THE QUILT

and Other Stories by Tayama Katai

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The Quilt

1

AS he started down the gentle slope of that road in Koishikawa that leads from Kirishitanzaka to Gokurakusui, he thought things over. "Well, this is the end of the first stage of my relationship with her. It's ridiculous to think I could ever have considered such a thing, what with me being thirty-six and with three children as well. And yet . . . I wonder—can it really be true? All that affection she showed me—was it really just affection, and not love?"

All those emotional letters—their relationship was certainly something out of the ordinary. He had a wife, he had children, he had a reputation to consider, and, moreover, he was her teacher, so they hadn't gone as far as falling madly in love. And yet, the beating of their hearts when they talked together, the sparkle in their eyes when they looked at each other—there was definitely something tremendously powerful deep beneath it all. He felt that, if only there was an opportunity, this hidden force would suddenly gain strength and destroy at a stroke that teacher-pupil relationship, that morality, that reputation, that family of his. At least, that was what he believed. But then the events of the last few days would mean that her feelings had just been put on. The thought that she had deceived him went time and again through his mind. However, while he could, being a literary man, consider his own state of mind objectively, the mind of a young woman was not something that could easily be fathomed. Perhaps her warm, cheerful affection was just part of a woman's nature, and perhaps that beautiful look in her eyes, that tenderness, were all subconscious, all meaningless, just like

a flower in nature giving a sort of comfort to those who look upon it. Even assuming for argument's sake that she did love him, he was the teacher and she was his pupil, he had a wife and children and she was a beautiful young flower just coming into bloom, so perhaps it was inevitable that they should both come to realize this. Then again, he had failed to clear the question up when she had sent him that one really intense letter, complaining of her anguish both openly and implicitly, and, as if to oppress him with the force of nature, conveying her feelings to him for a final time. With her female modesty, how could he now expect her to make things any clearer than that? Perhaps, with her mind in such a state, she had acted as she had now through despair.

"Anyway, the chance has now gone. She already belongs to someone else!" he exclaimed aloud as he walked along, and pulled at his hair.

He went slowly on down the slope, his figure, in suit of striped serge and straw hat, bent slightly forward as he thrust out his wisteria-vine walking-stick. It was the middle of September and still insufferably hot, but the sky was already filled with a refreshing air of autumn, and its deep, rich blue vividly stirred the emotions. Round about were fish shops and saké shops and grocery shops, beyond them rows of backstreet tenements and temple gates, and in the low-lying ground of Hisakatamachi numerous factory chimneys poured out their thick black smoke.

It was in one of those many factories that he went to work every afternoon, in a large Western-style room upstairs with a single large table standing in the middle and a Western-style bookcase, full of all sorts of geographical works, at its side. He was helping, on a part-time basis, with the editing of some geographical works for a certain publishing house. A man of letters editing geographical works! He had taken on the work pretending that he had an interest in geography, but of course, deep down, he wasn't happy with it. What with his rather tardy literary career, his despair at only having produced odds and ends without an opportunity for putting all he had into a work, the painful abuse he received every month from the young men's magazines, his own awareness of what he ought to do some day —it was inevitable he should feel upset. Society was advancing with each new day. Suburban trains had revolutionized Tokyo's transport system. Girl students had become something of a force,

and nowadays, even if he'd wanted to, he wouldn't have been able to find the old-fashioned sort of girl he'd known in his courting days. And the young men, like young men in any age, had a completely different attitude towards everything, whether love, literature, or politics, and he felt an unbridgeable gap between them and his own generation.

Every day, then, he would go mechanically along the same route, in through the same big gate, along the same narrow passage with its mixture of vibrating noise from the rotary press and smelly sweat from the factory-hands. He would casually greet the employees in the office, climb laboriously up the long and narrow steps, and finally enter that room. The east and south sides were open to the sun, and in the afternoon, when the sun was at its strongest, it grew unbearably hot in there. To add to it all the office-boy was lazy and didn't do the cleaning, so the table was covered with an unpleasant layer of white dust.

He sat down at his desk, smoked a cigarette, then got up again to take down from the bookcase some bulky statistical works, maps, guides, and geography books. Eventually he quietly took up his pen to continue from where he had left off the previous day. However, for the last few days his mind had been troubled, and he found it hard to write. He would finish one line, then stop to think things over, then write another line only to stop again. The thoughts that filled his mind were all fragmentary, intense, hasty, and often desperate. Then suddenly, by some chain of thought or other, he called to mind Hauptmann's *Lonely People*. Before things had turned out as they had, he had thought about teaching her this drama as part of her curriculum. He had wanted to teach her about the hero's—Johannes Vockerat's—mind, about his grief and the wife who misunderstood him. He had read the work some three years before, before he had even known of her very existence, and since then he too had been a lonely man. He didn't go so far as to try to compare himself to Johannes, but he did feel, with great sympathetic understanding, that if such a woman as Anna, Johannes's student, appeared, then it was only natural if things ended in such a tragedy. "And now I can't even become a Johannes," he thought, letting out a long, deep sigh.

Not surprisingly, he didn't teach her *Lonely People*, but instead Turgenev's short work *Faust*. There in the tiny little study,

bright with the light of the lamp, her heart had been filled with longing by that colorful love story, and her expressive eyes had sparkled with a still deeper significance. The lamplight shone on the upper part of her body, on her chic and fashionable hairstyle, her comb, her ribbons, and when she had drawn her face close to the book that indescribable perfumed smell, that fleshy, female smell. . . . As he explained to her the part in which the protagonist reads Goethe's *Faust* to his former lover, his own voice too had trembled with passion.

"But it's no good now!" he exclaimed to himself, and pulled at his hair again.

2

He was called Takenaka Tokio.

Three years before, when his wife was expecting their third child, he had already been completely disillusioned of the pleasures of newly wedded life. The busy affairs of the world had no meaning for him, he lacked even the enthusiasm to work on his life's masterpiece, and as for his everyday life—getting up in the morning, going off to work, coming home at four in the afternoon and seeing, as ever, his wife's face, eating his dinner and going off to bed—as for this monotonous existence, he was thoroughly and absolutely bored with it. Moving house all the time wasn't interesting, talking to friends wasn't interesting, and he failed to find satisfaction in searching out foreign novels to read. In fact, he even felt that the various forms of nature—the thickly growing trees in the garden, the raindrops, the blooming and withering of the flowers—were making his banal life even more banal. He was desperately lonely. As he walked along the streets he would invariably see beautiful young women, and feel an acute desire for a new love, if only such were possible.

His was the anguish which in reality every man feels in his mid-thirties. Many men of this age flirt with low-class women for the sake, in the final analysis, of curing this loneliness. And many of those who divorce their wives are of this age.

Every morning, on the way to work, he would encounter a beautiful woman, a teacher. In those days he saw this encounter

as his only pleasure in life, and would dream all sorts of dreams about her. What if they were to fall in love, if he were to take her to an assignation house in Kagurazaka, if they enjoyed themselves away from the eyes of others . . .? What if they went for a walk through the suburbs, without his wife knowing . . .? Indeed, at the time his wife was pregnant and so, if she suddenly died of complications in the birth, and then if afterwards he were to make the other woman his new wife . . .? Would he then so calmly be able to make her his second wife . . .? Such were his thoughts as he walked along.

It was at that time that he had received an absolutely idolizing letter from a girl named Yokoyama Yoshiko, a great admirer of his works from Niimimachi in Bitchū, and a pupil at the Kobe Girls' Academy. Under the name of Takenaka Kojō he wrote novels of elegant style, and was not unknown in the world, so he quite frequently received letters from various devotees and admirers in the provinces. He didn't concern himself overmuch even with letters asking him to correct the sender's texts, or asking permission for the sender to become his pupil. And so, even when he received this girl's letter, his curiosity hadn't especially prompted him to reply. But after receiving three such enthusiastic letters from this same person, even Tokio had to take notice. She said she was nineteen but, judging from the phrases in her letters, her powers of expression were surprisingly skilled. Her one great hope, she said, was to become his pupil and devote her whole life to literature. Her characters flowed smoothly and easily, and she seemed to be quite a sophisticated girl.

He had written a reply from that upstairs room at the factory. That day he had stopped his daily geographical work after just two pages, and the scroll letter which he then sent her was a long one, several feet in length. He explained in detail in the letter the imprudence of a woman getting involved in literature, the need for a woman to fulfill her biological role of motherhood, the risk involved in a girl becoming a writer, and then added a few insulting phrases. He had smiled to himself at the thought that this would surely make her lose heart and give up her ideas. Then, taking a map of Okayama Prefecture from the bookcase, he had looked up Niimimachi in the district of Atetsu. He was surprised that such a sophisticated girl could come from

such a place, in the middle of all those hills some thirty miles or more inland up the Takahashi river valley from the San'yō Line. And yet, somehow Tokio felt familiarly attracted to the place, and looked carefully at the hills, rivers, and other features of the area.

He had thought she would be unable to reply, but far from it. Four days later an even thicker letter arrived—three pages of small characters written laterally in violet ink across blue-ruled Western-style paper—in which she repeated over and over again how she hoped he would not abandon her but make her his pupil, and how, if she could get her parents' permission, she hoped to come to Tokyo, enter a suitable school, and faithfully and wholeheartedly study literature. Tokio had to admire her resolve. Even in Tokyo the graduates from the girls' schools didn't understand the value of literature, and yet, to judge from the remarks in her letters, this girl did seem to know about everything. He promptly sent off a reply and formed a teacher-pupil relationship.

Many letters and texts were to follow. There were still points of immaturity in her writing, but Tokio felt that she wrote smoothly and without affectation, and that there were sufficient prospects for future development. And then, as they gradually got to know each other a little better, Tokio started to look forward to her letters. Once he had thought about asking her to send a photograph, and had written a request in a corner of his letter, but then had blacked it out. Looks were essential for a woman. If a woman were unattractive, then no matter how much talent she might have men wouldn't take to her. Deep down, Tokio felt that since Yoshiko was a woman who wanted to write literature she was sure to be physically plain. Yet he hoped she would be as presentable as possible.

It was in February the following year that, having obtained her parents' permission, Yoshiko had come to Tokio's house, accompanied by her father. It was exactly seven days after the birth of Tokio's third child, a son. His wife was still in confinement in the room next to the parlor, and was much disturbed when she heard from her elder sister, who had come to help out, how beautiful this young girl pupil was. Her sister was also worried about Tokio's intentions in making such a young and beautiful girl his pupil.

Tokio talked in detail to Yoshiko and her father about the circumstances and aims of a writer, and sounded out beforehand her father's views on the question of marriage. He learned that Yoshiko's family was wealthy and one of the leading families in Niimimachi, that her father and mother were both strict Christians, and that her mother in particular was a devout believer, having once studied at the Dōshisha Girls' College. The eldest son of the family had been to England, and after returning to Japan had become a professor at a government school. Yoshiko had, after leaving the local primary school, gone straight to Kobe and entered the Kobe Girls' Academy, where she had led the life of a sophisticated girl student. Compared with other girls' schools, the Christian schools were all open-minded when it came to literature. At that particular time there was a stipulation forbidding the reading of works such as *The Wind of the Devil, the Wind of Love*, and *The Golden Demon*,* but before the Ministry of Education had interfered there had been no problem about such books, provided they weren't read in the classroom. In the school church Yoshiko had learned the preciousness of prayer, the pleasure of Christmas night, the cultivation of ideals, and she had become one of a group that ignored mankind's base aspects while celebrating its attractive ones.

At first she had missed her home and mother and had been greatly upset, but eventually she had forgotten all that and had come to appreciate above all else the life of a girl student at boarding school. No pampering with tasty pumpkin there, and no side-dishes for your soy sauce either. So you simply learnt to put your sauce on your rice instead and to ease your feelings by grumbling about the cook, just as you moaned about the crotchety old dormitory mistress behind her back. When you've been involved in student life like that, how can you be expected to view things simplistically, like a girl raised in the home? Beauty, ideals, and vanity—these Yoshiko had now acquired, and thus she had all the good traits, and the bad, of a Meiji-era girl student.

At least her presence broke the loneliness of Tokio's life. Yesteryear's lover—today's wife. That his wife had once been

* *Makaze Koikaze* by Kosugi Tengai (1903) and *Konjiki Yasha* by Ozaki Kōyō (1897) respectively. The former deals with student life, the latter with a love affair.

his lover was a certain fact, but times had changed. With the sudden rise of women's education over the past four or five years, the establishing of women's universities, and the fashion for low-pompadour hairstyles and maroon pleated skirts, women no longer felt self-conscious about walking with a man. To Tokio nothing was more regrettable than his having contented himself with his wife, who had nothing more to offer than her old-fashioned round-chignon hairstyle, waddling walk, and chastity and submissiveness. When he compared the young, modern wife —beautiful and radiant as she strolled the streets with her husband, talking readily and eloquently at his side when they visited friends—with his own wife—who not only didn't read the novels he took such pains to write but was completely pig-ignorant about her husband's torment and anguish, and was happy as long as she could raise the children satisfactorily—then he felt like screaming his loneliness out loud. Just like Johannes in *Lonely People*, he could only feel how insignificant his own domestically minded wife was. All this, all this loneliness, was shattered by Yoshiko. For who could remain unmoved when a beautiful, modern, sophisticated girl pupil respectfully calls him Sensei as though he were a man of great standing in the world?

