J. H.

[Benjamin Péret?]

La Vie d'une sainte

Translated by
Patrick Kearney

Scissors & Paste Bibliographies
Bakersfield, California
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Front wrapper of the first edition

NOTE

The original edition of this unassuming little book appeared during the 1950s, anonymously and secretly; on the front wrapper the author's alleged initials, the book's title and its imprint are all printed in black within a green crucifix on a plain background. The existence of the work was made generally public when it was prosecuted in March 1961, as reported in the revised and expanded edition of Daniel Bécourt's *Livres condamnés, livres interdits, régime juridique du Livre* published in 1972. But it was unknown to Pascal Pia in both editions of *Les Livres de l'Enfer*,[1] and also to Sarane Alexandrian who failed to note it in his *Histoire de la littérature Erotique*,[2] which has a chapter dedicated to surrealist erotica.

Who the publisher and author were remains uncertain, but there are compelling evidences. But first, a diversion, presumably accidental. In a reprint of *La Vie d'une sainte* published in 2003, Jean-Jacques Pauvert throws us off the scent:

> On a prononcé le nom d'Eric Losfeld a la fois comme auteur et comme éditeur du livre. Je suis, jusqu'a présent, des plus sceptique à ce sujet : rien ne rappelle les typographies habituelles de Losfeld dans impression de *La Vie d'une sainte.*
>
> Quant à la rédaction, je n'y retrouve guère non plus le style de l'auteur de Cerise, ou le moment bien employé, seul clandestin que l'on puisse attribuer avec certitude à Losfeld.
>
> [Eric Losfeld's name has been mentioned both as the author and the publisher of the book. I am, so far, very skeptical about this: there

[1] Pascal Pia, *Les Livres de l'Enfer. bibliographie critique des ouvrages érotiques dans leurs différentes éditions du XVI^e siécle à nos jours* (Paris : Coulet & Faure, 1978. 2 volumes). Expanded and revised edition published in one volume by Fayard in 1998.

[2] Published at Paris by Seghers in 1989

is nothing reminiscent of Losfeld's usual typography in the printing of *La Vie d'une sainte.*

As for the writing, I can hardly recognize the style of the author of *Cerise, ou le moment bien employé*, the only clandestine work that can be attributed with certainty to Losfeld.]

Pauvert was a major publisher in Paris in the middle years of the 20th century. He was also a very courageous one, being the first to publish, unexpurgated and openly, the complete works of the marquis de Sade. However, I am not able to agree with him on his denial of Losfeld being the publisher of *La Vie d'une sainte*, although he is correct to think that he didn't write it, as will be seen.

Eric Losfeld was Pauvert's contemporary, and in the same line of work. Both men published works that could reasonably be described as avant-garde, and were drawn to erotica, although more so in Losfeld's case. Pauvert dabbled a little in clandestine erotica at the beginning of his career, publishing just ten titles, all but one reprints. Conversely, Losfeld led a substantial underground existence throughout the 1950s and early 60s in addition to the 'respectable' side of his business. In a sense they were competitors or rivals, but they were as dissimilar as they were comparable. Sarane Alexandrian deftly describes the two: "Losfeld fut un surréaliste éditeur, Pauvert un éditeur du surréalisme…"[3]

It is my belief that *La Vie d'une sainte* was indeed one of Losfeld's clandestins, but first, the question of authorship.

My copy[4] — from which the present text is derived — was previously owned by the late Gershon Legman, an authority on erotica, who added some very interesting MS notes:

[Surrealist eroticum. Very well written. Is attributed to Raymond Queneau — note monorhymes end chapter III — or Benjamin Péret. However, when I asked him (R. Q.) about it point blank he would neither admit nor deny it. When I insisted, saying I was told it was a suppressed section or draft of ["Jackie"=] "Zazie dans le Metro," he said "C'est qui qui vous a soufflé tout cela monsieur Legman. C'est ce sacré Pia , sans doute." Is that tantamount to an

[3] Alexandrian, *Histoire de la littérature érotique* (Paris : Seghers, 1989), p. 373.
[4] Now at Cambridge University Library, shelfmark CCD.74.80.

admission?? Date: Paris, 1958, pub. by Losfeld? NOT by Haumont, i.e. "J. H."!]

The suggestion of Queneau's authorship need not detain us, especially as an unpublished or suppressed episode from Zazie. However, Legman adds a significant postscript to his note:

Aline G. told me the author was her fellow surrealist-occultist Benjamin Péret, a wholly mad anti-religionist. Very rare.

On the inside back wrapper, Legman has written:

[Paris, 1958] [The initials J. H. on cover and at head are a joke on Jacques Haumont who did NOT print or publish this! Probably published by Eric Losfeld.]

The identity of 'Aline G.' eluded me until I found the notice for *La Vie d'une sainte* in Jean-Pierre Dutel's marvelous *Bibliographie des ouvrages érotiques publies clandestinement en français entre 1920 et 1970* (Paris : the author, 2005). M. Dutel — after describing the book as a 'superbe texte surréaliste et anticlérical' — mentions my copy of *la Vie*, and includes in his notes the annotation by Legman concerning 'Aline G.' He adds:

Cette confidence était due à Aline Gagnaire (1911-1997) qui fit partie de la génération des surréalistes sous l'Occupation, avec le groupe des « Réverbéres » et celui de « La Main à Plume ». Elle fut un proche de Péret.

[This confidence was due to Aline Gagnatre (1911-1997) who was part of the generation of surrealists during the Occupation, with the "Réverbéres" and "Ia Main à Plume" groups. She was a close friend of Péret.]

This would seem to establish with a high degree of probability that Péret was the author of *La Vie d'une sainte*. But was Pauvert correct to assert that somebody other than Losfeld published it based on typographical evidence?

Once again, J.-P. Dutel comes to our assistance by show that the printing was done by the same printer as *Petites et grandes filles* and *Croisiére voluptueuse* by 'Jim Cooper,' both published in the 1950s by Losfeld. It's possible of course that two different publishers used the same printer, one

— Losfeld — for the two works mentioned above, and the other an unknown publisher for *La Vie d'une sainte*. This seems an unlikely scenario though, especially in view of the large number of works by or about Péret published by Losfeld, including the first three volumes of an *Œuvres completes* (1969, 1971, 1979) — the remaining four volumes being issued by José Corte — and another erotic work, *La Queue de Damocles* (c. 1955), that seems to have been prosecuted in the same action as *La Vie d'une sainte* in early 1961.

Patrick Kearney
November 2025

CHAPTER I

Suzanne Beautrin was a saint in heat. At the office, her knees pressed together, her rounded, chaste buttocks, she mechanically typed out invoices for phosphatic fertilisers. She lunched at noon in a little restaurant in the Rue Boissy-d'Anglas. The playful remark, the harmless proposition, died in the throat of the male on the prowl when she tossed back her white hair, arranged in long platinum-blonde rolls, and looked at him with contempt. Beneath the sombre fan of her heavy lashes, the only feature made up in the harmony of a marble face, her violet eyes seemed then to contract in a flash of anger.

People thought that beauty had moulded this woman's body as though in a casing of ice. The waiter placed the dishes beside her, taking care not to soil a thick manuscript which she customarily read over her meal. She seemed to be deciphering some strange grimoire, laden with crossings-out and marginal notes which she diligently composed.

I have held in my hands this manuscript, the vaginal and mystical confession of my mistress. In her, the Word has become flesh. It is Christ she adores, and I who fuck her. For the reader, I wish to select a few sublime pages which a saint composed on the very threshold of celestial bliss. Introducing these fragments of sacred anthology, I shall recount a few episodes from an exemplary life and follow the sometimes extraordinary paths which Providence marks out for the lovers of the Narrow Gate.

I write these lines after Suzanne's death. She has left this vale of misery where I remain, distraught, following her menstrual trail. May she nevertheless hear me, the new mistress who will seize the torch, from which the resin of my love still flows, like shining tears!

★★★

Suzanne Beautrin was brought up in a family of atheist schoolteachers. When she had her first period, she was putting her things away in her satchel before setting off for school. She passed her hand along her damp thighs and withdrew it stained with blood. At the piercing cry she gave, her mother came running. The pencil case had overturned on the floor; a drop of pink blood had stained her nature-study book. Seeing the look of despair on her daughter's face, Madame Beautrin burst out laughing. "Good heavens! What a fine little woman we have here! Don't be such a goose. It's nature making your little pussy bleed." She added, with an air of authority and instruction: "It's the nature of woman."

Excited by the occasion, her mother took Suzanne into the kitchen and sat her on the bidet. With lukewarm water, she washed her abdomen and upper thighs, then, bending her face closer, she spread her virgin lips with her finger and gently massaged the sex that had just awakened. Almost reluctantly, Madame Beautrin brought these intimate ablutions to an end and taught Suzanne how to arrange a terry-cloth towel. She sighed.

"This evening, I'll talk about it with your father."

"Why?" Suzanne asked anxiously.

Her mother blushed.

"Why? Because he's your father, and he'll be proud of you. Come along, now, hurry up and get to school."

For many years, Suzanne carried her "little pussy" like a wound. In the evening, before falling asleep, she would protect it with her hand, lightly brushing the sensitive and irritable mucous membrane with her finger. She would whisper: "Wound… my wound… I am a wound." She knew that the indisposition was monthly; nevertheless, every day she watched for the symptom which cast a shadow over her adolescence, but which also gave solitude its particular value. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, she would take refuge in a corner of the school playground, in the lavatories, or behind the great screen in the drawing room. With trembling hands, she would examine her underwear for the slightest stain, then check herself for any sign of the strange affliction that preoccupied her.

Thus, even before she had been touched by faith, Suzanne Beautrin had withdrawn from the world, absorbed in contemplation of a part of herself

upon which she lavished an almost obsessive attention. Her body developed with impetuous force. Nature was taking shape within her, bestowing upon her voluptuous curves which the senile pencil of Matisse might have envied. At sixteen, a mane of brown hair crowned her from forehead to shoulders like a helmet of bluish feathers. This banner of beauty, which fluttered in the wind and stirred the blood of men, held no mystery for Suzanne equal to that of the pubescent fleece growing on her sex. Like a downy gosling, the nascent raven grew bolder and beat its wings beneath the young girl's petticoat. But, at the end of the fatal cycle, it seemed sacrificed, its severed throat catching clots in the heavy curls.

From that time onwards, she felt the clitoris beginning to protrude beneath her finger, an insatiable and cruel beak. At this sign, she believed herself accursed. Bearing her wound, she shared her anguish with many other women; yet she imagined herself alone, gnawed by the demonic beak, whose precise and shameless response to the slightest pressure drove her to distraction. Before her, the breasts, like milky pears, had grown heavy, and their tips, ringed with brown, suddenly and strangely tapered at the beast's command.

Suzanne now walked, wherever she went, on the Calvary of promethean eroticism. She prolonged the caresses of adolescence. With increasing urgency and all her strength, she masturbated, seized by a kind of rage of annihilation. The first spasm of pleasure surprised her like a sob that responded to her alarms, and the anxious care of every hour of her life urged her to define this punishment more precisely.

Did she ever, virgin of pain, or woman with limbs spread wide, threatened by the member, distinguish between pleasure and pain? By the will of Heaven, Suzanne's story is one of a long and unique passion. At eighteen, when she began working, her habits were completely disrupted. For intolerable hours, she had to neglect the hairy, warm sex that she had, until then, nourished with her caresses.

In the early days, she would hurry off to take refuge in the lavatories, where she would spend long periods. As was her custom, she would settle herself on the seat, gather up her dress and petticoat, which she held in place with her clenched chin, and, her light knickers stretched by her plump knees, bend as close as possible towards herself. With her left hand, Suzanne would eagerly grasp her curly mound and, her gaze fixed, her lips moist, remain suspended for a moment, watching for the protrusion of the

clitoris, whose tip swelled and glistened. The young woman, whose dark hair shrouded her in a veil of infamy, would then moisten the index finger of her right hand with saliva, and anyone fortunate enough to witness this spectacle, as I myself was later, would follow with their eyes the circular path of her polished fingernail as it busied itself among the flushed flesh.

Soon pleasure beaded on the lips of her pretty mouth. Suzanne, still caressing the little bud with her forefinger, then thrust her clenched fingers into the half-open wound. Her whole body drawn together, she seemed to be searching for some jewel buried at the bottom of the lake she was making ripple. Suddenly she straightened, lashed by the spasm; her upturned face offered itself to Heaven, which struck her; her rigid legs spread apart and stretched her garters taut, trembling and twitching, while the deep sound of a groan was stifled within the walls of that anonymous retreat.

Fearing the jeers of her colleagues and the remarks of her superior, Suzanne soon found herself obliged to give up almost entirely her escapades, for that was how the office staff described the moments of ecstasy she procured for herself in the lavatories. It would have been tantamount to depriving a profoundly mystical soul of the solace of prayer or the blessings of solitude. More than ever, Suzanne concentrated upon her fierce secret. She withdrew from frivolous conversations, and watched with disdain as trivial intrigues took shape around her. She immersed herself in her work. This ovarian religion, which had blossomed within her like a dark lily, was not tolerated by the world. What, in its eyes, wore the mask of vice and had the foul taste of sin, presented itself to Suzanne as a ceremonial of purity, an arrogant cult of feminine tragedy. Until then, she had sought solitude through natural inclination. Now it was necessary to conceal herself and defy the world. A lustful and savage pride exalted her virtue.

Biting her lip, frozen in a half-smile, until it bled, she sometimes managed, while leafing through invoices at her desk, to bring herself to orgasm through the sheer power of mental suggestion. She would then disguise, with a kind of hoarse cough, the moan she was unable to suppress.

