D. H. LAWRENCE

THE TRESPASSER

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Chapter 1

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'Take off that mute, do!' cried Louisa, snatching her fingers from the piano keys, and turning abruptly to the violinist.

Helena looked slowly from her music.

'My dear Louisa,' she replied, 'it would be simply unendurable.' She stood tapping her white skirt with her bow in a kind of a pathetic forbearance.

'But I can't understand it,' cried Louisa, bouncing on her chair with the exaggeration of one who is indignant with a beloved. 'It is only lately you would even submit to muting your violin. At one time you would have refused flatly, and no doubt about it.'

'I have only lately submitted to many things,' replied Helena, who seemed weary and stupefied, but still sententious. Louisa drooped from her bristling defiance.

'At any rate,' she said, scolding in tones too naked with love, I don't like it.'

'*Go on from Allegro*,' said Helena, pointing with her bow to the place on Louisa's score of the Mozart sonata. Louisa obediently took the chords, and the music continued.

A young man, reclining in one of the wicker arm-chairs by the fire, turned luxuriously from the girls to watch the flames poise and dance with the music. He was evidently at his ease, yet he seemed a stranger in the room.

It was the sitting-room of a mean house standing in line with hundreds of others of the same kind, along a wide road in South London. Now and again the trams hummed by, but the room was foreign to the trams and to the sound of the London traffic. It was Helena's room, for which she was responsible. The walls were of the dead-green colour of August foliage; the green carpet, with its border of polished floor, lay like a square of grass in a setting of black loam. Ceiling and frieze and fireplace were smooth white. There was no other colouring.

The furniture, excepting the piano, had a transitory look; two light wicker arm-chairs by the fire, the two frail stands of dark, polished wood, the couple of flimsy chairs, and the case of books in the recess—all seemed uneasy, as if they might be tossed out to leave the room clear, with its green floor and walls, and its white rim of skirting-board, serene.

On the mantlepiece were white lustres, and a small soapstone Buddha from China, grey, impassive, locked in his renunciation. Besides these, two tablets of translucent stone beautifully clouded with rose and blood, and carved with Chinese symbols; then a litter of mementoes, rock-crystals, and shells and scraps of seaweed.

A stranger, entering, felt at a loss. He looked at the bare wall-spaces of dark green, at the scanty furniture, and was assured of his unwelcome. The only objects of sympathy in the room were the white lamp that glowed on a stand near the wall, and the large, beautiful fern, with narrow fronds, which ruffled its cloud of green within the gloom of the window-bay. These only, with the fire, seemed friendly.

The three candles on the dark piano burned softly, the music fluttered on, but, like numbed butterflies, stupidly. Helena played mechanically. She broke the music beneath her bow, so that it came lifeless, very hurting to hear. The young man frowned, and pondered. Uneasily, he turned again to the players.

The violinist was a girl of twenty-eight. Her white dress, high-waisted, swung as she forced the rhythm, determinedly swaying to the time as if her body were the white stroke of a metronome. It made the young man frown as he watched. Yet he continued to watch. She had a very strong, vigorous body. Her neck, pure white, arched in strength from the fine hollow between her shoulders as she held the violin. The long white lace of her sleeve swung, floated, after the bow.

Byrne could not see her face, more than the full curve of her cheek. He watched her hair, which at the back was almost of the colour of the soapstone idol, take the candlelight into its vigorous freedom in front and glisten over her forehead.

Suddenly Helena broke off the music, and dropped her arm in irritable resignation. Louisa looked round from the piano, surprised.

'Why,' she cried, 'wasn't it all right?'

Helena laughed wearily.

'It was all wrong,' she answered, as she put her violin tenderly to rest.

'Oh, I'm sorry I did so badly,' said Louisa in a huff. She loved Helena passionately.

'You didn't do badly at all,' replied her friend, in the same tired, apathetic tone. 'It was I.'

When she had closed the black lid of her violin-case, Helena stood a moment as if at a loss. Louisa looked up with eyes full of affection, like a dog that did not dare to move to her beloved. Getting no response, she drooped over the piano. At length Helena looked at her friend, then slowly closed her eyes. The burden of this excessive affection was too much for her. Smiling faintly, she said, as if she were coaxing a child:

'Play some Chopin, Louisa.'

