變成那樣了不起的孩子。她的聲音深而帶嘎。我立刻就喜歡她了。

鐵蒂姨母說她們要私下談一陣話，我願不願意出去散步一會。我說我願意的，於是她警告我在穿馬路時要先往左邊看看，又叫我好好記住門牌號碼和姓名，那樣我才不會迷路，於是她吻我，揮着手送我出門去。我小心地摸索着走下黑暗的樓梯，當我走到前門時，門打不開。我把門推拉了一陣之後，一個女人把頭伸出門來，對我尖叫了一些什麼，於是咯嗒一聲，門就像自動打開了。街道極窄，充滿了來往的車輛。我慢慢地走下街去，看着每一家店鋪的櫥窗，茶食店裏陳列着我從未見過的，最最美麗的蛋糕，有幾家美術用具店裏放着畫架，油畫，一匣匣彩色墨筆，和奇形怪狀的關節木頭人形。還有一家玩具店裏，有好幾百樣廉價玩具一起亂堆在紙板匣裏。此外還有雜貨店，菓蔬鋪，和一家放滿舊家具和磁器的大店鋪。這家大店鋪開在路角上，一半店面臨着河。我小心地穿過馬路，沿路的另一邊走着，經過放在短牆上的一排小木箱——木箱裏裝滿了書籍，彩色畫片和好幾千冊舊雜誌，都極破爛污穢，用細繩綁成一捆捆的。

有許多人翻開着書本，或是忽忽地在人行道上走着。差不多所有

的人都有長鬍子，有些人走到外面貼滿了廣告的圓形鐵門裏去，出來時都在扣彈鈕。我見了這情形很迷惑，因此朝其中一個的裏面張望了一下，看看倒底是什麼一會同事。過後我覺得很有趣，看着各種不同的脚兒站在下面。

我走過一座橋，憑石欄杆倚着。水色碧綠，有幾只汽船噴着氣在河裏往來，偶或會，會有一只大汽船駛來，當它穿過橋洞時，煙囪會彎曲成兩半。稍稍上游一點，河便分開來，水中央有一個小島，島上有一些房子，差不多像尖頭似的露在外面。在島的邊沿，到處都是樹木。每一件東西看來都比倫敦的要清楚好許多，房屋的影子映在草面上，清楚而明晰。

我覺得興奮而充滿了冒險精神，走到河的對面去，在樹底下走了好些路。每隔一些時候，一輛噪響的黃色電車會駛行過來。電車軌道看來倒更像火車軌道，兩軌中間長着草。等我回到家裏時，太陽已經在西沉，滑碼頭上所有的窗子，看來就像着了火一樣。

那天晚上，馬蒂在九點鐘光景來了，我們三人便一同出外去，在一家酒店裏吃晚飯。我們的桌子就擺在人行道上，桌上還放着一盞紅燈罩的台燈。馬蒂和鐵蒂姨母很高興，她們和認識的人用法國話交談，講得很快。她們自己談話和對我說話時用英語。鐵蒂姨母告訴我好些東西的法國講法，說我不如儘快的學習法語，因為這是非常有用的。她們長談了好一陣，談到我在她們表演時做「花花公子」。馬蒂對於這種提議非常起勁；她們說當天晚上就帶我到巴達克酒店去，立刻就與克勞特先生商談。

吃了晚飯後，我們沿林蔭道走到另一家咖啡店去喝咖啡，咖啡放在玻璃杯裏。她們還喝了白蘭地酒。於是我們回家去。鐵蒂姨母要我騎一個籠頂，她自己換衣服。她說我要到很遲才睡，我不如儘可能多多的休息。在十一點半鐘光景，馬蒂來找我們。她和鐵蒂姨母都穿了認眼的晚禮服和斗蓬，於是我們都坐在馬車裏，在燈光明亮的街道上駛行了好些路。在馬車裏，鐵蒂姨母給我一個前門的鑰匙和一些錢，叫我一次又一次地背着地址，說我們以後總是要獨自回家去的，就是我真的和她們一起表演，我也得一個人回家的，因為通常她們總得留

在那裏和人談話，有時幾乎要談一整夜。她告訴我馬車大概要多少錢，並且很清楚地告訴我，我該對車夫說的話。當我背着話時，她和馬蒂都大笑起來，說我的法國話講得真和本地人一樣。馬蒂說她不知道如果讓我一個人晚上在巴黎閒蕩，是不是妥當的，鐵蒂姨母說按我的年齡來講，我是非常聰明的，還不如讓我學會怎樣料理自己，學習獨立要好得多。

當我們到巴達克酒店時，除了許多侍者和酒排間的當櫃人之外，沒有人在那裏。我們一齊上樓去，坐在一間小化妝室裏，那小室是馬蒂和鐵蒂姨母合用的。她們的衣服都掛在木栓上，室內有兩只椅子，裝在架上的兩面鏡子，在房角裏有一隻極小的洗臉盆，旁邊有一個沒有柄的水壺放在地板上。