For the first month she had stayed at Tokio's house. What a contrast her gay voice and charming figure made with his previous sad and lonely life! She would busy herself helping his wife, just up from the childbirth, and would knit socks and mufflers, sew clothes, play with the children. Tokio felt as if he'd returned to his life as a newly-wed. He would feel a sense of excitement when he approached the door of his house. When he opened that door, there in the porch was her smiling face, her colorful figure. In the evenings before, his wife and children used to fall fast asleep, and the lamp, burning brightly but in vain in that little living room, would actually be if anything a source of misery. But now, however late he came home, beneath that same lamp Yoshiko's white hands would be nimbly plying knitting needles, and on her lap would be colorful balls of wool. Now, it was cheerful laughter that filled the brushwood-hedge confines of his home in the heart of Ushigome.

But before a month was out Tokio had realized the impossibility of having that lovable girl pupil stay on in his house. His docile wife didn't go so far as to complain about things, nor did

she show any signs of so doing, but nevertheless her mood got gradually worse. Amid the endless laughter spread an endless unease. He knew for a fact that his wife's relatives had started to treat it as a major problem.

After much worry Tokio had arranged for Yoshiko to stay at the house of his wife's elder sister, a military widow who lived off a pension and needlework, and that from there she should attend a private girls' school in Kōjimachi.

3

Since then until the present incident one and a half years had passed.

During that time Yoshiko had returned home twice. She had written five short novels, one long one, and several dozen passages of elegant prose and new-style poetry. At her school her English marks were first-class, and she had bought the complete works of Turgenev in English, which Tokio chose for her, from Maruzen Bookshop. The first time she had gone home was during the summer holidays, and the second was in compliance with the doctor's advice that she should relax in the quiet countryside of her home, following occasional hysteria-like convulsions due to nervous debility.

The house where Yoshiko was staying was in Kōjimachi Dote Sanbanchō, next to the embankment where the Kōbu Line trains passed. Her study was the guest room, a fairly large room fronting on a busy road that was a noisy place what with the din of children and passers-by. Next to her lacquered paper-ply desk was a bookcase rather like a smaller version of the Western-style bookcase in Tokio's study, and on top of it stood a mirror, a lipstick tray, a jar of face powder, and a large bottle of potassium bromide, which she said was for her nervous headaches. Prominent in the bookcase were the complete works of Kōyō,* Chikamatsu's realistic *jōruri* ballad-dramas,** English textbooks,

* Ozaki Kōyō, 1867–1903, was popular for his combined modernism and Japanese spirit.

** Chikamatsu Monzaemon, 1653–1724, was a famous classical dramatist, considered essential reading for any student of literature.

and in particular her newly purchased complete works of Turgenev. However, upon returning from school, rather than sitting at her desk writing fiction or poetry this aspiring authoress of the future preferred writing numerous letters. She had a considerable number of male friends, and a considerable number of letters in male handwriting would arrive for her. These friends included a student from the Tokyo Teachers' College and a student from Waseda University, who apparently came to see her from time to time.

There were not many such modern-minded girl students in that corner of Kōjimachi Dote Sanbanchō. Tokio's wife's folks lived there, beyond the Ichigaya Approach, and there were as well many girls from conservative merchant families. Thus Yoshiko's Kobe-bred sophistication drew the attention of the locals. Tokio was forever being told by his wife what her sister had said:

"She's having trouble with Yoshiko-san, she was saying only today. It's one thing for her boyfriends to come calling, but in the evening they go off together round the neighborhood and don't get back till late, she says. Yoshiko-san always tells her there's nothing to worry about, but rumors are rumors, my sister was saying."

When he heard such things Tokio would always side with Yoshiko and tell his wife, "You old-fashioned people will never understand what Yoshiko does. You only have to see a man and woman walking together and you think there's something strange going on, but you only think that way because you're old-fashioned. Nowadays women too are aware of themselves, and do what they want to do!"

Tokio would also proudly preach this ideal to Yoshiko. "Nowadays women have to be self-aware. It's no good having the same sort of attitude of depending on others as the women in the past. As Sudermann's Magda says, it's hopeless if you go straight from your father's hands into your husband's, with no pride in yourself. The modern woman in Japan must think for herself and then act for herself." He would go on to tell her about Ibsen's Nora and Turgenev's Elena, about how rich in both feeling and willpower were the women in Russia and Germany, and would then add, "But self-awareness also involves self-reflection, so you mustn't simply go throwing your willpower and ego about

recklessly. You must realize that you have full responsibility for your own actions."

Yoshiko would listen to Tokio's sermonizing as though it were of the utmost importance, and her feelings of admiration grew ever stronger. She felt it was more liberal than Christian teaching, and more authoritative.

Even for a girl student, Yoshiko's personal appearance was excessively showy. Her gold ring, her very fashionable pretty waist-sash, and her carefree posture were more than enough to draw the attention of people along the road. Her face was, rather than beautiful, extremely expressive, and while there were times when it did seem beautiful in the extreme, there were also times when it was somehow ugly. There was a sparkle in her eyes, and this was very often used to effect. Until four or five years before, women had been extremely simplistic when it came to expressing feelings, and were able to express only three or four different sorts of feeling, with basic looks such as of anger or joy. Now, however, there were quite a lot of women who could very cleverly express their feelings facially, and Tokio always felt that Yoshiko was one such woman.

The relationship between Yoshiko and Tokio was just too intimate merely for that of pupil and teacher. One female third-party, having observed the state of affairs between the two, had remarked to Tokio's wife, "Ever since Yoshiko-san came Tokio-san seems to have changed completely. When you see the two of them talking together it's as if their souls were reaching out for one another. Really, you should watch out, you know!" To other people, of course, it certainly looked that way, but as for the two people themselves, were they really that intimate? . . .

The feelings of a young woman, prone to high spirits. But then, just when you think she's in high spirits, suddenly she's dejected. Feelings aroused by trivial things, similarly often upset by trivial things. A tender attitude neither of love nor yet devoid of love. Tokio was always confused. The strength of morality, the strength of convention—if only there were once an opportunity, destroying these would be easier than tearing silk. However, such opportunities did not come readily.

And yet, Tokio himself believed that there had been two occasions in the last year when such an opportunity had at least come close. One had been when Yoshiko had sent him a lengthy

letter tearfully stating her belief that she was incompetent and unable to repay his kindness as her teacher, and that therefore it would be better for her to go back home, become a farmer's wife, and lose herself in the oblivion of the countryside. The other time had been when Tokio had chanced to visit her one evening and had found her alone in the house. As for the letter, Tokio clearly understood its meaning. He had spent a sleepless night worrying about how he should reply. Giving searching glances at the face of his peacefully sleeping wife, he had censured himself for his lack of conscience. And so, the letter which he sent in reply the following morning was that of the stern teacher. The second instance was a spring night some two months later, when he had chanced to call on Yoshiko and found her sitting alone by the *hibachi*,* her face powdered and beautiful.

"What's going on?" he had asked.

"I'm looking after the house."

"Where's my sister-in-law gone, then?"

"Shopping, over in Yotsuya."

She had looked him straight in the face as she replied. She was so very seductive. His heart had raced shamelessly at the overpowering look she gave him. Then they exchanged a few banal words, but both seemed to feel that those banalities were not quite so insignificant. What might have happened had they gone on talking for another quarter of an hour or so? Her eyes had sparkled expressively, her words were coquettish, her attitude was most definitely something out of the ordinary.

"You're very pretty tonight," he had said in a deliberately light-hearted tone.

"I've just been in the bath."

"Your make-up's very attractive, that's why you're so pretty!"

"Now Sensei, what a thing to say!"

She had laughed and moved her body coquettishly.

Tokio had returned home straight away. She had tried to get him to stay, but he had insisted on returning home, and so, looking reluctant, she had seen him off through the moonlit night. There was certainly something very mysterious contained in that powdered face of hers.

In April Yoshiko had come to look really off-color following

* A charcoal-burning brazier, the traditional Japanese domestic heater.

numerous bouts of illness, and her nerves had developed into a highly strung state. She took vast quantities of the potassium bromide, but apparently still couldn't sleep. Constant desires and reproductive forces never hesitate to take possession of a woman when she is of suitable age. Yoshiko grew familiar with a great number of medicines.

She had returned home at the end of April, had returned to Tokyo in September, and it was then that the present incident had occurred.

The present incident? Yoshiko had a lover! On the way back to Tokyo she had gone off with him to Saga, in Kyoto. As a result of those two days spent in merrymaking the timetable failed to tally between her departure from home and her arrival in Tokyo. Letters had therefore been exchanged between Tokyo and Bitchū, and after questioning Yoshiko it turned out to be a case of "love, pure love—the two of them most definitely hadn't done anything wrong, and wished desperately, at all costs, to continue their love in the future." As her teacher, Tokio found himself obliged to act as a sort of go-between, a witness to this love.

Yoshiko's lover was a Dōshisha student, a prodigy from the Kobe Church by the name of Tanaka Hideo, aged twenty-one.

Yoshiko swore to her teacher, in the name of God, that their love was pure. Her parents back home felt that to have gone secretly flirting in Saga with some man, while still only a student, already meant her spiritual degeneracy. She however maintained, amid a flood of tears, that there had definitely been no dirty act, and that the mutual awareness of their love had come only after she had left Kyoto. On arrival back in Tokyo she had found awaiting her a passionate letter from him, and it was then that they had first made their promises for the future. They had definitely done nothing wrong, she maintained. Tokio, while feeling a sense of martyrdom, was obliged to act in the interests of their so-called pure love.

He was in torment, greatly depressed at having been deprived of someone he cherished so very much. From the first he had had no thought of making his pupil his lover. If he had had any such fixed and clear-cut thought in mind he would not have hesitated to seize those two earlier potential opportunities. However, his

beloved pupil added beautiful color to his bleak existence and gave him a sort of limitless strength, so how could he be expected to endure her being snatched suddenly away by someone else? He had let two opportunities go by, but the vague hope at the bottom of his heart was to wait for the arrival of a third and a fourth opportunity, and then to build a new destiny, a new life. He was in torment, his thoughts in confusion. Feelings of jealousy, regret, and vexation merged together and spun round in his mind like a whirlwind. To add to his confusion, a sense of his moral obligation as her teacher was also mixed in, as was too a feeling of martyrdom that it was all for the sake of his loved one's happiness. He drank a great deal of saké with his evening meal and went off to sleep as drunk as a lord.

The next day was Sunday and it had rained, the steady downpour in the woods behind his house seeming twice as miserable as usual, and all for Tokio's benefit. His thoughts dwelled upon how long the streams of rain were that fell onto the zelkova trees, falling endlessly from an endless sky. He had no enthusiasm for reading or writing. He just lounged in his wisteria chair—cold to the back now that it was coming into autumn—and gazed at the streaming rain, thinking, in the light of this incident, how his life had been till now. He had already suffered similar experiences. He invariably tasted the bitterness of lonely torment, the torment of forever being made to stand on the outside of things and, because of some wrong step, never being able to enter into the heart of destiny. It was the same with literature, the same with society. Love, love, love . . . Was he still being tossed, even now, by the waves of a negative fate? The thought left him overcome by his wretchedness and by the ineptitude of fate. "I am Turgenev's 'superfluous man,'" he thought, and went over in his mind the transient life of that protagonist.

Unable to endure the loneliness, that afternoon he said he wanted to drink saké. He moaned because his wife was slow preparing things, and then the food he was given was tasteless, so he ended up getting angry and drinking out of desperation. One bottle, two bottles . . . the number grew, and soon Tokio was hopelessly drunk. He even stopped moaning at his wife. He would simply yell "Saké! Saké!" whenever he emptied the bottle. He gulped it down. The timid maid looked on in surprise and disgust. First he hugged and kissed his five-year-old son with

a great show of fondness, but then got angry when the child started to cry and slapped his behind furiously. The three children grew frightened and backed away from him to a respectful distance, gazing in bewilderment at the red, drunken face of their extraordinarily behaved father. He drank close on three pints and then simply collapsed on the spot in a drunken heap, not minding that he sent the table flying as he did so. Then presently, in strange, disjointed stanzas, he started to chant an infantile verse of new-style poetry that had been popular some ten years before:

I haunt your doorway
Like the dust of the street
Blown about by the storm.
More than that storm,
More than that dust,
It's the remnants of our love,
That lie scattered in the dawn . . .

Halfway through the verse he suddenly stood up, still wearing the quilt with which his wife had covered him, and, looking just like a little mountain, moved towards the parlor. His wife, very worried, followed and asked where he was going. He paid no attention and tried to enter the toilet, still clad in the quilt. His wife was flustered:

"What *are* you doing? You shouldn't get drunk like this! It's horrible! That's the toilet!"

Suddenly she pulled at the quilt from behind, and was left holding it there in the entrance to the toilet. Tokio was relieving himself in a dangerously erratic manner, and on finishing he promptly flopped straight down on his side, still in the toilet. His disgusted wife tried her best to move him, but he would neither move nor stand. Yet neither did he fall asleep, but rather, with wide piercing eyes in a face like red clay, he just stared at the rain pouring down outside.

