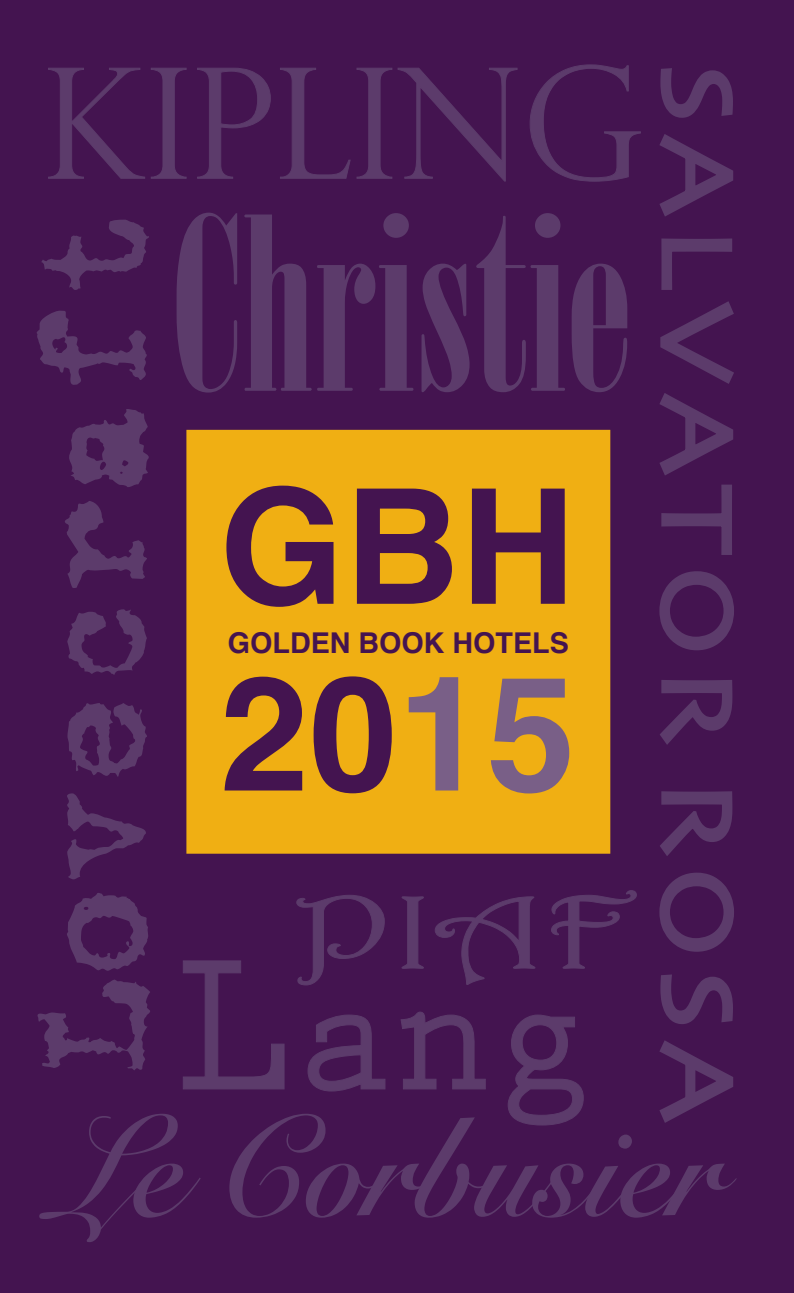
KIPLING
SALVATOR ROSA
Christie
Lovecraft
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GOLDEN BOOK HOTELS
2015
PIAF
Lang
Le Corbusier

Whoever has had the pleasure of spending a vacation in the "friendly" company of a good book knows the marvelous magic of losing track of the boundary between experience in first person and that acquired through reading.

Remembrance of a vacation in these cases transports us back to the book that gave it inspiration. Reading-matter that is fascinating and thought provoking renders us more sensitive, reflective, and ready to enjoy to the limit every detail of our stay away from home. Our journey also becomes an inner journey in this way.

The Golden Book Hotel Association is formed of a select group of companies operating in the tourist sector. These companies have chosen to promote their image by means of an elegant gesture: the gift of a book to their guests. The Association's members share the view that Tourism largely signifies Culture, and that attention to detail is an expression of qualified hospitality.

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KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling

Bombay, 1865 - London, 1936

Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, India, on 30 December 1865. In 1870, he was taken back to England to stay with a foster family in Southsea and then to go to boarding school in Devon. In 1882, he returned to India and worked as a journalist, writing poetry and fiction in his spare time. Books such as Plain Tales from the Hills *(1888) gained success in England, and in 1889 he went to live in London. In 1892, he married Caroline Balestier, the sister of an American friend, and the couple moved to Vermont in the United States, where her family lived. Their two daughters were born there and Kipling wrote* The Jungle Book *(1894). In 1896, a quarrel with his wife's family prompted Kipling to move back to England and he settled with his own family in Sussex. His son John was born in 1897. By now Kipling had become an immensely popular writer and poet for children and adults.*

His books included Stalky and Co. *(1899),* Kim *(1901) and* Puck of Pook's Hill *(1906). He turned down many honours in his lifetime, including a knighthood and the poet laureateship, but in 1907, he accepted the Nobel Prize for Literature, the first English author to be so honoured. In 1902, Kipling bought a 17th century house called Bateman's in East Sussex where he lived for the rest of his life. He also travelled extensively, including repeated trips to South Africa in the winter months. In 1915, his son, John, went missing in action while serving with the Irish Guards in the Battle of Loos during World War One. He died on 18 January 1936 and is buried at Westminster Abbey.*

150°

My Own True Ghost Story

FROM THE PHANTOM 'RICKSHAW
AND OTHER EERIE TALES (1888)

There are, in this land, ghosts who take the form of fat, cold, pobby corpses, and hide in trees near the roadside till a traveler passes. Then they drop upon his neck and remain. There are also terrible ghosts of women who have died in child-bed. These wander along the pathways at dusk, or hide in the crops near a village, and call seductively. But to answer their call is death in this world and the next. Their feet are turned backward that all sober men may recognize them. There are ghosts of little children who have been thrown into wells. These haunt well curbs and the fringes of jungles, and wail under the stars, or catch women by the wrist and beg to be taken up and carried. These and the corpse ghosts, however, are only vernacular articles and do not attack Sahibs. No native ghost has yet been authentically reported to have frightened an Englishman; but many English ghosts have scared the life out of both white and black.

Nearly every other Station owns a ghost. There are

said to be two at Simla, not counting the woman who blows the bellows at Syree bungalow on the Old Road; Mussoorie has a house haunted of a very lively Thing; a White Lady is supposed to do night-watchman round a house in Lahore; Dalhousie says that one of her houses "repeats" on autumn evenings all the incidents of a horrible horse-and-precipice accident; Murree has a merry ghost, and, now that she has been swept by cholera, will have room for a sorrowful one; there are Officers' Quarters in Mian Mir whose doors open without reason, and whose furniture is guaranteed to creak, not with the heat of June but with the weight of Invisibles who come to lounge in the chairs; Peshawur possesses houses that none will willingly rent; and there is something—not fever—wrong with a big bungalow in Allahabad. The older Provinces simply bristle with haunted houses, and march phantom armies along their main thoroughfares.

Some of the bungalows on the Grand Trunk Road have handy little cemeteries in their compound—witnesses to the "changes and chances of this mortal life" in the days when men drove from Calcutta to the Northwest. These bungalows are objectionable places to put up in. They are generally very old, always dirty, while the *khansamah* is as ancient as the bungalow. He either chatters senilely, or falls into the long trances of age. In both moods he is useless. If you get angry with him, he refers to some Sahib dead and buried these thirty years, and says that when he was in that

Sahib's service not a *khansamah* in the Province could touch him. Then he jabbers and mows and trembles and fidgets among the dishes, and you repent of your irritation.

In these bungalows, ghosts are most likely to be found, and when found, they should be made a note of. Not long ago it was my business to live in bungalows. I never inhabited the same house for three nights running, and grew to be learned in the breed. I lived in Government-built ones with red brick walls and rail ceilings, an inventory of the furniture posted in every room, and an excited snake at the threshold to give welcome. I lived in "converted" ones—old houses officiating as bungalows—where nothing was in its proper place and there wasn't even a fowl for dinner. I lived in second-hand palaces where the wind blew through open-work marble tracery just as uncomfortably as through a broken pane. I lived in bungalows where the last entry in the visitors' book was fifteen months old, and where they slashed off the curry-kid's head with a sword. It was my good luck to meet all sorts of men, from sober traveling missionaries and deserters flying from British Regiments, to drunken loafers who threw whisky bottles at all who passed; and my still greater good fortune just to escape a maternity case. Seeing that a fair proportion of the tragedy of our lives out here acted itself in bungalows, I wondered that I had met no ghosts. A ghost that would voluntarily hang about a bungalow would be mad of course; but so many men have died

mad in bungalows that there must be a fair percentage of lunatic ghosts.

In due time I found my ghost, or ghosts rather, for there were two of them.

We will call the bungalow Katmal bungalow. But that was the smallest part of the horror. A man with a sensitive hide has no right to sleep in bungalows. He should marry. Katmal bungalow was old and rotten and unrepaired. The floor was of worn brick, the walls were filthy, and the windows were nearly black with grime. It stood on a bypath largely used by native Sub-Deputy Assistants of all kinds, from Finance to Forests; but real Sahibs were rare. The *khansamah*, who was nearly bent double with old age, said so.

When I arrived, there was a fitful, undecided rain on the face of the land, accompanied by a restless wind, and every gust made a noise like the rattling of dry bones in the stiff toddy palms outside. The *khansamah* completely lost his head on my arrival. He had served a Sahib once. Did I know that Sahib? He gave me the name of a well-known man who has been buried for more than a quarter of a century, and showed me an ancient daguerreotype of that man in his prehistoric youth. I had seen a steel engraving of him at the head of a double volume of Memoirs a month before, and I felt ancient beyond telling.