This thrill of provocation, which had become indispensable to her, she now sought in the darkened auditoriums of cinemas. As soon as she left the office, Suzanne made her way to the Paramount. Without a glance at the shop windows, she moved with an easy, supple stride, like a frigate drifting before the breeze along the Grands Boulevards. During the week, the vast

cinema housed only a scattering of couples, a few colourful groups of tourists, and businessmen killing time between appointments. Suzanne chose a seat apart, in the back rows of the stalls. On the screen, gigantic images loomed like monsters of the Apocalypse over a devastated planet. For a while, this magnificent spectacle delighted the young woman. Uneasily, she kept watch on the vulgar, hostile creatures sprawled here and there. Then, as though unwrapping the silken paper around an engagement jewel, she hitched up her skirt, and the pallid beam of the projector caught two gleams on her pearly thighs, encircled by black garter straps.

One evening, she was on the verge of orgasm; the increasingly jerky movements of her hand were about to bring it to its final, shuddering climax when a tall redhead, her forehead hidden beneath a fringe, passed close by her along the row. In the darkness, she caught sight of Suzanne's astonishing posture, and Suzanne hastily pulled herself together, painfully. The intruder turned sharply towards the usherette following behind her. She paid her and took the seat beside the young woman.

Cruelly robbed of so intense a pleasure, and mortified beyond measure at having been discovered in the very act that expressed her entire being, Suzanne felt two bright tears spill over her eyelids. Furiously, she crushed them against her cheeks, and with the movement the scent of her sex rose to her nostrils. Her heart faltered; she fell back, half-fainting, against the back of the seat. As soon as she recovered from this brief swoon, Suzanne was seized by the dreadful feeling that her beloved cunt was living and throbbing independently of her will. In anguish, her eyes closed, she seemed to be enduring some vile and voluptuous nightmare such as had never before disturbed her chaste soul.

Apprehensive of some new and detestable pleasure, Suzanne slowly opened her eyes. With all the fury of an untamed virgin, for the first time subjected to the greedy desire of a stranger, she saw, very close to her own, the heavily made-up face of the redhead, who was gazing at her with sparkling eyes. The fur coat, draped over a body of ample proportions, exuded a heady perfume, a synthesis of Oriental flowers and organic depravity. Fascinated by this stranger, Suzanne remained for a moment motionless and numb. Suddenly she became aware that, having stolen her secret, the redhead now possessed her most intimate flesh. Indeed, the young woman's velvet pussy was coming alive beneath that accursed touch!

The woman's lips parted; she smiled, revealing a voracious tongue, and, emboldened, set about working Suzanne with passionate enthusiasm. She gave a little chuckle. "Darling… my own darling…" Her gaze travelled over the blue-black thatch of the unknown virgin whom she was ravishing with such delight. "Come, then," she commanded, greedily, imperiously. "Come, my love…"

Just as Suzanne was about to overcome the terror this woman inspired in her and free herself from the sacrilegious hand that was exploring her, a wild orgasm, the orgasm of crime and violation, surged through her belly like the ninth wave of an ocean of flames. Her teeth ground together. A thin trickle of saliva ran from Suzanne's parted lips as she sank into the darkness of the seat.

★★★

Suzanne Beautrin left her childhood behind on the velvet seats of the Paramount. When her mother remarked that she looked pale, she replied curtly that she was no farm girl and retreated to her bedroom. She diluted a basin of bleach with water and injected the acrid mixture into herself with a bulb syringe, as though it were possible to erase from her flesh the stain left by that shameless hand. Then she threw herself upon her bed, prostrated by fever, overcome by a sense of immense contrition which no one had yet taught her how to put into words.

For months, with the heavy loins of one who conceives a cursed child, Suzanne trudged across austere sands, and the mirage of her own degradation did nothing to turn her aside from the martyrdom she had imposed upon herself. It seemed that, from that time onwards, the divine spirit, in its loving favour, had singled her out. Even the bitter consolation of masturbation was denied her. Just as the monastic penitent, to whom God allows a glimpse of the path to holiness, must, at the moment of supreme trial, renounce even self-mortification. This is punishment piled upon punishment; for pain is the reward of these elect souls.

It sometimes happened, during the sultry nights, that the instinct of lust, pressing her loins beneath an iron glove, at last commanded surrender. With an uncertain gesture, the sublime virgin would brush the swollen lips, from which tears flowed, overflowing with forbidden delight.

Yet whenever she felt the erection of that female member which so many caresses had fashioned, her arm, stricken with impotence, fell inert upon her bed. The nipples of her marble breasts bore the weight of the heavy sheets. The storm of blood tormenting this youthful body seemed unlikely to restore it to sensual life. And yet the divine encounter was near. The Comforter required that the virgin should grieve before being filled with grace, that she should cleanse her dwelling and replenish with oil the lamp that would shine at the wedding feast.

It was at this time that Suzanne's hair began to turn white. At twenty, long bleached strands framed her with an air of serenity, from her hairline to her curled shoulders. Her beauty, haughty and grave, was strangely enhanced by this, and her premonition of an extraordinary destiny grew stronger. She went out little, read little, doing no more than await the storm ripening within her. Whenever she ventured into the streets, however, she had to thwart the wiles of men, and scorn the sordid advances of males who followed her like a bitch in heat, instead of prostrating themselves along the sacred path of the virgin. With her measured, feline gait, swaying on her high heels, Suzanne moved among the people, bearing her cunt like the Blessed Sacrament.

One spring Saturday, in the Rue Saint-Charles, she was leaving the poulterer's, having bought a rabbit. A tall, dark-haired man, who had been idling among the market stalls, suddenly approached her. Matching his pace to hers, he leaned towards her with a mocking smile.

"White dove, the two of us would lay some beautiful eggs together… wouldn't we?"

Already bristling at this brazen assault, Suzanne considered the lout's allusion utterly vile. She had always refused to think of herself as an egg-laying machine. Only women as vulgar as her mother could accept such bestial occupations.

"Go and find yourself some hens," she retorted, uttering the last word with undisguised disgust.

"I said dove, my beauty, not hen. There's a bird and there's a bird; but I also like little pussies, little pussies with velvet coats…"

A cry caught in Suzanne's throat. This great devil had laid his paw upon the incurable wound. Jostling housewives who swung their breasts among

the cabbages and fresh produce, the virgin tried to make her escape, to flee this putrid market where life proliferated like a cancerous growth.

At the corner of the Rue de la Convention, she turned round. Her tormentor, an ironic smile playing about his lips, had not given up the magnificent quarry he had flushed out. His hands in his pockets, apparently indifferent, he followed her with his eyes, threading his way through the crowd. Her mouth dry, her cheeks burning, Suzanne ran along the railings of the Imprimerie Nationale. In the net bag, the rabbit's stiffened body swung back and forth, knocking against her calves. Suzanne imagined the skinned animal, its two kidneys exposed between its parted thighs. To her left, the massive brick bulk of the church of Saint-Christophe-de-Javel suddenly loomed into view.

It was sanctuary. She did not stop to question herself or deliberate. Above Suzanne Beautrin, the divine wing was beating. As she crossed the Rue de la Convention, a bicycle brushed past her, and a lorry driver swore amid the din of his machine. Within the sanctuary, Christopher awaited her, a half-naked giant bearing the weighty God upon his shoulders.

Never in her life had Suzanne entered a church. When the padded door closed behind her, the mute darkness of the divine temple enveloped her in its mantle. In the Holy of Holies, immensity crackled. Crouching vestal virgins tended the glowing embers of the tabernacles. Their lips, pale as unleavened bread, murmured eternal supplications. With an unfamiliar strength, the power of Grace at work, Suzanne felt the ambiguous emotion of ancient solitudes stirring within her once more. She advanced, almost naked in her spring dress, her lap glowing and her breasts alert. In the presence of God, the floodgates of bliss and tears were once again to give way.

Suzanne walked cautiously; the clatter of her heels on the flagstones frightened her. On the left side of the choir, in the shadow of a pillar, she crouched. Upon the prie-dieu lay the mutilated rabbit. The plainchant of shame and outrage orchestrated the tumult of her soul. Bloodied limbs raised upon the gallows of the frescoes; menstrual stigmata staining the winding-sheets of the martyrs; the fixed gaze of exalted virgins; and the pilgrimage of a masturbated Christ, whose vaginal wounds flowed like semen — at last, Heaven was opening before the enraptured Suzanne. The sublime realm she was discovering reconciled her with herself, with the true sublimity of love.

Suzanne knew the gift, the prayer, bitter and sweet as incense, that God expected of her. Beneath the pallid light of a stained-glass window, beneath the vaults of desolation, the solitary virgin bent forward, humbling herself in her own hair, like Magdalene, the woman of the Gospel who tended to the God made man. With the backs of her hands together, Suzanne's slender hands slipped between her tightly pressed thighs, making the taut silk of her stockings rustle. Struggling and playing with a violent desire, she advanced little by little. From her foaming body, pleasure flowed, clinging to the curly hairs, warm upon her plump buttocks, impregnating the straw chair with her intimate perfume. Suzanne brushed her cunt, giving a groan of delight. There it was, a giver of tears and blood, cleft and full-lipped, hairy and ravenous. Suzanne felt the fiery ball of rut in her throat. With her pointed fingernails, she parted the narrow, loose waistband of her briefs. In the shadowy hollow of her lap, her sex leered, ravenous.

"Christ help you, child, prostrate in the darkness."

Low and deep, the voice seemed an emanation of the very darkness it sought to dispel. A heavily built priest stood before Suzanne, his smooth, florid cheek and one hand resting upon the prie-dieu. A surplice, gleaming with starch, clothed his broad shoulders like a shirt of purity. As he spoke, his full lips scarcely moved. In his heavy-featured, placid face, blue eyes glittered, piercing beneath short eyelashes.

"I am in His house," Suzanne replied. "One feels so comfortable here."

"He is Love and Consolation," said the priest. "I think you have suffered greatly, my child."

"Oh, Father, very much indeed, yes, very much."

The fatherly quality which she acknowledged in the author of her days only with repugnance, Suzanne now gladly bestowed upon this unknown clergyman who welcomed her into the temple. Without apprehension, she opened her thighs, freed a warm, moist hand and held it out to him.

"He takes our sins upon Himself, and the Church is His bride," said the priest, clasping Suzanne's slender hand between his thick palms.

"I do not belong to this Church," said the young woman.

"I welcome you into it."

"I have no faith."

"God searches the hearts and reins."

"I am unworthy of His gaze."

"He is a God of Love who washes away all defilement."

"I have never made love."

"He made the Virgin fruitful, then emerged from her womb."

"Will He love me?"

"He has chosen you. Already His infinite Compassion is nourishing you at the breast."

Suzanne's pupils dilated. Joy illuminated her face.

"He has wounded me," she said.

"The Divine Balm is poured upon every wound. He will anoint you, tender lamb."

"Father, I was made for Love."

"God has convinced me of that, my child."

The priest gripped tightly the docile hand that had been surrendered to him. He helped Suzanne to her feet.

"Follow me," he whispered. "You are going to confess your sins to me."

The priest and his companion climbed the steps to a secluded chapel. At his invitation, Suzanne knelt in the darkened cell of a confessional. The clergyman let a thick curtain fall over the penitent's humbled body. He then entered the sacred enclosure himself. He sat down and opened the little grille, behind which Suzanne was watching him with deep emotion. The young woman could feel the priest's harsh, laboured breathing close to her face.

"Before beginning a new life," he said, "are you willing, my child, to reveal your past transgressions to God's minister?"

"I am willing," Suzanne replied. Her voice faltered. "But I don't know… have pity on me, help me, Father."

"Answer the questions I put to you simply, with great modesty and sincerity. Do you feel the pricks of the flesh intruding upon your body?"

"Night and day, like a wretched creature, I wallow in sin and fire."

The priest started at this.

"Have you had relations with a man? Have you consummated the act?"

"I don't quite understand you, Father. I have always lived in solitude. Mine is the torment of a solitary woman, of a woman… who has been wounded." Suzanne began to tremble. "There was, though… another woman, in a cinema… How can I describe such a horror?…"

"What did she offer you?"

"Oh, nothing… She touched me."

"How daring!"

"She did exactly what I long for when my wound causes me suffering, but it disgusted me, I assure you."

"Your words are not very clear, my child. Is this wound an old one, and where do you bear it?"

Tears streamed down Suzanne's face.

"My pussy," she whispered. "My little pussy…"

She half rose in the confessional; the heels of her shoes slipped on the polished wooden step. Bent forward in this way, her neck bowed, the young woman revealed to her confessor the upper swell of her heaving breasts. His cheeks flushed, the priest leaned towards the little grille. The young woman was taking him as witness to her torment; distraught before him, she was exposing what for so long she had preserved as a voluptuous stigma. She hitched up her skirt; with a nervous movement, she snapped the elastic of her pink knickers, which slipped down along her thighs.

"My dear child," murmured the priest, whose cassock, bulging, had swollen beneath his surplice.

Arched backwards, Suzanne had frozen in an attitude of dominance when a rustling of fabric, a strange commotion, made her raise her eyes. Dumbfounded, she saw her confessor awkwardly unbuttoning the religious habit that had set him apart from the world. Beads of sweat stood on his cheeks and on his lowered eyelids. Leaning heavily against the chair, he suddenly spread his enormous palms, and in the half-light the weapon of flesh sprang forth, a taut crossbow whose bolt lodged in Suzanne's enraptured heart. Fascinated, the virgin thought herself a participant in some ceremony of magical initiation. The priest's hand returned and, with a swift movement, set the powerful, supple shaft swaying, which, like the tree of life, took root amid the arid undergrowth.

"Jesus," she exclaimed. "What a beautiful thing... Oh, Father, what a beautiful thing..."

Her confessor had now taken himself in hand. Instinctively, without being able to establish any connection between this spectacle and her former habits, Suzanne, panting, followed the priest in his race towards pleasure. With claws bared and gestures wild and disorderly, overturning the rituals of her solitary existence, she struggled to keep pace with the savage rhythm set by her partner. Sometimes, through a refinement of willpower, the latter would leave his wavering member to its own devices, poised on the brink of ecstasy. Suzanne imitated him with difficulty, nevertheless delighted to prolong the anticipation.