'I shall only do that all wrong, like everything else,' said the elder plaintively. Louisa was thirty-five. She had been Helena's friend for years.

'Play the mazurkas,' repeated Helena calmly.

Louisa rummaged among the music. Helena blew out her violin-candle, and came to sit down on the side of the fire opposite to Byrne. The music began. Helena pressed her arms with her hands, musing.

'They are inflamed still' said the young man.

She glanced up suddenly, her blue eyes, usually so heavy and tired, lighting up with a small smile.

'Yes,' she answered, and she pushed back her sleeve, revealing a fine, strong arm, which was scarlet on the outer side from shoulder to wrist, like some long, red-burned fruit. The girl laid her cheek on the smarting soft flesh caressively.

'It is quite hot,' she smiled, again caressing her sun-scalded arm with peculiar joy.

'Funny to see a sunburn like that in mid-winter,' he replied, frowning. 'I can't think why it should last all these months. Don't you ever put anything on to heal it?'

She smiled at him again, almost pitying, then put her mouth lovingly on the burn.

'It comes out every evening like this,' she said softly, with curious joy.

'And that was August, and now it's February!' he exclaimed. 'It must be psychological, you know. You make it come—the smart; you invoke it.'

She looked up at him, suddenly cold.

'I! I never think of it,' she answered briefly, with a kind of sneer.

The young man's blood ran back from her at her acid tone. But the mortification was physical only. Smiling quickly, gently—'

'Never?' he re-echoed.

There was silence between them for some moments, whilst Louisa continued to play the piano for their benefit. At last:

'Drat it,' she exclaimed, flouncing round on the piano-stool.

The two looked up at her.

'Ye did run well—what hath hindered you?' laughed Byrne.

'You!' cried Louisa. 'Oh, I can't play any more,' she added, dropping her arms along her skirt pathetically. Helena laughed quickly.

'Oh I can't, Helen!' pleaded Louisa.

'My dear,' said Helena, laughing briefly, 'you are really under *no* obligation *whatever*.'

With the little groan of one who yields to a desire contrary to her self-respect, Louisa dropped at the feet of

Helena, laid her arm and her head languishingly on the knee of her friend. The latter gave no sign, but continued to gaze in the fire. Byrne, on the other side of the hearth, sprawled in his chair, smoking a reflective cigarette.

The room was very quiet, silent even of the tick of a clock. Outside, the traffic swept by, and feet pattered along the pavement. But this vulgar storm of life seemed shut out of Helena's room, that remained indifferent, like a church. Two candles burned dimly as on an altar, glistening yellow on the dark piano. The lamp was blown out, and the flameless fire, a red rubble, dwindled in the grate, so that the yellow glow of the candles seemed to shine even on the embers. Still no one spoke.

At last Helena shivered slightly in her chair, though did not change her position. She sat motionless.

'Will you make coffee, Louisa?' she asked. Louisa lifted herself, looked at her friend, and stretched slightly.

'Oh!' she groaned voluptuously. 'This is so comfortable!'

'Don't trouble then, I'll go. No, don't get up,' said Helena, trying to disengage herself. Louisa reached and put her hands on Helena's wrists.

'I will go,' she drawled, almost groaning with voluptuousness and appealing love.

Then, as Helena still made movements to rise, the elder woman got up slowly, leaning as she did so all her weight on her friend.

'Where is the coffee?' she asked, affecting the dullness of lethargy.

She was full of small affectations, being consumed with uneasy love.

'I think, my dear,' replied Helena, 'it is in its usual place.'

'Oh—o-o-oh!' yawned Louisa, and she dragged herself out.

The two had been intimate friends for years, had slept together, and played together and lived together. Now the friendship was coming to an end.

'After all,' said Byrne, when the door was closed, 'if you're alive you've got to live.'

Helena burst into a titter of amusement at this sudden remark.

'Wherefore?' she asked indulgently.

'Because there's no such thing as passive existence,' he replied, grinning.

She curled her lip in amused indulgence of this very young man.

'I don't see it at all,' she said.

'You can't, he protested, 'any more than a tree can help budding in
April—it can't help itself, if it's alive; same with you.'

'Well, then'—and again there was the touch of a sneer—'if I can't help myself, why trouble, my friend?'