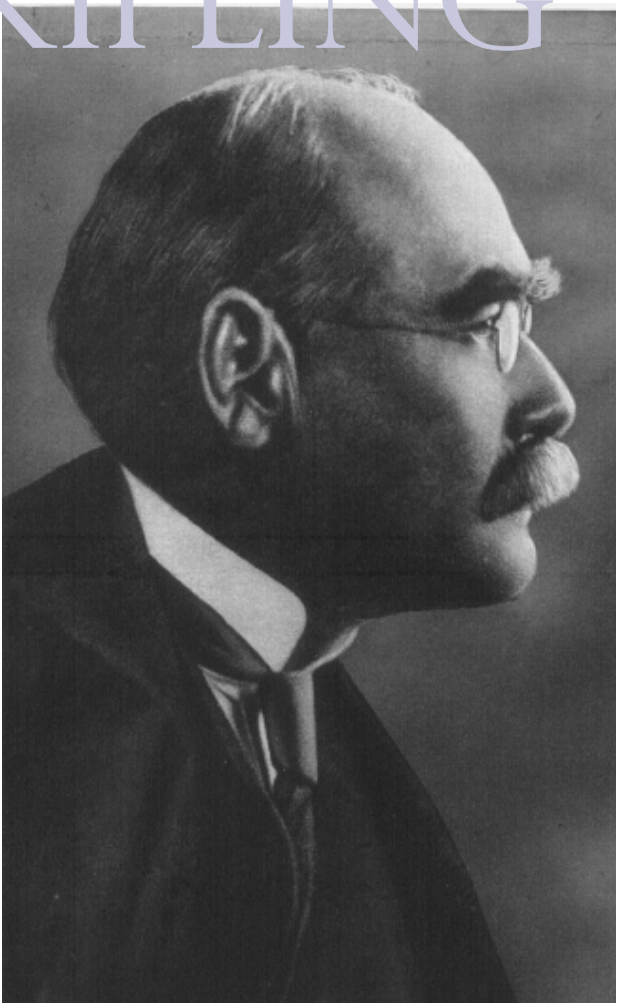
The day shut in and the *khansamah* went to get me food. He did not go through the pretense of calling it "*khana*"—man's victuals. He said "*ratub*," and that means, among other things, "grub"—dog's rations.

There was no insult in his choice of the term. He had forgotten the other word, I suppose.

While he was cutting up the dead bodies of animals, I settled myself down, after exploring the bungalow. There were three rooms, beside my own, which was a corner kennel, each giving into the other through dingy white doors fastened with long iron bars. The bungalow was a very solid one, but the partition walls of the rooms were almost jerry-built in their flimsiness. Every step or bang of a trunk echoed from my room down the other three, and every footfall came back tremulously from the far walls. For this reason I shut the door. There were no lamps—only candles in long glass shades. An oil wick was set in the bathroom.

For bleak, unadulterated misery that bungalow was the worst of the many that I had ever set foot in. There was no fireplace, and the windows would not open; so a brazier of charcoal would have been useless. The rain and the wind splashed and gurgled and moaned round the house, and the toddy palms rattled and roared. Half a dozen jackals went through the compound singing, and a hyena stood afar off and mocked them. A hyena would convince a Sadducee of the Resurrection of the Dead—the worst sort of Dead. Then came the *ratub*—a curious meal, half native and half English in composition—with the old *khansamah* babbling behind my chair about dead and gone English people, and the wind-blown candles playing shadow-bo-peep with the bed and the mosquito-curtains. It was just the sort of dinner and evening to make a man

KIPLING



think of every single one of his past sins, and of all the others that he intended to commit if he lived.

Sleep, for several hundred reasons, was not easy. The lamp in the bath-room threw the most absurd shadows into the room, and the wind was beginning to talk nonsense.

Just when the reasons were drowsy with blood-sucking I heard the regular—"Let-us-take-and-heave-him-over" grunt of doolie-bearers in the compound. First one doolie came in, then a second, and then a third. I heard the doolies dumped on the ground, and the shutter in front of my door shook. "That's some one trying to come in," I said. But no one spoke, and I persuaded myself that it was the gusty wind. The shutter of the room next to mine was attacked, flung back, and the inner door opened. "That's some Sub-Deputy Assistant," I said, "and he has brought his friends with him. Now they'll talk and spit and smoke for an hour."

But there were no voices and no footsteps. No one was putting his luggage into the next room. The door shut, and I thanked Providence that I was to be left in peace. But I was curious to know where the doolies had gone. I got out of bed and looked into the darkness. There was never a sign of a doolie. Just as I was getting into bed again, I heard, in the next room, the sound that no man in his senses can possibly mistake—the whir of a billiard ball down the length of the slates when the striker is stringing for break. No other sound is like it. A minute afterwards there was another whir, and I

got into bed. I was not frightened—indeed I was not. I was very curious to know what had become of the doolies. I jumped into bed for that reason.

Next minute I heard the double click of a cannon and my hair sat up. It is a mistake to say that hair stands up. The skin of the head tightens and you can feel a faint, prickly, bristling all over the scalp. That is the hair sitting up.

There was a whir and a click, and both sounds could only have been made by one thing—a billiard ball. I argued the matter out at great length with myself; and the more I argued the less probable it seemed that one bed, one table, and two chairs—all the furniture of the room next to mine—could so exactly duplicate the sounds of a game of billiards. After another cannon, a three-cushion one to judge by the whir, I argued no more. I had found my ghost and would have given worlds to have escaped from that bungalow. I listened, and with each listen the game grew clearer. There was whir on whir and click on click. Sometimes there was a double click and a whir and another click. Beyond any sort of doubt, people were playing billiards in the next room. And the next room was not big enough to hold a billiard table!

Between the pauses of the wind I heard the game go forward—stroke after stroke. I tried to believe that I could not hear voices; but that attempt was a failure.

Do you know what fear is? Not ordinary fear of insult, injury or death, but abject, quivering dread of something that you cannot see—fear that dries the inside of

the mouth and half of the throat—fear that makes you sweat on the palms of the hands, and gulp in order to keep the uvula at work? This is a fine Fear—a great cowardice, and must be felt to be appreciated. The very improbability of billiards in a bungalow proved the reality of the thing. No man—drunk or sober—could imagine a game at billiards, or invent the spitting crack of a "screw-cannon."

A severe course of bungalows has this disadvantage—it breeds infinite credulity. If a man said to a confirmed bungalow-haunter:—"There is a corpse in the next room, and there's a mad girl in the next but one, and the woman and man on that camel have just eloped from a place sixty miles away," the hearer would not disbelieve because he would know that nothing is too wild, grotesque, or horrible to happen in a bungalow. This credulity, unfortunately, extends to ghosts. A rational person fresh from his own house would have turned on his side and slept. I did not. So surely as I was given up as a bad carcass by the scores of things in the bed because the bulk of my blood was in my heart, so surely did I hear every stroke of a long game at billiards played in the echoing room behind the iron-barred door. My dominant fear was that the players might want a marker. It was an absurd fear; because creatures who could play in the dark would be above such superfluities. I only know that that was my terror; and it was real.

After a long, long while the game stopped, and the door banged. I slept because I was dead tired. Oth-

erwise I should have preferred to have kept awake. Not for everything in Asia would I have dropped the door-bar and peered into the dark of the next room.

When the morning came, I considered that I had done well and wisely, and inquired for the means of departure.

"By the way, *khansamah*," I said, "what were those three doolies doing in my compound in the night?"

"There were no doolies," said the *khansamah*.

I went into the next room and the daylight streamed through the open door. I was immensely brave. I would, at that hour, have played Black Pool with the owner of the big Black Pool down below.

"Has this place always been a bungalow?" I asked.

"No," said the *khansamah*. "Ten or twenty years ago, I have forgotten how long, it was a billiard room."

"A how much?"

"A billiard room for the Sahibs who built the Railway. I was *khansamah* then in the big house where all the Railway-Sahibs lived, and I used to come across with brandy-*shrab*. These three rooms were all one, and they held a big table on which the Sahibs played every evening. But the Sahibs are all dead now, and the Railway runs, you say, nearly to Kabul."

"Do you remember anything about the Sahibs?"

"It is long ago, but I remember that one Sahib, a fat man and always angry, was playing here one night, and he said to me:—'Mangal Khan, brandy-*pani do*,' and I filled the glass, and he bent over the table to strike, and his head fell lower and lower till it hit the

table, and his spectacles came off, and when we—the Sahibs and I myself—ran to lift him. He was dead. I helped to carry him out. Aha, he was a strong Sahib! But he is dead and I, old Mangal Khan, am still living, by your favor."

That was more than enough! I had my ghost—a firsthand, authenticated article. I would write to the Society for Psychical Research—I would paralyze the Empire with the news! But I would, first of all, put eighty miles of assessed crop land between myself and that bungalow before nightfall. The Society might send their regular agent to investigate later on.

I went into my own room and prepared to pack after noting down the facts of the case. As I smoked I heard the game begin again,—with a miss in balk this time, for the whir was a short one.

The door was open and I could see into the room. *Click—click!* That was a cannon. I entered the room without fear, for there was sunlight within and a fresh breeze without. The unseen game was going on at a tremendous rate. And well it might, when a restless little rat was running to and fro inside the dingy ceiling-cloth, and a piece of loose window-sash was making fifty breaks off the window-bolt as it shook in the breeze!

Impossible to mistake the sound of billiard balls! Impossible to mistake the whir of a ball over the slate! But I was to be excused. Even when I shut my enlightened eyes the sound was marvelously like that of a fast game.

Entered angrily the faithful partner of my sorrows, Kadir Baksh.