4

Tokio came plodding back at the usual hour to his home in Ushigome Yaraichō.

For three days he had been struggling with that torment. Part of him had a sort of strength that made it impossible for him to abandon himself to indulgence. He always regretted being controlled by this strength, but sooner or later he was always beaten and forced into submission by it. For this reason he was obliged always to taste the bitterness of standing on the outside of destiny, and was considered by society to be a correct and trustworthy man. After three days of anguish he could at least now see how things stood before him. The curtain had come down on the first act of his relationship with Yoshiko. From now on he would just have to do his duty as a teacher and think of the happiness of the woman he loved. It was hard, but life was hard. Such were his thoughts as he went home.

His wife came up to greet him as soon as he opened the door. The day was still hot, a late fling of summer, and his underwear was soaked in sweat. He changed into a simple unlined starched white kimono and sat in front of the *hibachi* in the living room. His wife took a letter from the sideboard, as though she had just remembered it.

" From Yoshiko-san," she said as she handed it to him.

He opened it quickly. Just by looking at the thickness of the roll of paper he knew it was about the incident. He eagerly started to read.

It was in the new colloquial writing style, the penmanship flowing and excellent.

Sensei,

Actually I wanted to talk this over with you, but things happened too quickly so I just acted on my own judgment.

Yesterday, at four o'clock, a telegram came from Tanaka saying he would arrive at Shinbashi Station at six—you can't imagine how surprised I was!

I was really worried because I believed that he wasn't the rash sort of person who'd come about nothing. Sensei, please forgive me—I went to meet him at the said time. When I met him and asked him why he'd come, it turned out that, after reading my letter—in which I explained everything—he'd been really worried that perhaps, because of this incident, I might be taken off back home, and that he'd be to blame. So, he'd abandoned his studies straight away and come up to Tokyo with the intention of explaining everything to you, apologizing, asking for support, and trying to ensure that everything went smoothly. Then when I explained to him about how I'd told you everything, about your kind words, and about how you'd kindly become the witness and protector of our pure and sincere love, he was extremely moved by your kindness and was overcome with tears of gratitude. It seems he was extremely shocked by the over-worried nature of my letter and had come up to Tokyo prepared for the worst. He said he'd come with the intention of, if necessary, getting a friend—who'd gone with us that time to Saga—to act as witness to make it clear that nothing dirty took place between us, and he wanted to explain how we became aware of our love only after we'd parted. He also wanted to ask if you'd be kind enough to tell all this to my parents back home. But seeing how I've just very rashly upset my parents' feelings, how could we do that? We've now come to the conclusion that the best thing to do is wait a while and say nothing, to cherish our hopes and devote ourselves to our studies, and wait for an opportunity to explain things even if it's five or ten years from now. I also told him everything you'd said. And so, things being settled, he should have gone back, but when I saw how thoroughly worn out he looked, I just couldn't tell him to go straight back again. (Please forgive my weakness.) I do try to honor your advice that I shouldn't get involved in practical problems while I'm in the middle of my studies, but, for the time being, I got him settled in a travel lodge, and since he'd taken the trouble to come so far, I ended up saying I'd spend a day sightseeing with him. Please forgive me, Sensei. For all our passionate feelings, we still have common sense, and we won't do anything that might be misunderstood by others, such as at Kyoto when we temporarily forgot ourselves. I swear to you we won't do anything like that.

Best wishes also to your wife,

Yoshiko

As Tokio read this letter various feelings kindled like fire within him. That twenty-one-year old boy Tanaka had actually come to Tokyo. Yoshiko had gone to meet him. Who knows what they did? What she had just told him might be a pack of lies. Perhaps there'd been physical motives ever since Tanaka had first met her at Suma bathing resort during the summer holidays, and so, having sought to gratify his desires in Kyoto, he had now come to Tokyo in pursuit of the woman for whom he could no longer contain his desire. They had no doubt held hands. Their hearts would have pressed against each other. Who knows what they had been doing upstairs in that travel lodge, out of other people's sight? It was only a fleeting moment between purity and impurity. Tokio couldn't bear such thoughts. "This concerns my

responsibility as her supervisor!" he cried out angrily within himself. "I can't leave things like this! I can't allow such freedom to a woman of capricious mind. I must exercise supervision, protection. 'We are passionate but sensible'—what's this 'we'? Why did she write 'we' and not 'I'? Why did she use the plural?" Tokio was confused, angry. Tanaka had arrived at six the previous evening. If Tokio went to his sister-in-law's and asked, he could find out what time Yoshiko had returned that night. But what had they done today? What were they doing now?

The dinner, which his wife had so carefully prepared, included fresh sliced raw tuna and chilled bean-curd with *shiso*-plant seasoning, and although he didn't feel much like savoring his meal, he got through one drink of saké after another.

His wife put the youngest child to bed and then came and sat in front of the *hibachi*. Glancing at Yoshiko's letter at her husband's side, she asked:

"What did Yoshiko have to say?"

Without replying, Tokyo tossed the letter to her. As she caught it she gave him a searching look, and knew a storm was brewing.

She read the letter through and then rolled it up.

"He's come, then?"

"Uh."

"Will he stay on in Tokyo, do you think?"

"Isn't it written in the letter! He's going back soon, she says . . ."

"*Will* he go back, though, I wonder?"

"*Who knows?*"

Her husband's tone was harsh, so she kept quiet. Then, after a while:

"Well, it's really too bad. A young girl like her, saying she wants to be a novelist or something—she might well want what she wants, but her parents should act like properly responsible parents too, shouldn't they?"

"But I dare say you were relieved at her affair!" he was about to say, but checked himself. "Well, don't concern yourself about it—people like you just don't understand. . . . Why don't you just pour some saké instead?"

His obedient wife took up the saké-pourer and filled his Kyoto-made porcelain cup to the brim.

Tokio knocked back the saké as though it alone could help him overcome his depression. At the third bottle his wife grew worried.

"What's the matter with you lately?" she asked.

"Why?"

"Isn't it a fact you do nothing but get drunk?"

"Is there anything the matter, then, if I get drunk?"

"I'd say so, yes. I think there's something on your mind. Shouldn't you stop worrying about Yoshiko-san?"

"Fool!" thundered Tokio.

His wife went on undaunted.

"Well, it's poison if you drink too much, you know, so I should stop while you're still all right. If you lay yourself out again in the toilet, you're too big for me and the maid Otsuru to manage between the two of us!"

"Never you mind—let's just have another bottle!"

And so he drank another half-bottle. He now seemed very drunk. His face had turned a copper color and his eyes were rather fixed. Suddenly he stood up.

"Get my waist-sash out!"

"Where are you going?"

"I'm off to Sanbanchō."

"My sister's?"

"Uh."

"You should forget that idea—you're not in a fit state!"

"What!? I'm all right! You can't be given responsibility for someone's daughter and then neglect to look after her! I can't just look the other way when this fellow comes up to Tokyo and goes strolling about with her! I can't relax while she's over with your sister Takawa, so I'm going to bring her back here today, if there's time. You go and clean upstairs."

"You're going to bring her back to stay here, again . . .?"

"Of course!"

His wife didn't seem keen to get out his waist-sash and outdoor kimono.

"All right, then!—If you won't get my things out, I'll go like this!"

He hurried out, just as he was, without a hat, in his plain white kimono with its dirty muslin under-belt.

"I'm just getting them out! . . . Dear me, what next?" He heard his wife's words behind him.

The summery day was drawing to a close. The birds were chattering noisily in Yarai's Sakai Wood. In the nearby houses the evening meal had been finished, and made-up young women appeared in the doorways as they set out for the evening. Some boys were playing ball. He also encountered several couples strolling to the Kagurazaka—thinly moustached gentlemen, government officials to judge from appearances, escorting their young wives, with their fashionable low-pompadour hairstyles. Tokio was thrown into disorder by his agitated feelings and drunken body, and all his surroundings seemed to belong to a different world. It seemed to him as though the houses on either side were moving, the ground giving way beneath his feet, the sky coming down over his head. Although he had never had a particularly good tolerance for drink he had just drunk heavily and recklessly, and it had gone straight to his head. All at once he recalled how lower-class Russians got drunk and fell flat out asleep on the roadside. He remembered having told a friend that this showed what great people the Russians were—if you're going to let yourself go, then you should let yourself go all the way! "Fool! How could love *possibly* make any discrimination between teacher and pupil?" he yelled at himself.

By the time he had climbed Nakanezaka Hill, gone past the rear gate of the Officers' School, and come to the top of Sanaizaka Hill, the day had drawn completely to a close. Many people in white *yukata* were passing by. The tobacconist's young wife had come out in front of the shop. The hanging curtain in the doorway of the shop selling iced refreshments fluttered in the evening breeze with a suggestion of coolness. Gazing vacantly at this summery night scene Tokio bumped into a telegraph pole and, on the point of collapse, fell to his knees in a shallow ditch. "Drunkard! Stay on your feet!" yelled some workman contemptuously.

Suddenly seeming to come to his senses, Tokio turned to the right from the top of the hill and went into the grounds of the Hachiman Temple. Here there was no one to be seen and all was peaceful. Tall old zelkovas and pines formed a canopy overhead, and in a corner to the left stood a huge, thick coral tree. Here and there the all-night lamps started to come on and cast their light. In terrible distress, Tokio plunged into the shadow of the coral tree and laid himself out on the ground at its base.

His mind was excited, his wild feelings and the pleasure of his sadness mustered all their force, and while on the one hand he was carried away by a burning jealousy, on the other he was coolly and objectively considering his own situation.

Of course his feelings were not the passionate feelings of a first love. Rather than blindly following his fate, he was coolly appraising that fate. Burning feelings and ice-cold objective appraisal fused firmly together like entwined threads, and produced in him an extraordinary state of mind.

He was sad, truly deeply sad. His sadness was not the sadness of florid youth, nor simply the sadness of lovers. It was a more profound and greater sadness, a sadness inherent in the innermost reaches of human life. The flowing of moving waters, the withering of blossoming flowers—when encountering that irresistible force which is deep within nature, there is nothing as wretched nor as transient as man.

Tears flowed down over Tokio's whiskered face.

Then suddenly an idea struck him. He stood up and started walking. It was now full night. The glass lamps erected here and there in the grounds gave off their light, and the three words "all-night lamp" showed clearly on their faces. It upset him to read those three words. Had he not once before looked upon those three words in a state of great distress? When his wife was still unmarried and living just below the high ground where he now stood, he had often climbed to this same spot hoping just to catch the faint sound of her harp. So great had been his passion that if he couldn't win her he had wished only to cast himself away in some colony in the South Seas, and he had often pondered things while gazing at those three words—"all-night lamp"—and at the *haiku* poems on the paper lanterns, at the temple sanctuary, at the long stone steps, at the temple gates. Below, just as in earlier days, stood the same houses and, although the occasional rumbling of a passing train now broke the silence, just as in the old days a light shone bright and clear from the windows of his wife's house. What a fickle heart! Who would have thought that things would change so much after just eight years? Why, with the change of her unmarried *momoware* hairstyle into the rounded chignon *marumage* style of a married woman, had their pleasant life become so bleak? Why had he now come to feel this new love? Tokio could not help feeling

an acute awareness of the frightening power of time. However, strange as it was, the facts of the present situation remained completely unchanged.

"Paradox it may be, but there's nothing I can do about it. That paradox, that inconstancy, is a fact, and facts are facts. *Fact!*"

The thought echoed through his mind.

Like a being oppressed by the unendurable forces of nature, Tokio once again laid down his bulky frame, this time on a nearby bench. Chancing to look up, he saw that a large and lusterless copper-colored moon had risen silently over the pines along the moat. The color, the form, the appearance, were thoroughly miserable. Tokio thought how well it matched his own present misery, and once again his heart was filled with unbearable sadness.

By now he had sobered up. The evening dew had started to fall.

He arrived in front of the house in Dote Sanbanchō.

He looked, but could see no light in Yoshiko's room. It appeared that she still hadn't returned. His heart raced feverishly again. Alone with her lover, on a dark night like tonight! Who knew what they might be getting up to? When they acted as stupidly as this, what was to become of their "pure love," their claim to have committed no vulgar act?

Tokio's first thought was to go inside, but then, realizing there was no point in going in before Yoshiko got back, he went straight past. As he walked he looked at the face of each woman he passed, thinking she might be Yoshiko. He loitered—first on the embankment, then in the shadow of the pines, then at the corner of the road—so much that he began to arouse the suspicions of passers-by. It was now nine o'clock, now almost ten. You might well say it was a summer night, but there was no reason for being out quite as late as this. Convinced that Yoshiko must have returned by now, he returned to his sister-in-law's house, but no, she still wasn't back after all.

He went in.

No sooner had he gone through to the small living room at the back than he asked:

"What's happened to Yoshi-san?"

Before answering, in fact before all else, his sister-in-law noticed in surprise the liberal amount of mud on Tokio's clothes.

"Well now, what's happened to you, Tokio-san?"

Under the clear bright light of the lamp he could see, sure enough, on the shoulder, knee, and hip of his plain white casual kimono, not merely a trace but a very large amount of mud.

"What? Oh, I just fell over back there."

"Really? But it's even on your shoulder! You were drunk again, I suppose."