'Because—because I suppose *I* can't help myself—if it bothers me, it does. You see, I'—he smiled brilliantly—'am April.'

She paid very little attention to him, but began in a peculiar reedy, metallic tone, that set his nerves quivering:

'But I am not a bare tree. All my dead leaves, they hang to me—and—and go through a kind of *danse macabre*—'

'But you bud underneath—like beech,' he said quickly.

'Really, my friend,' she said coldly, 'I am too tired to bud.'

'No,' he pleaded, 'no!' With his thick brows knitted, he surveyed her anxiously. She had received a great blow in August, and she still was stunned. Her face, white and heavy, was like a mask, almost sullen. She looked in the fire, forgetting him.

'You want March,' he said—he worried endlessly over her—'to rip off your old leaves. I s'll have to be March,' he laughed.

She ignored him again because of his presumption. He waited awhile, then broke out once more.

'You must start again—you must. Always you rustle your red leaves of a blasted summer. You are not dead. Even if you want to be, you're not. Even if it's a bitter thing to say, you have to say it: you are not dead….'

Smiling a peculiar, painful smile, as if he hurt her, she turned to gaze at a photograph that hung over the piano. It was the profile of a handsome man in the prime of life. He was leaning slightly forward, as if yielding beneath a burden of life, or to the pull of fate. He looked out musingly, and there was no hint of rebellion in the contours of the regular features. The hair was brushed back, soft and thick, straight from his fine brow. His nose was small and shapely, his chin rounded, cleft, rather beautifully moulded. Byrne gazed also at the photo. His look became distressed and helpless.

'You cannot say you are dead with Siegmund,' he cried brutally. She shuddered, clasped her burning arms on her breast, and looked into the fire. 'You are not dead with Siegmund,' he persisted, 'so you can't say you live with him. You may live with his memory. But Siegmund is dead, and his memory is not he—himself,' He made a fierce gesture of

impatience. 'Siegmund now—he is not a memory—he is not your dead red leaves—he is Siegmund Dead! And you do not know him, because you are alive, like me, so Siegmund Dead is a stranger to you.'

With her head bowed down, cowering like a sulky animal, she looked at him under her brows. He stared fiercely back at her, but beneath her steady, glowering gaze he shrank, then turned aside.

'You stretch your hands blindly to the dead; you look backwards. No, you never touch the thing,' he cried.

'I have the arms of Louisa always round my neck,' came her voice, like the cry of a cat. She put her hands on her throat as if she must relieve an ache. He saw her lip raised in a kind of disgust, a revulsion from life. She was very sick after the tragedy.

He frowned, and his eyes dilated.

'Folk are good; they are good for one. You never have looked at them. You would linger hours over a blue weed, and let all the people down the road go by. Folks are better than a garden in full blossom—'

She watched him again. A certain beauty in his speech, and his passionate way, roused her when she did not want to be roused, when moving from her torpor was painful. At last—

'You are merciless, you know, Cecil,' she said.

'And I will be,' protested Byrne, flinging his hand at her. She laughed softly, wearily.

For some time they were silent. She gazed once more at the photograph over the piano, and forgot all the present. Byrne, spent for the time being, was busy hunting for some

life-interest to give her. He ignored the simplest—that of love—because he was even more faithful than she to the memory of Siegmund, and blinder than most to his own heart.

'I do wish I had Siegmund's violin,' she said quietly, but with great intensity. Byrne glanced at her, then away. His heart beat sulkily. His sanguine, passionate spirit dropped and slouched under her contempt. He, also, felt the jar, heard the discord. She made him sometimes pant with her own horror. He waited, full of hate and tasting of ashes, for the arrival of Louisa with the coffee.

Chapter 2

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Siegmund's violin, desired of Helena, lay in its case beside Siegmund's lean portmanteau in the white dust of the lumber-room in Highgate. It was worth twenty pounds, but Beatrice had not yet roused herself to sell it; she kept the black case out of sight.

Siegmund's violin lay in the dark, folded up, as he had placed it for the last time, with hasty, familiar hands, in its red silk shroud. After two dead months the first string had snapped, sharply striking the sensitive body of the instrument. The second string had broken near Christmas, but no one had heard the faint moan of its going. The violin lay mute in the dark, a faint odour of must creeping over the smooth, soft wood. Its twisted, withered strings lay crisped from the anguish of breaking, smothered under the silk folds. The fragrance of Siegmund himself, with which the violin was steeped, slowly changed into an odour of must.