馬蒂從小廚裏拿出一個瓶來，她們倆都喝了杯酒。於是鐵蒂姨母走到樓下去看克勞特先生，留我同馬蒂談話。

馬蒂問我是不是有點覺得陌生，我說是的，但是我很高興。她說：「這生活真是他媽的不好受呢，你知道，但是也有它有趣的時刻。同我以前表演過的有些酒店相比。這一家還不算怎麼壞。有一次我和一班戲子在比利時的安脫韋潑跳舞，他們叫我們在四樓的一間廁所裏化妝，我向你罰咒，千真萬確的，光是那臭氣就够把你薰死呢。和那裏相比，這裏真是一個小小天堂了。」於是她又把酒瓶拿出來，又喝了好些，問我要不要嚐一下。我說「好的。」她說，「我的天哪，我已經在教壞你了。」但是她讓我嚐了一口，當我做歪臉時，她大笑着。『這是生杜松子酒，寶貝，別讓誰騙你說這是水。不過它可真的使你覺得暢快呢，精神十足的要出去和誰打架。信不信由你，在這愛情之亭裏，你真需要有這種心情呢。』

鐵蒂姨母回來了，非常高興的樣子，說克勞特先生要見我，我們便立刻到下一層樓，走到一個小房間裏去。房裏有一只寫字檯，還有許多裸體女人的照片釘在牆上。克勞特先生肥胖而容易興奮。他吻着我的雙頰，抓住我的兩肩，把我推開去，仔細地看着我，一直用法國話很快的講着。於是他對鐵蒂姨母耳語了許多話，在她唇上響吻一下，引我們到走道裏去。正當我走出門去時，他在口袋裏摸索着，給我

三個法郎。鐵蒂姨母簡直喜歡極了，說我不覺得他是一個可愛的傢伙嗎。「不能夠再和氣的了，你知道，自然他有的時候也稍微興奮一點，但是除非他喝了幾杯酒，他從來不真正猥褻的，多謝上帝，他也不常喝這麼多的。」

我們又回到樓上的化裝室裏去，把一切都告訴馬蒂。我開頭每星期可以賺十個法郎，如果我做得好，以後就有十五法郎一星期。馬蒂說那卑鄙的老王八也該再多出一點。但是鐵蒂姨母提醒她說他到底也得顧到他的生意的。隔了一忽兒，我們三人一起下樓去。鐵蒂姨母把我介紹給酒排間裏當櫃的人。他講英國話，給我一只高凳子，讓我坐在櫃台後面的一個角落裏，我可以望見所有的人。我在那裏坐了好久好久，直到我的眼睛被煙刺痛。每隔一會兒，馬蒂或是鐵蒂姨母會跑來看看我，看我在那裏好不好，於是她們扮作女牧童赤裸着大腿走下來，等她們在酒排間喝了些葡萄酒之後，她們便跳陽傘舞。似乎誰都不怎麼瞧這跳舞。但是當舞畢時，他們都拍掌喝彩。我看完她們全部的表演，覺得那樣的疲乏，決定回家去，所以我跑回化裝室去拿我的帽子。我敲敲門走進去，以為鐵蒂姨母和馬蒂都在樓下，但是她們都不在樓下——至少鐵蒂姨母不在樓下。她和克勞特一起在房裏。她正坐在他膝上，幾乎一點衣服也不穿，他正在吻她。他們兩人都閉上了眼睛，誰都不會看見我，所以我輕輕地又把門關上，沒有拿到帽子便出去了。我很容易的就雇到一輛馬車，車夫開我到家裏，當我給他車錢時，他和我談了好一陣，我却一點也不懂，於是我對他鞠了一個躬，說聲晚安，他便駕着車走了。

我在床上躺了好一忽兒，都沒有入睡。我覺得古怪，好像我所經驗到的一切事情，都不是真的。我猜想着鐵蒂姨母是不是喜歡被辟克勞特先生親吻，於是我在酒店裏所見的人底面孔，似乎都很快地在我眼前掠過，直到他們都模糊起來，我便入睡了。在清晨時分，我醒了一剎那。一線灰色的寒光從百葉窗裏透露進來。我聽見鐵蒂姨母的聲音。於是她臥室的門兒碰上了，我轉過身來，又睡着了。

當我第一次和鐵蒂姨母和馬蒂·本絲在巴黎的巴達克酒店表演時，我演得非常成功。所有的娼妓都來和我招呼道喜，說我是非常瀟灑，是非常可愛的孩子，給我甜餅吃。克勞特先 很快便把我的薪水從一星期十法郎加到十五法郎。當合同滿期時，馬蒂和鐵蒂姨母吵了一架，便各自散場。我想這場爭吵似乎和克勞特先生有關係，當時的情形真是可怕。鐵蒂姨母哭了好一陣，說馬蒂是一個卑鄙的騙人惡婦，馬蒂就坐在小裏大笑，一直等到鐵蒂姨母完全失掉自制，把一個苦艾酒瓶向她擲去，但沒有擲中，却一直飛進門來，擲到我的房裏，打破我洗臉盆上面的鏡子。於是馬蒂停住大笑，繞着桌子追趕鐵蒂姨母，大聲咒罵着。她們兩人都喝醉了酒，我有點驚慌了，所以奔到外面去，坐在樓梯上，把手指塞住我的耳朵。不一會兒，馬蒂從房間裏衝出來，跌在我身上；他拍的打了我一巴掌，尖叫着走下樓去。我聽見他拚命推拉着大門，咒罵着門兒，最後她把門打開了，砰的一聲把它在她身後碰上，碰得這樣的使勁，竟使一大塊灰泥從屋頂上掉下來，落在樓梯口頭的污水桶裏。當我回到客室裏時，鐵蒂姨母正躺在沙發上大哭；她的頭髮都鬆散下來，鼻子流着血，衣服的前面染滿了血跡。當我走進去時，她站起來蹣跚着走到她的臥室裏去，我聽見她嘔吐了好一陣。我關上房門，上了鎖，打開百葉窗，看看天色怎樣。天正下着大雨，水落正大聲嘩嘩地響着，我便回到牀上入睡了。