In all her innocence, she suddenly realised that the climax was near; she hurried on, her knees chafed, almost seated upon her bare heels. In the little cell, the priest rose. At the grille of the confessional, the purple branch appeared in his raised hand. Two dark fruits emerged from it, bells of flesh whose death knell was muffled. He roared, directing towards Suzanne's blinded face the opaque stream, the Holy Chrism of fire and deliverance, which the stained virgin received in a swoon.

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On the evening of that day, Suzanne Beautrin opened a diary. Day after day, she wished to continue a confession which had brought her into the bosom of the Church. Grace had touched her, and the deepest faith had taken root in her heart. It is curious, however, to observe that in a diary in which she expresses herself with the utmost freedom, the figure of the priest, who played such a prominent part in Suzanne's life, lacks the prominence one might expect. He is evoked merely as an intermediary, an anonymous channel for divine revelation. Mired as we are in the everyday vulgarity of existence, subject to the mechanical processes of prosaicism, we find it difficult to understand how the episode in the church could, in Suzanne's mind, have transcended its elementary genital significance. Through her, transcendence is accepted a priori.

From the outset, Suzanne had kept herself free of unhealthy curiosity, of the furtive investigations and petty games that adolescents tentatively embark upon in the schoolyard. For her, the masculine bulge which she had observed without the slightest disturbance in male bathers on the beaches or

in statues in gardens suggested only the business of animal procreation and the banality of its consequences. As for the exhibition she witnessed in the secrecy of the confessional, Suzanne, on the contrary, incorporated it into a mystical experience for which the young girl felt herself prepared. This astonishing vision gave free rein to her imagination, provided its spiritual element, and finally offered the hope of fulfilment, of advancement to the higher degrees of eroticism.

"My Jesus," she wrote, "how could I ever forget Thy Goodness, with which Thou hast overwhelmed me? Thou hast sprinkled me with Thy Blood and nourished me with Thy Honey. For a long time, my eyelids, sealed shut by Love, refused to open again upon the pallid day which Thy blessing had consecrated. Through every pore of my burning face, an ineffable sweetness was infused into me, which ever since has renewed my languid limbs, filled me with fresh ardours, a young doe with nimble thighs, dreaming of gambolling in the shadow of Thy brandished Rod. In the presence of Thy minister, who, in the exercise of his priestly office, deigned to lead me along the tumultuous path of divine delights, I split open like an overripe peach, streaming with juice, down to its bitter, downy kernel. Christ Jesus, abandon me no more. I adore Thee, I belong to Thee, and I desire Thee. For Thee, I shall roll, shameless and wanton, among the brambles along the road. With my petticoats flung over my head, the sharp tips of my breasts torn by the flints, I shall show the obscene populace the globes of my satin flesh, which they will wish to scourge; parting them with both hands, I shall kindle their eyes and quicken their breathing when they see the furrow Thou hast carved deep within me with Thy flaming fingernail. Over all the wounds of Thy Body, upon Thy mysterious loincloth, I rub my wound against Thy fleshy, protruding lips, for a long time, swiftly, skilfully and furiously… Then, O sweet Jesus, Thy Suzanne has just attained her pleasure…"

CHAPTER II

I lived in the same neighbourhood as Suzanne Beautrin. Early in the morning, when I went downstairs to fetch my milk, I would often happen to meet her at the dairy. In the evening, returning from work, I was occasionally fortunate enough to travel on the same Métro train as she did. There was something so intense and desperate about her that it drove me mad with desire. Beneath the marble of her form, the unbreakable crystal of her modesty, I imagined the seething torrent of a forbidden volcano, whose lava would pour impetuously over the bed of her first lover.

The prospect of a fierce struggle redoubled my amorous ardour. The vicissitudes of the stern contest awaiting me filled my days with chaotic nightmares and robbed of their savour the embraces in which, night after night, the fleeting charms of my mistresses were exhausted. Screaming dolls, whom I dislocated with thrusts of my loins, I sent them back to the blissful wings of an overindulged coitus, while the coursers of the Soul, a chariot harnessed to vain images, unseated Suzanne in unfamiliar postures before making their escape at dawn.

I knew her to be a wild creature, and I awaited my moment. With Suzanne, I refrained from provoking those stupid conversations in which passion grows blunted and vainly skates over paltry insinuations. If, at least, she had consented to notice me in the past, I believe she was grateful for it. One day, chance decreed that the crush in the Métro should fling me into her arms. She received me like a north wind sweeping down upon the Pont Mirabeau, and closed the cloak into which I had plunged. The blade of my gaze crossed hers with the courtesy of steel. Throughout the entire journey, I performed the remarkable feat of not brushing against her for a single second, sacrificing to my more distant aims the rare opportunity afforded me of at last pressing the young woman's immediate charms against my heart. When we stepped down from the carriage, she looked at me once more, with a kind of astonishment in which a weakness in her armour began to show.

In the weeks following her mystical adventure, Suzanne behaved in a manner that did not fail to astonish me greatly. Without renouncing her proud nature, which she continued to hold aloof, she appeared to take an interest in the life of the neighbourhood. She firmly recommended the wholesome discipline of a new life to the dairywoman, who was being cuckolded, and lent *La Chartreuse de Parme* to the baker's daughter. For the first time in many years, she attended the School Fund's ball and consented to dance with a few sheepish young fellows who dared to venture close to her.

I was, naturally, present at this springtime festivity, which took place in the reception rooms of the Town Hall of the Fifteenth Arrondissement. The languorous dance music of Square Péclet draws to the occasion, from several surrounding arrondissements, the newer strata of the fair sex, who feel the spur of the mating season and are minded to take some exercise. At first, I thought Suzanne had performed the somersault by which hymen is sacrificed for the benefit of the loins; but, watching her, I observed that she granted each partner only a single dance, keeping him, moreover, at a respectful distance and answering his remarks with a cheerful affability with which, for all the world, I would not have wished to be favoured. Then, for long periods, she chatted with her parents at the buffet, nibbling at an appropriate pastry.

She was there for show, playing her part in good humour. I decided to ignore her that night, and not to solicit the sordid favour of a ceremonial dance. I had no interest in such pretence; what I needed was her flame and her shudder.

The event was of considerable importance. The young girl's anxiety seemed to have come undone, like the cord of a dressing gown. It was my task to seize its tassel and possess proud Suzanne at this moment of abandon. I left the ball early, wearied by its static eroticism. I stretched out on my bed, completely naked, and gazed admiringly at the swollen, throbbing muscle which I promised the virgin.

From then on, I kept watch for her. I waited for her at the Métro station, outside her home. Taking the greatest care to conceal my manoeuvres, I followed her when she went shopping, when she visited the public baths or went to the hairdresser. If I was to pluck the precious carbuncle from the jewel casket of my dreams, I needed the assistance of some exceptional circumstance. The slightest indiscretion could prove my undoing.

One day, at lunchtime, I was raising a stirrup-cup with a few good companions when the silver wing of Suzanne Beautrin brushed past the window of the bar-tabac. Leaving my friends to settle the drinks bill, I slipped away, tomcat after she-cat, along the trail of my desires. At her heels—though did I ever hope to get her skirts up?—I had to walk some distance along Rue Lourmel. On Rue de la Convention, I allowed her to get ahead of me so as not to alarm her. She walked with her swift, majestic, interstellar stride, a lunar virgin of the tertiary spaces. Imagine my astonishment when I saw Suzanne making her way towards the church of Saint-Christophe-de-Javel, the temple of the ferryman who once served as Gargantua's double and nowadays protects motorists. I was on the point of abandoning my surveillance. A heathen of my stamp had no place in the house of God. But as soon as Suzanne disappeared beneath the porch, curiosity, opportunity, some devil or other urging me on, I finally decided to follow her.

The church was deserted. Bouquets of candles, impaled like stiff tulips, wept beside the votive thrones. In the silence of this solitary place, the footsteps of my adored Suzanne moved me strangely. I thought I had lost her in this sepulchral domain, where the sound of her heels was stifled; yet, at the same instant, she seemed closer than ever, more secretive, more vulnerable. Such is the priceless reward of seclusion: love, which flares up amid the agitation of crowds and social display, smoulders and dies away in the depths of alcoves.

Gliding unnoticed on my crepe-rubber soles, I approached Suzanne. She pushed open the little wrought-iron gate of a secluded chapel and knelt upon a prie-dieu. Through a stained-glass window, a shaft of sunlight found its way along the less opaque path of a transfigured face. The rays caught Suzanne's bowed forehead; lower down, they fell upon the flagstones in geometrically straight lines.

Despite the majesty of this place, the solitary presence of the woman I had desired so ardently overwhelmed me. Against the fabric of my suit, my member grew heavy and curved, merciless, threatening like a weapon the innocent prey I offered it. I believe I lost my reason, heedless of the dangers to which my audacity exposed me. In a lucid delirium, I unbuttoned my constricting clothes, freeing with a single gesture the branch whose brown pod burst at the edge of a coral fruit. For a moment, I was tempted to finish the business there and then, with eyes and hands. Suzanne shuddered. I took fright, thinking that the young girl had heard the coarse back-and-

forth. I no longer wished to retreat. From one moment to the next, something unexpected might happen; we were robbing ourselves of the precious intimacy which united us. Certain that I had everything to lose, I took a heavy step forward into the shaft of sunlight and, already displaying the foaming swell of pleasure, began to grow erect in the light.

It was then that Suzanne turned her face towards me. My features were drained of all colour. Her eyes lowered, her arms flung back, I stood petrified, awaiting the cry of horror that would summon the wrath of priests and congregation. A rutting statue of salt, it was the chastisement that should have recalled me to life, whose suspended spasm vibrated throughout my insolent being.

Before I could make any movement to forestall her impulse, Suzanne enclosed me in her arms and pressed herself against me. Her hair, silky as the Virgin's threads, dazzled me; her burning mouth sought mine, and against my chest two hardened pears answered the brutal assault with which I bruised her belly. My palms seized her buttocks and parted them, and upon her light-grey tailored skirt there burst the flakes of a thick life. Through the fabric, Suzanne was burned by it. Soon she responded, biting my lips until they bled. In the side aisle of the church, a footstep drew nearer. Painfully, we had to part. Side by side, we moved away from the unforgettable chapel. Suzanne untied the silk scarf that protected her throat. As we walked, her nervous hands tormented it in front of her.

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"You'll come to my room," I said, my throat tight.

"Wherever you wish," she replied. "I knew that Christ would show me… the thing once again. I also knew that He would lead you to me."

These words seemed mysterious to me, but they filled me with joy. I resolved not to disturb this religious soul in any way, not to thwart a belief that was destined to plunge me into an abyss of delights.

"Had you recognised me?"

"For a long time, I thought you were just like all the others, my little neighbourhood stud. Then I realised that you had a soul very close to mine. At the ball, you were quite right not to invite me to dance. I think I would have refused…"

I walked very close behind Suzanne. Against my hip, hers swayed, and my hand followed her movements, brushing her rounded thigh, playing with the fastening of her suspender.

"Now that I have seen… that, now that you have given me the sign, I am yours. Do with me as you wish."

She gazed at me intensely. Beneath her parted lips, the mother-of-pearl of her teeth fused together

"You hear me? As you wish…"

Suddenly she seemed anxious, perhaps fearing that I was unworthy of this total gift, so long delayed, or simply frightened at the prospect of the unknown ordeal.

"I shall take you away," I told her, "far away, where neither you nor I have ever been."

I believe I was sincere, having never desired the possession of a woman with such passion.

"May you speak the truth, and may Christ hear you."

I occupied a room in a newly built apartment block. In the service staircase, I followed Suzanne, admiring her long, flute-like legs, sculpted in flesh by a satyr. Impatiently, I slipped a hand down, feeling beneath my palm the curve and warmth of the skin betrayed by the transparency of her stockings. Higher up, I felt the satin-smooth skin, bare, chafed by her suspenders. Suzanne stopped, her knees pressed together.

"Have we arrived, then?" she asked.

"The road to Heaven is steep and mountainous, but there are stages along the way."

For a moment, I feared I had offended her. Nothing of the sort had happened.

"Love," she replied, "is the beginning and the end. Christ is dead and living."

Raising my hand again, I pinched her buttocks. My fingers grew moist as they touched the lightweight fabric of her trousers, which she was soaking with delight. My throat tightened. I urged Suzanne forward.

"Come along, we're nearly at my place."

The lock creaked. Against my shoulder and elbow, the plywood door panel gave way. The room was small, a cubic shell in which the double bed sprawled, insatiable, carefree and debauched with pleasure. To the left, behind a chintz screen, the washbasin and bidet lay concealed, secret firemen standing by to extinguish the flames I kindled.

If, as seemed likely, Suzanne was a virgin, I would have to employ every artifice and every loving consideration. A single false step might drive her back into her impregnable fortress, where fear confronts and masters the dragon of desire in single combat. As soon as the door had closed behind her, I saw Suzanne turn pale.

"What do you think of my little abode?" I asked.

"Charming," she replied, "but you don't know how to make a bed. Look at the corner of this bedspread sticking out like a great dog's nose, all these hollows and bumps. You must have dreadful nightmares about this… volcano."

She burst into a nervous laugh.

"If I have nightmares, you're more to blame than the bed."

I was tempted to add that a bed made with military precision resembled a car that had broken down. Putting my arm around Suzanne's waist, I drew the young woman towards me. She smiled and slipped away. With great enthusiasm, she busied herself around my bed, throwing the sheets and blankets into disarray.

"I'm going to teach you how it should be done."

This activity seemed supremely pointless to me, but I resigned myself to it. I set two glasses of port on the table while Suzanne fussed around the nuptial couch. In such circumstances, I always have the impression that the girl is playing with her doll. I find it delightful and exasperating. As Suzanne bent down to tuck in the blankets, I tried to seize her breasts.

"Would you?" she said, giving me a slap on the cheek.

"When you've finished the housework, will you agree to have a drink with me?"