"*What*! . . ."

Tokio tried to turn the comment away with a forced laugh.

He continued, not letting up in the least.

"Where's Yoshi-san gone?"

"When she went off this morning she said she was going for a walk with a friend, towards Nakano. She should be back any time now. Anything you wanted with her?"

"Well, yes, a small matter. . . . Was she back late last night?"

"No. She said she was going to Shinbashi to meet a friend, left just after four and came back around eight."

She looked at Tokio's face. "Is anything the matter?"

"Well, really, after all. . . ." Tokio's tone became serious. "I just thought we'd have problems if the same sort of thing that happened in Kyoto were to happen again, and that therefore I ought to have her back at my place and keep a proper eye on her."

"Yes, that would be best. Really, Yoshiko-san has such a strong character, and for uneducated people like me . . ."

"No, that's not the reason. It's just that to allow her too much freedom might turn out to be against her own interests, and so I thought of having her at home and looking after her properly."

"Well, that would be best. Really, even Yoshiko-san. . . . There's nothing really bad about her, and she's bright and intelligent and a rare sort of person, but if she does have a fault then it's this habit of hers of walking nonchalantly around at night with her men friends. I'm often telling her that it's the one thing she should stop, but when I say that she just laughs and calls me old-fashioned. And then I hear how, at the police-box on the corner, they felt it suspicious that she was always hanging around with these men and how a plainclothes detective had been stationed outside the house. Of course those things

aren't really going on and so I'm not worried in that sense, but. . . ."

"When was this?"

"The end of last year."

"She's just a bit too sophisticated for comfort." Glancing at his watch, which showed half past ten, he added, "Anyway, I wonder what's happened? Staying out alone as late as this, at her age. . . ."

"She'll be back soon."

"Does this happen often, then?"

"No, it's very unusual. But it's a summer evening, so she'll be out thinking it's still early."

His sister-in-law went on with her needlework as she talked. In front of her stood a cutting-board with broad-based leg-supports, while silk cuttings and threads and scissors lay scattered about in jumbled disarray. The lamplight shone clearly on the beautiful colors of women's clothes. The mid-September night wore on, it grew a little chilly, and a Kōbu Line cargo train passed by along the embankment behind the house, setting up a dreadful shaking.

Every time he heard the sound of *geta* Tokio felt sure it had to be Yoshiko, but eventually, just after eleven had struck, a particular light, mincing sound of a girl's *geta* could be heard resounding through the quiet night.

"This time it *is* Yoshiko-san," said his sister-in-law.

Sure enough, the footsteps stopped at the entrance to the house, and the sliding-door opened with a noisy rattling.

"Yoshiko-san?"

"Yes," replied a charming voice.

A tall, beautiful figure with a fashionable low-pompadour hairstyle came quickly and quietly in from the porch.

"Oh! What a surprise! Sensei!"

Her tone was enough to reveal her surprise and embarrassment.

"Sorry I'm so late," she said as she came to the doorway between the front room and the living room. Then, half-sitting and flashing a searching glance at Tokio, she took out a purple crepe-wrapped package and handed it to his sister-in-law.

"Oh, what's this then? A present? Really, you always go to such trouble over me. . . ."

"Oh no—it's for me too!" replied Yoshiko cheerfully. Although she had looked as if she intended to go into the next room, she was now obliged to sit in a corner of the living room, under the dazzling light of the lamp. Her beautiful figure, her fashionable hairstyle, her colorful flannel kimono tied neatly with an olive-green summer-style waist-sash, her seductive appeal as she casually lay back. . . . Sitting facing this figure, Tokio felt a sort of vague satisfaction, and half forgot his earlier distress and anguish. No matter how powerful your rival in love, if you can just possess the girl you can at least feel some sort of peace of mind.

"I really am late getting back."

She apologized again, quietly, uneasily.

"You went to Nakano then, for a walk?" Tokio asked abruptly.

"Yes . . ." Yoshiko shot another searching glance at him.

His sister-in-law made some tea. On opening the present she found it was her special favorite, cream puffs. "Oh, how delicious!" she exclaimed, and for a moment or two everyone's attention was focused on the cakes.

After a while Yoshiko spoke:

"Sensei, were you waiting for me, then?"

"Yes, that's right—he's been waiting over an hour and a half, you know!" cut in Tokio's sister-in-law.

With this the whole story came out, about how he had come with the intention of taking her back with him, that very night if possible—her luggage could be sent on later. Yoshiko listened with head bowed, nodding assent. Certainly she felt a certain coercion, and yet deep down she had absolute faith in Tokio—and after all, it wasn't so bad to go and live in the home of a teacher who had sympathized so much with her recent love affair. In fact, for some time now she had been unhappy about staying in this old-fashioned house and had wished, if only it were possible, that she could live as she had at the beginning, in Sensei's house; and so, if only it hadn't come about as it had, she would have been only too happy about the plan.

Tokio was anxious to find out about her lover. Where was he now? When was he going back to Kyoto? For Tokio this was a truly important question. But he couldn't reveal everything by asking in front of his sister-in-law, who knew nothing, and so that evening he said not a word about it. The three talked into the night about trivia.

Tokio had mentioned her moving back that very evening, but since it was now midnight his sister-in-law thought it best that Yoshiko go the following day. Tokio considered returning alone to Ushigome, but he felt hopelessly worried and so, on the pretext of it being late, he arranged to stay the night at his sister-in-law's and for himself and Yoshiko to leave early the next morning.

Yoshiko slept in the front room, while Tokio and his sister-in-law slept in the slightly smaller living room. Presently he could hear his sister-in-law's little snores. The clock struck one. Apparently Yoshiko was finding it hard to get to sleep, for from time to time he heard what seemed to be a loud sigh. A Kōbu Line cargo train passed by alone through the still night, setting up a dreadful shaking in the house. For a long while Tokio too was unable to get to sleep.

5

The next morning Tokio escorted Yoshiko to his own house. He had wanted to find out about the previous day's happenings as soon as he was alone with her, but when he saw how she was following dejectedly on behind him with bowed head, he felt rather sorry for her, and walked on in silence, containing his impatience.

When they reached the top of Sanaizaka Hill there were only a few passers-by. Tokio suddenly turned round and asked abruptly:

"Well, what happened?"

"Eh?" Yoshiko frowned as she returned the question.

"I'm talking about yesterday! Is he still here?"

"He's going back on the six o'clock express."

"So, won't you have to see him off, then?"

"No, that's not necessary now."

With this their conversation came to an end, and they walked on in silence.

In Tokio's house in Yaraichō they cleaned the upstairs three-mat and six-mat rooms, which had been used till then as storerooms, and made them into Yoshiko's living quarters. For ages

the storerooms had been left for the children to play in, and were thick with dust, but, after setting to work with a broom and dusters and after repairing the broken, rain-stained sliding paper screens, it became so bright and cheerful one would not have believed it possible. The place was filled with a pleasant greenness by the huge, thickly growing trees of the Sakai Cemetery to the rear of the house, and the view also included the neighbor's grapevine trellis, and the abandoned garden with poppies blooming beautifully amid the weeds. For the alcove Tokio chose a wall-scroll of morning-glory by a certain artist, and placed some late-blooming roses in the hanging vase.

Around noon her luggage arrived—a large Chinese trunk, wicker cases, cloth bags, the bookcase, the desk, her bedding—and it was no small task to carry it all upstairs. Tokio was obliged to take the day off work in order to help.

The desk was placed under the window to the south, the bookcase on its left, and on top were set the mirror, the lipstick-tray, and the bottle. The Chinese trunk and the wicker cases went into one half of the wall-cupboard; then, as he was about to put the set of patterned bedding into the other half, Tokio caught a faint, lingering, feminine smell, and felt rather strange.

By two o'clock the place had achieved a degree of order.

"Well, how about this, then? It shouldn't be too unpleasant living here," said Tokio, laughing and looking very pleased with himself. "The thing to do here is study quietly. Really, there's no sense in getting worried over practical issues."

"Yes . . ." Yoshiko hung her head.

"We can go over things in detail later, but for the moment the two of you just have to settle down to your studies."

"Yes . . ." Yoshiko raised her head. "That's just what we both feel too, Sensei—for both of us to study now, and hold out hope for the future, perhaps even for my parents' consent."

"That's good. At the moment, if you make too much of a fuss, you'll only be misunderstood by everybody, including your parents, and you'll end up unable to make that special dream of yours come true."

"And so, Sensei, I want to devote myself to my studies. That's what Tanaka said, too. He also said that he should definitely meet you and thank you, and he asked me to give you his best regards . . ."

"Really, there's no need . . ."

Tokio was unhappy with Yoshiko's use of the word "we" and her thinking in the plural, as though they had now openly pledged their betrothal. He was surprised that a still unmarried girl of nineteen or twenty and in the budding bloom of womanhood could talk like that. He felt, somewhat belatedly, how times had changed. He was surprised how much the character of modern girl students differed from that of the unmarried girls of his own courting days. Of course, from the point of view of principle and personal taste, he was certainly pleased to see this character in girl students. Old-fashioned education simply could not equip a girl to be the wife of a modern, Meiji man. His own view was that girls too had to stand on their own feet and develop their own willpower. Indeed, he had often preached this view to Yoshiko. But naturally, when it came to seeing this new-style sophistication actually put into practice, he couldn't help showing a certain consternation.

A postcard was forwarded the following day from his sister-in-law's house in Sanbanchō. It was post-marked Kōzu in Kanagawa and was from Tanaka, saying he was on his way home.

Yoshiko, now installed upstairs, would come down as soon as she was called. The daily meals would all be taken in a happy family atmosphere. In the evenings, as they gathered round the bright shining lamp, the conversation would wax lively. Yoshiko knitted socks for Tokio. She never failed to present a beautiful, smiling face. Tokio had her completely to himself, and at least this gave him a certain relief and satisfaction. His wife too, knowing that Yoshiko now had a lover, completely forgot her feelings of danger and unease.

It was painful to Yoshiko to be separated from her lover. If only it had been possible she would have liked him to be there in Tokyo with her, and just once in a while be able to see him, speak to him. But she knew this was difficult at the present time. She realized that, until he graduated from Dōshisha in a few years' time, they would have to study quietly and wholeheartedly, only exchanging the occasional letter. And so, in the afternoons, she went as before to her private English school in Kōjimachi, while Tokio went to his job in Koishikawa.

From time to time in the evening, Tokio would call Yoshiko

into his study and talk to her about literature, about novels, about love. He would give her advice about her future. His attitude at such times was fair, frank, and full of sympathy, and one would never have thought him the same man who had collapsed blind drunk in the toilet and laid himself flat out on the ground. Even so, it wasn't that Tokio actually planned on adopting such an attitude, but rather that, at moments when he was face to face with his beloved woman, no sacrifice was too great in order to gain her favor.

And so, Yoshiko had faith in her teacher. She even believed that when the time came for speaking to her parents, even if there was going to be a clash between old and new ways of thinking, then it would be enough just to have the support of this benevolent teacher.

September became October. A desolate wind rustled through the wood behind the house, the sky turned a deeper, darker blue, the sunlight came piercingly through the clear air, and the evening shadows gave a new depth to their surroundings. Rain fell all day long on the remaining taro leaves, and mushrooms appeared on display in the greengrocers' shops. The cries of insects in the hedges disappeared with the dew, and the leaves of the paulownia trees in the gardens fell frail to the ground. For one hour each morning, from nine till ten, there was an explanation of Turgenev's novels, and under her teacher's twinkling eyes, Yoshiko would lean across the desk as she listened to the lengthy story of *On the Eve*. How moved she must have been by Elena's passionate feelings and strong, willful character, and by her sad and tragic fate. Yoshiko compared Elena's love story with her own and lost herself in the novel. Her love's fate —the fateful act of placing her future in the hands of someone unexpected, with no chance to love the man she really wanted to—this was just how Yoshiko actually felt at the time. She had never dreamed that the lily-leaf postcard she had chanced to receive at Suma Beach would lead to such a destiny.

As she looked out on the wood, out there in the rain, in the night, in the moonlight, Yoshiko had various thoughts about her affair. The night train to Kyoto, the moon over Saga, the beautiful sunset over Lake Biwa when they had gone to Zeze, the lespedeza blooming in picturesque profusion in the garden of the inn. . . . Those two days of fun seemed now a dream. Her

thoughts went further back, to before the time she had fallen in love with him, to swimming at Suma Beach, to the moon over the hills at home, to before the time she had fallen ill—her cheeks flushed instinctively at the particular thought of her distress at that time.

From reverie to reverie . . . The reveries took the form of long letters, bound for Kyoto. And bulky letters would come back from Kyoto, almost every other day. However much they wrote, their feelings were inexhaustible. In fact, their correspondence was so frequent that Tokio waited until Yoshiko was out and then, placating his conscience with the pretext of supervision, went furtively through her writing-case and the drawers of her desk. He read hurriedly through the two or three letters from Tanaka which he found.

They were full of lovers' sweet words. However, Tokio was trying hard to find out something a bit more than that, to discover a certain secret. Was there no evidence anywhere of their lips having met, of sexual desire? Had their relationship not gone beyond the bounds of pure love? But the real state of their love could not be learned even from these letters.

A month went by.