"This bungalow is very bad and low-caste! No wonder the Presence was disturbed and is speckled. Three sets of doolie-bearers came to the bungalow late last night when I was sleeping outside, and said that it was their custom to rest in the rooms set apart for the English people! What honor has the *khansamah*? They tried to enter, but I told them to go. No wonder, if these *Oorias* have been here, that the Presence is sorely spotted. It is shame, and the work of a dirty man!"

Kadir Baksh did not say that he had taken from each gang two annas for rent in advance, and then, beyond my earshot, had beaten them with the big green umbrella whose use I could never before divine. But Kadir Baksh has no notions of morality.

There was an interview with the *khansamah*, but as he promptly lost his head, wrath gave place to pity, and pity led to a long conversation, in the course of which he put the fat Engineer-Sahib's tragic death in three separate stations—two of them fifty miles away. The third shift was to Calcutta, and there the Sahib died while driving a dogcart.

If I had encouraged him the *khansamah* would have wandered all through Bengal with his corpse.

I did not go away as soon as I intended. I stayed for the night, while the wind and the rat and the sash and the window-bolt played a ding-dong "hundred and fifty up." Then the wind ran out and the billiards stopped, and I felt that I had ruined my one genuine,

hall-marked ghost story.
Had I only stopped at the proper time, I could have made *anything* out of it.
That was the bitterest thought of all!

Salvator Rosa

Naples, 1615 - Rome, 1673

He was born in Arenella, at that time in the outskirts of Naples. His father entered him into the convent of the Somaschi Fathers. Yet Salvator showed a preference for the arts and secretly worked with his maternal uncle to learn about painting. He soon transferred himself to the tutelage of his brother-in-law F. Fracanzano, a pupil of Ribera, and afterward to Aniello Falcone. He continued apprenticeship with Falcone, helping him complete his battlepiece canvases. In that studio, Lanfranco took notice of his work, and advised him to relocate to Rome, where he stayed from 1634–36. Returning to Naples, he began painting haunting landscapes: Rosa was among the first to paint "romantic" landscapes. He returned to Rome in 1638–39, where he was housed by Cardinal Francesco Maria Brancaccio, bishop of Viterbo. For the Chiesa S. Maria della Morte in Viterbo, he painted his altarpieces, the Incredulity of Thomas.
While Rosa had a facile genius at painting, he pursued a wide variety of arts: music, poetry, writing, etching, and acting. By late 1639, he had to relocate to Florence, where he stayed for 8 years. To the rigid art milieu of Florence, he introduced his canvases of wild landscapes. In 1646 he returned to Naples, and appears to have sympathized with the 1648 insurrection of Masaniello. He returned to stay in Rome in 1649. Among the pictures of his last years were the admired Battlepiece *and* Saul and the Witch of Endor *now in the Musée du Louvre, painted in 40 days. While occupied with a series of satirical portraits, Rosa was assailed by dropsy. He died a half year later. In his last moments he married a Florentine named Lucrezia.*

Self-Portrait of Salvator Rosa

SALVATOR ROSA

Lucrezia as the Personification of Poetry >>

(1641 ~ OIL ON CANVAS, MUSEUM OF ART, HARTFORD)

SALVATOR ROSA

The Apparition of Astræa
(1645) ~ OIL ON CANVAS, KUNSTHISTORISCHES M., VIENNA)

SALVATOR ROSA

Philosophy >>

(1645 ~ OIL ON CANVAS, NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON)

SALVATOR ROSA

A Battle Scene

(1646 ~ OIL ON CANVAS, PRIVATE COLLECTION)

SALVATOR ROSA

Humana Fragilitas

(1656 ~ OIL ON CANVAS, FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, CAMBRIDGE)

SALVATOR ROSA

Saul and the Witch of Endor >>
(1668 ~ OIL ON CANVAS, LOUVRE, PARIS)

125°

Agatha Christie

Torquay, 1890 - Wallingford, 1976

Agatha Miller was born in Torquay, England on September 15th, 1890. In 1914 she married Colonel Archibald Christie, an aviator in the Royal Flying Corps. The couple had one daughter, Rosalind, before their divorce in 1928. In a writing career that spanned more than half a century, Agatha Christie wrote 79 novels and short story collections. She also wrote over a dozen plays including The Mousetrap, *which opened in London on November 25th, 1952. Christie's first novel,* The mysterious Affair at Styles *(1920), was also the first to feature her eccentric Belgian detective Hercule Poirot. Surely one of the most famous fictional creations of all times, Poirot's 'little grey cells' triumphed over devious criminals in 33 novels and many dozens of short stories.*

Christie's last published novel, Sleeping Murder *(1976), featured her other world-famous sleuth, the shrewdly inquisitive Miss Jane Marple of St. Mary Mead. Miss Marple appeared in twelve novels, beginning with* The Murder at the Vicarage *in 1930. Both Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple have been widely dramatized in feature films and made-for-TV movies.* Murder on the Orient Express *(1974),* Witness for the Prosecution *(1957),* And Then There Were None *(1945), and* Death on the Nile *(1978) are a few of the successful films based on her works. Agatha Christie also wrote six romantic novels under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott. In 1971, she achieved her country's highest honor when she received the Order of Dame Commander of the British Empire. Agatha Christie died on January 12th, 1976.*

The Thumb Mark of St. Peter

FROM THE THIRTEEN PROBLEMS (1933)

'And now, Aunt Jane, it is up to you,' said Raymond West.

'Yes, Aunt Jane, we are expecting something really spicy,' chimed in Joyce Lemprière.

'Now, you are laughing at me, my dears,' said Miss Marple placidly. 'You think that because I have lived in this out-of-the-way spot all my life I am not likely to have had any very interesting experiences.'

'God forbid that I should ever regard village life as peaceful and uneventful,' said Raymond with fervour. 'Not after the horrible revelations we have heard from you! The cosmopolitan world seems a mild and peaceful place compared with St Mary Mead.'

'Well, my dear,' said Miss Marple, 'human nature is much the same everywhere, and, of course, one has opportunities of observing it at close quarters in a village.'

'You really are unique, Aunt Jane,' cried Joyce. 'I hope you don't mind me calling you Aunt Jane?' she added. 'I don't know why I do it.'

'Don't you, my dear?' said Miss Marple.

She looked up for a moment or two with something quizzical in her glance, which made the blood flame to the girl's cheeks. Raymond West fidgeted and cleared his throat in a somewhat embarrassed manner.

Miss Marple looked at them both and smiled again, and bent her attention once more to her knitting.

'It is true, of course, that I have lived what is called a very uneventful life, but I have had a lot of experience in solving different little problems that have arisen. Some of them have been really quite ingenious, but it would be no good telling them to you, because they are about such unimportant things that you would not be interested—just things like: Who cut the meshes of Mrs Jones's string bag? and why Mrs Sims only wore her new fur coat once. Very interesting things, really, to any student of human nature. No, the only experience I can remember that would be of interest to you is the one about my poor niece Mabel's husband.

'It is about ten or fifteen years ago now, and happily it is all over and done with, and everyone has forgotten about it. People's memories are very short—a lucky thing, I always think.'

Miss Marple paused and murmured to herself:

'I must just count this row. The decreasing is a little awkward. One, two, three, four, five, and then three purl; that is right. Now, what was I saying? Oh, yes, about poor Mabel.

'Mabel was my niece. A nice girl, really a very nice girl, but just a trifle what one might call *silly*. Rather fond

of being melodramatic and of saying a great deal more than she meant whenever she was upset. She married a Mr Denman when she was twenty-two, and I am afraid it was not a very happy marriage. I had hoped very much that the attachment would not come to anything, for Mr Denman was a man of very violent temper—not the kind of man who would be patient with Mabel's foibles—and I also learned that there was insanity in his family. However, girls were just as obstinate then as they are now, and as they always will be. And Mabel married him.

'I didn't see very much of her after her marriage. She came to stay with me once or twice, and they asked me there several times, but, as a matter of fact, I am not very fond of staying in other people's houses, and I always managed to make some excuse. They had been married ten years when Mr Denman died suddenly. There were no children, and he left all his money to Mabel. I wrote, of course, and offered to come to Mabel if she wanted me; but she wrote back a very sensible letter, and I gathered that she was not altogether overwhelmed by grief. I thought that was only natural, because I knew they had not been getting on together for some time. It was not until about three months afterwards that I got a most hysterical letter from Mabel, begging me to come to her, and saying that things were going from bad to worse, and she couldn't stand it much longer.

'So, of course,' continued Miss Marple, 'I put Clara on board wages and sent the plate and the King Charles tankard to the bank, and I went off at once. I found Ma-

bel in a very nervous state. The house, Myrtle Dene, was a fairly large one, very comfortably furnished. There was a cook and a house-parlourmaid as well as a nurse-attendant to look after old Mr Denman, Mabel's husband's father, who was what is called "not quite right in the head". Quite peaceful and well behaved, but distinctly odd at times. As I say, there was insanity in the family.

'I was really shocked to see the change in Mabel. She was a mass of nerves, twitching all over, yet I had the greatest difficulty in making her tell me what the trouble was. I got at it, as one always does get at these things, indirectly. I asked her about some friends of hers she was always mentioning in her letters, the Gallaghers. She said, to my surprise, that she hardly ever saw them nowadays. Other friends whom I mentioned elicited the same remark. I spoke to her then of the folly of shutting herself up and brooding, and especially of the silliness of cutting herself adrift from her friends. Then she came bursting out with the truth.

' "It is not my doing, it is theirs. There is not a soul in the place who will speak to me now. When I go down the High Street they all get out of the way so that they shan't have to meet me or speak to me. I am like a kind of leper. It is awful, and I can't bear it any longer. I shall have to sell the house and go abroad. Yet why should I be driven away from a home like this? I have done nothing."