"Just a moment. Get me the broom. There's a lot of dust in the corner of the wardrobe. That simply won't do."

We were at an impasse. If I continued to indulge these delaying tactics, the laundry, washing-up and ironing would keep us occupied until dawn

the following morning. Irritated, I pushed open the cupboard door to get the broom, when a new feather duster, a recent gift from a fond female friend, caught my eye. This switch of cane, crowned with a bushy bouquet of multicoloured feathers, suggested a happy diversion. Fastening the cord bracelet around my wrist, I armed myself with this novel kind of riding crop.

Taking advantage of the moment when Suzanne, her legs apart, was pushing the sofa back into the corner of the room, I slipped the head of the feather duster between her thighs. She gave a hoarse cry like a wounded tigress and rolled onto the bed, flailing all four limbs in every direction. At last the feathered bouquet was beneath her petticoat, lashing the young woman's frantic belly.

"Demon, Satan, Lucifer! Ah! What are you doing to me!" she cried. "Do you really want to hurt my poor, miserable little pussy even more?"

She was working her hips and buttocks as though in the very thick of amorous play, writhing and making the bedstead groan beneath her weight. Under the diabolical feather duster, she spread her thighs wide, then closed them again, crushing the caressing tuft, rubbing her intimate flesh against the feathers which pricked her a thousand times over. At first erratic, the movement of her legs, opening and resisting, became more rhythmic, and the girl marked its beat with the deep moan of her throat, already anticipating the pleasure she expected from this unusual implement.

I had no intention of playing along.

"Ah!" I exclaimed. "Enough of this coyness and delicate sensibility. You are no longer the strong woman of Solomon in this room."

Withdrawing the feather duster, I began to lash Suzanne all over her body. As in a battle of parrots, yellow, green, blue and red feathers fluttered up towards the ceiling of the room, but it was the cane, sturdy enough, I must say, that was now doing the work, striping her calves, her tits and her cheeks. Under the flogging, Suzanne's lingerie—stockings and suspenders, bodice and brassiere—fell to pieces. Frenzied, I brought my free hand to this wanton devastation, widening the tears, snapping the elastic, eager at last to feel the stigmatised skin upon which tiny drops of blood were forming. On the ivory of her cheeks, two furrows ran from her temples to the corners of her mouth; turning blue, they gave Suzanne the appearance of a slave in make-up. The waistband of her skirt tore. I pulled the garment towards me, stripping from her legs the magnificent body possessed by lust.

Once again, I whipped her, stripping away the petals of her black-and-pink petticoat.

"Say that you are my slave!" I shouted at Suzanne. "Come on, will you obey me? Say: I am your slave!"

Congested, panting, sobbing and grinding her teeth, she began to scream:

"Satan, you'll pay for this, you'll pay!"

"For the moment, you're the one who's suffering."

With a single movement, I tore away Suzanne's light girdle and the nylon panties, where the stain of pleasure had spread almost to her waist. The cane came down with a sharp crack upon the thick, curly brown hair. Under the pain, Suzanne parted her thighs. A sort of ball of fire rolled into her free hand, at the astonishing sight that presented itself to my eyes. It seemed impossible that this girl could be a virgin. The intimate caresses she had lavished upon herself for so many years had strangely moulded Suzanne's secret nature, developed the sensitive fringes of her feminine wound, polished and swollen like a ruby the purple knot of her pleasures. Suzanne heard the groan of admiration and desire she had provoked. She stretched out her arms and concealed the marvellous fruit with her slender fingers.

When she saw me removing my clothes, Suzanne raised her eyelids, swollen with tears and smudged with mascara, its dark trail running down towards the earlobe. Her dark eyes sparkled, watching each of my movements. In the bedroom, the sun entered with a flourish, and the reveille of its rays sounded upon my bronzed muscles. All the strength flowing like a torrent along my neck and biceps, across the swell of my chest and down to my abdominal muscles, seemed to converge upon the force-field of my ample drawers, where the masculine threat became increasingly apparent, swollen like a truncheon and curved like a scimitar. In revealing my underpants, the muscles of my thighs rippled beneath their hairy skin. I straightened up and advanced, naked, for her.

"Oh!" murmured Suzanne. "Oh, how handsome you are!"

I leapt onto the bed, standing upright, and my member slapped against her belly. On either side of Suzanne's face, upon her scattered hair, I planted my feet, pinning to the sheets the head of the woman I was about to possess. Beneath me, in profile, amid the tree of flesh and the heavy bags, the young girl scrutinised me, half-mad with pleasure and terror. A groan

escaped her open, glistening lips. As it swelled, rising and vibrating throughout the room, I slowly crouched down, my palms on my knees, and smothered it beneath my spread buttocks. Like two dark, coarse figs, my balls settled upon Suzanne's nostrils, and I plunged my gaze into her bewildered, bloodshot eyes, while she bit my anus savagely.

When I felt her weakening, suffocated, I raised myself slightly. Gratefully, Suzanne caressed my loins, scratching me with her nails; then, like the docile cat she had become, her eyes closed, she licked my crotch in long strokes.

"I am entirely your slave," she said, with a kind of relish.

Then I knelt beside Suzanne and undressed her completely. Bending over her, I bathed myself in a powerful perfume of sweat and pleasure, which enveloped her whole body. With every movement I made, Suzanne trembled, now shrinking away, now seeking the touch of my hands. Every inch of her skin suffered the erection and burned with fever. When she was naked, the marble pears of her breasts seemed to dominate, from their insensitive pyramids, a desert of satiny sand. As I caressed them, I raised the dry tempest of the sirocco. Grasping my raging member, with a dull thud I lashed this body of my own flesh. Suddenly Suzanne straightened up, her jaws open, cruel, and she bit me.

I do not know how long I remained in this position, lodged as far as the throat of my mistress, bruised by the vice of her teeth. Her platinum-blonde hair spread across my knees, my fingers clenched upon her smooth back; our hearts, forbidden so much happiness, beat wildly.

In my turn, I grew hungry for the sumptuous feast she offered me. I pressed Suzanne beneath me and slowly, so as not to deprive her of the pleasure of the fruit she was tasting, turned myself around in the cradle of her thighs. When she felt me so close, when she sensed the demonic lust in my eyes and mouth, her jaws tightened and her tongue grew frantic, irritating and burning. With all her strength, she tried to resist my hands, which roughly forced her legs apart. At that moment, Suzanne opened herself completely, and I plunged my face into the dark crater, where the throbbing corollas welcomed me like a mask of blood.

Now I was feasting. Seeking the posture that had always delighted me, one that laid bare the gynæcological charms beneath the voracity of the trunk, I turned her over, plunged my arms between Suzanne's thighs, raised her legs and pressed them against her sides like folded wings. Then the

woman's body blossomed, widened and disclosed its abysses. The skin stretched over this nuptial drum; from the very base of the loins, the cleft became brazenly pronounced, and the pubic mound displayed its finest prominences; the double lips, weary of their secret confinement, now undulated freely, hallucinating fins from the depths of love.

Yet how great was my astonishment when I beheld the lovers' adored threshold, the Ring of Venus, as we might call it: Suzanne's was intensely alive, quivering with spasms and contractions, itself subject to the passions it aroused! If I slipped in a finger trembling with emotion, the delicious sphincter squeezed it; if I dared to point my tongue towards it, it responded, quivering with delight at the approach of this unaccustomed guest.

This rare vitality of the female parts, which vulgar minds might compare with certain reflexes of the animal races, was something only Suzanne had offered me the pleasure of discovering. Since then, I have come to regard it as the most delicate of discoveries granted to a man in love. I would give the whole of America to recapture the exhilaration of the pioneer that was mine then, for it is indeed true that Columbuses and Cooks bring back from their voyages little more than trinkets, whereas the divers of love sometimes steal away the pearl-bearing oyster. Ah, what a delightful tempest in this vessel perfumed with youthful musk! I worked away with my snout, while Suzanne, mouth wide open, gleefully unmanned me. Phew! A sudden convulsion. Splash! She gave me a coming whose geyser drenched my nostrils.

I duly returned the compliment; bursting with delight, with a kind of cackle that twisted my diaphragm, I toyed with the feeding-bottle and regaled my tender friend with a draught of nectar.

I like, when the bride is beautiful, to get the first rut out of the way. It is a minor concern, and I really couldn't care less. I soon recover the necessary stiffness and, from then on, it is no Herculean task to find the target. To comfort Suzanne at this crucial moment, I resumed my position; I rose from Hell in order to persuade her that Satan is not such a bad devil as he is made out to be. She smiled at me with her mouth stained by the kisses with which I covered it, eager to mingle with our sighs the most intimate perfumes of voluptuousness.

"I love you," she said. "I should like to throw myself at Christ's feet and give thanks to Him."

"Wait," I told her. "This is only a preface, the Offertory, if you like, to the Mass of Love. Let us not forget Holy Communion."

"Ah? What do you mean, darling?"

I burst out laughing, but such innocence was written across Suzanne's features that I was left bewildered. Did she really believe she had drained the cup of pleasure to the dregs? I was transported with joy that Fortune had thus placed in my arms the purest virgin and the most virginal whore I could possibly desire.

"Don't you think so?" I asked her.

"Indeed I do… Can there be any greater happiness than what we have experienced? I think you have tended my wound very well."

"On the surface," I whispered.At that moment, the *ultima ratio* of voluptuousness, the life-giving pin of lovers, sprang against the young woman's yielding belly, drawn, massive, merciless and impetuous. Suzanne's eyes flashed. She stretched out her hand.

"Ah!…!" she cried, with an astonishment that delighted me.

I began to shout, striking a pose.

"I'm going to make your capsule burst, my little hen, I'm going to crack your shell. Soon they'll be calling you 'Madame Suzanne', and long may it last, or else they'll cut me short."

"What do you mean? What are you doing?" Suzanne asked anxiously.

She had stretched herself out and watched me preparing my assault between her thighs, the glans poised.

"Come along, lie down," I told her, "and I'll make a woman of you."

Obstinate, she settled herself squarely on the bed.

"I want to see. I want to know."

"All right, all right…"

I reached towards the bed's lower end and seized the handle of the feather duster. The cane whistled, the feathers quivered, and I lashed the bristling nipples of Suzanne. The girl howled beneath the outrage and the pain. Several times I whipped her, savouring the delicate attributes of her femininity, from which flowed the purple milk of the virgin martyr. Defeated, a single blow of the switch across her nose brought on a nosebleed.

Beside her obstructed nostrils, her laboured breathing raised bubbles of blood; black clots gathered among the scattered locks of her flattened mane.

Drunk and stained with the blood of my victim, I flung myself upon Suzanne's body for the final assault. Her thighs, which I threw out of my way, fell wide apart, inert and dislocated. Temerary and presumptuous, I hurled the battering ram with its bronze bells against the ivory gateway of the female porch, and cruelly, I rammed it against the hymen of the Holy of Holies. A single, frenzied groan of suffering rose from our intertwined bodies and shook the walls of the room, which had become a torture chamber. A surge of love and despair engulfed us, pounding and sobbing, transmuted into the very marrow of our bones. Beyond their pursed lips, our jaws ground together in a kiss; our fingers, twisted in the embrace, became claws gripping great clumps of flesh. Man and woman, only the air-raid siren of hope still sounded within us. We loved one another, and even the spectre of a violated will was torn apart by the unstoppable momentum of an absolute eroticism. Pure magic of our interwoven wills: once again, the swell of the abyssal tempests lifted our vertebral skeletons on its tide, and the violet flame of an initiatory rut flickered in our eyes.

With hatred and rage, proffering the weapon of a funeral wrath, I possessed Suzanne, and upon her belly I danced a ritual dance. As I advanced into her, the woman I was creating educated herself in lascivious mimicry: she surrendered with groans, participating in the labour, her loins disordered, then, after a pause, in a more knowing rhythm than she had invented beneath my guidance. Little by little, I quickened the pace; little by little, the artificial hymen I had fashioned within her tested the defeat of the original hymen. Soon Suzanne would yield, accomplished mistress, consummate concubine. Very soon now, we were moving, panting, suspended in space almost until that moment of madness which each of us hoped for, when suddenly the ceiling of the rut cracked amid the howling plaints of the lover and the synchronised gasps of the one who was overcoming her, becoming the best version of herself.

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The night covered our battered, bloodied bodies, exhausted and laid low by sleep. Blows struck at my bedroom door, regular, insistent, tore me from nothingness. Against my neck, Suzanne's lips breathed a gentle, warm sigh.

The silver moon played upon my mistress's hair; a jealous star, it touched her with the life of its rays.

There was knocking.

"Listen, come on… it's me, Jackie Lalo… Open up, darling…"

The girl continued knocking.

Gently, I got up and approached the door.

"Not tonight, Jackie. I've got the flu."

She pressed herself against it, rubbing against the panel.

"My poor darling… I bet you've caught a mouse. I'll cure you, my little flu."

Jackie Lalo delivered several blows with her knees against my door. Of medium height, she was a blonde with green eyes, plump and sensual. She worked as a maid for a tenant in the building and lived on my floor. When she had one of her fits of temper, nothing could stand in her way. Whatever she wanted had to happen. As a last resort, I think Jackie would have called the fire brigade. She wasn't jealous, but she was insatiably greedy. I opened the door a crack.

"Listen to me, darling," I whispered. "Be sensible. There's a young virgin in the bedroom. You'll frighten her if she hears you."

Under her dressing gown, Jackie had already taken hold of the sleeping doll she wanted to play with. She knew her business, and, apparently without thinking, made it swing back and forth, slapping it against my thighs.

"So," she said, "the gentleman has just acquired himself a virgin. Show her to me. I'd like to see your little virgin."

"Come on, this is madness. If Suzanne catches sight of you at my place, there'll be a scene. Besides, you know she's a religious girl…"

"Really? She's not a nun, is she? Anyway, I'm very kind to ladies too. You can ask Colette, down at the end of the corridor. When she hasn't got a man, she's quite happy to have me."