Then one day Tokio took receipt of a postcard addressed to Yoshiko. It was written in English. He read it, nonchalantly. It was from Kyoto, from Tanaka, to the effect that he had saved enough money to support himself for a month and was now wondering if he could find work in Tokyo to keep him going afterwards. Tokio's heart raced. His peace of mind was destroyed at a stroke.

He asked Yoshiko about it after dinner.

She looked upset. "Sensei, I just don't know what to do—Tanaka says he's coming to Tokyo! I've stopped him several times already, but for some reason—he says that after this affair he's sick of pursuing religion and leading a life of hypocrisy, or something like that—anyway, he says he's definitely coming to Tokyo."

"What does he intend to do in Tokyo?"

"He says he'd like to do literature."

" 'Literature'? What's that, then, 'literature'? Writing novels, do you mean?"

"Yes, I suppose so . . ."

"How stupid!" roared Tokio.

"I just don't know what to do."

"Didn't you lead him into this, then?"

"No I didn't!" She shook her head emphatically. "In fact, I told him that for the time being we were in a fix and that he should at least graduate from Dōshisha, and I made him give up this idea of his when he first mentioned it, but now . . . now he's acting completely on his own. And it's too late to do anything about it now, he says."

"Why?"

"Well, you see, in Kobe there's this Christian called Kōzu who's been paying Tanaka's expenses, for the sake of the Kobe Church. Tanaka went and told him that he wasn't cut out for religion and wanted to make his career in literature. And then he asked him to let him go to Tokyo. Kōzu got angry at this and told him that if that was the case then he didn't care any longer and to do what he wanted, and so now he's made all these preparations, and I just don't know what to do."

"How stupid!" Tokio snapped again. "Please get him to stop this time too. This idea he has of making his career writing novels—it's not possible, it's just a daydream, a complete and utter daydream! And besides, if he does come here to Tokyo, I shall be in an extremely difficult position over your supervision. I won't be able to look after you, so please, make sure you get him to stop!"

Yoshiko looked increasingly worried. "I'll try to get him to stop, but my letter may be too late."

"Too late? Is he already on his way, then?" Tokio's eyes opened wide in astonishment.

"He said in the letter I just got that I wasn't to send any further letters because they'd be too late."

"The letter you just got? Did one come *after* that postcard you just got?"

Yoshiko nodded.

"We're in trouble, then. That's why they say young daydreamers are hopeless."

His peace of mind was destroyed a second time.

6

Two days later a telegram came from Tanaka to say he would be arriving at Shinbashi at six that evening. Telegram in hand, Yoshiko was in complete confusion. She wasn't allowed to go to meet him, however, as it wouldn't have been right to allow a young girl out alone at night.

She met him the next day, saying she would remonstrate strongly with him and somehow or other get him to return to Kyoto. He was staying in a travel lodge called Tsuruya, in front of the station.

When Tokio came home from work, although he had not expected Yoshiko to be back by then, there as usual was her smiling face in the porch. It turned out that Tanaka would definitely not return to Kyoto after having made up his mind to come to Tokyo. Yoshiko had clashed with him almost to the point of arguing, but all to no avail. He had come to Tokyo with his hopes pinned on Sensei, but well, if that was how it was, then that was how it was. He also fully appreciated the inconvenience with regard to supervision. But it was now impossible for him to go back, and so all he could do was try to support himself and try to achieve his objective.

Tokio was disturbed to hear what Tanaka had said. For a time he thought of telling the pair to do as they pleased, and of completely abandoning the matter, but how could he remain totally indifferent, involved as he was?

During the next few days there was no sign that Yoshiko had visited Tanaka again, and she came home punctually from school, but Tokio's heart burned with a jealous suspicion that she might just have said she was going to school while actually going to see her lover. He was greatly upset. His feelings would change from moment to moment. One minute he would decide to become a complete martyr and do everything he could for the pair, while the next he would decide to destroy everything at a single stroke by reporting the whole thing to her parents. But in his present state of mind he was unable to take either course in practice.

His wife suddenly whispered something to him.

"Upstairs—this . . ." She imitated someone sewing clothes. "She's making something for him, you know—a blue and white splash-pattern student's coat! And she's bought lots of white cotton cord as well."

"Really?"

"Yes, really," his wife laughed.

Tokio felt far from laughing.

With blushing face Yoshiko told him that today she would be back a little late.

"You're going there, then?" he asked.

"Oh no! I just have to call in at a friend's for something."

That evening, with a certain desperation, Tokio visited her lover in his lodgings.

"Sensei, really, I don't know what to say . . ." Tanaka made his formal apologies in a drawn-out, flowing tone, as though he were making a public speech. He was of medium height, slightly plumpish, and of pale complexion, and he spoke as if seeking sympathy, with a look in his eyes as if at prayer.

Tokio was heated. "But wouldn't it be best to do that, if you understand? I'm speaking with the future of the pair of you in mind. Yoshiko is my pupil. My responsibilities won't allow me to let her give up her studies. If you insist on staying in Tokyo, then I must either send her back home, or reveal everything to her parents and beg their approval—I must choose one of these two courses of action. I don't imagine you're the sort of egoistic person who would let the girl you love be kept at home back there in the hills just for your own sake. You say that this affair has turned you off religion, but that's just one point of view. If you were just to bear up and return to Kyoto, then everything would go smoothly and there'd be hope for your relationship in the future."

"I fully appreciate what you're saying . . ."

"But you can't do it?"

"Well, I'm sorry, but . . . I've sold my hat and uniform, and even if I wanted to, I couldn't go back now."

"So do I send Yoshiko back home, then?"

Tanaka remained silent.

"Shall I tell her parents, then?"

Tanaka continued to remain silent for a while, but presently spoke.

"My reasons for being in Tokyo have nothing to do with all that. Even now that I'm here it won't particularly affect our relationship . . ."

"That's what you say. But it means I can't supervise her. You can never tell when love will give in to indulgence."

"Well, that's not what I intend."

"Can you swear to it?"

"As long as I can study quietly, there'll be nothing like that."

"In that case it's hopeless!"

They sat facing each other for some considerable time, continuing this roundabout sort of conversation. Tokio proposed Tanaka's returning to Kyoto, on grounds such as hope for the future, the sacrifice of the male, the advancement of the affair, and so on. The Tanaka Hideo that now appeared before his eyes was not good-looking and tough as he had imagined, nor did he look like a genius. When Tokio first met him, there in that cheap travel lodge in Kōjimachi Sanbanchō Road, in that stuffy room hemmed in on three sides by solid walls, the first thing that struck him was the distasteful, unpleasant attitude of one raised in the Christian faith, annoyingly smug and too mature for his years. He spoke in the Kyoto accent, his complexion was fair, and he had a certain gentleness about him, but Tokio could not understand why Yoshiko had chosen someone like him from among numerous young men. What he particularly disliked about him was his formal attitude of trying to justify himself, producing all sorts of reasons for his misdeeds and shortcomings, without the least bit of simple and down-to-earth frankness. But in fact, for all his anger Tokio did feel—not immediately or spontaneously, but on seeing, in a corner of the room, the little traveling-case and the crumpled plain white *yukata*—a certain sympathy for this young man suffering and anguishing for love, and he was reminded of his own past and the dreams of youth.

Facing each other in that stuffy room, not even relaxing enough to sit with crossed legs, the two of them talked for at least an hour. Their talk finally finished without any real conclusion. "Well anyway, try and reconsider things," were the final words with which Tokio took his leave and returned home.

Somehow he felt foolish. He felt as if he'd done something stupid, and derided himself for it. He had spoken words of flattery that he did not mean, and he remembered how, to conceal the secret in his own heart, he had even promised to act as a "kind-hearted guardian" of their love. He also remembered saying he would take the trouble to introduce Tanaka to someone he knew in order to get him some minor translating work. He cursed himself for having no pride and for being too nice a chap.

He thought things over again and again. Perhaps it would be better to tell her parents. But the problem then was what attitude to adopt in doing so. As long as he felt himself to be holding the key to their love, he felt a heavy responsibility. He couldn't bring himself to make a sacrifice of his beloved's passionate love affair for the sake of his own unreasonable jealousy and his own improper feelings of love, and at the same time, as their self-styled "kind-hearted guardian," he couldn't bear to deal with them like some moralist. In yet another respect, he feared Yoshiko's being taken off home by her parents should they learn what was happening.

It was the following evening that Yoshiko came into Tokio's study and, with quiet voice and bowed head, talked about her hopes for the future. However much she reasoned with Tanaka, he would not go back. And yet if her parents were informed, she knew they would not give their consent and might even feel it better to fetch her back at once. Then again, Tanaka had taken such pains to come to Tokyo, and moreover their love wasn't just common and vulgar and she could swear that there would be no impure act or indulgence between them. Literature was a difficult path to follow, and perhaps it was impossible for someone like Tanaka to support a family by writing novels, but anyway, if they were going to share the future together, then they wanted to walk along their chosen path together. She wanted Tokio to leave things as they were for a while, letting them stay in Tokyo.

It was impossible for Tokio simply to refuse coldly this inevitable request. He did have doubts about Yoshiko's chastity during her stay at Saga, but on the other hand he also believed the explanation, and felt it very possible that the young couple's relationship might still be pure. Considered in the light of his own youthful experiences, it was by no means easy for physical

love to be realized, even if there was spiritual love. And so, he said it would be all right to leave things as they were for a while, provided they were not given to indulgence, and went on to lecture her with great earnestness and sincerity on spiritual love, physical love, the relationship between love and human life, and on what an educated modern woman should properly preserve. The main points of his lecture were that the fact that people of old paid such heed to a woman's chastity was really, rather than being one of society's moral sanctions, for the benefit of safeguarding that woman's independence; that once a woman gave herself physically to a man her freedom was completely destroyed; that modern Western women well understood such things and so never got into difficulties in their affairs with the other sex, and that modern Japanese women most certainly had to do likewise. He talked with particular earnestness about the new type of woman.

Yoshiko listened with head bowed.

Tokio warmed to the occasion.

"Well, just how does he propose to live?"

"He's come a little prepared, and he'll be all right for a month or so, but . . ."

"It wouldn't be so bad if he had a good job or something . . ."

"Well, actually he was pinning all his hopes on you, Sensei, and came up to Tokyo not knowing anyone, and so he's greatly disheartened . . ."

"Well, he was just too hasty. That's what I thought when I met him the other day. There'll be problems, you know," said Tokio laughingly.

"But please, if there is anything you can do to help him . . . I'm very sorry to have to keep troubling you like this . . ." Yoshiko blushed as she sounded so helpless.

"Don't worry—things will work out somehow."

As soon as Yoshiko had gone Tokio's face adopted a troubled, sullen expression. "Is it possible for me—*me*!—to help out in this love affair?" he asked himself. "Young birds flock only with other young birds—the wings of old birds like me aren't beautiful enough to attract the young ones any more." The thought overwhelmed him, leaving him with an indescribable loneliness. "A wife and children—they call them the happiness

of the home, but where's the meaning in that? There's probably some meaning for the wife, who exists for the sake of the children, but what about the husband? He has his wife taken from him by his children and his children taken from him by his wife, so how can he avoid being lonely?" He stared at the lamp.

De Maupassant's "As Strong as Death" lay open on the desk.

Two or three days later, when Tokio came home from work at the usual hour and sat in front of the *hibachi*, his wife said quietly to him:

"He came today, you know."

"Who?"

"You know . . . upstairs—Yoshiko-san's young man," his wife laughed.

"Really?"

"Yes—around one o'clock today, someone came to the porch asking if anyone was at home, and when I went to see who it was, who should it be but a round-faced young student in a splash-pattern coat and white-striped *hakama* trousers. Well, I wondered, is this yet another student with a manuscript or something, when he went and asked if Yokoyama-san lived here. Strange, I thought, and asked him his name, and it was none other than Tanaka. So that's him, is it, I thought. Horrible, isn't he?—She could have had plenty of better students than that for a boyfriend. She's really peculiar, Yoshiko-san. There's no hope for her at all if this is anything to go by."

"So what happened?"

"I suppose Yoshiko-san must have been pleased, but she looked sort of embarrassed. When I took them some tea she was sitting at her desk, and he was there too, facing her, and they suddenly stopped talking and clammed right up. I thought it a bit odd so I came straight down again. . . . But, you know, it really is strange the things young people get up to nowadays. In my day we women used to get really embarrassed if a man just looked at us!"

"Times do change, though."

"Well, however much times change, I got the idea she's just *too* modern. She's no better than some drop-out student. Well,

to go by appearances that's how it seems, though I suppose in her heart she's not like that. But anyway, it really is quite extraordinary."

"Never mind all that! What happened next?"

"Yoshiko-san went out and bought some rice cakes and baked sweet potatoes—our maid Otsuru said she'd go for them, but Yoshiko-san said it was all right and went herself—and then they made a right royal feast out of them. . . . Even Otsuru had to laugh, you know. When she went up to offer them some hot water, there were the pair of them, stuffing themselves with these sweet potatoes. . . ."

Even Tokio had to laugh.

His wife continued. "They were talking for quite some time, and very loudly too. It seemed to be some sort of discussion, and Yoshiko-san was really holding her own in it."

"So when did he leave?"

"Just a little while ago."