經過這場吵鬧之後，鐵蒂姨母和我就把所有東西包裝好，到渥士登特去。我們到一家音樂會酒店裏去表演，那酒店設在一條通到海濱去的小街上。鐵蒂姨母唱三個歌，我學了一篇法國演說介紹她。當我戴着大禮帽，白手套和手杖上場時，每個人都會大笑。鐵蒂姨母以為如果我戴一個單眼鏡，一定會很好的，但是我總不能把它嵌在眼睛裏，最後我們才把它用酒精樹膠黏在眼睛上，上場時非常成功。我們在那裏演了六個星期，在白天我時常在海濱玩耍。

我們住在一家便宜的旅館裏，是一個極消瘦的女人叫白魯乞太太的開設的。她是半德國種，有時做巧格力蛋糕吃，上面放着乳精花，滋味非常之好。她有好幾個兒子，她時常把他們的照片給我看。有一個是水手，在照片上他拿着一只鐵錨，胸部凸出。他的臀部之大，為

我從來所未見。

我們在渥士登特的合同期滿後，便到布魯賽爾去，差不多有五個星期都找不到活兒。我們時常到介紹所的應接室裏坐着，室裏還有好許多找工作的人。牆壁上貼滿了紅明星的畫幅，顏色鮮麗，還有一張莎拉·布哈脫的簽字照片，樣子像一隻裝白花邊的羊兒。

我們不得不從原來住着的旅館裏搬出來，搬到一家更便宜的旅館裏去。鐵蒂姨母愈來愈沮喪了，但是有一天不知道她在那一家酒店裏碰見一個奧地利軍官，很遲才回家，神色愉快多了。他非常漂亮，有一天晚上請我們兩人到一家露天館店裏去吃晚餐，他和我逗笑了好一陣，捻着我的耳朵使我發痛，但是我假裝着喜歡這樣。晚飯後，他替我雇了一輛馬車，叫車夫開到旅館裏去，給我車錢，但是當我們轉過街角時，我叫車夫停下，給了他一點錢，走回家來。路比我想像的要遠些，但是我却賺了三個法郎。過了一星期光景，鐵蒂姨母弄到了一個合同，到安脫韋潑去表演三星期。這之後，我們到阿姆斯特丹，接着又回到布魯賽爾，在那裏住了兩個月，有一部份的時候在曼賽特歌舞場表演。

在真正的舞台上表演，我最初覺得有些古怪，但是我比較喜歡得多。那地方也不是一個真正的戲院，因為大半的觀眾都坐在桌邊，但是有台腳燈和佈景，還有一個掛幕。

鐵蒂姨母致給我一只歌，當她換裝的時候，我扮作丑角歌唱。這只歌叫「別走到草地上去」，是英國歌舞喜劇裏的一個曲子。似乎誰都不十分留心聽這只歌，但是我却唱得非常高興。

這之後，我們有一個長期合同，在全法國旅行着，在每一個地方表演一星期，最後到里昂，尼斯和馬賽，接着我們到北非的阿爾吉爾去留了三星期。在節目單上和我們在一起的還有一個魔術師，他非常喜歡我。有一天晚上他請我吃晚飯，我們和許多戴土耳其帽的阿拉伯人坐在一起。我想他自己也是半阿拉伯種。後來我們一同坐車沿海兜風，他說我是一個「非常使人喜歡的孩子」，非常漂亮，有迷人的眼睛。他把我的手握了一忽兒，我知道會發生什麼了，所以我說我覺得很難過，開始作嘔。他立刻送我回旅館去。在我們表演後，便輪到他

表演，我時常等着看他。他玩紙牌術，從籠裏打出鴿子來。作最後一個表演時，他常常走到舞台的前面，非常嚴肅地說：「太太們，先生們，讓我給你們做一個非常非常艱難的試驗，生命的經驗。」他便把上衣和襯衫脫掉，上半身的衣服脫光，死般地靜站了一會兒。於是，他萬分審慎地從桌子裏拿出一把銳利的匕首來試一試鋒口，用細長的手指把匕首稍稍的彎一下，於是在觀眾屏息的沉寂裏，開始剜他的左乳頭。他表演得非常逼真，就是那流到肋骨上的一條赤褐色血流，也極逼真。於是，突然的，他敏捷地一跳，把匕首條的丟開，揮出一塊手帕，止住血流，叫一聲「完了」，幕便降落下來。我想他有一個小橡皮囊，裝滿了紅色液體，藏在他手裏。他把自己的乳頭塗成肉色，把另一個假紅的黏在真的上面。這表演時常引起雷鳴似的掌聲。