'I was more disturbed than I can tell you. I was knitting a comforter for old Mrs Hay at the time, and in my per-

turbation I dropped two stitches and never discovered it until long after.

‘ “My dear Mabel,” I said, “you amaze me. But what is the cause of all this?”

‘Even as a child Mabel was always difficult. I had the greatest difficulty in getting her to give me a straightforward answer to my question. She would only say vague things about wicked talk and idle people who had nothing better to do than gossip, and people who put ideas into other people’s heads.

‘ “That is all quite clear to me,” I said. “There is evidently some story being circulated about you. But what that story is you must know as well as anyone. And you are going to tell me.”

‘ “It is so wicked,” moaned Mabel.

‘ “Of course it is wicked,” I said briskly. “There is nothing that you can tell me about people’s minds that would astonish or surprise me. Now, Mabel, will you tell me in plain English what people are saying about you?”

‘Then it all came out.

‘It seemed that Geoffrey Denman’s death, being quite sudden and unexpected, gave rise to various rumours. In fact—and in plain English as I had put it to her—people were saying that she had poisoned her husband.

‘Now, as I expect you know, there is nothing more cruel than talk, and there is nothing more difficult to combat. When people say things behind your back there is nothing you can refute or deny, and the rumours go on growing and growing, and no one can stop them. I was quite certain of one thing: Mabel was quite incapable of

poisoning anyone. And I didn't see why life should be ruined for her and her home made unbearable just because in all probability she had been doing something silly and foolish.

' "There is no smoke without fire," I said. "Now, Mabel, you have got to tell me what started people off on this tack. There must have been something."

'Mabel was very incoherent, and declared there was nothing—nothing at all, except, of course, that Geoffrey's death had been very sudden. He had seemed quite well at supper that evening, and had taken violently ill in the night. The doctor had been sent for, but the poor man had died a few minutes after the doctor's arrival. Death had been thought to be the result of eating poisoned mushrooms.

' "Well," I said, "I suppose a sudden death of that kind might start tongues wagging, but surely not without some additional facts. Did you have a quarrel with Geoffrey or anything of that kind?"

'She admitted that she had had a quarrel with him on the preceding morning at breakfast time.

' "And the servants heard it, I suppose?" I asked.

' "They weren't in the room."

' "No, my dear," I said, "but they probably were fairly near the door outside."

'I knew the carrying power of Mabel's high-pitched hysterical voice only too well. Geoffrey Denman, too, was a man given to raising his voice loudly when angry.

' "What did you quarrel about?" I asked.

' "Oh, the usual things. It was always the same things

over and over again. Some little thing would start us off, and then Geoffrey became impossible and said abominable things, and I told him what I thought of him."

' "There had been a lot of quarrelling, then?" I asked.

' "It wasn't my fault—"

' "My dear child," I said, "it doesn't matter whose fault it was. That is not what we are discussing. In a place like this everybody's private affairs are more or less public property. You and your husband were always quarrelling. You had a particularly bad quarrel one morning, and that night your husband died suddenly and mysteriously. Is that all, or is there anything else?"

' "I don't know what you mean by anything else," said Mabel sullenly.

' "Just what I say, my dear. If you have done anything silly, don't for Heaven's sake keep it back now. I only want to do what I can to help you."

' "Nothing and nobody can help me," said Mabel wildly, "except death."

' "Have a little more faith in Providence, dear," I said. "Now then, Mabel, I know perfectly well there *is* something else that you are keeping back."

'I always did know, even when she was a child, when she was not telling me the whole truth. It took a long time, but I got it out at last. She had gone down to the chemist's that morning and had bought some arsenic. She had had, of course, to sign the book for it. Naturally, the chemist had talked.

' "Who is your doctor?" I asked.

' "Dr Rawlinson."

'I knew him by sight. Mabel had pointed him out to me the other day. To put it in perfectly plain language he was what I would describe as an old dodderer. I have had too much experience of life to believe in the infallibility of doctors. Some of them are clever men and some of them are not, and half the time the best of them don't know what is the matter with you. I have no truck with doctors and their medicines myself.

'I thought things over, and then I put my bonnet on and went to call on Dr Rawlinson. He was just what I had thought him—a nice old man, kindly, vague, and so short-sighted as to be pitiful, slightly deaf, and, withal, touchy and sensitive to the last degree. He was on his high horse at once when I mentioned Geoffrey Denman's death, talked for a long time about various kinds of fungi, edible and otherwise. He had questioned the cook, and she had admitted that one or two of the mushrooms cooked had been "a little queer", but as the shop had sent them she thought they must be all right. The more she had thought about them since, the more she was convinced that their appearance was unusual.

' "She would be," I said. "They would start by being quite like mushrooms in appearance, and they would end by being orange with purple spots. There is nothing that class cannot remember if it tries."

'I gathered that Denman had been past speech when the doctor got to him. He was incapable of swallowing, and had died within a few minutes. The doctor seemed perfectly satisfied with the certificate he had given. But how much of that was obstinacy and how

much of it was genuine belief I could not be sure.
'I went straight home and asked Mabel quite frankly why she had bought arsenic.
' "You must have had some idea in your mind," I pointed out.
'Mabel burst into tears. "I wanted to make away with myself," she moaned. "I was too unhappy. I thought I would end it all."
' "Have you the arsenic still?" I asked.
' "No, I threw it away."
'I sat there turning things over and over in my mind.
' "What happened when he was taken ill? Did he call you?"
' "No." She shook her head. "He rang the bell violently. He must have rung several times. At last Dorothy, the house-parlourmaid, heard it, and she waked the cook up, and they came down. When Dorothy saw him she was frightened. He was rambling and delirious. She left the cook with him and came rushing to me. I got up and went to him. Of course I saw at once he was dreadfully ill. Unfortunately Brewster, who looks after old Mr Denman, was away for the night, so there was no one who knew what to do. I sent Dorothy off for the doctor, and cook and I stayed with him, but after a few minutes I couldn't bear it any longer; it was too dreadful. I ran away back to my room and locked the door."
' "Very selfish and unkind of you," I said; "and no doubt that conduct of yours has done nothing to help you since, you may be sure of that. Cook will have repeated it everywhere. Well, well, this is a bad business."

'Next I spoke to the servants. The cook wanted to tell me about the mushrooms, but I stopped her. I was tired of these mushrooms. Instead, I questioned both of them very closely about their master's condition on that night. They both agreed that he seemed to be in great agony, that he was unable to swallow, and he could only speak in a strangled voice, and when he did speak it was only rambling—nothing sensible.

' "What did he say when he was rambling?" I asked curiously.

' "Something about some fish, wasn't it?" turning to the other.

'Dorothy agreed.

' "A heap of fish," she said; "some nonsense like that. I could see at once he wasn't in his right mind, poor gentleman."

'There didn't seem to be any sense to be made out of that. As a last resource I went up to see Brewster, who was a gaunt, middle-aged woman of about fifty.

' "It is a pity that I wasn't here that night," she said. "Nobody seems to have tried to do anything for him until the doctor came."

' "I suppose he was delirious," I said doubtfully; "but that is not a symptom of ptomaine poisoning, is it?"

' "It depends," said Brewster.

'I asked her how her patient was getting on.

'She shook her head.

' "He is pretty bad," she said.

' "Weak?"

' "Oh no, he is strong enough physically—all but his

eyesight. That is failing badly. He may outlive all of us, but his mind is failing very fast now. I have already told both Mr and Mrs Denman that he ought to be in an institution, but Mrs Denman wouldn't hear of it at any price."

'I will say for Mabel that she always had a kindly heart.

'Well, there the thing was. I thought it over in every aspect, and at last I decided that there was only one thing to be done. In view of the rumours that were going about, permission must be applied for to exhume the body, and a proper post-mortem must be made and lying tongues quietened once and for all. Mabel, of course, made a fuss, mostly on sentimental grounds—disturbing the dead man in his peaceful grave, etc., etc.—but I was firm.

'I won't make a long story of this part of it. We got the order and they did the autopsy, or whatever they call it, but the result was not so satisfactory as it might have been. There was no trace of arsenic—that was all to the good—but the actual words of the report were *that there was nothing to show by what means deceased had come to his death*.

'So, you see, that didn't lead us out of trouble altogether. People went on talking—about rare poisons impossible to detect, and rubbish of that sort. I had seen the pathologist who had done the post-mortem, and I had asked him several questions, though he tried his best to get out of answering most of them; but I got out of him that he considered it highly unlikely that the poisoned mushrooms were the cause of death. An idea was sim-

mering in my mind, and I asked him what poison, if any, could have been employed to obtain that result. He made a long explanation to me, most of which, I must admit, I did not follow, but it amounted to this: That death might have been due to some strong vegetable alkaloid.

'The idea I had was this: Supposing the taint of insanity was in Geoffrey Denman's blood also, might he not have made away with himself? He had, at one period of his life, studied medicine, and he would have a good knowledge of poisons and their effects.

'I didn't think it sounded very likely, but it was the only thing I could think of. And I was nearly at my wits' end, I can tell you. Now, I dare say you modern young people will laugh, but when I am in really bad trouble I always say a little prayer to myself—anywhere, when I am walking along the street, or at a bazaar. And I always get an answer. It may be some trifling thing, apparently quite unconnected with the subject, but there it is. I had that text pinned over my bed when I was a little girl: *Ask and you shall receive*. On the morning that I am telling you about, I was walking along the High Street, and I was praying hard. I shut my eyes, and when I opened them, what do you think was the first thing that I saw?'

Five faces with varying degrees of interest were turned to Miss Marple. It may be safely assumed, however, that no one would have guessed the answer to the question right.

'I saw,' said Miss Marple impressively, '*the window of*

the fishmonger's shop. There was only one thing in it, *a fresh haddock*.'

She looked round triumphantly.