Siegmund died out even from his violin. He had infused it with his life, till its fibres had been as the tissue of his own flesh. Grasping his violin, he seemed to have his fingers on the strings of his heart and of the heart of Helena. It was his little beloved that drank his being and turned it into music. And now Siegmund was dead; only an odour of must remained of him in his violin.

It lay folded in silk in the dark, waiting. Six months before it had longed for rest; during the last nights of the season, when Siegmund's fingers had pressed too hard, when Siegmund's passion, and joy, and fear had hurt, too, the soft body of his little beloved, the violin had sickened for rest. On that last night of opera, without pity Siegmund had struck the closing phrases from the fiddle, harsh in his impatience, wild in anticipation.

The curtain came down, the great singers bowed, and Siegmund felt the spattering roar of applause quicken his pulse. It was hoarse, and savage, and startling on his inflamed soul, making him shiver with anticipation, as if something had brushed his hot nakedness. Quickly, with hands of habitual tenderness, he put his violin away.

The theatre-goers were tired, and life drained rapidly out of the opera-house. The members of the orchestra rose, laughing, mingling their weariness with good wishes for the holiday, with sly warning and suggestive advice, pressing hands warmly ere they disbanded. Other years Siegmund had lingered, unwilling to take the long farewell of his associates of the orchestra. Other years he had left the opera-house with a little pain of regret. Now he laughed, and took his comrades' hands, and bade farewells, all distractedly, and with impatience. The theatre, awesome now in its emptiness, he left gladly, hastening like a flame stretched level on the wind.

With his black violin-case he hurried down the street, then halted to pity the flowers massed pallid under the gaslight of the market-hall. For himself, the sea and the sunlight opened great spaces tomorrow. The moon was full

above the river. He looked at it as a man in abstraction watches some clear thing; then he came to a standstill. It was useless to hurry to his train. The traffic swung past the lamplight shone warm on all the golden faces; but Siegmund had already left the city. His face was silver and shadows to the moon; the river, in its soft grey, shaking golden sequins among the folds of its shadows, fell open like a garment before him, to reveal the white moon-glitter brilliant as living flesh. Mechanically, overcast with the reality of the moonlight, he took his seat in the train, and watched the moving of things. He was in a kind of trance, his consciousness seeming suspended. The train slid out amongst lights and dark places. Siegmund watched the endless movement, fascinated.

This was one of the crises of his life. For years he had suppressed his soul, in a kind of mechanical despair doing his duty and enduring the rest. Then his soul had been softly enticed from its bondage. Now he was going to break free altogether, to have at least a few days purely for his own joy. This, to a man of his integrity, meant a breaking of bonds, a severing of blood-ties, a sort of new birth. In the excitement of this last night his life passed out of his control, and he sat at the carriage-window, motionless, watching things move.

He felt busy within him a strong activity which he could not help. Slowly the body of his past, the womb which had nourished him in one fashion for so many years, was casting him forth. He was trembling in all his being, though he knew not with what. All he could do now was to watch the lights go by, and to let the translation of himself continue.

When at last the train ran out into the full, luminous night, and Siegmund saw the meadows deep in moonlight, he quivered with a low anticipation. The elms, great grey shadows, seemed to loiter in their cloaks across the pale fields. He had not seen them so before. The world was changing.

The train stopped, and with a little effort he rose to go home. The night air was cool and sweet. He drank it thirstily. In the road again he lifted his face to the moon. It seemed to help him; in its brilliance amid the blonde heavens it seemed to transcend fretfulness. It would front the waves with silver as they slid to the shore, and Helena, looking along the coast, waiting, would lift her white hands with sudden joy. He laughed, and the moon hurried laughing alongside, through the black masses of the trees.

He had forgotten he was going home for this night. The chill wetness of his little white garden-gate reminded him, and a frown came on his face. As he closed the door, and found himself in the darkness of the hall, the sense of his fatigue came fully upon him. It was an effort to go to bed. Nevertheless, he went very quietly into the drawing-room. There the moonlight entered, and he thought the whiteness was Helena. He held his breath and stiffened, then breathed again. 'Tomorrow,' he thought, as he laid his violin-case across the arms of a wicker chair. But he had a physical feeling of the presence of Helena: in his shoulders he seemed to be aware of her. Quickly, half lifting his arms, he turned to the moonshine. 'Tomorrow!' he exclaimed quietly; and he left the room stealthily, for fear of disturbing the children.