My dear Jackie knew my nature, and the treatment she was administering was beginning to bear fruit. I told myself that the triangular arrangement Jackie was proposing would certainly not lack spice. Suzanne was very inexperienced, no doubt, but it was better to educate her quickly, before she acquired any bad habits. I pushed Jackie back into the corridor and, in a low voice, explained my plan.

A few minutes later, I was once again stretched out on the divan, like a porpoise beside its mate. In my left hand I held the culprit Jackie had undertaken to enlarge. Suddenly, from the corridor, we heard a whimpering, muffled sobs, broken by little pauses. I started and placed my hand on Suzanne's shoulder.

"Darling," I said to her, "can you hear that? What's going on? It seems to me that someone is complaining, moaning quite close by."

Suzanne yawned like a daisy beneath the morning dew, and nibbled at my earlobe.

"What are you talking about?"

"Listen, my angel..."

The mysterious symptoms of sincere and discreet distress continued to manifest themselves behind the door.

"It's strange," said Suzanne. "Strange and rather frightening... Is this the first time it's happened in this house? It's a new house, after all..."

"Damn... Do you think that... You're frightening me..."

A key turned gently in the lock.

"Jesus!" Suzanne cried. "Oh, Jesus!..."

Her hands dug into my wrist.

With one hand, I silenced her.

"Don't make a scene, my love. Besides," I added, "I'm sure I left my key in the pocket of my overcoat..."

A white figure slipped into the room. I had the greatest difficulty in restraining Suzanne, who, beside herself, was thrashing about and throwing off the bedclothes, exposing our naked bodies. It was Jackie Lalo, making this theatrical entrance. The bitch had dressed herself up in a nightdress whose embroidered hem fluttered over her bottom; she had pulled on black stockings and slipped into her patent-leather high-heeled dancing shoes. Her fair fringe hung down over her forehead, while she continued to sob into a little square of batiste.

"It's a ghost..." Suzanne stammered, as I fondled her, trembling with gooseflesh.

At these words, Jackie raised her arms. Her clasped hands seemed to implore Heaven, while the front of her nightdress revealed a curly mound whose colour matched her hair.

"Oh! My good God!" she cried. "I thank you a thousand times for having led me to the holy princess…"

With her left hand she made a grand sign of the cross, and her full, round tits collided beneath the flimsy fabric. Jackie was playing her part to perfection. I had considerable difficulty controlling myself and resisting the urge to leap upon her backside, taking her from behind with a succession of vigorous thrusts, hearty slaps and bursts of joyful laughter.

"Well, madam," I said to her at last, "what is the meaning of this strange visit? Who are you? Are you one of us, or are you Satan's?"

Suzanne began to scream:

"Be quiet, you wretch! She'll put a spell on us!"

"Me?" Jackie exclaimed indignantly, overcome with emotion as she knelt on the bedside rug. "Oh, wonder of wonders, image of my dreams and my delights, how can you believe such a thing?"

She seized Suzanne's icy ankles, gazing at her in astonishment.

"For months now, you have appeared to me in my dreams, naked, just as you are at this moment… No, little Jesus does not deceive me; I recognise you perfectly, and your platinum-blonde hair, and those beautiful pears that are your breasts, and everything, absolutely everything…"

With shining eyes, she examined my mistress's charms. The truth was, the performance was so convincing that I was almost jealous.

"This still doesn't explain to us, madam, how and why you came here?"

She gave me a mischievous look.

"It's because of my affliction…"

Suzanne gave a little giggle and spread her trembling hands over her own thatch of hair.

"It's difficult to speak of it in front of you, sir," my accomplice continued. "This affliction I'm talking about causes suffering only to ladies. Night after night, it kept me awake; or else I had to feel it, rub it, knead it, for longer and longer, more and more often, until I was neglecting both food and drink. Once, I dreamt of a beautiful young girl whom I had not yet met in the neighbourhood. She was lying on my bed, right beside me. The

bedclothes had been thrown back, and we were both quite naked. My companion was sleeping no better than I was. She tossed and turned, giving great sighs; her body was drenched in perspiration. After so much writhing and twisting, turning this way and that, she eventually began to frolic about, and we were lying head to toe, our heads at the other's feet… You can picture the scene…

Jackie was in full flight now; nothing could stop her. She gave me a cheeky wink.

"Would you believe it, this beauty spreads her thighs and, nestled in a mass of black hair, I see her… or his… well… It's so embarrassing to confess such things in the presence of a gentleman. It was bright red, like heavily made-up lips, and looked very much like my own… my… oh, good heavens! I can only look at it in my little mirror, you see, since I can hardly contemplate it any other way. The poor darling, it really seems to me that I am there all over again. She was weeping from that place, and so was I. I shed great tears upon the bedsheet, pearls of love, if you like, although at that time I had no misfortune whatsoever in my life. But I shall spare you the details… My heart breaks when I think of what that beautiful naked woman did next…"

As she followed the thread of her reverie, Jackie's warm, shameless hands were bringing the storyteller ever closer to the very place she was describing. My neighbour's audacity and gift of the gab seemed to fascinate Suzanne, whose knees, quite unconsciously, were yielding to these ambiguous caresses. As for Jackie, she was savouring the sight of our entwined bodies and the rigid promise I carried like a candle.

"What did the beautiful naked woman do next?" Suzanne asked in a faint voice.

"Well, you see, if you can picture it, our open legs were entwined and folded back, so that our four buttocks almost touched. Had this beauty not had black hair, I should have thought myself standing before the dressing-table mirror. Groaning, she slid onto her back, drawing closer and pressing herself against me. I realised that she was offering her great moist mouth to the one I was presenting to her myself. I shifted position and, to make myself more comfortable, raised one leg in the air and rested it against the girl's chest. What a splendid idea! Thus tilted over on her side, I took her between my thighs, and flop! Our two wounds, veritable gargoyles of sensual

pleasure, began to quiver, flow, gurgle and kiss one another with all their might. Oh, what a serenade, my friends! What a racket from the bedstead!"

In her enthusiasm, she seized one of Suzanne's breasts.

"We rubbed against one another, back and forth, from right to left, from top to bottom, round and round, in circles and squares. I covered her toes and calves with kisses, and shook her breasts with my heel. But believe me, you fortunate lovers, such love-making, though it may lead girls along the road to madness, alas, seldom frees them from that luminous flood which afflicts their tender organs. Pleasure is miserly with itself; it yields only drop by drop. The hours pass while one awaits the click that will open the floodgates. At last, something is missing: a striking argument, a key, a handle, a horn... Ah! You understand me well enough..."

A prophetess in her scanty attire, Jackie straightened up, buoyed by her own eloquence. Violently aroused by this account, I turned the knob of the bedside lamp. Our blonde visitor was standing with her fists on her hips. In this pose, she had hitched her nightdress up to her waist, and beneath it the lamplight cast rosy highlights upon her plump thighs. Her rounded mound, framed by black stockings and matching suspenders, was displayed like a jewel in its setting. Parting the fair curls, the darker cleft was suffused with pleasure.

With mischievous grace, the girl placed her daintily shod foot upon our nuptial bed and, in this amorous display, the warm fig of her crotch opened up, a charming wound which the Physician Love never tires of probing.

As she exhibited herself, she gazed at us with shining eyes.

"Ah! What a cherished vision!" she continued with a sigh. "How many times have you appeared to me since that night! What frolics, what gymnastic exercises, what wild capers and senseless caresses come flooding back into my mind, transporting me into the television of my dreams!"

Jackie let herself slide onto the bed, one knee resting against Suzanne's crotch. With a gentle caress, she brushed her breasts, making their nipples stand erect.

"The companion of my dreams," she said in a low voice, altered by desire, "was you, my darling... Even tonight, I had just dozed off when I saw you, bending over me, in the thrilling position we are in now..."

She slowly brought her body closer to Suzanne's; her face inclined towards that of the young woman.

"My wound was open and throbbing… Suddenly, a voice was heard in the room, and Christ, with his long hair, appeared beside the bedside table… 'Rise and walk,' he said to me. He opened his robe slightly and handed me a key. 'Abandon everything and follow me,' he said again. Like a sleepwalker, I obeyed Him. I put the key into the lock he pointed out to me, and here I am now in your arms, voluptuous beauty…"

Blonde Jackie pressed her violet lips against Suzanne's dark mouth. Her breasts escaped from the neckline of her loose nightdress and rolled across my mistress's chest, while she seized me with her right hand.

Mischievous Jackie spurred Suzanne on with her knee and, with a swift movement of her head, sucked like a sweetmeat the tongue my friend willingly offered her. Completely conquered, Suzanne undulated her haunches; she gave herself up to this libertine embrace, growling and yelping like a pretty little bitch. When I saw the two young women so closely entwined, I abandoned Jackie's rhythmic handwork and, crouching beside these wriggling ladies, seized them by the hair. I separated their lips, momentarily disappointed, and presented them with the shining marshal's baton that every man keeps in his knapsack. The wanton creatures gazed upon it as though they had seen thirty-six stars, for their eyes widened and the greedy, servile smile spreading across their faces bore every mark of respect.

As soon as I released their manes, their mouths seized me, warm mucous membranes and sharp teeth. They competed for the fleshy crown of the virile attribute; with their tongues they teased the sensitive prow of the nerve, as though seeking to circumcise it. Drop by drop, they lapped up the little trickles of pleasure they so relished, jealously guarding every drop. Then the female duo became intoxicated by their duet; their foamy lips, in noisy kisses, slid all along the flute of Pan, and suddenly each one was choking amid the brambles at its base, her cheeks swollen around a truffle they devoured, both more voracious than Eve, their mother, when she bit into the apple.

To make them release their hold, I pinched the two little noses of my lovers. Left to themselves, Suzanne and Jackie consoled themselves in a thousand caresses. The blonde, kneeling, was nibbling at the breasts of her latest conquest, while the latter, a nervous filly, subdued by her black stockings, gazed in wonder, both hands wandering madly as they explored the mysteries of an unfamiliar wound.

"Ah! My Suzanne, my beautiful pussy in heat!" I cried. "I'm going to give our hostess a little turn of honour. What do you think?"

"Please, darling. Go ahead, go ahead with all your heart. She's charming, our friend, and she deserves it."

Suzanne smiled at Jackie and, continuing to busy herself with both hands at the young woman's… what shall we call it? She asked her, with exquisite politeness:

"Dear friend, may I enquire your name?"

"Jackie Lalo, and yours, if I may?"

"Suzanne Beautrin, at your service, charming companion."

"Well then, good evening, Madame Jackie," I said, placing my lips upon the fragrant banks where Suzanne's nimble fingers were disporting themselves. "I have the honour of greeting you, and should be delighted to doff my hat."

The two girls giggled, then abandoned themselves to peals of laughter, cuddling and wriggling about with ever greater enthusiasm. I played with my tongue and nose in the nest of fair hair where Suzanne's active, mischievous fingers were discovering her new friend's femininity, before turning their playful attentions towards me. Beneath the gaze and caresses of the male, the dance of these ladies' bellies and thighs suggested some lascivious rumba, a spectacle I might have been offered, lurking and crawling about at a lesbian ball. As they rubbed against one another, sweating, their backs alternately arched and pressed flat, the intimate, warm fragrance of their buttocks went to my head. My voice hoarse with desire, I shouted insults and impassioned encouragements at them; the slang of lust, describing their forms and denouncing the obscene display of their charms, poured from my pleasure-moistened mouth, setting the blood racing in these frenzied females and reviving their former modesty. A voyeur at this lubricious dance, my hands roaming and travelling up the length of four legs, I disturbed and directed the rhythm of their Sapphic games as I pleased. Down to my waist, my desire was rising, cruelly restrained by a wire of brass.

Tearing away the elastic of the garter straps, I seized Jackie by the hips and, drawing her rosy buttocks against my belly, heard her cry out deliriously, like a woman being impaled. Never before had I made her scream and articulate her pleasure to such an extent. The preliminaries and erotic charade in which she had indulged, perched half-naked upon her whore's

platform shoes, together with the strange and unrestrained caresses of an unknown girl, were producing their effect, turning the young woman's innermost parts into a furnace. Coming and going, the rough little helmet glittered like a sapper's casque, then, with a sharp little smack, disappeared into the flooded mine through which it passed from end to end, a pneumatic drill boring into a vein of molten fire. When she swooned, battered and breached by repeated thrusts, Jackie Lalo's savage song consisted of just one syllable, the vowel of mouths and openings, the open, deep vowel of her entrails, the *ah*, gong of welcome and withdrawal, the *ah* , the pure, inarticulate reflex of the abyss from which she choked, scraping her glottis, giving herself entirely, a total confession and a drumbeat of rhythms that carried her lover to the very limits of spasmodic speed.

As I write these lines, that imperious cry still echoes and rumbles, before collapsing inside the skull like a demonic memory which the man riding the *ah – ah – ah – ah* upon this woman's rump will never be able to stifle. And wham! The collar of voluptuousness dilated and spurted, the organ battering it twitching in every direction. Like a trickle of saliva, the sap of this girl flowed along the instrument that had grafted itself to her and, lower down, spread over Suzanne's thatch, which she gathered up and frenziedly smeared upon her own lips with the ardour of an onanist. Swept away by delirium, I let myself be carried along by the gallop of these furious mistresses, and, propelled outwards by the blonde's muscular pouch, the cascade of my pleasure plunged into the ravine of the dark-haired lover, who received it as she herself found release.

Dawn had whitened the sky, as though the moon, renouncing its alchemy, had dissolved at the edge of the real city. The twilight of exhaustion was making us numb; our gaping flesh and prostrate limbs lay beneath its cold gaze, like a vision of Titans whom death seemed to have seized on the very threshold of victory.