在阿爾吉爾表演之後，我們到突尼斯去。那邊的情形也極相似，不過天氣暖和一點。接着，我們在熱諾瓦有一星期的合同，但結果大失敗——所有的年輕意大利人喧鬧得那末利害，我們不能使自己的歌聲讓人聽見，所以我們便慢慢的一路上表演着回巴黎去，路經日內瓦和蒙脫維時，表演了一番。

我們想法子去租我們以前住過的房間，但那裏已經有人了，所以我們到一家在拿破侖紀念館後面的小旅館裏去住了幾個星期，直到鐵蒂姨母弄妥了秋季合同。為消度中間空閒的時間，我們到布爾多附近的一家農場去，住在鐵蒂姨母的老朋友白倫拿爾太太家裏。她過去是一個舞女，結婚後不幹了。她肥胖而和善，有前妻生的三個成年女兒和一個兒子看管葡萄樹，他們都非常活潑，吃飯時整個時候都提高了嗓子說話。他們有一只猴子，有時總要咬人，但是當它高興時，却非常和愛。我們時常在池塘裏釣鰻魚和小泥魚，在整個葡萄園裏走着撿撿葡萄，看長得好不好。

我們在那裏住了六個星期，得益不少。鐵蒂姨母因為喝了那末多牛奶和乳精，長得非常肥胖。整個時候她都沒有染頭髮，因此她的頭髮變得很古怪，髮尾黃色，但在髮根上却是淺灰色。

下一年，大半的時候我們都在德國消度，在佛朗克福，漢堡，特蘭士登，紐倫堡，慕尼黑，海奴佛，海台爾培和柏林各地表演。在柏

林時。鐵蒂姨母認識了奧賽·魏勒，一個賣藝人。她熱烈地愛上了他。我們在那裏住了好幾個月，有時在城外舞廳裏表演，有時在撲茨頓和柏林城內的酒店裏表演，奧賽·魏勒是一個身材矮胖壞脾氣的小男人，他常常打鐵蒂姨母，但是我想她並不在乎。在夏天，他和我們一同到鐵洛爾的阿麥茲去，我們住在一個公寓裏，時常到湖邊去野餐。他教我游水潛水。就是烈日照在湖上時。湖水也依舊冰涼，但是我也習慣了，時常一天游泳七八次。魏勒時常在水邊的草上躺著，用毛巾縛在他的腰部，表演各種技藝，時常演得那末用勁，毛巾會掉下來，鐵蒂姨母會笑得流淚說：「好極了，奧賽，給可憐的德國人一場好好的款待吧！」

每天晚上，我們時常坐在公寓外邊吃晚飯。桌子差不多就擺在路上，德國家庭團體的行列，會大踏步地走過，他們都因為爬山而十分熱，十分疲乏。連年青人都是大肚皮，他們都穿短褲，繡花吊帶，頭戴小帽子。

每天傍晚大約六點鐘光景，我們在臨湖的一家露天飯店裏喝啤酒。我們喜歡看那汽船貫着氣穿過湖來，於是停在碼頭邊，讓旅客們上岸。

有一天晚上，當魏勒付了啤酒錢，我們正要回公寓時，他突然着魔似地站住了，扼住了鐵蒂姨母的手臂說：「老天爺喲，那是我的妻子！」

我抬頭看見一個穿淺色衣服的瘦女人走下碼頭來，呆呆地瞪住我們。我們都站著不動，等她走到我們這邊來。她的神色非常忿怒，神經質地咬着嘴唇。

「奧賽，」她說，「我要同你講話。」她的聲音嚴厲而堅強，極端的堅決。

奧賽·魏勒開始恐嚇一下：「你聽着，愛美，——」他起頭說，但是她握住他的手臂打斷他的話兒，把他領到花園的另一頭，在一張桌子邊坐下。我望着鐵蒂姨母，她的臉色非常蒼白，一句話也不會說。

「我們要不要回公寓去？」我說。她搖搖頭。「不，我們留在此

地，」所以我們便在剛才站起來的桌子邊坐下，等待着。汽船的號笛突然叫了一聲，使我跳起來，於是船兒就在水裏搗起泡沫，開上湖去了。是黃昏時分了，鋸齒狀的山嶺背襯着天空，就像是從黑紙上剪刻出來的。在湖的對面，村莊裏的燈火已經在閃爍了。汽輪在好遠的地方又鳴叫起來，一羣鳥兒在飯店後面的大樹上喋喋地飛出來。我望見鐵蒂姨母。她正呆呆地直望着前面，臉色堅定而沉靜，只有兩條小脈息在她的太陽穴裏抽搐着。