'Oh, my God!' said Raymond West. 'An answer to prayer—a fresh haddock!'

'Yes, Raymond,' said Miss Marple severely, 'and there is no need to be profane about it. The hand of God is everywhere. The first thing I saw were the black spots—the marks of St Peter's thumb. That is the legend, you know. St Peter's thumb. And that brought things home to me. I needed faith, the ever true faith of St Peter. I connected the two things together, faith—and fish.'

Sir Henry blew his nose rather hurriedly. Joyce bit her lip.

'Now what did that bring to my mind? Of course, both the cook and house-parlourmaid mentioned fish as being one of the things spoken of by the dying man. I was convinced, absolutely convinced, that there was some solution of the mystery to be found in these words. I went home determined to get to the bottom of the matter.'

She paused.

'Has it ever occurred to you,' the old lady went on, 'how much we go by what is called, I believe, the context? There is a place on Dartmoor called Grey Wethers. If you were talking to a farmer there and mentioned Grey Wethers, he would probably conclude that you were speaking of these stone circles, yet it is possible that you might be speaking of the atmosphere; and in the same way, if you were meaning the stone circles, an

outsider, hearing a fragment of the conversation, might think you meant the weather. So when we repeat a conversation, we don't, as a rule, repeat the actual words; we put in some other words that seem to us to mean exactly the same thing.

'I saw both the cook and Dorothy separately. I asked the cook if she was quite sure that her master had really mentioned a heap of fish. She said she was quite sure.

' "Were these his exact words," I asked, "or did he mention some particular kind of fish?"

' "That's it," said the cook; "it was some particular kind of fish, but I can't remember what now. A heap of—now what was it? Not any of the fish you send to table. Would it be a perch now—or pike? No. It didn't begin with a P."

'Dorothy also recalled that her master had mentioned some special kind of fish. "Some outlandish kind of fish it was," she said.

' "A pile of—now what was it?"

' "Did he say heap or pile?" I asked.

' "I think he said pile. But there, I really can't be sure—it's so hard to remember the actual words, isn't it, Miss, especially when they don't seem to make sense. But now I come to think of it, I am pretty sure that it was a pile, and the fish began with C; but it wasn't a cod or a crayfish."

'The next part is where I am really proud of myself,' said Miss Marple, 'because, of course, I don't know anything about drugs—nasty, dangerous things I call them. I have got an old recipe of my grandmother's for

tansy tea that is worth any amount of your drugs. But I knew that there were several medical volumes in the house, and in one of them there was an index of drugs. You see, my idea was that Geoffrey had taken some particular poison, and was trying to say the name of it.
'Well, I looked down the list of H's, beginning He. Nothing there that sounded likely; then I began on the P's, and almost at once I came to—what do you think?'
She looked round, postponing her moment of triumph.
'Pilocarpine. Can't you understand a man who could hardly speak trying to drag that word out? What would that sound like to a cook who had never heard the word? Wouldn't it convey the impression "pile of carp"?'
'By Jove!' said Sir Henry.
'I should never have hit upon that,' said Dr Pender.
'Most interesting,' said Mr Petherick. 'Really most interesting.'
'I turned quickly to the page indicated in the index. I read about pilocarpine and its effect on the eyes and other things that didn't seem to have any bearing on the case, but at last I came to a most significant phrase: *Has been tried with success as an antidote for atropine poisoning*.
'I can't tell you the light that dawned upon me then. I never had thought it likely that Geoffrey Denman would commit suicide. No, this new solution was not only possible, but I was absolutely sure it was the correct one, because all the pieces fitted in logically.'
'I am not going to try to guess,' said Raymond. 'Go on,

Aunt Jane, and tell us what was so startlingly clear to you.'

'I don't know anything about medicine, of course,' said Miss Marple, 'but I did happen to know this, that when my eyesight was failing, the doctor ordered me drops with atropine sulphate in them. I went straight upstairs to old Mr Denman's room. I didn't beat about the bush. ' "Mr Denman," I said, "I know everything. Why did you poison your son?"

'He looked at me for a minute or two—rather a handsome old man he was, in his way—and then he burst out laughing. It was one of the most vicious laughs I have ever heard. I can assure you it made my flesh creep. I had only heard anything like it once before, when poor Mrs Jones went off her head.

' "Yes," he said, "I got even with Geoffrey. I was too clever for Geoffrey. He was going to put me away, was he? Have me shut up in an asylum? I heard them talking about it. Mabel is a good girl—Mabel stuck up for me, but I knew she wouldn't be able to stand up against Geoffrey. In the end he would have his own way; he always did. But I settled him—I settled my kind, loving son! Ha, ha! I crept down in the night. It was quite easy. Brewster was away. My dear son was asleep; he had a glass of water by the side of his bed; he always woke up in the middle of the night and drank it off. I poured it away—ha, ha!—and I emptied the bottle of eyedrops into the glass. He would wake up and swill it down before he knew what it was. There was only a tablespoonful of it—quite enough, quite enough. And so he did!

They came to me in the morning and broke it to me very gently. They were afraid it would upset me. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

'Well,' said Miss Marple, 'that is the end of the story. Of course, the poor old man was put in an asylum. He wasn't really responsible for what he had done, and the truth was known, and everyone was sorry for Mabel and could not do enough to make up to her for the unjust suspicions they had had. But if it hadn't been for Geoffrey realizing what the stuff was he had swallowed and trying to get everybody to get hold of the antidote without delay, it might never have been found out. I believe there are very definite symptoms with atropine—dilated pupils of the eyes, and all that; but, of course, as I have said, Dr Rawlinson was very shortsighted, poor old man. And in the same medical book which I went on reading—and some of it was *most* interesting—it gave the symptoms of ptomaine poisoning and atropine, and they are not unlike. But I can assure you I have never seen a pile of fresh haddock without thinking of The Thumb Mark of St. Peter.'

There was a very long pause.

'My dear friend,' said Mr Petherick. 'My very dear friend, you really are amazing.'

'I shall recommend Scotland Yard to come to you for advice,' said Sir Henry.

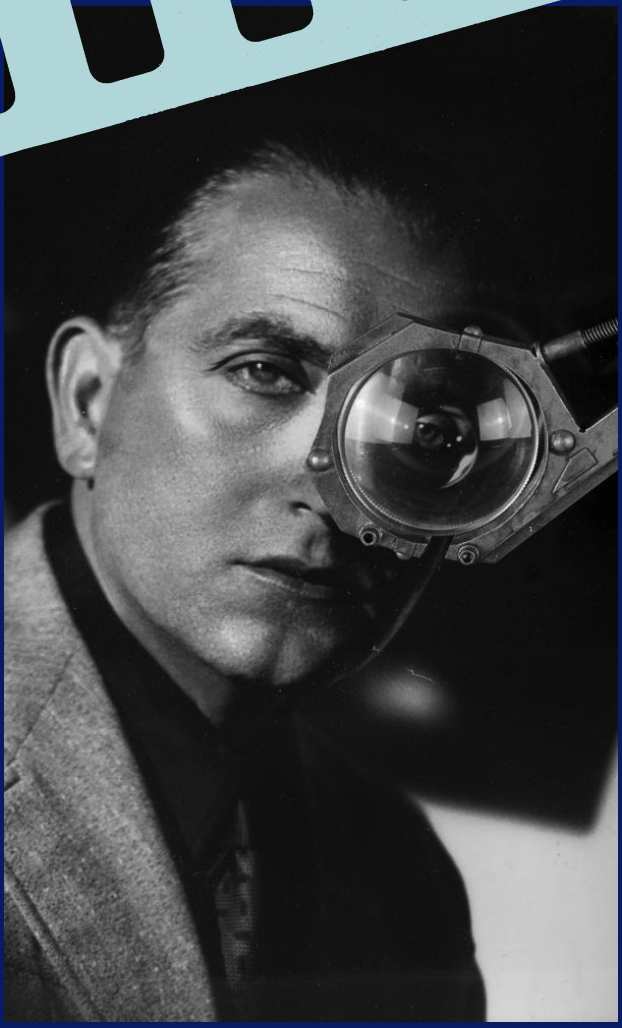
'Well, at all events, Aunt Jane,' said Raymond, 'there is one thing that you don't know.'

'Oh, yes, I do, dear,' said Miss Marple. 'It happened just before dinner, didn't it? When you took Joyce out to ad-

mire the sunset. It is a very favourite place, that. There by the jasmine hedge. That is where the milkman asked Annie if he could put up the banns.'

'Dash it all, Aunt Jane,' said Raymond, 'don't spoil all the romance. Joyce and I aren't like the milkman and Annie.'

'That is where you make a mistake, dear,' said Miss Marple. 'Everybody is very much alike, really. But fortunately, perhaps, they don't realize it.'



125°

Fritz Lang

Vienna, 1890 - Beverly Hills, 1976

Fritz Lang was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1890. His father managed a construction company. His mother was Jewish but converted to Catholicism when Lang was ten. After high school, he enrolled briefly at the Technische Hochschule Wien and then started to train as a painter. From 1910 to 1914, he traveled in Europe, and he would later claim, also in Asia and North Africa. He studied painting in Paris from 1913-14. At the start of World War I, he returned to Vienna, enlisting in the army in January 1915.

Severely wounded in June 1916, he wrote some scenarios for films while convalescing. In early 1918, he was sent home shell-shocked and acted briefly in Viennese theater before accepting a job as a writer at Erich Pommer's production company in Berlin, Decla. In Berlin, Lang worked briefly as a writer and then as a director, at Ufa and then for Nero-Film, owned by the American Seymour Nebenzal. In 1920, he began a relationship with actress and writer Thea von Harbou, who wrote with him the scripts for his most celebrated films: Dr. Mabuse *(1922),* Die Nibelungen *(1924),* Metropolis *(1927) and* M *(1931) (credited to von Harbou alone). They married in 1922 and divorced in 1933.*

Lang

In that year, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels offered Lang the job of head of the German Cinema Institute. Lang – who was an anti-Nazi mainly because of his Catholic background – did not accept the position (it was later offered to and accepted by filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl) and, after secretly sending most of his money out of the country, fled Germany to Paris. After about a year in Paris, Lang moved to the United States in mid-1934, initially under contract to MGM. Lang became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1939. His first American film was the crime drama Fury. He made twenty-three features in his 20-year American career, working in a variety of genres at every major studio in Hollywood, and occasionally producing his films as an independent.