"And Yoshiko—is she in?"

"No—she said he didn't know the way, so she went out to see him home."

Tokio frowned.

As they were having dinner Yoshiko came in through the back door. She seemed to have been hurrying and was panting for breath.

"How far did you go?" asked Tokio's wife.

"As far as Kagurazaka." With this Yoshiko turned to Tokio, gave him her usual greeting of "Welcome home," and hurried off upstairs. They thought she would come straight back down, but in fact quite a while passed with no sign of her. Tokio's wife called her several times, and she answered with a long, drawn-out "O-kay," but still didn't come down. Otsuru finally went to fetch her and presently she did come down, but she ignored the dinner set out for her and lounged near the wall-support.

"What about your dinner?" asked Tokio's wife.

"I don't feel like anything just now—I'm quite full."

"I suppose that's because you ate too many sweet potatoes!"

"Oh, now really, what a terrible thing to say!" she retorted, looking indignant.

Tokio's wife laughed. "Yoshiko-san really is a strange one."

"Why?" Yoshiko's tone was measured.

"Oh, no particular reason."

"Now really, let's stop this, shall we?" Yoshiko looked indignant again.

Tokio watched this playful bantering in silence. Naturally he was upset. Unhappiness filled his heart. Yoshiko shot a searching glance at him, and immediately realized his unpleasant mood. She promptly changed her attitude.

"Sensei, Tanaka came today."

"So I hear."

"He wanted to meet you to give you his thanks, but said he'd come again. . . . He gave his regards. . . ."

"Oh, really?"

Tokio suddenly stood up and went off into his study.

As long as Yoshiko's lover was in Tokyo, Tokio was unable to relax, despite having her upstairs under his supervision. It was absolutely impossible to prevent the two of them meeting. And naturally neither could he stop them sending letters to each other, nor say anything about Yoshiko blatantly going off with "I'm calling in at Tanaka's today so I'll be an hour or so late." Moreover, he could not now prevent Tanaka from visiting her, however unhappy he might feel about it. Before he knew it, he found that the couple had firmly accepted him as that "kind-hearted guardian" of their love.

He was constantly irritable. He had numerous manuscripts to write. He was pressed by the bookshops. He needed money. Yet he just couldn't get himself into the right settled frame of mind for getting down to writing. When he did force himself to try, he couldn't collect his thoughts. When he tried reading, he lost interest after a few pages. Every time he saw the warmth of their love his heart would burn feverishly, and he would drink, and take his anger out on his innocent wife. He would find fault with the vegetables in the evening meal and kick the table away. Sometimes he would come home past midnight, drunk. Yoshiko was not a little worried about Tokio's violent and extraordinary behavior. "It's my fault because I cause him so much trouble," she would say apologetically to his wife. And so she tried to keep her correspondence as much out of sight as possible; and to make her visits seem less frequent she would, about every third

visit, take time off school and go on the sly. Tokio found out about this and became even more unhappy.

In the fields the autumn drew to a close and a cold wintry wind started up. The leaves of the ginkgo trees in the wood behind the house turned yellow and added a beautiful coloration to the evening sky. The fallen leaves, curled and crackly, tumbled along the hedge-lined lanes. The cries of the shrike filled the air. It was about this time that the young couple's love grew just too open for comfort. As supervisor, Tokio could not look upon such a state of affairs, and persuaded Yoshiko to report everything to her parents back home. He himself also sent a long letter to her father about the love affair. Even in this case Tokio tried to win Yoshiko's gratitude. He deceived himself and, telling himself he was a tragic sacrifice, he became that "kind-hearted guardian" of their love.

A number of letters arrived from the hills of Bitchū.

7

January the next year found Tokio on a geography trip to the banks of the Tone River, the boundary between the Kōzuke and Musashi regions. He had been there since the end of the previous year and was therefore anxious about his household affairs, especially Yoshiko. However, he could do nothing to avoid the duties of his work. On the second of January he had briefly returned to Tokyo, to find his second son suffering teething troubles and his wife and Yoshiko busy nursing him. According to his wife, Yoshiko seemed to have become even more indulgent in her affair. Apparently, on New Year's Eve Tanaka had, with no means of support, been unable to return to his lodgings and had spent the night on a train. His wife had also come to a vague exchange of words with Yoshiko over the two of them seeing too much of each other. When he learned of these and various other happenings, Tokio realized what a fine pass things had come to. He stayed one night and then went back to the Tone River.

It was now the night of the fifth. In the wide, open sky the moon was ringed with a halo, and its light sparkled on the center of the river like broken fragments of gold. Tokio opened a letter

that lay on his desk, and lost himself in thought over its contents. The inn maid had brought the letter to him a short while before, and the writing was Yoshiko's.

Sensei,

I really must apologize. I shall certainly never forget your kindness and sympathy as long as I live, and even now, when I think of it, tears come to my eyes.

It was typical of my parents to act like that. Despite your writing to them as you did, they're too old-fashioned and stubborn to understand our feelings, and so they wouldn't give their consent no matter how much I begged them. I cried when I read my mother's letter, but I do think it would be nice if they would try to understand my feelings a little, too. I now fully realize how painful love can be. Sensei, I have made up my mind. Just as it says in the Bible that a woman leaves her parents to follow her husband, I think I shall follow Tanaka.

He has still not been able to find means of support, has already used up the money he saved, and saw the year out in the most wretched of circumstances. I can't bear any longer to see him in such a state. Even without support from home, we shall try our best to make a life together.

I'm really sorry for having caused you so much trouble. As supervisor it's understandable that you're worried. But despite your going to the trouble of writing to them to explain things on our behalf my parents just got angry and refused to listen to us, which is most heartless of them, and even if they disown me there's nothing we can do about it. They just go on and on about depravity without actually knowing what's happening, but do they suppose our love is really that insincere? And then they talk of family pedigree, but you will no doubt forgive me, Sensei, for not being the old-fashioned sort of woman who loves in accordance with her parents' convenience.

Sensei, I have made up my mind. Yesterday, there was an advertisement for girl trainees at Ueno Library, and I think I'll try applying. If we both work our hardest, I don't suppose we'll starve. I'm sorry for all the trouble I've caused to both you and your wife, but it's because I'm in your home. Please, Sensei, forgive my decision.

Yoshiko

So the power of love had plunged them into the depths of indulgence after all. Tokio felt he had to do something about it. He considered his attitude as "kind-hearted guardian," a role he had assumed in order to win Yoshiko's favor. He thought about the letter he had sent to her father in Bitchū, in which he

had asked for her parents' complete support for the young couple and for consent to their relationship. He knew they would never give that consent. In fact, he had hoped rather that they would completely oppose the relationship. And sure enough, they completely opposed it. Her father had even written back that unless Yoshiko obeyed her parents they would disown her. The two lovers had received due reward for their love. Tokio had argued painstakingly on Yoshiko's behalf, writing how her love had no impure intentions, and he had asked for one of her parents to come without fail to Tokyo to sort the problem out. But they had not come, saying that it was useless to go to Tokyo since Tokio, as her supervisor, felt the way he did, whereas they themselves could definitely not bring themselves to give their approval.

Tokio now considered Yoshiko's letter.

The two lovers' situation now called for immediate action. He took sufficient warning from the bold words with which Yoshiko had expressed her wish to live with Tanaka, away from his supervision. Indeed, perhaps they had already carried the situation a stage further. Yet he was also so annoyed at how they had reduced all his good efforts on their behalf to nothing through this ungrateful and inconsiderate decision that he felt like washing his hands of the whole business.

To calm his agitated mind he went for a walk along the embankment of the river, which was bathed in a misty moonlight. Although it was a winter night, with the moon ringed by a halo, it was quite warm, and a peaceful light shone quietly from the windows of the houses below the embankment. A thick mist hung upstream, broken occasionally by the gentle sound of a passing boat. Downstream someone was calling for passage across the river. The sound of a cart crossing on the ferry filled the air for a while and then all was silent again. Tokio thought over various things as he walked along the embankment. It was the loneliness of his own home that upset him so, rather than Yoshiko's affair. His unhappiness with a life that a man in his mid-thirties should expect rather to enjoy, his unhealthy thoughts about his job, his sexual frustration. . . . He felt terribly depressed by such things. Yoshiko had been the flower and the substance of his banal existence. Her beautiful power had made flowers bloom again in the wilderness of his heart, had made rusty bells

peal forth again. Thanks to Yoshiko he had been filled with a new zest for life, been resurrected. And yet now he had to resume that former existence, banal, bleak, and lonely. . . . He felt it was unfair, he felt jealous, and hot, burning tears rolled down his cheeks.

He thought seriously about Yoshiko's love, about her future life. He thought, in the light of his own experience, about the boredom, the tedium, the callousness that would come into the young couple's life after they had lived together for a while. He thought about the pitiable situation of a woman once she had given her body to a man. His heart was now filled with world-weariness, weariness of that dark power lurking in the hidden reaches of nature.

He concluded that a serious step was called for. He felt that up to now his own behavior had been very unnatural and not serious enough. That same evening he wrote with great conviction to Yoshiko's parents back in the hills of Bitchū. He enclosed Yoshiko's letter and gave a detailed account of the young couple's latest situation. Finally he added:

"I believe the time has now come for you, as her father, for me, as her teacher, and for the couple themselves to meet together to discuss this problem properly. You have your point of view as her father, Yoshiko has her freedom as herself, and I too have my opinion as her teacher, and while I appreciate that you are extremely busy, I would be obliged if you would without fail come to Tokyo. I am full of expectation."

Finishing the letter, he put it in an envelope, addressed it "Yokoyama Heizō, Niimimachi, Bitchū," put it to one side, and stared fixedly at it. This letter is the hand of fate, he thought. Making up his mind, he called for the maid and handed it to her.

He imagined the letter being taken to the hills of Bitchū a day or two later. The postman would deliver it to a large white-walled building in the middle of that little hill-encircled country town, and some fellow at the counter would take it through to the rear. The tall, whiskered gentleman would read it. . . . The force of destiny pressed ever closer.

8

Tokio returned to Tokyo on the tenth.

The following day a reply came from Bitchū stating that Yoshiko's father would leave for Tokyo in a few days' time.

It seemed that both Yoshiko and Tanaka were if anything now hoping for this, and they showed no particular sign of surprise when informed.

It was around eleven on the morning of the sixteenth that her father called at Tokio's house in Ushigome, having first found, on arrival, accommodation in Kyōbashi. It was a Sunday and Tokio was at home. Her father wore a frock coat and bowler hat, and seemed worn out after his long journey.

That day Yoshiko had gone to the doctor's. She had caught a cold a few days before, and had a slight fever. She complained of a headache. Presently she came in through the back door, looking unconcerned, and Tokio's wife hurried to speak to her:

"Yoshiko-san, Yoshiko-san! Something terribly important—your father's come!"

"Father?"

Yoshiko was, not unnaturally, a little taken aback.

She went straight upstairs but didn't come down again.

They were asking for Yoshiko in the living room, so Tokio's wife shouted up to her, but got no reply. When she went up to find out what was going on, she found Yoshiko slumped over her desk.

"Yoshiko-san."

There was no reply.

She went over to her side and spoke again. Yoshiko raised her nervous, ill-looking face.

"They're asking for you downstairs, you know."

"But how can I possibly meet Father?"

She was crying.

"Well now, isn't it a long time since you last saw him? Really, you must meet him. There's nothing to worry about—everything'll be all right."

"But . . ."

"Really, it'll be all right, so just face up to him and speak your mind. Don't worry."

Finally Yoshiko confronted her father. When she saw his familiar face, with a hint of gentleness somewhere beneath its heavy whiskers and outward dignity, she could not hold back her tears. He was a stubborn, old-fashioned father, a father who didn't understand the feelings of young people, but nevertheless he was a gentle father. Her mother was attentive in all things and often took a sympathetic interest in her, but somehow Yoshiko still preferred her father. She believed that even he would be moved when she told him of her desperate situation, when she told him in tears how sincere her love was.

"Well, Yoshi, it's been quite a time. . . . How have you been?"

"Father . . ." Yoshiko could say no more.

"Just now, on the way here . . ."—her father was addressing Tokio, who was sitting there beside them—"I think it was between Sano and Gotenba, anyway, the train broke down and we had to wait two hours. The engine exploded."

"Oh?"

"We were going at full speed, when there was this dreadful noise and then the train started going backwards, on an incline. What on earth's going on? I wondered. Well, the engine had exploded, and two firemen were killed outright. . . ."

"It must have been dangerous."

"We had to wait a good two hours for a locomotive to be brought out from Numazu and fixed on, so I had time to think about things. . . . If anything had happened to me on the way up to Tokyo because of this affair, then, Yoshi," (he turned to his daughter) "then you'd have had a hard job justifying yourself to the rest of the family!"

Yoshiko hung her head in silence.

"It was dangerous, that, but it's fortunate that you weren't injured in any way," put in Tokio.

"Well, yes."

Her father and Tokio talked for a while about the engine explosion. Suddenly, Yoshiko spoke:

"Father, is everyone all right back home?"

"Yes, everyone's in good health."

"And Mother . . .?"

"She's fine. I've been busy recently and did ask your mother to come instead, but then I thought it'd be better if I came after all."