不久，魏勒太太走到我們這邊來。鐵蒂姨母站起來。

「明天早上奧賽和我坐第一班船離開此地，」魏勒太太說。「現在他回到你的旅館裏去整理東西。今天晚上我已經替我們定了一間房間。」

「喔，」鐵蒂姨母說，「那樣到不差呢，不是嗎？」

「如果你沒有錢，」魏勒太太說，「我敢担保奧賽會給你一些，够你回到你來的隨便什麼地方去的。」

鐵蒂姨母微微喘息了一下。「謝謝你的好打算！」她說，她的聲音聽來高昂而緊張，「我不要奧賽的錢，這你也知道的。」

「你是一個下賤的女人，」魏勒太太說，「我不願意同你交談。」

「我倒沒有那樣的下賤，靠男人賺來的錢生活了十五年，却一點什麼也沒有回答他。」

「像你這種人，還不能够守住一個男人十五年哩。」魏勒太太說。

「自己不要留下的人，我也不要守住他的，」鐵蒂姨母說。「他愛我比愛你更深，否則他也不會在這裏的，不是嗎？你可以把這件事仔細想一想，辨辨味道。」

魏勒太太顫抖起來。「你不過是一個下等的娼妓罷了，」她粗魯地說。於是鐵蒂姨母拍的一聲打了她一個耳光，把她的帽子打在一邊，在他的頰上留下一個淺紅色的掌印。

奧賽奔跑過來，神色非常慌張。「看老天爺的面，你們兩個別再吵鬧吧，」他說，「所有的人都在聽你們呢。」

「我打了她，我很抱歉，」鐵蒂姨母說。「我從來不知道什麼應該控制我自己的。回家去吧，奧賽，去整理你的行李。」她轉過身來，走開去了。奧賽有點猶豫地跟着她，我跟在最後面。我回望着魏勃太太，她一動也不動地站在我們離開她的那個地方，她的帽子依舊側在一邊。我知道她在哭泣，因為大門口的門燈照出她臉上的淚痕。

我們大家沉默地走向公寓。當我們到了那裏時，我留在外面，讓他們兩人進去。我走到湖邊的牆上坐下。湖水非常凝靜，像一片大玻璃鏡躺在岸邊。不久，奧賽·魏勃從屋子裏走出來，提着他的手提箱。他沒精打彩地向我揮揮手，於是急速地走開去了。

我回到公寓裏時，鐵蒂姨母正坐在窗邊，頭兒埋在兩臂裏啜泣着。她一點也沒有知道我進來，所以我便坐在床上，一句話也不說。不久，她恢復過來，站起來照着鏡子。「沒有錯兒，我真是醜樣子呢。」她沙啞地說，試着微笑，於是戴上帽子走出去了。我從窗口望着她，看見她沿着背向村莊的道路徬徨地走去。我坐着等待她，直等到她在十時半光景才回來。她似乎因為我在房裏而高興，極力裝作愉快的樣子。她脫下帽子，把頭髮整整鬆，我們在煤氣噴射爐上煮茶，用餅乾伴飲着。

她講了好些話，但一次也沒有提起奧賽。她說她曾打算了一番，決定到維也納去；她說她認識一個叫馬克斯·施登納的介紹人，也許我們可以立刻有工作做。她說維也納是個可愛的地方，她滿望着再到那邊去，幾年前她曾同馬蒂一起到過那裏一次。當我向她道晚安時，她突然緊緊地擁抱着我說，「哦，親愛的，現在又只我們兩個人在一起了，讓我們儘量享樂吧！」

這以後，可憐的鐵蒂姨母有好幾星期都非常沮喪而不快活。我們到了維也納，發現馬克斯·施登納不在那裏，所以我們四處奔走。到其他介紹人處去謀事，直到我們一個錢也沒有了。於是我們在潑拉脫維亞場的擲環場裏找到一個職業。在玩客們把環兒投過之後，我得把它們丟在一根柱上，再把它們投回給場主。場主是一個喉嚨粗啞的胖小男人，但極和氣。我這樣賺錢來，够我們兩人吃飯。我們住在一家極難堪的小旅館裏。鐵蒂姨母不時找到男人過夜，贖錢付我們的房租。

實在她這樣做也不容易，因為有那許多年青漂亮的正式娼妓，她們熟悉最好的酒店，憎恨有人闖進她們的營業區域。每天晚上當我回家時，我總是非常的疲乏，因為整天站着，我的腳上生了很利害的水泡。

在十月裏，鐵蒂姨母碰到一個極有錢的老頭兒，他把她帶到普達拜斯脫城去。她去了大概有一星期，便電匯給我一些錢，叫我立刻到她那邊去，所以我早一天向擲環場辭了職，第二天便到她那邊去了。鐵蒂姨母坐了一輛漂亮的小汽車到車站上來接我。她穿得很好，看來愉快了好多。她說她有一層房，臨着河面，如果她的老頭兒能夠活得長久一點，我們便可以舒服一陣了。可是他真的已經非常非常之老了，她恐怕他活不過冬天。我們笑了不少，因為又能夠重聚而高興。她的房間真的很好，我睡在後面的一間僕人小臥室裏。有一個匈牙利廚子白天來工作，我們自己收拾屋子。這老頭兒不大麻煩我們，他不過一星期來吃兩三次晚飯，並且留得也不太晚。當他來時，我時常出來到城裏去——城裏很美——在咖啡店裏坐着喝咖啡，聽着匈牙利浮浪民的音樂。