In the 1950s, in part because the film industry was in economic decline and also because of Lang's long-standing reputation for being difficult with, and abusive to, actors, he found it increasingly hard to get work. At the end of the 1950s, he traveled to Germany and made what turned out to be his final three films there, none of which were well received. In 1964, nearly blind, he was chosen to be president of the jury at the Cannes Film Festival. He was an avid collector of primitive art and habitually wore a monocle, an affectation he picked up during his early days in Vienna. After his divorce from von Harbou, he had relationships with many other women, but from about 1931 to his death in 1976, he was close to Lily Latte, who helped him in many ways.

50°

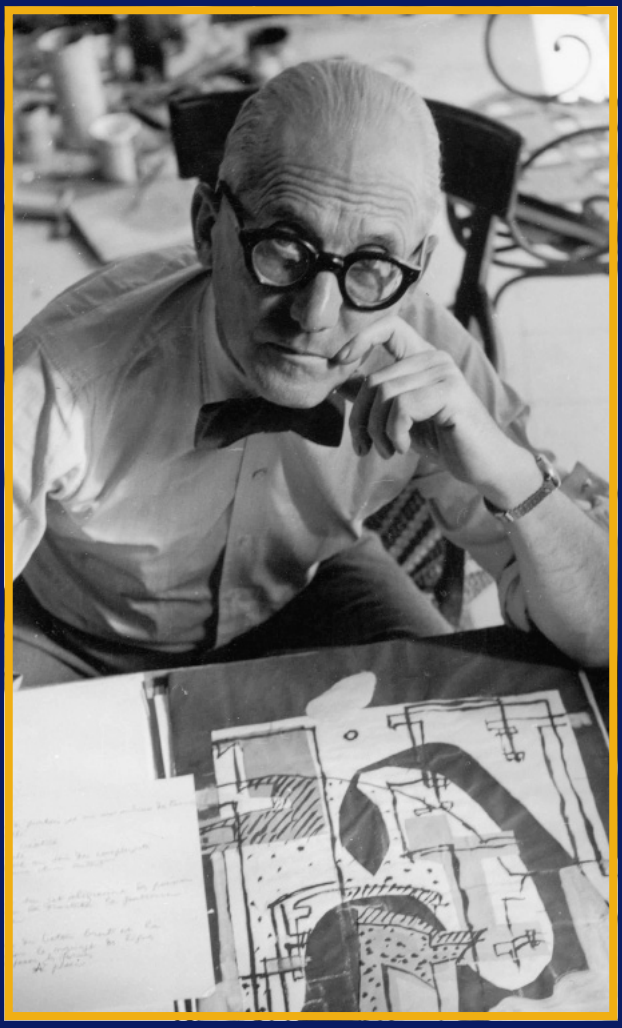
Le Corbusier

La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1887 - Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, 1965

Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, who chose to be known as Le Corbusier, was born in Switzerland in 1887. As architect, urban planner, painter, writer, designer and theorist, he was active mostly in France. In 1922, Le Corbusier and his cousin Pierre Jeanneret opened an architectural studio in Paris. He placed systems of harmony and proportion at the centre of his design philosophy. His faith in the mathematical order of the universe was closely bound to the golden section, which he explicitly used in his Modulor system for the scale of architectural proportion. He saw this system as a continuation of the long tradition of the works of Vitruvius, Leonardo da Vinci and Leon Battista Alberti, and others who used the proportions of the human body to improve the appearance and function of architecture.

The Villa Savoye *(1929-1931) exemplifies the ideas that Le Corbusier had been developing throughout the 1920s in his publication "Five points of architecture". After World War II, he sought efficient ways to house large numbers of people in response to the urban housing crisis. He believed that his new, modern architectural forms would provide an innovative solution that would raise the quality of life for the lower classes. He realized some of his urban planning schemes on a small scale by constructing a series of 'unités' (housing block units) around France. The most famous of these was the* Unité d'Habitation of Marseilles. *In the 1950s, a unique opportunity to translate his concept on a grand scale presented itself in the construction of* Chandigarh, *India. Before his death in 1965, he established the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris.*

Le Corbusier



Le Corbusier

Still Life

(1920 ~ MoMA, New York, USA)

Le Corbusier

Villa Savoye

(1928 ~ Poissy, France)

Le Corbusier

The Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut

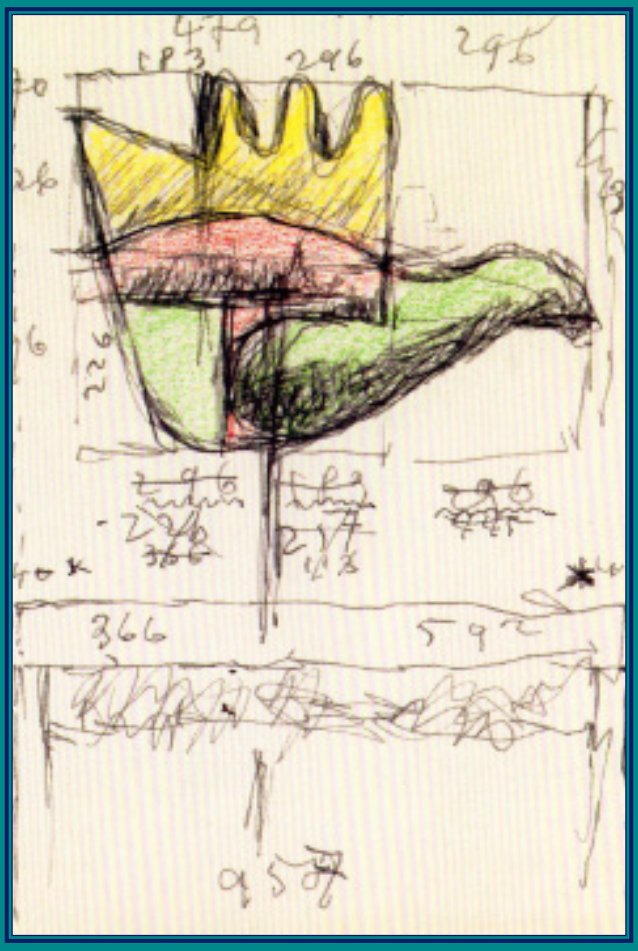
(1950-55 ~ Ronchamp, France)

Le Corbusier

Femme

(1953 ~ POLYCHROMED WOOD, FONDATION LC, PARIS, FRANCE)

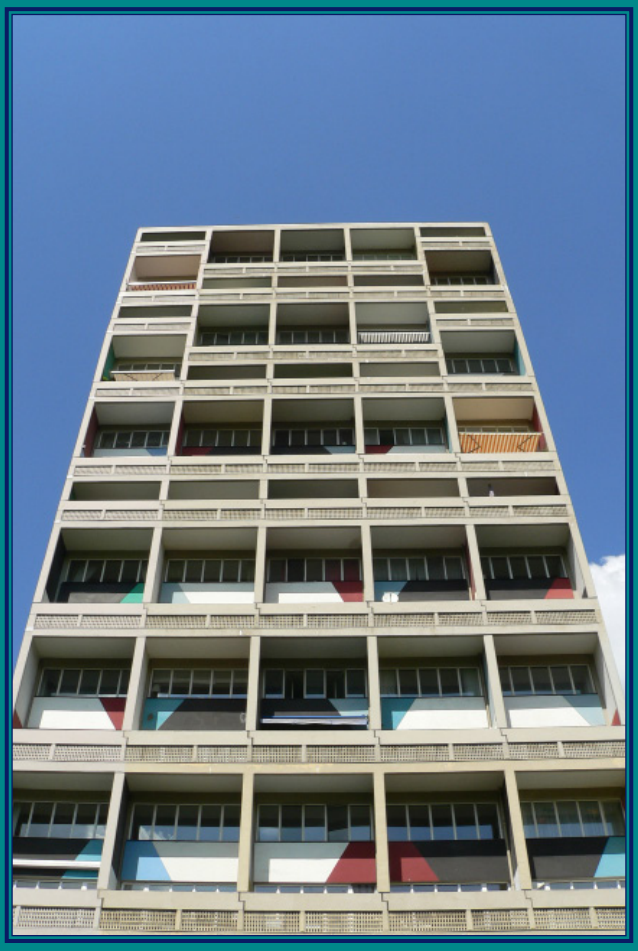
Le Corbusier



La Main Ouverte

(1954 ~ WATERCOLOUR, EMBLEM OF CHANDIGARH, INDIA)

Le Corbusier



Unité d'Habitation

(1957 ~ Berlin, Germany)

Édith Piaf

Paris, 1915 - Grasse, 1963

Édith Piaf was born Édith Giovanna Gassion in Belleville, Paris. Her mother was an Italian cafe singer, her father a street acrobat. Édith's parents soon abandoned her, and she may have lived for a short time with her maternal grandmother, who ran a brothel. In 1929, at the age of 14, she joined her father in his street performances all over France. At 17, she had a daughter named Marcelle, who died of meningitis two years later. In 1935, Piaf was discovered by Louis Leplée, who owned the successful club "Le Gerny" off the Champs-Élysées. Her nervous energy and small stature inspired the nickname La Môme Piaf ("The Little Sparrow"). Her first record was produced in the same year. In 1940, Jean Cocteau wrote the successful play "Le Bel Indifférent" for her to star in. She began to make friends with famous people, such as Maurice Chevalier and Jacques Borgeat. She wrote her signature song, La Vie en Rose, in the middle of the German occupation in World War II. Her concerts for German servicemen were controversial, although she later

PIAF

stated that she had been working for the French Resistance. While the veracity of this claim is unclear, she was instrumental in helping a number of individuals escape Nazi persecution. After the war, her fame spread quickly. She

toured Europe, South America and the United States. The personal life of Édith Piaf was characteristically dramatic. She was involved in three serious car crashes after 1951, leading to morphine and alcohol addictions. The great love of Piaf's life, the boxer Marcel Cerdan, died in 1949. Piaf was married twice. Her first husband was Jacques Pills, a singer; they married in 1952 and divorced in 1956. Her second husband, Theophanis Lamboukas (a.k.a. Théo Sarapo), was a 20-years-younger hairdresser turned singer and actor; they married in 1962. Piaf died of cancer in Cannes on October 11, 1963, the same day as her friend Jean Cocteau. She was buried in the Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris.