In the darkness of the kitchen burned a blue bud of light. He quickly turned up the gas to a broad yellow flame, and sat down at table. He was tired, excited, and vexed with misgiving. As he lay in his arm-chair, he looked round with disgust.

The table was spread with a dirty cloth that had great brown stains betokening children. In front of him was a cup and saucer, and a small plate with a knife laid across it. The cheese, on another plate, was wrapped in a red-bordered, fringed cloth, to keep off the flies, which even then were crawling round, on the sugar, on the loaf, on the cocoa-tin. Siegmund looked at his cup. It was chipped, and a stain had gone under the glaze, so that it looked like the mark of a dirty mouth. He fetched a glass of water.

The room was drab and dreary. The oil-cloth was worn into a hole near the door. Boots and shoes of various sizes were scattered over the floor, while the sofa was littered with children's clothing. In the black stove the ash lay dead; on the range were chips of wood, and newspapers, and rubbish of papers, and crusts of bread, and crusts of bread-and-jam. As Siegmund walked across the floor, he crushed two sweets underfoot. He had to grope under sofa and dresser to find his slippers; and he was in evening dress.

It would be the same, while ever Beatrice was Beatrice and Siegmund her husband. He ate his bread and cheese mechanically, wondering why he was miserable, why he was not looking forward with joy to the morrow. As he ate, he closed his eyes, half wishing he had not promised Helena, half wishing he had no tomorrow.

Leaning back in his chair, he felt something in the way. It was a small teddy-bear and half of a strong white comb. He grinned to himself. This was the summary of his domestic life—a broken, coarse comb, a child crying because her hair was lugged, a wife who had let the hair go till now, when she had got into a temper to see the job through; and then the teddy-bear, pathetically cocking a black worsted nose, and lifting absurd arms to him.

He wondered why Gwen had gone to bed without her pet. She would want the silly thing. The strong feeling of affection for his children came over him, battling with something else. He sank in his chair, and gradually his baffled mind went dark. He sat, overcome with weariness and trouble, staring blankly into the space. His own stifling roused him. Straightening his shoulders, he took a deep breath, then relaxed again. After a while he rose, took the teddy-bear, and went slowly to bed.

Gwen and Marjory, aged nine and twelve, slept together in a small room. It was fairly light. He saw his favourite daughter lying quite uncovered, her wilful head thrown back, her mouth half open. Her black hair was tossed across the pillow: he could see the action. Marjory snuggled under the sheet. He placed the teddy-bear between the two girls.

As he watched them, he hated the children for being so dear to him. Either he himself must go under, and drag on an existence he hated, or they must suffer. But he had agreed to spend this holiday with Helena, and meant to do so. As he turned, he saw himself like a ghost cross the mirror. He looked back; he peered at himself. His hair still grew thick and dark from his brow: he could not see the

grey at the temples. His eyes were dark and tender, and his mouth, under the black moustache, was full of youth.

He rose, looked at the children, frowned, and went to his own small room. He was glad to be shut alone in the little cubicle of darkness.

Outside the world lay in a glamorous pallor, casting shadows that made the farm, the trees, the bulks of villas, look like live creatures. The same pallor went through all the night, glistening on Helena as she lay curled up asleep at the core of the glamour, like the moon; on the sea rocking backwards and forwards till it rocked her island as she slept. She was so calm and full of her own assurance. It was a great rest to be with her. With her, nothing mattered but love and the beauty of things. He felt parched and starving. She had rest and love, like water and manna for him. She was so strong in her self-possession, in her love of beautiful things and of dreams.

The clock downstairs struck two.

'I must get to sleep,' he said.

He dragged his portmanteau from beneath the bed and began to pack it. When at last it was finished, he shut it with a snap. The click sounded final. He stood up, stretched himself, and sighed.

'I am fearfully tired,' he said.

But that was persuasive. When he was undressed he sat in his pyjamas for some time, rapidly beating his fingers on his knee.

'Thirty-eight years old,' he said to himself, 'and disconsolate as a child!' He began to muse of the morrow.