我們在那裏住了幾星期之後，鐵蒂姨母在匈牙利旅店裏碰見一個從巴黎來的老朋友。他是一個法國人，在河的對面開一家小酒店。兩天之後，他到我們家裏來吃茶，我們爲他表演一番，他說他願意聘請我們。那時候鐵蒂姨母真的神色很好，有許多漂亮衣服。我們在下一個星期一便開始表演，在那裏過了整個冬天。每隔兩星期，我們換一個歌唱節目，積下了不少錢。

四月裏，鐵蒂姨母的老頭兒必得離開普達拜斯脫到塔頓塔頓去治病去了。他決定得很突兀，寫了一封告別的信給鐵蒂姨母，還附了些錢，够她付上月的房租，還有一些餘錢。我們倆人實在都寬心不少，以後就不會再看見他。一年之後，我們在報上讀到他故世的消息。

五月裏，我們離開普達拜斯脫回到維也納，在那裏住了幾天，又到布拉格去，在露天酒店裏表演了六個星期。我們積了一筆錢，又回到巴黎，如果生活得便宜一些的話，至少可以够我們度過夏季。

在秋天我們又開始旅行，在有些表演過的城市裏我們又得到復聘

。我那時十四歲，長得非常漂亮。在過後兩年裏，我們的生活很平靜。有一次在尼斯城的英格蘭林蔭道上碰到奧賽·魏勒，他樣子整潔，神色很好，戴着一頂草帽。他有禮地點頭招呼我們，但是鐵蒂姨母不理睬他。我們在下一天就離開尼斯，因此後來也不會再看見他。一九一一年夏天，我們又回到巴黎。鐵蒂姨母不大舒服，訴說着胃部發痛，我們有幾星期都不會工作，後來便隱去了。

。下一年正月，我慶我十七歲的生日。那天正輪到星期日，我們正在赴西班牙的旅途中——我們倆誰都不會到過西班牙。我們在貝榮勒地方下車，買了一瓶香檳酒，就只我們兩人在車廂裏慶祝着。我們倆把酒喝完，我一生裏第一次喝醉了酒，在走廊裏來回地大叫着。鐵蒂姨母笑得氣力都沒有了，不能來阻止我。

我們在聖麥巴士登的歌舞酒店裏表演，這家酒店剛開幕，房子很新，裝潢得很神氣，充滿油漆味。酒店老板是一個肥胖的比利時猶太人，他在小手指上戴着一個非常之大的金剛鑽鑲藍寶石戒指。我們由巴黎的介紹人杜美爾介紹給他，說我們是名角。可是他不像把我們當作名角看待，當鐵蒂姨母叫樂隊奏得稍稍安穩一點時，他對她很沒有禮貌。但實際上也沒有什麼關係，因為無論如何，幾乎沒有什麼人到這家酒店裏來。一星期完了後，我們領得薪金，便被辭退了。我們又到西班牙的其他一些地方表演，但是沒有多少成功。西班牙人很有禮貌，敷衍地拍掌贊美我們的表演，但僅僅只如此而已。他們沒有熱誠。當鐵蒂姨母從一張桌子走到另一張桌子地唱着『像我這樣的一朵玫瑰，你怎樣喜歡我？』時，他們總是十分靜寂地坐着，望着她，極少伸出手來拿紙玫瑰花的。所以可憐的鐵蒂姨母得把花兒放在桌子上，再到另一張桌子邊去。這使她非常沮喪，她的樣子開始有些蒼老了，她的微笑失掉了慣有的愉快。

。我們到了巴塞龍納後，在一家非常醜陋的歌舞場裏表演。這家歌舞場比別處好一點，因為劇場裏的地板沒有鋪地毯，觀眾們不拍手而踐腳，聲音非常之大，使我們每一次的表演，都似乎無上的成功。有一天下午我們去看大門牛，使我們兩人都非常難受。鐵蒂姨母回到旅館裏時，一路上都哭泣着，想着這些馬兒，想着它們怎樣和善地快步。

走入跑馬場，一只眼睛被帶子綁住，它們看見衝過來的公牛。有幾只馬兒在斃命時恐怖地慘叫着。這一幕回憶，有好幾天都盤據在我們的心頭。

在回家去的路上，我們坐在一家咖啡店外面吃濕却汰，這是冰凍甜品，由果仁做成的，看來很像極濃的牛奶。鐵蒂姨母不斷地哭泣着，於是又神經質地笑着自己。她竟陷入這樣的狀態，不得不喝些白蘭地酒，在表演時躺着休息。兩夜之後，當我們表演完了，我正在台下的化妝室中等候，鐵蒂姨母正在換衣服時，突然上面有什麼東西沉重地塌壓下來，在一聲高響的尖叫之後，樂隊突然完全停止演奏。我衝到台上去看看發生了什麼事情。每個人都奔跑着大聲叫嚷。一盞大強光燈爆炸了，跌落下來，台幕着火，正焚燒着。