"And my brother? How's he?"

"Yes, he's all right, too. Seems to have settled down a bit lately."

As they talked about one thing or another, lunch was served. Yoshiko went back to her room. After lunch, during the tea, Tokio continued with the issue in question:

"So there's no way you'll give your consent, then?"

"Whether I consent or not is not the problem. At the moment, even if I did temporarily agree to the two of them trying to make a go of things together, he's only twenty-two, and a third-year student at Dōshisha . . ."

"That's true, but after you've met him, perhaps then some promise for the future . . ."

"No, I can't make any promises. I haven't met him so of course I don't know for sure, but if he's the sort of man who waylays a girl student on her way back to Tokyo and gets her to dilly-dally with him, and then one morning just ups and abandons his long-standing benefactor from the Kobe Church, then I don't think there's anything to be discussed. In the letter Yoshi just sent to her mother she asked us to appreciate how badly the fellow was suffering, and to provide enough money for him to attend Waseda University, even if it meant reducing her own allowance—I just wonder if Yoshi hasn't been tricked as part of some such scheme?"

"I wouldn't say so, but . . ."

"Well, it's just a bit suspicious. No sooner has he made all these promises to Yoshiko than he suddenly gives up religion and takes a fancy to literature—that's a bit strange. And then he comes following her, and despite your advice stays on here in Tokyo even though he's struggling to find means of support. There's something behind all this, I reckon."

"It could just simply be the infatuation of love, and so it is possible to interpret things in a good sense, too."

"Well anyway, be that as it may, whether I give my consent or not is not the problem. A promise of marriage is no small matter—you have to investigate the person's social standing, consider the balance with your own standing, and you have to investigate his lineage. Then again, the person himself is most important. From what you've seen of him, you say he has ability, but . . ."

"Well no, not exactly that . . ."

"Then, as a person, just what sort of . . .?"

"I understand that your wife knows that better than I do."

"What? She doesn't seem to know him all that well; she only met him once or twice at Suma Sunday School. Anyway, in Kobe they do say that he has a certain amount of ability, and Yoshi has probably known him since her time at the Girls' Academy. They also say that when they get him to preach and to lead prayer he does things even better than adults, but . . ."

Ah, no wonder he talks so formally, as if he were delivering a public address, and uses those horrible upturned eyes—it's the expression he uses at prayer, thought Tokio. He was disturbed to think that this horrible expression could send a young woman into confusion.

"Well anyway, what are we finally going to do? Are you going to take Yoshiko-san back with you?"

"I suppose if that's how it's got to be. . . . If possible I would like to avoid taking her back, but . . . It's not the least bit pleasant when you suddenly bring your daughter back to a country town. My wife and I are involved in various charitable works back home and we hold various honorary positions, and if this sort of affair got out . . . well, we'd be in a lot of bother. So I would like if possible, as you say, to send the boy back to Kyoto, and for my daughter to stay here under your care for a year or two, but . . ."

"That would be best, I agree," said Tokio.

They talked about the couple's relationship. Tokio recounted the circumstances of the Saga incident, and the course of events afterwards, and said that their love was probably a purely spiritual one, with no impure relationship involved. Her father listened, and nodded his head, but added, "Well, surely we must also consider that there is that other type of relationship too?"

Yoshiko's father was now filled with remorse over his daughter. He remembered how they had sent her, out of country folks' vanity, to such a sophisticated school as the Kobe Girls' Academy, how they had obliged her to lead a dormitory life there, how

they had let her go to Tokyo, as she had wished, to learn about novels, and how they had, because of her proneness to illness, not been very strict with her and had let her do as she pleased.

An hour later Tanaka entered the room, having been specially sent for. Yoshiko was there too, listening to the conversation with bowed head. From the outset her father didn't take to Tanaka. The figure before his eyes, this student figure with white-striped *hakama* trousers and dark blue, splash-pattern coat, filled him with feelings of contempt and hatred. His feeling of hatred towards this man who had taken away his property was very similar to Tokio's feeling earlier when he had met him in his lodgings.

Tanaka very properly folded the creases of his *hakama* and sat stiffly, staring at the mat a few feet in front of him. He showed, rather than compliance, an attitude of defiance. He seemed somehow just a bit *too* stiff, as though he had a certain right to act freely with Yoshiko.

The conversation was serious and intense. Yoshiko's father didn't go so far as to condemn Tanaka's impudence openly, but would occasionally put a bitter sarcasm into his words. Tokio also spoke at first, but eventually Yoshiko's father and Tanaka took over. Her father was a member of the prefectural council, so his manner of speech was clever and convincing. Even Tanaka, accustomed as he was to public speaking, was occasionally forced into silence. The problem of consent or otherwise was raised, but dismissed as a subject not in need of consideration for the moment, and the immediate question of Tanaka's return to Kyoto was taken up instead.

For the two lovers, and for Tanaka in particular, this separation seemed a bitter matter. He asserted strongly that it was impossible for him to return for several reasons: he was no longer qualified for religion, he had neither house nor home to return to, and now, after enduring abject circumstances for the last few months, he was at last beginning to see some hope for the future here in Tokyo, and couldn't bring himself to give up now.

Yoshiko's father spoke with earnest persuasiveness.

"You say that you can't go back to Kyoto any more, and I'm sure that's true. But things are as they are. If you love a girl, then I don't suppose it's asking too much to sacrifice yourself

for her. If you can't go back to Kyoto, then go back to your home in the country. Even if, as you say, you won't be able to accomplish your aims if you go back, I still say that's best. That's to say, even if those aims have to be sacrificed too, then that can't be helped."

Tanaka looked at the floor and said nothing. He didn't seem prepared to agree just like that.

Tokio had been listening quietly, but since Tanaka was being so stubborn he suddenly cut in:

"I've been listening. Don't you understand what Yokoyama-san has been saying? He's not saying anything about your misdeeds, nor about your impudence, neither is he saying that if you're still bound to each other in the future, he will necessarily refuse his consent. You're still young, and Yoshiko-san too is right in the middle of her studies, so the two of you should leave this affair in abeyance for a while and see what the future brings —this is what he's saying. Don't you understand? At the present moment, there's no way the two of you can be left together. One of you will have to leave Tokyo, and since you came here after Yoshiko it's only right that that person be you."

"I quite understand," answered Tanaka. "I'm entirely to blame, so I must be the one to leave. Sensei, you've just said that it doesn't necessarily mean that our love won't be given approval, but I still can't find such satisfaction in what Yokoyama-sama has been saying."

"What do you mean?" asked Tokio.

"I suppose you mean it's unsatisfying not to receive a definite promise," cut in Yoshiko's father, "but I've just explained about that. At the present moment I can neither consent nor refuse. You're still in the middle of your studies and can't be independent, so I just can't have any confidence in what you say about the two of you making your way in the world together. Therefore I think it's best for both of you to study for a few years. If you're serious, then you must understand what I've been saying. I suppose you're also dissatisfied because you think that I'm just fooling you for now and that I intend to marry off Yoshi to someone else. However, I swear before God—and I say it also before Sensei here—that I will not marry off Yoshi for three years. As Jacob believed, sinners can but await that final judgment, and therefore I can't go so far as to promise Yoshi to

you—I can't agree at present, because I don't believe that at present this affair accords with the Will of God. We can't tell at the moment whether, in three years from now, it will then accord with his Will or not, but if you're truly sincere and honest in your heart, then I'm sure that it will."

"You see how understanding Yokoyama-san is?" Tokio followed up. "He'll wait three years for your sake. That really is the greatest favor you could wish for, to be told you'll be given three years, enough to prove your dependability. Though no one is under any obligation to discuss anything seriously with someone who's seduced his daughter, and you would've had no cause for complaint in the least if he'd taken Yoshiko straight back home without further ado, Yokoyama-san has said that if you wait three years, until your sincerity becomes clear, then he will not marry Yoshiko to anyone else. Those are really kind words to you, kinder even than if he actually gave his consent. Don't you understand this?"

Tanaka looked down at the floor and, just when everyone expected him to put on a frown, tears started to roll down his cheeks.

The company fell silent, as if cold water had been thrown over them.

Tanaka wiped away his flood of tears with his hand. Tokio thought it the right moment to speak:

"Well, please give your answer."

"I don't care what happens to me! Let me be swallowed up in the countryside, then, I don't care!"

He wiped his tears away again.

"Now that won't do—it's meaningless if you say it so antagonistically. The whole point of this meeting is for everyone to say what they really feel and to bring about a settlement satisfactory to all. If you find it so absolutely unpleasant to go back to the country, then there's nothing else for it but to send Yoshiko back," said Tokio.

"Isn't it possible for the two of us to be together in Tokyo?"

"Impossible! Impossible from the point of view of supervision! Impossible from the point of view of the future of both of you!"

"In that case I don't care if I'm swallowed up in the country."

"No, I'll be the one that goes back!" Yoshiko's voice trembled with tears. "I'm a woman . . . a woman. If you alone make

a success of things, then it doesn't matter about me being lost in oblivion in the country—I'll go back."

The company sank into silence again.

Presently Tokio spoke, in a different tone.

"Anyway, just why is it that you can't go back to Kyoto? Wouldn't it be all right if you were just to explain everything to your benefactor in Kobe, apologize for your indiscretion, and then go back to Dōshisha? Just because Yoshiko-san hopes to make a go of literature, it doesn't mean that you have to as well. What about you becoming a religious teacher, a theologian, or a minister?"

"I can no longer enter the service of the church. I'm just not that special sort of person who can preach to people . . . But what's particularly upsetting is that after three months of hardship I've finally managed to open up a path for the future, thanks to the kind help of a friend, so I just couldn't bear to go back to the nothingness of the countryside."

The three talked on again. Finally the conversation came to a vague sort of end. Tanaka left, saying he would talk things over with his friend that evening and come back with a definite answer, either the next day or the day after. It was now four o'clock, the winter's day was drawing to a close, and a patch of light that had, up till then, lit up the corner of the room, now faded quickly away.

Just Tokio and Yoshiko's father were left in the room.

"He's a wishy-washy sort of fellow." Her father made the remark almost casually.

"He's formal, and never gets to the point. It'd be better if he opened up a bit more and spoke frankly . . ."

"Yes, but somehow that sort of thing just doesn't go down with Chūgoku people—they've got very little caliber, and try to worm their way around you. People from this Kantō area and up north in Tōhoku are completely different in this respect. Bad is bad and good is good—they say what's really in their mind, which is how it should be. It just won't do, resorting to petty little tricks like that weeping."

"Yes, he certainly does seem to be a bit like that, doesn't he?"

"You just watch—tomorrow he's bound to find some reason why he can't agree, and why he can't go back to Kyoto."

Suddenly Tokio was seized with suspicion about the couple's relationship, a suspicion aroused by Tanaka's impassioned persistence and by that attitude of his as though he had a right to make Yoshiko his own property.

"So what sort of views do you have about a physical relationship between them?" he asked her father.

"Well, I think we probably have to assume that there *is* a physical relationship."

"At this stage I do think we should make sure about this. Shouldn't we get Yoshiko-san to tell us exactly what happened at Saga? She says they fell in love only *after* Saga, so there should be letters to prove this."

"Well, I don't really think we need go quite that far . . ."

Even though he believed there was a physical relationship, her father seemed to fear this turning out to be a definite fact.

Unfortunately, at that moment Yoshiko came into the room with some tea.

As she was leaving Tokio asked her to show them the old letters she no doubt had from around that time, as these would prove her purity.

Yoshiko suddenly blushed. From her expression and attitude she was clearly greatly embarrassed.

"I've just burned all those old letters," she said quietly.

"Burned them?"

"Yes." She hung her head.

"Burned them? I can't believe that!"

Yoshiko's face grew even redder. Tokio couldn't stop himself from getting furious. The facts struck him with a terrible force.

He stood up and went to the toilet. He was angry and upset, his mind in a daze. He was staggered by the thought that he had been deceived.

When he came out of the toilet he found Yoshiko standing there outside the sliding-door, looking nervous.

"Sensei, really, I've burned them."

"And now tell me a lie, why don't you!" snapped Tokio. Violently slamming shut the sliding-door, he went back into the room.

9

Yoshiko's father went back to his inn after staying for dinner. That night, Tokio's distress was extreme. The thought that he had been deceived made his anger boil. He was furious to think how he had done his serious best to help their love, yet all the while having Yoshiko taken from him body and soul by some student. If things had reached that stage—if she had given up her body to Tanaka—then there was no need for him to respect her chastity as a virgin. It would be in order for him, too, to make a bold move and satisfy his sexual desire. Such thoughts led him to look upon Yoshiko, whom he had formerly worshiped as heavenly, as some sort of prostitute, whose beautiful attitude and expressions, let alone her body, were nothing but contemptible. In such terrible torment, he hardly slept at all that night. All sorts of feelings passed through his heart like dark clouds. Placing his hands on that troubled heart, Tokio thought things over. Perhaps he should . . . Well, for a start it was a fact that she was now soiled, having given her body to a man. Should he simply send Tanaka back to Kyoto, and then exploit her weakness to make her his own? This prompted all sorts of thoughts. What if he were to creep silently upstairs while Yoshiko was asleep there, and then pour out his love for her? Perhaps she would hold herself very prim and proper and lecture him. Perhaps she would call out for help. And yet, perhaps she would understand his pressing passion and sacrifice herself to him. And if she did sacrifice herself to him, what then the following morning? Of course, in the bright light of day they would be unable to face each other. She would stay in bed, ignoring breakfast. He called to mind a short story of de Maupassant's, "The Father." He remembered with particular poignancy the bit about the girl giving her body to the man and then sobbing her heart out afterwards. At such thoughts, however, a force arose within him to oppose this dark imagining, and a sharp conflict followed. Torment followed torment, anguish followed anguish, and he tossed and turned endlessly, hearing the clock strike two, then three.