125°

Howard Phillips Lovecraft

Providence, 1890 - Providence, 1937

Lovecraft was born in 1890, in Providence, Rhode Island. He had an unusual childhood marked by tragedy. His traveling salesman father developed a type of mental disorder caused by untreated syphilis when he was around the age of three and died in 1898. A sickly child, Howard spent many of his school years at home. He became an avid reader, devouring works on a variety of texts. He loved the works of Edgar Allan Poe and developed a special interest in astronomy. Lovecraft started out as a would-be journalist, joining the United Amateur Press Association in 1914. He became more serious about writing stories around 1917. Many of these early works were influenced by the writings of Lord Dunsany, an Irish author of fantasy tales. The horror magazine "Weird Tales" bought some of Lovecraft's stories in 1923, giving him his first taste of literary success.

The following year, he married Sonia Greene. The couple lived together in New York City for two years before splitting up. After his marriage failed, Lovecraft returned to Rhode Island and began work on some of his best stories. The Call of Cthulhu *came out in 1928 in "Weird Tales", and it perhaps best illustrated Lovecraft's efforts at creating an otherworldly type of terror. In his final years, he was barely able to support himself. He took editing and ghostwriting work to try to make ends meet. Lovecraft died of cancer on March 15, 1937, in Providence, Rhode Island. He left behind more than 60 short stories and a few novel and novellas, including* The Case of Charles Dexter Ward.

The Music of Erich Zann

(1921)

I have examined maps of the city with the greatest care, yet have never again found the Rue d'Auseil. These maps have not been modern maps alone, for I know that names change. I have, on the contrary, delved deeply into all the antiquities of the place, and have personally explored every region, of whatever name, which could possibly answer to the street I knew as the Rue d'Auseil. But despite all I have done, it remains an humiliating fact that I cannot find the house, the street, or even the locality, where, during the last months of my impoverished life as a student of metaphysics at the university, I heard the music of Erich Zann.

That my memory is broken, I do not wonder; for my health, physical and mental, was gravely disturbed throughout the period of my residence in the Rue d'Auseil, and I recall that I took none of my few acquaintances there. But that I cannot find the place again is both singular and perplexing; for it was within a half-hour's walk of the university and was distinguished by

peculiarities which could hardly be forgotten by any one who had been there. I have never met a person who has seen the Rue d'Auseil.

The Rue d'Auseil lay across a dark river bordered by precipitous brick blear-windowed warehouses and spanned by a ponderous bridge of dark stone. It was always shadowy along that river, as if the smoke of neighboring factories shut out the sun perpetually. The river was also odorous with evil stenches which I have never smelled elsewhere, and which may some day help me to find it, since I should recognize them at once. Beyond the bridge were narrow cobbled streets with rails; and then came the ascent, at first gradual, but incredibly steep as the Rue d'Auseil was reached.

I have never seen another street as narrow and steep as the Rue d'Auseil. It was almost a cliff, closed to all vehicles, consisting in several places of ffights of steps, and ending at the top in a lofty ivied wall. Its paving was irregular, sometimes stone slabs, sometimes cobblestones, and sometimes bare earth with struggling greenish-grey vegetation. The houses were tall, peaked-roofed, incredibly old, and crazily leaning backward, forward, and sidewise. Occasionally an opposite pair, both leaning forward, almost met across the street like an arch; and certainly they kept most of the light from the ground below. There were a few overhead bridges from house to house across the street.

The inhabitants of that street impressed me peculiarly; At first I thought it was because they were all silent and reticent; but later decided it was because they were all

very old. I do not know how I came to live on such a street, but I was not myself when I moved there. I had been living in many poor places, always evicted for want of money; until at last I came upon that tottering house in the Rue d'Auseil kept by the paralytic Blandot. It was the third house from the top of the street, and by far the tallest of them all.

My room was on the fifth story; the only inhabited room there, since the house was almost empty. On the night I arrived I heard strang music from the peaked garret overhead, and the next day asked old Blandot about it. He told me it was an old German viol-player, a strange dumb man who signed his name as Erich Zann, and who played eve nings in a cheap theater orchestra; adding that Zann's desire to play in the night after his return from the theater was the reason he had chosen this lofty and isolated garret room, whose single gable window was the only point on the street from which one could look over the terminating wall at the declivity and panorama beyond.

Thereafter I heard Zann every night, and although he kept me awake, I was haunted by the weirdness of his music. Knowing little of the art myself, I was yet certain that none of his harmonies had any relation to music I had heard before; and concluded that he was a composer of highly original genius. The longer I listened, the more I was fascinated, until after a week I resolved to make the old man's acquaintance.

One night as he was returning from his work, I intercepted Zann in the hallway and told him that I would

like to know him and be with him when he played. He was a small, lean, bent person, with shabby clothes, blue eyes, grotesque, satyrlike face, and nearly bald head; and at my first words seemed both angered and frightened. My obvious friendliness, however, finally melted him; and he grudgingly motioned to me to follow him up the dark, creaking and rickety attic stairs. His room, one of only two in the steeply pitched garret, was on the west side, toward the high wall that formed the upper end of the street. Its size was very great, and seemed the greater because of its extraordinary barrenness and neglect. Of furniture there was only a narrow iron bedstead, a dingy washstand, a small table, a large bookcase, an iron music-rack, and three old-fashioned chairs. Sheets of music were piled in disorder about the floor. The walls were of bare boards, and had probably never known plaster; whilst the abundance of dust and cobwebs made the place seem more deserted than inhabited. Evidently Erich Zann's world of beauty lay in some far cosmos of the imagination.

Motioning me to sit down, the dumb man closed the door, turned the large wooden bolt, and lighted a candle to augment the one he had brought with him. He now removed his viol from its motheaten covering, and taking it, seated himself in the least uncomfortable of the chairs. He did not employ the music-rack, but, offering no choice and playing from memory, enchanted me for over an hour with strains I had never heard before; strains which must have been of his own devising. To describe their exact nature is impossible

for one unversed in music. They were a kind of fugue, with recurrent passages of the most captivating quality, but to me were notable for the absence of any of the weird notes I had overheard from my room below on other occasions.

Those haunting notes I had remembered, and had often hummed and whistled inaccurately to myself, so when the player at length laid down his bow I asked him if he would render some of them. As I began my request the wrinkled satyrlike face lost the bored placidity it had possessed during the playing, and seemed to show the same curious mixture of anger and fright which I had noticed when first I accosted the old man. For a moment I was inclined to use persuasion, regarding rather lightly the whims of senility; and even tried to awaken my host's weirder mood by whistling a few of the strains to which I had listened the night before. But I did not pursue this course for more than a moment; for when the dumb musician recognized the whistled air his face grew suddenly distorted with an expression wholly beyond analysis, and his long, cold, bony right hand reached out to stop my mouth and silence the crude imitation. As he did this he further demonstrated his eccentricity by casting a startled glance toward the lone curtained window, as if fearful of some intruder—a glance doubly absurd, since the garret stood high and inaccessible above all the adjacent roofs, this window being the only point on the steep street, as the concierge had told me, from which one could see over the wall at the summit.

The old man's glance brought Blandot's remark to my mind, and with a certain capriciousness I felt a wish to look out over the wide and dizzying panorama of moonlit roofs and city lights beyond the hilltop, which of all the dwellers in the Rue d'Auseil only this crabbed musician could see. I moved toward the window and would have drawn aside the nondescript curtains, when with a frightened rage even greater than before, the dumb lodger was upon me again; this time motioning with his head toward the door as he nervously strove to drag me thither with both hands. Now thoroughly disgusted with my host, I ordered him to release me, and told him I would go at once. His clutch relaxed, and as he saw my disgust and offense, his own anger seemed to subside. He tightened his relaxing grip, but this time in a friendly manner, forcing me into a chair; then with an appearance of wistfulness crossing to the littered table, where he wrote many words with a pencil, in the labored French of a foreigner.