當大燈跌下來時，正在台上表演的魔術家衝過我身邊，把我撞在牆上。做他助手的他的妻子被關在戲台中央的魔術櫃子裏，她在裏面捶打着叫人放她出來。舞台監督奔過去開門，但是在他走到那邊之前，整塊焚燒着的帷幕正跌落在路中間。

我飛快地奔下樓去招呼鐵蒂姨母，正碰到她穿着化妝外衣，面上塗滿了油膏走上來。我們聽見魔術家的妻子在恐怖地哀號，因為櫃子開始燒起來，但這時候整個舞台都是熊熊大火，所以沒有辦法可以救她。我們設法從濃煙裏打出一條路來到舞台門口去。鐵蒂姨母被烟燻窒住，一個舞台工人嚇得發了昏，竟把她撞倒，自己跌在她身上，一隻靴子把她的面孔踏破。我扶她起來，最後我們走了出來，走到街裏。在我們的背後，傳來可怕的塌壓聲，一部份的屋頂正塌了下來。鐵蒂姨母發出一小聲喘息，便昏暈過去了。我把她抓在臂下，把她從術裏拖出來，她的腳跟在大圓石子上磨擦着。有好幾百個人都驚慌着四處奔跑，我真怕我們會被撞倒，被踐踏而死。當我把鐵蒂姨母從術裏拖到街上時，我突然想到魔術家的妻子被關在櫃裏，便把鐵蒂姨母放在地上，在水溝邊利害地嘔吐起來。

嘔吐之後，我在人行道旁大石上傳着鐵蒂姨母坐下。那時我才注意到她的面孔在流血，我便把手帕替她輕擦着，她張開眼睛睜來。這時候救火車已經開來了。我能夠聽見車子在那壁街上的聲音。有一個人

走過來，我們一同把鐵蒂姨母扶起，用手臂撐住她。她站起來，搖擺了一忽兒，於是發出一聲尖叫，緊按着腰部，又昏迷過去了。我不知道怎麼辦才好。這個人既不會講英國話，又不會講法國話，我又只會講幾句西班牙語。他幫我把她抬到街角上，我做手勢叫他陪着她，自己去雇汽車。我跑得非常的快，但到處都找不到汽車。突然我看見一輛救護車在一條小街裏駛出來，我叫住了車子，吩咐開回我把鐵蒂姨母留下的地方去。兩個救護員把她抬進車子，我同這位陌生人告別，多多道謝了他。他拾起低頂戴帽向我鞠躬，我們便向醫院裏開去，留他站在馬路邊。

當我們到了醫院裏時，他們把鐵蒂姨母送到緊急病房裏去，我在那裏等了許久，才有人走過來。她隔了一忽兒蘇醒轉來，開始叫喊；她說胃的一邊痛得利害！她的聲音極微弱而沙啞。病房裏還有好許多人躺在床土呻吟着。有一個人的面孔差不多全黑了，頭頂上的頭髮都已燒掉，只剩斑斑的紅肉。他不斷的像一只兔子般發出尖銳的叫聲，用他燒得非常可怕的兩手緊抓着被單。

不久兩個姆姆走進來了，到每只床邊看了一會，想法子使病人稍稍舒服一點。最後兩個醫生和幾個看護進來了，他們到一張張床邊看了一遍，低聲講了好些話。當他們走到我們身邊時，我站起來，用法國話解釋鐵蒂姨母的病痛。幸虧有一個醫生懂得我的話，他用手指按着鐵蒂姨母的胃。於是他派一個看護出去，她幾分鐘之內便回來了，推來一張有輪的昇床。我們一同把鐵蒂姨母抬到那張床上，我同醫生跟在後面，走過那長得要命的走廊。

最後，我們走到一間非常安靜的病房裏去，只有幾張床上睡着病人。一個姆姆在一張桌子邊看書，桌上放着一只有燈罩的台燈。我們進去時，她站起來。於是醫生領我到樓下的待候室裏去，說恐怕鐵蒂姨母患極嚴重的盲腸炎，但是他就要詳細檢查一番，確定到底是不是。他又說我不如回家去，到明天早上再來。我說我寧願留下，也許鐵蒂姨母需要我，所以他說聲「很好」，便走開了。我整夜都躺在長凳上，入睡了一些時。在清晨，有兩個打掃的走進來，水桶咚咚地響着。我站起來尋路走到大門口，最後找到一個稍為能講點法國話的看護。