Then the sun, hypocritical quartermaster of the moons whose victims it sets ablaze, seemed to cherish the pink lilies of our breasts and the moist shell of my sex. Slowly, the precious warmth of its metals, just beneath the skin, transmuted the blood into joyful wine with which our hearts were crowned. Waking had the lightness of a bucolic prelude, whose fresh laughter caught up, in counterpoint, little splinters of light and soap. Our ablutions and games around the bidet inspired us to dance in circles, like shepherdesses and shepherds rejoicing beside rocky springs. Afterwards, arm in

arm, my mistresses and I went shopping at the market in the Rue du Commerce.

CHAPTER III

The deflowering of Suzanne Beautrin and the exploits of the bold trio we formed opened up before the young woman the path of erotic apostolate. This apostolate, which I myself had practised for many years in my own secular and positivist fashion, she sublimated on the plane of faith and of a religious conviction which the virile member seemed, with each passing day, to drive ever more deeply into her.

"Beloved Christ," she would write at the time, "what is the substance of Thy message, the content of Thy teaching, if not the profound meaning of sacrifice, the resounding virtue of self-surrender? Upon Thine altar, I have given my person to the lover Thou hast chosen for me, to the mystical lesbian whom Thou hast afflicted with a wound like my own. Christ, blessed be Thou for having coupled me, naked against naked, upon one and the same bed, with my neighbour. Man and woman, for their sake I have renounced all modesty; I have assumed the habit of the Sister of Love, who conceals her hair beneath no headband and hides her ample figure beneath no dress. For the pleasure of her neighbour, the Sister of Love unfastens the skirt of her suit, raising one knee; her bodice, unbuttoned, slips down along her bare arms, and the straps of her brassiere appear, digging into the plump flesh of her shoulders. At her feet, the neighbour, burning with desire to take her as his mistress and clasp her between his thighs, admires her and contemplates her in every detail. Delirious as a child at heart, his lips purse greedily, his curious, sparkling eyes delight in the transparency of the short petticoat which the wound of the lovable Sister makes one suspect beneath it, and his fingers itch with intolerable tingling and irritation. Feverish and indiscreet, he clasps his companion's ankles, strokes her calves with an electric caress that makes the nylon crackle, then lifts the hem of her petticoat like a sacred cloth and gazes upon her features, now contorted, and the little gathered slip into which the Sister of Love draws her thighs, and everything, absolutely everything, so overcome is she with emotion.

It is at this moment that the amorous man often engages in conversation with the feminine part, in order to charm this most secret and exceedingly wild creature whose curly fur lies curled up inside the trousers. He gives it the names of flowers, fruits or animals, intending both to seduce it and to indulge his own appetite. 'My little pippin, my round-headed cabbage, my hairy carnation, my pussy, my downy gosling; my flat-topped mignonette, my fig, my hen's bottom, my snapdragon, my rat or my raspberry,' he whispers, so close to the coveted object that his warm breath penetrates the lingerie.

The young woman is delighted, overwhelmed by the happiness of having such respect and attention bestowed upon those shameful and painful parts which she has sometimes scratched with her fingernails during nights of anger and sleeplessness; upon that orifice so close to the anus, which she nevertheless carefully perfumes after her natural evacuations; upon that mouth, finally, which must, alas, be watered with piss many times over, as though the fire smouldering beneath this volcano might spread at any moment. Beside himself, the lover then straightens to his full height, and the Sister of Love, when no longer inexperienced in such matters, feels irresistibly drawn to turn her eyes towards her companion's fly, in order to contemplate the astonishing bulge which desire produces there. My Jesus, quite simply, I must confess to Thee that this spectacle truly makes me swoon. This swelling, this hardening, soon threatening, this fleshy will which stiffens at the approach of a woman: behold, in truth, one of the most wonderful mysteries of our humanity, which Thou hast deigned to create in Thine own image. Is there not a miracle at that moment? Is this brandished member not a sign of divinity? Yes, at that moment, Thy iron Law takes shape, Thy Justice is revealed, and the enormous Finger Thou raisest points towards the woman's belly in order to punish her for her sin. At first, delivered over to the fury of the world, the girl resists, distraught, refuses him, clenching her thighs, and fears that the crimson bludgeon will horribly tear open a wound which she had tenderly caressed throughout her adolescence.

But the man is strong. He becomes fully erect. He cries out. He strikes. It seems that lightning flashes from his barbarous member. For woman, man's law is the Law of God; he bends her like a doe whose hind legs buckle and, beneath his knees of steel, the victim's thighs are dislocated. Into the red, gaping wound he plunges His dagger; ah, Jesus! As I write this prayer, I rather think I'm there—or rather, that he is: the very dear fellow

who has plucked my flower; if I may say so, in the presence of Thy Holy Crucifix, I am now writing with only one hand, and Thou, who delightest in every spectacle, modest or immodest, knowest full well what I am fondling with my left… Indeed, Jesus in His loincloth, Jesus of blood, Jesus of nakedness, Jesus swooning upon the Cross like the Lover of the Dawn, I now know that the long Calvary of my youth, the Golgotha of Lust, was guiding me and carrying me towards the very summit of heavenly voluptuousness. Hard and long, the lance of torment pierces the vault of variegated delights… ah, ah, oh… I come to Thee, my little Jesus…"

★★★

One Saturday evening, after making love, as Jackie, Suzanne and I were taking tea, our Christian accomplice gazed at her troubled reflection in the cup she was raising to her lips. Bent forward like a solemn Madonna, she crossed her legs high beneath her silk dressing gown and swung her bare foot, its toenails painted a vivid red.

"I don't know what you will think of me," she said, "but last week I asked the parish priest for an audience. He has entrusted me with organising a group of the *Enfants de Marie.*"[5]

Astonishment spread across our faces. Jackie and I exchanged bewildered glances.

"Come now," I said, "my Suzy, this is going to be dreadful and take up an awful lot of your time. Have you really thought it through?"

"My decision is made."

She placed her cup on the little table and tossed back her hair with an air of dignity.

"Don't you understand that we live in a closed circle?" she said, indicating the disorder of the sheets and the frivolous underwear we had scattered about the divan and the chairs.

"So you're not happy with us, then?" Jackie asked, in such a sorrowful manner that she brought tears to my eyes.

[5] Marian sodalities were Catholic religious associations devoted to the Virgin Mary, particularly popular among young women and girls

"I want to devote myself to a cause. If love does not become charity, it curls up like the severed lengths of an earthworm."

"Ugh! You wicked woman!" Jackie cried, placing her hand on the slit of my pyjama trousers. "What are you trying to say?"

Red with anger, Suzanne seized her packet of Camels. She lit a cigarette and surrounded herself with a halo of smoke.

"You're both impossible. You think of nothing but your petty pleasures; you're hopelessly entangled in routine."

Irritated, I went over to Suzanne and pushed her backwards onto the divan, cigarette between her lips. Roughly, I forced her knees apart.

"Look, Jackie, at this fine rut of routine in which I'm buried up to the hilt... Since that's how things stand, I'm going to plant my standard in her in a quite unusual fashion. Did you know she's still half a virgin?"

Jackie Lalo burst out laughing, clutching her breasts.

"You see, Jackie understood me perfectly well. To her credit, I must say that nothing in the realm of eroticism is unfamiliar to her."

Confident that she was in the right, Suzanne straightened up. She threw her still-burning cigarette into the middle of the room. Passionately, she laid her slender fingers upon her lap, which I was holding open.

"Do you never think of the unfortunate virgins who suffer from the same wound? And you, darling," she said, bringing her burning lips close to mine, "are you unaware of the torments of young men whom a materialistic society condemns to exhausting games?"

Her fingers tightened in her thatch of hair.

"The love I discovered so late, I want to make known to them. I cannot enjoy my happiness unless I spread it around me."

As I listened to Suzanne, I followed with an eager eye the jerky movements of her hand.

"Remember the heroic and biblical ages, the times when the happy young maiden was delivered into the hands of her young husband. Then the divine breath swept across the world like the north-westerly wind of Galerne, of which the Ancients speak, which brought the mares of the desert and the daughters of men into heat. It is the pagans who dream of a Golden Age; but believers remember the Age of Giants..."

At these words, a groan escaped Suzanne's throat. She was thinking of some gigantic bait…

"…And of the Age of Fire, which set the human race ablaze, regardless of sex. But men began to worship fire, not the divine flame which makes women's breasts and men's virile parts swell, but the vulgar, material element that boils the cooking pot. Then came the Flood!" Suzanne cried in a voice shaken with emotion, "and modesty spread across the world like an icy ocean!"

To prolong the pleasure and safeguard my mistress's health, I seized her overly active wrist. She cried out in pain, and tears sprang from her eyelids, for the sudden drop in tension is agonising when the pulse has been racing under the influence of an idea.

"Ah! Barbarian! Barbarian!" she cried. "Dog's tail! Blood's tail! If we lay our hands on it, it's because it burns us!"

Then she threw herself at my knees, hands clasped together. Her breasts escaped from her flimsy dressing gown.

"Forgive me, my love, my guardian angel, my barley sugar, my equatorial banana!"

She tried to seize the holy-water sprinkler that was protruding from my pyjama trousers.

"Darling, give me your blessing."

"Before the blessing comes the correction," I said sternly.

"Come along, Jackie, fetch me the feather duster, and be quick about it!"

"Yes, my wolf, at once."

Jackie made her way towards the cupboard, wiggling her bottom. When she handed me the brand-new feather duster, her smile had frozen upon her lips and her blue eyes were sparkling.

Kneeling on the bedroom floor, Suzanne began to tremble from head to toe. Her colourless lips seemed to be murmuring a litany.

"Come along, assume your position!" I cried. "Saint Suzanne, present us with your martyr's backside."

Fascinated, Suzanne slowly turned round and went down on all fours, crouching low.

"Raise that beautiful behind of yours and lift up your dressing gown. We need a spectacle, don't we, Jackie?"

"Indeed we do. We certainly need a spectacle," said Jackie, who had stripped completely naked for the ceremony.

She gave Suzanne a kick in the small of her back.

"Well, my girl, are you deaf?"

Suzanne took the two sides of her purple dressing gown, which were trailing on the floor, and, bending forward in prostration, revealed her magnificent backside. This lascivious goddess awaited her punishment with as much pleasure as apprehension. She laid her forehead on the bedside rug. Her knees were spread apart, the soles of her feet exposed. In this position, the inflamed scar reopened. There was a gargling sound; the female sphincter spasmed and released a jet of blood. Bubbles of acrid foam swelled and burst in the young woman's pubic hair. Suzanne submitted to the haemorrhage. With each fresh spasm, she spread her buttocks, and thick drops ran down her white thighs, tracing fine rivulets of blood. Saint Suzanne presented the spectacle of a martyr stoned to death, but this dear beauty was simply indisposed.

"Nature has spoken and blood has flowed," I said then. "I forgive you this time. But you, Jackie, are going to wash her. Female solidarity, naturally. You understand what I mean. I mean with your tongue…"

Jackie stared at me, bewildered, mechanically fondling her breasts.

"Oh no, darling. After making love, I'm quite happy to wash her."

She curled back her greedy lip.

"Actually, I adore it. But that, I've never done…"

"All the more reason to sample this new pleasure. Personally, I can assure you that it's a delightful pastime. Besides, Suzanne loves it. Don't you, Suzy?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. Come and do it for me, my little Jackie. Oh, come! I can almost feel your pretty little mouth already."

Jackie, her fists on her hips, her fringe bristling like a battle standard, had set her face in a stubborn scowl.

"No," she said. "I don't want to."

She had barely finished speaking when I struck her squarely across the forehead, knocking a lock of blonde hair from her fringe.

Jackie Lalo began to howl with pain and fury:

"No, no and no! I won't wash her. No, no and no! I don't want to wash her."

Her doll-like face was crimson. She screamed with her eyes shut, her arms crossed, fists clenched, pulling at her breasts and thrusting them out. She was driving me mad with rage. I seized the handle with both hands. Like a woodcutter felling an oak, I struck Jackie's bare torso. She was plump. The handle of the feather duster sank into her flesh with a dull thud.

Farting loudly, Jackie fled to the four corners of the room. The cat, bristling for battle, leapt repeatedly over the divan, the overturned screen, the stools and the bidet. The cane lashed her all over, scoring her skin with long red streaks. My natural switch had grown so long and rigid that it hampered my movements; I whipped her from her knees to her navel.

Suddenly, I stretched out a foot and managed to catch Jackie between the buttocks, my big toe striking her very inferno. She gave a sort of hiccup and fell on her back, her limbs flung across the divan. I sprang upon her. The sight of my virility, in all its splendour, made me laugh. Standing over her, with both feet crushing Jackie's thighs, I delivered a series of violent blows with the switch to the delicate little bottom of the young woman, with such force that I thought I was splitting her in two lengthwise. The screams she now uttered had lost all semblance of humanity. Although Jackie was accustomed to such things, a bloody source suddenly sprang up at the bottom of this valley of tears. She murmured in a broken voice:

"Darling, darling... the washing... I'm washing her..."

I threw the feather duster to the far end of the room.

"You've got the message. That's better. Go on."

Jackie got up, grimacing with pain, and, with her legs bent into an arch, approached Suzanne, who was bathing in her own blood. Suzy was delighted by the spectacle of the ordeal. She smiled and held out her arms to her companion. Her naked body shivered, undulating with the suppleness of a serpent. Jackie went down on all fours over Suzanne and inverted herself into that arithmetical position which Pythagoras invented for the happiness of lovers. Thus, the reverse arrangement of symbolic numbers bordered on esotericism. Those who draw inspiration from it know the multiplication of pleasures and the geometrical progression of voluptuousness.

Turn after turn, the faces of the two young women disappeared from view. From time to time, they resumed their breathing and their lips, swollen and smeared with blood, seemed hungry for carnage. Now they were rubbing against one another, biting each other with groans, and, charming executioners, they slapped the partner's rump with the flat of their hands. So as not to let my hands wander over my own body, I had folded my arms and, leaning over the convulsive cheeks of my two sirens, searched in their dilated eyes for the dark clouds of a stormy horizon.

"Enough!" I suddenly cried.

I punctuated the order with a stroke of the switch.