When he seemed to be going to sleep, he woke up to find thoughts labouring over his brain, like bees on a hive. Recollections, swift thoughts, flew in and alighted upon him, as wild geese swing down and take possession of a pond. Phrases from the opera tyrannized over him; he played the rhythm with all his blood. As he turned over in this torture, he sighed, and recognized a movement of the De Beriot concerto which Helena had played for her last lesson. He found himself watching her as he had watched then, felt again the wild impatience when she was wrong, started again as, amid the dipping and sliding of her bow, he realized where his thoughts were going. She was wrong, he was hasty; and he felt her blue eyes looking intently at him.

Both started as his daughter Vera entered suddenly. She was a handsome girl of nineteen. Crossing the room, brushing Helena as if she were a piece of furniture in the way, Vera had asked her father a question, in a hard, insulting tone, then had gone out again, just as if Helena had not been in the room.

Helena stood fingering the score of *Pelléas*. When Vera had gone, she asked, in the peculiar tone that made Siegmund shiver:

'Why do you consider the music of *Pelléas* cold?'

Siegmund had struggled to answer. So they passed everything off, without mention, after Helena's fashion, ignoring all that might be humiliating; and to her much was humiliating.

For years she had come as pupil to Siegmund, first as a friend of the household. Then she and Louisa went occasionally to whatever hall or theatre had Siegmund in

the orchestra, so that shortly the three formed the habit of coming home together. Then Helena had invited Siegmund to her home; then the three friends went walks together; then the two went walks together, whilst Louisa sheltered them.

Helena had come to read his loneliness and the humiliation of his lot. He had felt her blue eyes, heavily, steadily gazing into his soul, and he had lost himself to her.

That day, three weeks before the end of the season, when Vera had so insulted Helena, the latter had said, as she put on her coat, looking at him all the while with heavy blue eyes: 'I think, Siegmund, I cannot come here any more. Your home is not open to me any longer.' He had writhed in confusion and humiliation. As she pressed his hand, closely and for a long time, she said: 'I will write to you.' Then she left him.

Siegmund had hated his life that day. Soon she wrote. A week later, when he lay resting his head on her lap in Richmond Park, she said:

'You are so tired, Siegmund.' She stroked his face, and kissed him softly. Siegmund lay in the molten daze of love. But Helena was, if it is not to debase the word, virtuous: an inconsistent virtue, cruel and ugly for Siegmund.

'You are so tired, dear. You must come away with me and rest, the first week in August.'

His blood had leapt, and whatever objections he raised, such as having no money, he allowed to be overridden. He was going to Helena, to the Isle of Wight, tomorrow.

Helena, with her blue eyes so full of storm, like the sea, but, also like the sea, so eternally self-sufficient, solitary;

with her thick white throat, the strongest and most wonderful thing on earth, and her small hands, silken and light as wind-flowers, would be his tomorrow, along with the sea and the downs. He clung to the exquisite flame which flooded him....

But it died out, and he thought of the return to London, to Beatrice, and the children. How would it be? Beatrice, with her furious dark eyes, and her black hair loosely knotted back, came to his mind as she had been the previous day, flaring with temper when he said to her:

'I shall be going away tomorrow for a few days' holiday.'

She asked for detail, some of which he gave. Then, dissatisfied and inflamed, she broke forth in her suspicion and her abuse, and her contempt, while two large-eyed children stood listening by. Siegmund hated his wife for drawing on him the grave, cold looks of condemnation from his children.

Something he had said touched Beatrice. She came of good family, had been brought up like a lady, educated in a convent school in France. He evoked her old pride. She drew herself up with dignity, and called the children away. He wondered if he could bear a repetition of that degradation. It bled him of his courage and self-respect.

In the morning Beatrice was disturbed by the sharp sneck of the hall door. Immediately awake, she heard his quick, firm step hastening down the gravel path. In her impotence, discarded like a worn out object, she lay for the moment stiff with bitterness.

'I am nothing, I am nothing,' she said to herself. She lay quite rigid for a time.

There was no sound anywhere. The morning sunlight pierced vividly through the slits of the blind. Beatrice lay rocking herself, breathing hard, her finger-nails pressing into her palm. Then came the sound of a train slowing down in the station, and directly the quick 'chuff-chuff-chuff' of its drawing out. Beatrice imagined the sunlight on the puffs of steam, and the two lovers, her husband and Helena, rushing through the miles of morning sunshine.