The note which he finally handed me was an appeal for tolerance and forgiveness. Zann said that he was old, lonely, and afflicted with strange fears and nervous disorders connected with his music and with other things. He had enjoyed my listening to his music, and wished I would come again and not mind his eccentricities. But he could not play to another his weird harmonies, and could not bear hearing them from another; nor could he bear having anything in his room touched by another. He had not known until our hallway conversation that I could overhear his playing in my room, and

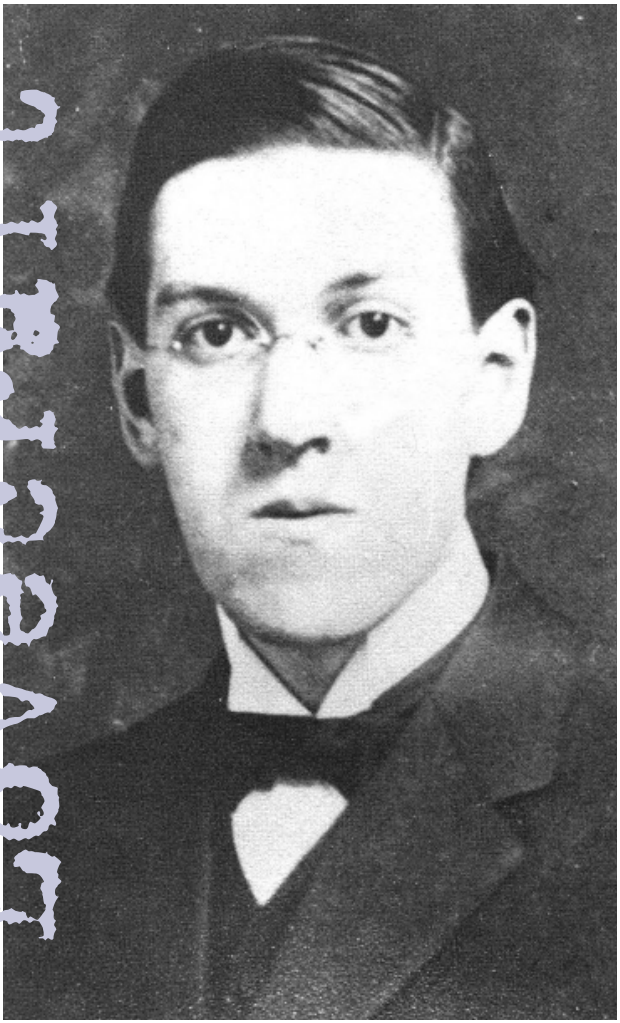
now asked me if I would arrange with Blandot to take a lower room where I could not hear him in the night. He would, he wrote, defray the difference in rent.

As I sat deciphering the execrable French, I felt more lenient toward the old man. He was a victim of physical and nervous suffering, as was I; and my metaphysical studies had taught me kindness. In the silence there came a slight sound from the window—the shutter must have rattled in the night wind, and for some reason I started almost as violently as did Erich Zann. So when I had finished reading, I shook my host by the hand, and departed as a friend.

The next day Blandot gave me a more expensive room on the third floor, between the apartments of an aged money-lender and the room of a respectable upholsterer. There was no one on the fourth floor.

It was not long before I found that Zann's eagerness for my company was not as great as it had seemed while he was persuading me to move down from the fifth story. He did not ask me to call on him, and when I did call he appeared uneasy and played listlessly. This was always at night—in the day he slept and would admit no one. My liking for him did not grow, though the attic room and the weird music seemed to hold an odd fascination for me. I had a curious desire to look out of that window, over the wall and down the unseen slope at the glittering roofs and spires which must lie outspread there. Once I went up to the garret during theater hours, when Zann was away, but the door was locked.

What I did succeed in doing was to overhear the noc-


Lovecraft

turnal playing of the dumb old man. At first I would tip-toe up to my old fifth floor, then I grew bold enough to climb the last creaking staircase to the peaked garret. There in the narrow hall, outside the bolted door with the covered keyhole, I often heard sounds which filled me with an indefinable dread—the dread of vague wonder and brooding mystery. It was not that the sounds were hideous, for they were not; but that they held vibrations suggesting nothing on this globe of earth, and that at certain intervals they assumed a symphonic quality which I could hardly conceive as produced by one player. Certainly, Erich Zann was a genius of wild power. As the weeks passed, the playing grew wilder, whilst the old musician acquired an increasing haggardness and furtiveness pitiful to behold. He now refused to admit me at any time, and shunned me whenever we met on the stairs.

Then one night as I listened at the door, I heard the shrieking viol swell into a chaotic babel of sound; a pandemonium which would have led me to doubt my own shaking sanity had there not come from behind that barred portal a piteous proof that the horror was real—the awful, inarticulate cry which only a mute can utter, and which rises only in moments of the most terrible fear or anguish. I knocked repeatedly at the door, but received no response. Afterward I waited in the black hallway, shivering with cold and fear, till I heard the poor musician's feeble effort to rise from the floor by the aid of a chair. Believing him just conscious after a fainting fit, I renewed my rapping, at the same time

calling out my name reassuringly. I heard Zann stumble to the window and close both shutter and sash, then stumble to the door, which he falteringly unfastened to admit me. This time his delight at having me present was real; for his distorted face gleamed with relief while he clutched at my coat as a child clutches at its mother's skirts.

Shaking pathetically, the old man forced me into a chair whilst he sank into another, beside which his viol and bow lay carelessly on the floor. He sat for some time inactive, nodding oddly, but having a paradoxical suggestion of intense and frightened listening. Subsequently he seemed to be satisfied, and crossing to a chair by the table wrote a brief note, handed it to me, and returned to the table, where he began to write rapidly and incessantly. The note implored me in the name of mercy, and for the sake of my own curiosity, to wait where I was while he prepared a full account in German of all the marvels and terrors which beset him. I waited, and the dumb man's pencil flew.

It was perhaps an hour later, while I still waited and while the old musician's feverishly written sheets still continued to pile up, that I saw Zann start as from the hint of a horrible shock. Unmistakably he was looking at the curtained window and listening shudderingly. Then I half fancied I heard a sound myself; though it was not a horrible sound, but rather an exquisitely low and infinitely distant musical note, suggesting a player in one of the neighboring houses, or in some abode beyond the lofty wall over which I had never been able to look.

Upon Zann the effect was terrible, for, dropping his pencil, suddenly he rose, seized his viol, and commenced to rend the night with the wildest playing I had ever heard from his bow save when listening at the barred door.

It would be useless to describe the playing of Erich Zann on that dreadful night. It was more horrible than anything I had ever overheard, because I could now see the expression of his face, and could realize that this time the motive was stark fear. He was trying to make a noise; to ward something off or drown something out—what, I could not imagine, awesome though I felt it must be. The playing grew fantastic, dehnous, and hysterical, yet kept to the last the qualities of supreme genius which I knew this strange old man possessed. I recognized the air—it was a wild Hungarian dance popular in the theaters, and I reflected for a moment that this was the first time I had ever heard Zann play the work of another composer.

Louder and louder, wilder and wilder, mounted the shrieking and whining of that desperate viol. The player was dripping with an uncanny perspiration and twisted like a monkey, always looking frantically at the curtained window. In his frenzied strains I could almost see shadowy satyrs and bacchanals dancing and whirling insanely through seething abysses of clouds and smoke and lightning. And then I thought I heard a shriller, steadier note that was not from the viol; a calm, deliberate, purposeful, mocking note from far away in the West.

At this juncture the shutter began to rattle in a howling

night wind which had sprung up outside as if in answer to the mad playing within. Zann's screaming viol now outdid itself emitting sounds I had never thought a viol could emit. The shutter rattled more loudly, unfastened, and commenced slamming against the window. Then the glass broke shiveringly under the persistent impacts, and the chill wind rushed in, making the candles sputter and rustling the sheets of paper on the table where Zann had begun to write out his horrible secret. I looked at Zann, and saw that he was past conscious observation. His blue eyes were bulging, glassy and sightless, and the frantic playing had become a blind, mechanical, unrecognizable orgy that no pen could even suggest.

A sudden gust, stronger than the others, caught up the manuscript and bore it toward the window. I followed the flying sheets in desperation, but they were gone before I reached the demolished panes. Then I remembered my old wish to gaze from this window, the only window in the Rue d'Auseil from which one might see the slope beyond the wall, and the city outspread beneath. It was very dark, but the city's lights always burned, and I expected to see them there amidst the rain and wind. Yet when I looked from that highest of all gable windows, looked while the candles sputtered and the insane viol howled with the night-wind, I saw no city spread below, and no friendly lights gleamed from remembered streets, but only the blackness of space illimitable; unimagined space alive with motion and music, and having no semblance of anything on

earth. And as I stood there looking in terror, the wind blew out both the candles in that ancient peaked garret, leaving me in savage and impenetrable darkness with chaos and pandemonium before me, and the demon madness of that night-baying viol behind me.

I staggered back in the dark, without the means of striking a light, crashing against the table, overturning a chair, and finally groping my way to the place where the blackness screamed with shocking music. To save myself and Erich Zann I could at least try, whatever the powers opposed to me. Once I thought some chill thing brushed me, and I screamed, but my scream could not be heard above that hideous viol. Suddenly out of the blackness the madly sawing bow struck me, and I knew I was close to the player. I felt ahead, touched the back of Zann's chair, and then found and shook his shoulder in an effort to bring him to his senses.

He did not respond, and still the viol shrieked on without slackening. I moved my hand to his head, whose mechanical nodding I was able to stop, and shouted in his ear that we must both flee from the unknown things of the night. But he neither answered me nor abated the frenzy of his unutterable music, while all through the garret strange currents of wind seemed to dance in the darkness and babel. When my hand touched his ear I shuddered, though I knew not why—knew not why till I felt the still face; the ice-cold, stiffened, unbreathing face whose glassy eyes bulged uselessly into the void. And then, by some miracle, finding the door and the large wooden bolt, I plunged wildly away from that

glassy-eyed thing in the dark, and from the ghoulish howling of that accursed viol whose fury increased even as I plunged.

Leaping, floating, flying down those endless stairs through the dark house; racing mindlessly out into the narrow, steep, and ancient street of steps and tottering houses; clattering down steps and over cobbles to the lower streets and the putrid canyon-walled river; panting across the great dark bridge to the broader, healthier streets and boulevards we know; all these are terrible impressions that linger with me. And I recall that there was no wind, and that the moon was out, and that all the lights of the city twinkled.

Despite my most careful searches and investigations, I have never since been able to find the Rue d'Auseil. But I am not wholly sorry; either for this or for the loss in undreamable abysses of the closely-written sheets which alone could have explained the music of Erich Zann.

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