"I hope, Jackie, that I've shown you the way. I'm going to perform Suzanne's second defloration. Go and fetch the tube you know so well."

Embarrassed, Jackie chose a tube from the medicine cabinet. She coated me with the grease it contained. The doll which suddenly slipped from her hands resembled a shiny chocolate-coated ice lolly. Jackie prepared her companion in the same way. Affectionately, she caressed her buttocks and breasts. She settled her on the divan and slipped a large cushion beneath her belly, so that her posterior stood out like a balloon.

Anxious, her eyes darting about, Suzanne nevertheless submitted meekly to these preparations. Her agile index finger busied itself in the space between. As soon as the threat became clear, the circular muscle tightened in a powerful defensive contraction, imprisoning the phalanx Jackie had inserted. The young woman murmured in a faint voice:

"Do you want to…? What are you doing, you wicked woman?"

Jackie puffed away and continued her work without unclenching her teeth. Little by little, Suzanne imagined what was coming, the purpose of this elaborate performance. Her will was broken. Her face buried in her hair, she trembled, terrified:

"My God, oh, my God, what are you going to do to me?"

Readers, my brothers, and you, my hardy sisters, who have followed me throughout this account of our burning exploits, can you imagine the delights awaiting me upon the overturned throne of this fallen queen? Like a funeral pope, served in this office by a female deacon, I knelt behind Suzanne, firmly holding her head and guided by Jackie's hand. The demonic blonde, convinced of the importance of her role, carefully inspected the solution of continuity, gleaming with blood and pus, which Suzanne offered

us, gaping. A wise woman, she seemed absorbed by the thrust of a needle, while the tip of her tongue brushed against her upper lip. Machiavellian, she played first with her weapon of flesh upon the smooth banks which immediately quivered with an innocent vanity. Suzanne stiffened, shuddered, and gaped like a fish at the hook. For a moment, the two accomplices prolonged this illusion, a fixed smile upon their faces. I remained impassive, my torso upright, while Jackie skated at full speed over the cabalistic signs of her burning chariot. Suzanne began to collapse. With one hand I slapped her loins to keep her upright; with the other, I caressed the blonde curls of Jackie.

"Come along..." I said simply, as I withdrew.

Conspiratorially, she pointed, both hands clenched, accusing the impetus. Horror, desire and voluptuousness, three notes rang out, strangely discordant, from our opposing throats, prolonging themselves in a savage point of organ music. For an instant, mastered by the ecstatic blare, carried away to the very edge, I experienced in that place the vertigo of the depths which it alone could provoke. I struck Jackie's nape, slapped Suzanne's buttocks. Now, the hard virile member I had created, whose *orbite de Gabès*[6] was tormenting my sheath, I exhorted, invited to the movement of beautiful lovers, to thrust into women the piston I had launched into this unknown tunnel. The victim's shrill siren filled our ears. Stretched out, this woman struggled, but did nothing except open herself to receive the assault. At the open window, the hands of her rival, omnipresent, carrying rage and madness, watched over and spent themselves like those of a factory worker at her machines. Lower down, she revived ancient pleasures which the procession of today's barbarian had left behind on its polished rails. Finding me, her gesture brushed the black curls of her tender parts and, choosing infinity, she then fashioned a symmetrical hollow to the one I was boring. Tenderness fixed a jet of steam in my heart. From nothingness to nothingness, the virile being of sex was forged in victory and freedom. From the abyss, he carried upon his cable of steel the gondolas laden with heavy pleasures which, by some miracle, the companion of the horizon emptied all at once, like the gourds of human kindness. Beneath the opaque buffer, Suzanne had moved. The ovarian glow was the price of this torment. It had just shone forth, the very essence of force and rape. The firedamp explosion blasted

[6] *l'orbite de Gabès.* An allusion or expression I am unfamiliar with. [*Translator's note.*]

open the anus, burst the tubercles of uncertain humours and cast us back, our limbs mangled, the only surviving fragments of throbbing love, into the shroud of ecstatic catastrophes.

★★★

The militant work Suzanne Beautrin carried out in establishing the "Enfants de Marie" attracted the benevolent attention of the Archbishop. He entrusted her with an important responsibility in the diocese and with organising certain retreats, or "recollections", in one of those pious Houses in the Rue de Babylone.

At the beginning of this apostolic undertaking, Jackie and I were blinded by a vulgar incredulity which prevented us from understanding either its source or the erotic genius itself in its most immediate applications. Can we now recall without shame the little insults, the teasing and the bitter reproaches with which we once overwhelmed that beautiful soul? Now that she is no longer with us, that she has taken refuge, dare we at least hope for her, upon the bosom of Jesus whom she adored, is it in lamentation that we mingle our tears, pressing our breasts, our hips and our knees together, as we utter her venerated name?

This Catholic Venus had, moreover, not been long in making us understand the deeper significance of a mission which we were soon to undertake alongside her. One Sunday afternoon, at teatime, Suzanne Beautrin knocked at the bedroom door. We were waiting for her, Jackie and I. We had put a few microgroove records on the turntable, tangos and the like… and, exhilarated by this music, we were in the mood to plant a pair of horns on the unblemished brow of our fair friend.

Suzanne came in, holding the hand of a sixteen-year-old girl, whose plaited hair hung down like garlands over her slender chest. The adolescent wore a rather short flowered dress and natural-leather moccasins. I nevertheless noted the delicacy of her chin and the discreet curve of her lips, which suggested a shy femininity. Although Jackie and I had not been excessively proper in our behaviour, the girl blushed as she entered the room and bowed to us with awkward deference. Suzanne, greatly excited, seized her by the waist and pulled her forward.

"I'd like you to meet my friend Isabelle. She's full of talent. She sings, plays the piano and has a remarkable aptitude for choral singing. Don't

lower your eyes like that, my dear. But perhaps you'd like to let us admire those long, curly eyelashes of yours?" she asked, laughing.

Isabelle raised her beautiful brown eyes towards her. One could detect in her a certain affection, mingled with admiration, such as those young minds often inspire in the leaders who have the merit of wishing to ignore the particular problems of adolescence. They are right. The mutation brought about by puberty and the dividing line that people draw between adults and adolescents are purely abstract notions. It is a sociological category resulting from a decadent evolution, and one that will disappear along with the factors of alienation that gave rise to it. Maturity has no age, and those who deny it to youth are condemning it to a kind of precocious senility. Isabelle's slender body, with its generous proportions, made one forget her mediocre height, which her high heels corrected to perfection.

I approached her and placed my lips upon her icy hand.

"I bet," I said to her, "that the rosy dimples in your cheeks are less cold than this hand."

She quickly withdrew it.

"Really, is it so cold?" she asked anxiously. "I must have poor circulation, there's no doubt about it."

Suzanne put her arm around her and drew her against her breast.

"Dear Isabelle, your little heart is charmingly capricious. I can feel it struggling against my breasts. It is moved and doesn't know how it ought to beat."

She turned towards us.

"Did you know that my friend was eagerly awaiting an introduction? I've told her about the affection that binds us together and the happy freedom of our relationship. Her father and mother treat her like a servant, who must earn her keep but is allowed no pleasures of her own."

Suzanne sighed as her companion rested her forehead against her shoulder.

"Her youth is much like mine once was; but now I am here beside her… You were dancing, I believe? Why interrupt such a delightful pastime? I'll take advantage of the occasion to give Isabelle her first tango lesson."

Jackie switched on the record-player while I pushed the divan back against the wall. At the first notes of *Tango Bleu*,[7] I gave a signal with my hands, and Jackie's hips came towards me, her arms open. What a splendid woman! She was a dancer without equal, although she was rather generously built. I had often observed on the dance floor that a certain fullness of figure in no way hindered our female companions from executing graceful movements. Without wishing to detract from the beauty, the number of points of which can be measured by the curve of the waist, it is nevertheless certain that, in these contests, slim women have less ease of movement than those whose strategic positions are veritable strongholds. Technique has nothing to do with it; rather, it is the bone, whose stiffness is appreciated only by the ladies, and then in a very particular locality. On the contrary, an abundance of curves, provided the dancer wears them boldly and consents to lend them to the male partner's embrace, ensures a firmer centre of gravity, which the couple maintains by entwining their thighs. It is a plumb line suspended between their legs, whose swing increases with the excitement of the partners.

"Don't you find it rather awkward that she's brought that kid along?" Jackie whispered.

"Don't rack your brains about it," I told her. "Just let things take their course. Suzanne knows what she's doing."

Jackie pressed herself against me. I felt every inch of her body, from her ankles to her temple. It is only in dancing that two beings experience the sensation of becoming wholly one. In its movements, carnal love is syncopated, arrhythmic. It is a war waged by lovers, and the peace they finally achieve, which they share with voluptuous delight, is experienced as the memory of an act that bears little resemblance to it.

This explains, to some extent, the disgust that some people feel after having consummated the act. They are metaphysical minds, the "absent-minded" ones of love. A veritable abyss separates, in effect, knowing how to love from knowing how to enjoy. As for me, I am one of those hunters who delight in the mist-shrouded field and who, for all that, do not forgo

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[7] *Tango Bleu* is a French popular song and tango recorded in December 1952 by singer Tino Rossi. It is a French adaptation of *Blue Tango*, a 1951 American instrumental hit composed by Leroy Anderson. The French lyrics were written by Jacques Plante.

the steaming jugged hare awaiting them at supper. I am grateful for the pleasures of the belly, but do not suffer from its heaviness. These temporal gymnastics, in which lovers risk breaking their backs, undergoes a marvellous transformation amid the orchestral flourishes. Under the pretext of a simple tempo, to the accompaniment of a conventional folk rhythm, lovers' legs relax, their heels beat out the call to the springboard of the cadences, and the illusion of eternity holds two hearts beneath its beating wing. When dancing, neither man nor woman is concerned with union: there is no obstacle course to negotiate, no breathless dash towards an exhausted finishing post. Ecstasy is given, and partakes of a higher force which is the very essence of music. For him and for her, it is the In-Itself of voluptuousness.

It goes without saying that I am not advocating chastity in choreography, since dance is, for me, a way of being of love. It is precisely the worthy apostles of 'pure dance' who pervert it, substituting it for the most legitimate of acts. *Id est ejaculatio in accordionibus.*[8] If it is true that dance constitutes a parallel copulation, then love proper represents a leap in quality, a rotation in space, the absolute exhaustion of quantitative series.

Jackie had opened herself up. Like a paste of love, a molten statue in which I moulded my own existence, I began shaping her with both hands. Between my arms and thighs, she dissolved into a world of absolute pleasure. In the maternal embrace of his partner, the dancer is reborn. He comes into the world a second time. How strange that this woman, who abandons herself, swoons and annihilates herself, should thus give birth, in a state of complete unconsciousness, to a dominant adult male, whose description as a "man of the world" is thereby justified! Such is the way of things. It is the moment of truth, to borrow the expression of bullfighting aficionados. In this game, where the death blow is excluded but the assault is incessant, the protagonists exchange their attributes. The man is both matador and bull, the woman a sacred cow and a horned pansy. The couple is androgynous, and the dancer's petticoat sketches out "veronicas".

With her back aching, Jackie pivoted nimbly on one foot. The whirl sent her skirt flying up to her buttocks, pinched beneath the billowing triangle of her briefs. I seized them in both hands.

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[8] Literally, "that is, ejaculation in accordions". A mock-Latin expression coined by the author.

"Do you want to…?" Jackie whispered, her eyes closed. "The kid will see us."

"Look," I said simply.

Suzanne held the teenager close to her body, her slender waist yielding to her arm. Her wild gaze lit up the cheeks and flushed neckline of the girl she was initiating. In her instructional fervour, Suzanne had unfastened her wrap skirt and continued her dance class in a pink leotard and black stockings. This outfit, which some might describe as skimpy, contrasted with the young girl's modest attire, and as the woman's attributes and charms were confidently displayed, they gave Suzanne a certain ascendancy over her pupil. Like a beginner, Isabelle danced with her feet too far apart. She seemed hesitant to entrust the slender curve of her leg to her teacher's lap. Her downcast eyes contemplated the mysterious nest where nylon lingerie rustled. Docile, she followed the movements of this disturbing dance and allowed herself to be led to greater pleasures.

"Tee-la, la-lee, la-la," Suzanne hummed, marking the rhythm of the tango.

She exaggerated her hip movement for Isabelle, teaching her the step. When the rhythm quickened, inviting the dancers into the gliding step amateurs begin like felines, Suzanne loosened the pressure of her hand on Isabelle's back; she gave her space, lifted her elbow proudly, delighted to dominate — and perhaps soon to possess. Her thigh, bold and burning, darted into her pupil's crotch, lifting the flowered dress and the budding mound beneath, like so many virgin mortgages. These ardent, lascivious figures drew sighs from the tender Isabelle.

Suzanne placed small kisses on her pupil's braids.

"You are astonishingly supple. That is essential. A good rider, you see, must — if I dare say — have a light thigh. She must submit, bend, melt, merge into the arms of the one who guides her."

She stopped dancing and squeezed Isabelle violently against her chest. I heard a gasp in her throat, one I knew well. To hide her emotion, she gave a nervous laugh.

"Little darling, with you I embrace all my youth, my solitude, the despair of an entire sex…"

I thought she was on the verge of tears.

"Shall we try a few rumbas now?" I asked. "What do you think, Suzanne?"

"Gladly, my dear. It will be a change. Isabelle must learn to distinguish rhythms easily."

She gave me a melancholy smile.

"I'm becoming gloomy, aren't I?"

"Nonsense — Isabelle came here for a cheerful afternoon, not to listen to your laments."

The rumba drummer's sticks preluded the saxophone melody. Jackie, hands on hips, advanced toward me, accentuating the belly dance and the sway of her buttocks. Before we touched, the flannel pants betrayed my pleasure.

"You're absolutely right," said Suzanne.