她說時候太早了，不能探聽出什麼來。不如去喝些咖啡再回來，所以我便走到街上去，尋到一家剛開門的咖啡店，喝了些咖啡，吃了一個麵包卷。當我回到醫院裏時，我碰見醫生從梯階上走下來，他領我到一間辦公室裏去，一個媽媽把鐵蒂姨母的出生職業記錄下來——我用法文講給她聽，由醫生譯成西班牙語。講完後，醫生告訴我說，要救鐵蒂姨母的唯一希望，就是立刻施行手術。我問他我能不能夠去看她，他說不能夠，說她近乎不省人事，如果我同意了，他便立刻施行手術。我說他還是按他所想的最好辦法去做吧，我會等待着的。所以我又回到待候室裏去。有好些人已經進來了，有幾個是火災裏受傷的人底親戚，大半的人都在泣號痛哭，聲音非常嘈雜。大約三小時之後，一個看護走來，喊着我的名字。我站起來，她又領我到辦公室裏去。隔了一兩分鐘，醫生進來了，神色很嚴重。他告訴我鐵蒂姨母差不多沒有一點活命的希望了。因為當他們施行手術時，他們發見她的盲腸已經爆裂。他說她還沒有從麻醉藥裏蘇醒轉來，但是等她醒來時，我可以去看她。我問他這大概要在什麼時候，他說他可不能確定說什麼時候，我不如等待着。他們讓我留在辦公室裏，那房間比待候室要好一點，媽媽從她書桌上的馬口鐵匣子裏拿出一些乾餅干給我吃。她圍鏡，戴眼鏡，同情地從眼鏡裏凝視着我。不一會兒，一個看護走來招呼我跟她出去。我們坐電梯登了好幾層樓。電梯裏有一架推輪昇床，床上躺着一個人，一個侍者站在旁邊。這個人一動也不動，頭上裹滿了綳帶。

這一次鐵蒂姨母在一間單人病房裏，室內光線很暗，床頭放着一個吊風，壁門邊又有一個。當我進去時，有一分鐘之久我都幾乎看不見東西；看護把一張椅子拉過來，我靠床坐下。鐵蒂姨母非常甯靜地躺著，眼睛緊閉。她的臉孔十分蒼白，穿着一件厚佛蘭絨睡衣，鈕子一直扣到頸邊。她的樣子簡直疲乏得不得了，每隔一忽兒，嘴巴便稍稍扭歪一下。我切望着把我的手臂挽住她的身子，緊緊地擁抱着她，告訴她我是怎樣的愛她，但是當我怨着時，我想哭出來，所以我朝別處看了一會兒，想法子弄制我自己，不久她張開眼睛，把頭轉過一邊來。她看見我了，低聲說「喂，親愛的，」於是她翻過頭，又閉上

眼睛。我拿思她露出憔悴的容顏，兒媳滿臉淚痕。她的手乾燥而灼熱。稍稍圍了一會兒，她又移動着，試圖講話，她的手緊緊地抓住我的，接着又放鬆了。我俯下身去把我的頭貼近她的，她說：「你自己保重吧。」於是開始無聲地哭泣起來，但是小心不出聲息，她的眼睛依舊閉着，所以也沒有看見。突然的，她小聲地哀號了一下，看護從屏風後面走出來，指點我走出房去。我非常溫柔地把我右手從鐵帶姨母的手裏脫出來，他似乎沒有感覺到，我便回來走到走廊裏去。在走廊的盡頭有一扇窗子，我站在那裏眺望，望着醫院場地那邊的城裏。天括着大風，在小山上有一根旗杆，旗子筆挺地張在旗杆上，看來好像是用木頭做成的。每隔一些時，旗子飄動着垂下一忽兒，於是又筆挺的張起來。

我在醫院裏等了一整天，但是他們不讓我再進去看鐵帶姨母，因為他們說她不會人事。在晚上七時光景她故世了。我回到旅館裏，躺在床上，想法子使自己任性一點，想出一個辦法來，但是不大成功。最後我不能自制，哭了好一陣，直到我昏昏地入睡了。當我醒來時，大約十一點鐘，我覺得好一點了，但是不能再入睡，便走出去在城裏徘徊着。我一直走到港邊，望着船隻。港裏有一隻大郵船泊在港口，全部甲板都輝煌地開着電燈，還微微地可以聽見音樂的聲音。我突然明白我一天都沒有吃東西，便到一家飯店裏去。店裏坐滿了水手，我叫了一盤蒸肉和咖啡，菜卻非常之油，我吃不下多少。

第二天，我把鐵帶姨母所有的東西都翻了一遍，發現總有二十個一鎊的金幣鎖在珠寶箱裏，此外還有一只鑲金剛鑽的胸針和兩只戒指，一只鑲着極小的玫瑰花金剛石，另一只是純金的。我自己也有十四鎊的積蓄，大多是法郎。我回到醫院裏，和醫生商談關於手術費和葬費的事。他非常和善，當我告訴他我一共有多少錢時，他說他不要收手術費了。可是雖然這樣，我還得付一大筆錢，當一切都料理完畢後，我只剩下了十七鎊光景。鐵帶姨母在兩天後下葬，一個英國牧師來主持葬禮。他好管閒事，不斷地問我關於鐵帶姨母的事情。我買了一束鮮花，放在坟上。於是我回到寓所，把所有的東西都包裝好了，買車票到巴黎去。

去巴黎的火車站漸快，我整夜都坐在走廊裏，想到鐵帶姨母的種種，我的心幾乎因孤寂而破碎。我把頭兒壓在窗上，渴望着自己也能死去。