'God strike her dead! Mother of God, strike her down!' she said aloud, in a low tone. She hated Helena.

Irene, who lay with her mother, woke up and began to question her.

Chapter 3

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In the miles of morning sunshine, Siegmund's shadows, his children, Beatrice, his sorrow, dissipated like mist, and he was elated as a young man setting forth to travel. When he had passed Portsmouth Town everything had vanished but the old gay world of romance. He laughed as he looked out of the carriage window.

Below, in the street, a military band passed glittering. A brave sound floated up, and again he laughed, loving the tune, the clash and glitter of the band, the movement of scarlet, blithe soldiers beyond the park. People were drifting brightly from church. How could it be Sunday! It was no time; it was Romance, going back to Tristan.

Women, like crocus flowers, in white and blue and lavender, moved gaily. Everywhere fluttered the small flags of holiday. Every form danced lightly in the sunshine.

And beyond it all were the silent hillsides of the island, with Helena. It was so wonderful, he could bear to be patient. She would be all in white, with her cool, thick throat left bare to the breeze, her face shining, smiling as she dipped her head because of the sun, which glistened on her uncovered hair.

He breathed deeply, stirring at the thought. But he would not grow impatient. The train had halted over the town, where scarlet soldiers, and ludicrous blue sailors, and all the

brilliant women from church shook like a kaleidoscope down the street. The train crawled on, drawing near to the sea, for which Siegmund waited breathless. It was so like Helena, blue, beautiful, strong in its reserve.

Another moment they were in the dirty station. Then the day flashed out, and Siegmund mated with joy. He felt the sea heaving below him. He looked round, and the sea was blue as a periwinkle flower, while gold and white and blood-red sails lit here and there upon the blueness. Standing on the deck, he gave himself to the breeze and to the sea, feeling like one of the ruddy sails—as if he were part of it all. All his body radiated amid the large, magnificent sea-moon like a piece of colour.

The little ship began to pulse, to tremble. White with the softness of a bosom, the water rose up frothing and swaying gently. Ships drew near the inquisitive birds; the old *Victory* shook her myriad pointed flags of yellow and scarlet; the straight old houses of the quay passed by.

Outside the harbour, like fierce creatures of the sea come wildly up to look, the battleships laid their black snouts on the water. Siegmund laughed at them. He felt the foam on his face like a sparkling, felt the blue sea gathering round.

On the left stood the round fortress, quaintly chequered, and solidly alone in the walk of water, amid the silent flight of the golden-and crimson-winged boats.

Siegmund watched the bluish bulk of the island. Like the beautiful women in the myths, his love hid in its blue haze. It seemed impossible. Behind him, the white wake trailed myriads of daisies. On either hand the grim and wicked battleships watched along their sharp noses. Beneath him

the clear green water swung and puckered as if it were laughing. In front, Sieglinde's island drew near and nearer, creeping towards him, bringing him Helena.

Meadows and woods appeared, houses crowded down to the shore to meet him; he was in the quay, and the ride was over. Siegmund regretted it. But Helena was on the island, which rode like an anchored ship under the fleets of cloud that had launched whilst Siegmund was on water. As he watched the end of the pier loom higher, large ponderous trains of cloud cast over him the shadows of their bulk, and he shivered in the chill wind.

His travelling was very slow. The sky's dark shipping pressed closer and closer, as if all the clouds had come to harbour. Over the flat lands near Newport the wind moaned like the calling of many violoncellos. All the sky was grey. Siegmund waited drearily on Newport station, where the wind swept coldly. It was Sunday, and the station and the island were desolate, having lost their purposes.

Siegmund put on his overcoat and sat down. All his morning's blaze of elation was gone, though there still glowed a great hope. He had slept only two hours of the night. An empty man, he had drunk joy, and now the intoxication was dying out.

At three o'clock of the afternoon he sat alone in the second-class carriage, looking out. A few raindrops struck the pane, then the blurred dazzle of a shower came in a burst of wind, and hid the downs and the reeds that shivered in the marshy places. Siegmund sat in a chilly torpor. He counted the stations. Beneath his stupor his heart