She took one of Isabelle's braids in each hand and, hold-ing her at arm's length, mimed a devilish rumba for the young girl. In the lewd movement of the exhibition, her magnificent legs, moulded by black stockings, seemed to catch the bluish reflections of the tropical stars; her wide hips, dislocated at the whim of the pantomime, seemed to welcome and advocate senseless coitus.

"How beautiful you are," whispered Isabelle, her dilated pupils sparkling with excitement.

"For you, for you, for you," sang Suzanne, shouting.

She thrashed about, stamped her feet, and shook her breasts with her bare biceps.

"Suzanne, oh, my dear Suzanne!" cried the young girl.

They embraced passionately. Isabelle suddenly abandoned the modest manners that had been holding her back.

There was a kind of escalation in the hysterical agitation of these two girls, a disorder that only the relentless desire of men could organize. A blissful and anxious expression had settled on Isabelle's face like a mask. Her delicate, shy smile, stretched thin, froze in the obtuse acquiescence of a virgin about to be deflowered. She no longer shied away from cheek-to-cheek contact; sweat beaded on her temples and the eager, jerky movement of her buttocks responded awkwardly to the serpentine belly that inflamed hers.

In the distance, beyond Issy-les-Moulineaux, the gray crowd of clouds left the stadium of a Sunday sky. Almost horizontal rays pierced through my companions' light clothing, exposing them immodestly. While dancing, I let my pants slide down. Now my bare chest, arms, and thighs shivered under the gaze of the young women. Jackie's head dis-appeared under her dress in a graceful movement of her arms that stripped her bare like a domestic victory. To the rhythm of the rumba, my underpants swelled and stared at granite forms; little by little, my lover's garter belt drew closer, undulating below my navel, finding contact with a squeak of latex. Our arms closed around each other like a wave crash-ing over a reef, enveloping us in infinity.

I know of no situation more exhilarating and desperate than that of a couple entangled to the sound of rumba. Ancient tragedy has taken refuge in their embrace. At the musette, no one waits for Godot. While modern theatre and poetry are in the hands of spoiled brats who enjoy kicking the sandcastles of their childhood, Parisian dancers have not given up the wild games of love and death for a plate of lentils. It is a birthright that they claim for themselves, that of rut, recognized and curbed under the multifaceted ball, whose arc breaks down according to a celestial mechanism.

Between Jackie and me rolled the club of a stone age. From right to left, it was exorcism, a patience that this magi-cal thing still tolerated. Vertically, the plowshare cut through its brake, finding and losing the meaning of an emp-ty nature, of a furrow it could not dig. Soon, Jackie was no longer in control of herself. She fell back, presenting her bra to my breath; such are the sails swollen by the storm. Dark carmine, the male spindle escaped from her panties, frantically rubbing against the nylon hymen; seeking shelter, it lifted the garter belt.

A piercing scream made me turn my head. Suzanne had just pulled up the young girl's flowered dress. On Isabelle's slender thighs, wide pink elastic bands pulled and distorted the garters of her stockings, feminine attributes that clashed with her virginal skin. The dance teacher's slender fingers, greedy and quick, disappeared, then moved beneath the triangle of white cotton. Isabelle's high-pitched cries rushed out, a terrible, false soprano at the first touch; then they be-came hoarse, syncopated, muffled by the sensual lips of the teacher.

Isabelle lay completely naked on the sofa. Her braids curled around her young breasts, whose pale, bristling buds would soon darken, like flowers

turned upside down in the buttonholes of her lips. With long strokes, Suzanne's caressing hands encouraged her nonchalant beauty. The teacher had gotten rid of the annoying panties. Her bodysuit draped over her lower back as she crawled on her knees across the white river of sheets. Like a curious nymph, Suzanne seemed to swim and inquire about the adolescent Ophelia. Then she showed her her train. Her forehead resting on the bed, she observed, in the curve of her thighs, the distraught face of the young girl, whose wide eyes slowly scanned a ravine of bloody arbutus trees.

"Touch it!..."

The young girl stretched out her trembling hand toward this woman who, for her, was fulfilling her destiny. Her fin-gers closed, then opened again, inhibited at the edge of the abyss.

"Go on... go on... touch it," whispered Suzanne, drawing out the words intensely.

Isabelle sat up slightly. Her braids slid down her body; her smooth belly wrinkled above the downy bush. She smiled mischievously, revealing her pussy teeth, and suddenly, her fingers clenched in a spray, she plunged her hand up to the wrist into the funeral chapel. Suzanne screamed, rolled over on the couch, trapping Isabelle's hand between her closed thighs. The Child of Mary had taken her at her word. She was working the wolf trap, for often, such is the trick of the one who thought she was taking and moans the woman who thought she was teaching. Now that she had her way, the girl had no intention of giving up. Fiery and courageous, this agile doe pursued her mistress, brilliantly taking ad-vantage of the surprising positions offered by the wounded tigress.

While Jackie stripped off her last piece of clothing, I approached the furious couple. A few inches from Isabelle's face, I exposed myself. The young girl turned pale. Tears sprang from her eyes. Then, completely unpredictably, she let out a brief snicker. Between Suzanne's legs, her arm went into a frenzy.

"A gentleman..." she said in a dull, unrecognisable voice. "I'd never seen a gentleman before..."

I was even closer. Isabelle stuck out her schoolgirl tongue at me. It was rough, coming in little bursts like that of a cat tempted by a spoonful of jam into forbidden caresses. When she began to purr, I saw that my Jackie was returning the pleasure and giving Isabelle her first loving grooming.

The music of feminine pleasures rose to my nostrils like the sacred smoke of a holocaust. From the depths of the or-chestra, the swooning gazes of my lascivious performers con-verged on the club, whose majestic sway set the pace for passion and regulated the transports of these damned women. I heard them gasping, each lending a hand, a knee, or a tongue, all aspiring in unison to the final crescendo, the con-cert of which intoxicated me. It was at that moment that I grabbed a large bottle of rum from the nightstand. I popped the cork and poured a stream of alcohol over these writhing forms, whose inviting laps split open and begged in spasms for a sip of fire. When they suffocated, I kicked them onto the bedside rug, where, obedient to the male, they knelt in a row. At my command, they spread their torsos, crushing their breasts against the mattress, and presented their behinds for inspection. Blinded by their hair, they waited, shivering, for me to take them roughly. With their buttocks poised and protruding, their thighs spread apart, Suzanne, Jackie and Isabelle stamped their feet, ea-gerly awaiting their turn, tense and disciplined.

Without any regard for precedence or pre-established order, at my whim, I would lean over and make a pass.

I would shout to the chosen one of the moment:

"Your turn!" and I would give her a jolt.

"Your turn!" and I would take her in succession.

"Your turn!" and I would give her a shove.

"Your turn!" and she would make a mess of it.

"Your turn!" and she would piss herself.

"Your turn!" and she would think she was a monad.

"Your turn!" and she wriggled like a sea bream.

"Your turn!" and I rushed for the Olympics.

"Your turn!" and I turned the mayonnaise.

"Your turn!" and she retaliated against the jostling.

"Your turn!" because I was hard for this parade, and from these three onions, I made marmalade.

The cries of joy and roars of pleasure gave way to insults, screams of an-ger and stabbing pain when, with a sharp snap, the enormous probe was withdrawn, torn from the abyss it had suddenly set ablaze, leaving it bereft

of its atomic radiation. I imagined myself a scientist of the New Age, commanding the great organs of the cyclotron and subtly manipulating the chain reaction on the quarterdeck of a particle accelerator. The movements became faster and more numerous. I dreamed of some ultimate harmony, not in Sodom, nor Gomorrah, nor Hiroshima, but in the ultraviolet mushroom cloud of Paris, the City of Light. Isabelle was about to give in. I grabbed her breasts with both hands, green reinettes where her braids were tangled like vines.

"Your turn!" I cried. Sobbing tigresses.

Suzanne and Jackie pounced on the couple we formed. They tore us apart with their claws and teeth; then, straddling me, one on my neck, the other on my back, they joined in the salvos of honour with which I struck down the disintegrated girl.

CHAPTER IV

At the end of a four-day retreat organised by Suzanne Beautrin for the elite militants of the Paris region, my mistress was apprehended by the police. They were waiting for her on the pavement in the rue de Babylone. A chief wearing dark glasses, accompanied by several assistants, approached the buzzing swarm of the "Enfants de Marie". He pointed with his finger to the silver-haired mane floating above the young girls like the standard of this confraternity. These gentlemen elbowed their way through and snapped handcuffs onto Suzanne's delicate wrists. Her hands were dead, her morning and evening hands. They were dead, for fruit and fish, for moon and sun. This woman could not survive the loss of such hands.

In the weeks following the arrest, there was, among the "Enfants de Marie", a veritable uprising of young women brandishing their bucklers. The archbishop organised virginal delegations whose ardent members attempted to force the bolts of La Santé prison. In vain. The harpies vented their fury upon their superiors and hid their faces before the weaker sex. Moreover, the accusation was a serious one, supported by witness statements whose venality was equalled only by their frigidity. They claimed to have seen, they said, in the woods of the Bois de Boulogne, Suzanne turning her most precious charges upside down.

It was a plot against the Faith. Suzanne abhorred those public places where vulgarity was flaunted. For her, the amorous mystique formed part of a providential design, and I never saw her transgress the austere principles of contemplation in the privacy of her room. What could one do against such witnesses? The Gospel triumphs through its martyrs, but secular law is guaranteed by informers. If these witnesses, ensconced in courtrooms like the sole possible intermediaries between the law and punishment, arrogate to themselves the task of reforming morals, they most often plead the cause of repentant voyeurs, and all is lost for the unfortunate person they accuse.

Suzanne Beautrin committed suicide in her cell. She had stolen from the infirmary an ampoule file, but the appalling logic of the death she inferred

from this trifling object escaped her gaolers. The warder who discovered her body was admitted to a psychiatric hospital, for a long time refusing, in his deranged state and professional memory, to classify the dreadful recollection. It seemed to him that the young woman had received a nocturnal visit in her cell from a criminal sadist. Birds of prey of this magnitude were chained beneath the same roof. Nevertheless, the thickness of the walls, the deep pits of the inner courtyards and the feline patrols which the guards multiplied in this zoo of crime seemed, until then, to guarantee the lives of the prisoners and even the purity of the criminal races. Medieval sorceresses, whom the new dynamism of the "Enfants de Marie" had once torn from their slumber and shaken from their epileptic trances at the end of a dry ditch, now stood beneath the porches of churches. From door to door, their fetid breath spread the news that the beautiful possessed woman, the satyr woman, the magnificent dyke of the holy-water fonts, had endured rotten love and the supreme vengeance of the incubus who ruled her. The vampire woman had welcomed him between her thighs, only to find herself in turn vampirised upon the straw of her prison cell: such was the will of God.

The blood of my adored Suzanne had frozen upon the walls and ceiling, as though the scythe of the Grim Reaper had harvested a jungle of purple with its blade. Pieces of feminine finery, stained and caked with vermin, lay on the floor and hung from the bars of her cell. The tin vessel which the administration had provided for the natural functions of the prisoner had overturned onto the straw of the torn mattress, and the stiffened nape of the stripped corpse had rounded against the neck of an amphora.

When the warder pushed open the cell door, the bolt resisted. He forced it with a blow of his shoulder, and Suzanne's foot slipped into a foul puddle, bringing down her stiff knee and frozen thigh. Thus she presented her obtuse crotch at the threshold of freedom. A final living stream began to gurgle, a violet cascade which washed over the enormous wound in her mutilated thighs. From the rectal region, in the middle of the abdomen, the fluid continuity of a dreadful wound laid bare her most intimate nature. Between the hardened pores of her breasts, whose dark nipples had been severed, a cut of red had traced a line of division as far as the abdominal wound. Around her waist of white marble, a furrow of the same nature,

narrow and deep, encircled her like a belt and crossed at the navel the atrocious longitudinal gash. Thus, in her very flesh, she bore the crucifix of her solitude and despair.

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Ah! Suzanne, Saint Suzanne, why was I not the gaoler who knew your naked body, offered up to obscene death, plunged for a time into madness! It was while listening, two months later, and drinking away my grief over a glass of Beaujolais in a bistro on the Boulevard Saint-Jacques, that I was able to piece together the scattered and savage hours of your agony. Yet it seems to me now that I can see you with your eyes wide open, fixed upon the bloodstained tiles, frozen in a sardonic grimace, the sublime avowal of a suicide you had contemplated as a final orgasm.

Your veins were open, your arms outstretched upon the flagstones. In your clenched fists you held, in your right hand, the steel file, thirsting for blood, and in your left, oh beloved unfortunate woman, allow me to reveal to you what your fingers were gripping! I know that your breast swelled with apostolic anger when someone described the woman's noble parts as "shameful regions". This irritable and erect apprentice, whose mystical and ecstatic devotion you had wished to cultivate, you had wanted to caress, to crush in a hand which, for so many years, had known how to fondle it. Your onanistic science withdrew before mystical acupuncture, and it was thus, by your own hand, that you sought to cross the gates of death. Upon your breast, you had traced the cross of supreme renunciation. You had severed your veins. Then, drenched in blood, streaming forth, you had sullied yourself with the nakedness of your woman's body. In a hysterical rumba, a mad recluse, you displayed yourself and exposed your wounds. You had battered the walls of your dungeon with the contempt of a life laid waste; you had scattered your rags and your underclothes, those flimsy veils which no enlightened man should ever have had to lift. You had defied everything. Death had come to strike you in the groin. Slowly, you had collapsed upon the straw. In the grandiose delirium of an ultimate desire, the bells of evil had begun to ring, a funereal knell in a celestial setting.

And so it was, my Suzanne, that you were mutilated, ever more profoundly, ever more cruelly. Like a sheaf of sparks, your senses had been stripped bare; the grey flames of nothingness had covered your pupils with

ashes. For the first time, the scourge of voluptuousness had not stained your loins. It was death that had entangled you in the arms of its octopus. In truth, ineffable Suzanne, you were sacrificed like a saint, but you were slaughtered like a sow.