Undoubtedly Yoshiko was in great distress too. She looked ill

when she got up the next morning. She hardly touched her breakfast. She seemed to be trying to avoid meeting Tokio's eyes. Her distress appeared to be not so much that her secret was known as that she realized she had done wrong in trying to hide things. That afternoon she said she'd just like to go out for a while, but Tokio, who had not gone to work, wouldn't allow it. Thus the whole day passed. No answer came from Tanaka.

Yoshiko ate neither lunch nor dinner, saying she didn't feel like eating. A gloomy atmosphere filled the house. Tokio's wife was perplexed at her husband's out-of-sorts mood and Yoshiko's depression. After all, the previous day's talk seemed to have gone so smoothly. . . . She took Yoshiko some food upstairs, thinking she must be terribly hungry as she'd eaten so little. Tokio was spending the miserable twilight hours drinking saké, a sour look on his face. Presently his wife came down. Tokio asked her what Yoshiko had been doing, and it turned out she had been sitting there in the dark at her desk, bent over a letter she had started to write. Letter? A letter to whom? Tokio grew exasperated. He dashed noisily off upstairs, intending to warn her against writing such a letter.

"Sensei, please, for Heaven's sake . . ."

She sounded as if she were praying as she spoke.

She was still bent over her desk.

"Sensei, for Heaven's sake, please, just wait a little longer. I'm writing everything down in this letter for you."

Tokio went back downstairs. Presently, at his wife's directions, the maid went upstairs to light the lamp, and when she came down she was carrying a letter, which she gave to Tokio.

He read it eagerly:

Sensei,

I am a fallen student. I have used your kindness and deceived you. I think my misdeed is so terrible I can never be forgiven however much I apologize. Sensei, please have pity on me as a weak being. I have failed to discharge my duties as a new Meiji-era woman, such as you taught me about. After all, I am an old-fashioned woman without the courage to put the new philosophy into action. I had talked things over with Tanaka and we'd decided that at all costs we would not reveal this one thing. What's done was done, but we pledged to maintain a pure love in the future. But then when I think that all your troubles are due to my shortcomings I just can't rest easy. I've been worried about this all day long. Please, Sensei, have pity on this poor girl. I have no one to turn to but you.

Yoshiko

Tokio felt as if he were about to be swallowed by the earth at his feet. He stood up, letter in hand. His mind was too upset to interpret Yoshiko's reason for daring to make this confession —her attitude of confessing everything and then asking for help. He climbed noisily up the stairs, and sat solemnly beside the desk over which Yoshiko was still bent.

"Well, with things as they are now, I can no longer do anything. I'll give this letter back to you, and I promise I won't say anything about it to anyone. At least, your having trusted me as your teacher is nothing to be ashamed of as a new Meiji woman. But with things as they are now, it's only right for you to go back home. Let's go straight away this evening to your father and tell him everything, so that you can return home as soon as possible—that's best."

And so, after something to eat, they got ready and left the house. Yoshiko was no doubt full of various complaints and grievances, as well as sadness, but she could not disobey Tokio's solemn command. They got on the streetcar at Ichigaya. They sat next to each other, but didn't exchange a single word. Getting off at Yamashitamon, they went to the inn at Kyōbashi, where, fortunately, Yoshiko's father was in his room. They told him everything. He didn't get particularly angry. It seemed that he just wanted, as much as possible, to avoid accompanying Yoshiko back home, but there was nothing else for it. Yoshiko's only emotion appeared to be one merely of being fed up with the irony of fate. Tokio asked if it were not possible for him to continue to look after her, if her parents decided to abandon her, but her father wouldn't allow this as things stood, though he wasn't sure what might happen if Yoshiko herself were to abandon her parents. Yoshiko herself didn't seem resolved to refuse to return home to the point of forsaking her parents, and so Tokio gave her over to her father's care and went back home.

10

The following morning Tanaka called on Tokio. Unaware of what had now been settled, he attempted to explain in detail how his own circumstances were not conducive to his returning home—that is, lovers who had given body and soul to each other could just not bear to be parted, Tokio felt to be his meaning.

A triumphant look spread over Tokio's face.

"Well, the problem has now been solved. Yoshiko told me everything. I know now how the pair of you had been deceiving me. It was some 'pure' love, wasn't it!?"

Tanaka's expression suddenly changed. Shame, exasperation, and a terrible feeling of despair filled his heart. He didn't know what to say.

"There's nothing that can be done about it now," Tokio continued. "I can have nothing more to do with this affair. In fact, I'm now fed up with it. I've given Yoshiko back over to her father's supervision."

Tanaka sat in silence. His ill-looking face could clearly be seen to twitch nervously. Suddenly, he took his leave with a bow, as though he could no longer bear being there in such a situation.

Yoshiko and her father came at about ten that morning. They were going home that same evening on the six o'clock Kobe express and would take only her personal effects, with most of the luggage being sent on afterwards. Yoshiko went up to her room to sort out her luggage.

Tokio was upset, but nevertheless more cheerful than before. He felt indescribably miserable at the thought that he could no longer look upon her beautiful expressions, soon to be separated from him by more than five hundred miles of hills and rivers, but on the other hand it was at least pleasing to have taken her from his rival in love and delivered her to her father. And so it was in quite a cheerful manner that Tokio chatted with her father. The latter was, as is often the case with country gentlemen, very fond of art, particularly of the paintings of Sesshū,

Ōkyo, and Yōsai and the scrolls of San'yō, Chikuden, Kaioku, and Sazan, and he had himself a considerable collection of their masterpieces. The conversation turned naturally in that direction, and for a while the room was filled with banal talk of art.

Tanaka arrived, saying he wanted to speak to Tokio. They met in the eight-mat room, the partition to the six-mat room being closed. Yoshiko's father was in that six-mat room. Yoshiko herself was in her room upstairs.

"Is her father going back home, then?"

"It looks like it, yes."

"With Yoshi-san?"

"Looks that way."

"Could you please possibly tell me what time they'll be leaving?"

"Well, in the present situation, I don't think I can."

"In that case, do you think I could be allowed to see Yoshi-san, just for a moment?"

"No, I really don't think so."

"Well, where is her father staying, then? I'd just like to know that."

"I don't know whether I should really even tell you that."

Tanaka could make no headway. After sitting for a while in silence, he took his leave with a bow.

Presently lunch was brought into the eight-mat room. As this was a farewell, Tokio's wife had carefully prepared something a little special. Tokio was also hoping to have the three of them eat together as a sort of farewell gathering. Yoshiko, however, said she didn't want to eat. Tokio's wife pleaded with her, but she wouldn't come down. Tokio himself went upstairs.

The room was dark, with just one window open to the east. Books and magazines and clothes and waist-sashes and bottles and traveling-cases and trunks were all over the floor, leaving hardly anywhere to walk, and a strong smell of dust struck the nostrils. In the middle of all this Yoshiko was sorting out her luggage, tears in her eyes. What misery and gloom compared with that time three years ago when she had come up to Tokyo with a heart full of youthful hope. It was terribly sad to think that her fate was to return to the country without having produced a single memorable work.

"There's some lunch specially prepared for you, so how about trying to eat? It'll be quite some time before we get the chance to eat together again."

"Sensei—"

Yoshiko burst into tears.

Tokio was moved too. Had he fully discharged his duty as her teacher? He searched his heart scrupulously. He too was miserable enough to want to cry. Here in a dark room among a jumble of baggage and books, his beloved in tears over having to part for home . . . and he had no words of comfort to offer.

At three in the afternoon three carriages arrived. The drivers carried the traveling-cases and the Chinese trunk and the bags from the porch, where they had been placed, and loaded them into the carriages. Yoshiko wore a purple-brown coat, with a white ribbon in her hair, and her eyes were swollen with crying. She took firm hold of the hand of Tokio's wife, who had come out to see them off.

"Well, goodbye then . . . I'll be back again, I'll definitely be back . . . I just have to come back . . ."

"Yes, please, certainly, you must come back, say in a year or so."

Tokio's wife firmly returned the handshake. Tears filled her eyes. With a woman's weakness, her heart was filled with sympathy.

The carriages set off through the residential suburb of Ushigome, somewhat chilly in the winter's day, with Yoshiko's father in the first one, then Yoshiko, then finally Tokio. Tokio's wife and the maid stayed and watched the carriages disappear. The neighbor's wife was behind them watching too, wondering what this sudden departure could be. And behind her, at a corner of the lane, stood a man wearing a brown hat. Yoshiko looked back several times.

As the carriages turned from Kōjimachi Road towards Hibiya, Tokio fell to thinking about present-day girl students. There was Yoshiko in the carriage in front of his, with her high, right-up-with-the-fashion hairstyle, her white ribbon and her rather slouched figure, being taken back home with the baggage by her father, under such circumstances—there were probably lots of other girl students in similar positions. Even the strong-willed Yoshiko, then, had met this fate. There was good reason for the

educationalists' constant talk of the female problem. He thought about her father's unhappiness, about Yoshiko's tears, about his own bleak life. There were passers-by who looked meaningfully at this passing spectacle of a flower-like girl student and her pile of baggage, protected by her father and another middle-aged man.

They arrived at the inn in Kyōbashi, gathered the baggage together, and paid the bill. It was in this same inn that Yoshiko and her father had stayed three years before, when they had first come up to Tokyo, and Tokio had visited them there. They were, all three of them, filled with much emotion as they compared that time with the present. Yet they all kept their feelings to themselves.

At five o'clock they went to Shinbashi Station and entered the second-class waiting room.

Confusion upon confusion, crowds upon crowds. The minds of the travelers and those who had come to see them off were filled with restless confusion, and the noise reverberating around the room echoed in their hearts. The station was enveloped in a whirlwind of sadness, of joy, of curiosity. At every moment groups of people would arrive, and in particular there seemed to be a lot of passengers for the six o'clock Kobe express. The second-class waiting room soon became a scene of utter chaos. Tokio bought two packages of sandwiches from the stall upstairs and handed them to Yoshiko. He bought their tickets and a platform ticket for himself. He got a check for their luggage. Now all they had to do was wait.

All three were wondering if Tanaka might not be in the crowd. However, they couldn't see him.

A bell rang. The crowd surged towards the ticket-barrier. Everyone was eager to board at once, everyone impatient, and the confusion was considerable. The three of them just managed to get through and found themselves out on the spacious platform. Yoshiko and her father got into the nearest second-class compartment.

Other passengers flooded in after them. There was a merchant, prepared to sleep through the long trip. An army captain, probably returning to Kure. A group of women, gossiping away in broad Osaka dialect. Yoshiko's father spread a white blanket on the seat, placed his little bag beside it, and sat down with

Yoshiko. The electric light in the carriage made Yoshiko's white face stand out like an engraving. Her father came to the window, repeatedly expressed his thanks to Tokio for all his kindness, and asked him to attend to those things still remaining. Tokio stood there next to the window, in his outfit of brown trilby hat and triple-crested, silk *haori* coat.

The time for the train's departure drew near. Tokio thought about their trip, about Yoshiko's future. If he had not had a wife, of course he would certainly have married Yoshiko himself. And she would probably have been glad to be his wife. She would have comforted his life of ideals, his life of literature, the insufferable torment of his literary creativity. She would probably have been able to save his now bleak heart. He remembered her words to his wife: "Why couldn't I too have been born a little earlier, in your time? It would've been interesting if I had. . . ." Was he then fated never to make Yoshiko his wife? Would there never come a time when he would call her father his father-in-law? Life was long, and fate had strange powers. The fact that she was not a virgin—that she had lost her chastity—might actually be a help towards her becoming his wife, the wife of a man getting on in years and with many children. Fate, life . . . he remembered Turgenev's *Punin and Baburin*, and now realized the significance of the life depicted by that outstanding Russian writer.

Behind Tokio was a crowd of people, come to see passengers off. There at the back, standing next to a pillar, was a man in an old trilby hat, who must have arrived without anyone noticing at the time. Yoshiko now noticed him and her heart raced. Her father was not at all pleased. Tokio, however, standing there lost in his daydreams, had not the faintest suspicion that this man was there behind him.

The guard blew his whistle.

The train started to move.

11

A lonely, bleak existence visited Tokio's home again. It depressed him to hear his wife shouting at the children all the time.

Life fell into the old rut of three years before.

Five days later a letter arrived from Yoshiko. It was not in her usual relaxed, conversational style, but stiff and formal:

I wish to inform you that we arrived safely last night and therefore hope you will no longer be worried. I hope that you will accept my sincerest aplogies for having occasioned you so much trouble when you were so busy. I really cannot apologize enough, and in fact I wanted to thank you and to apologize to you in person, but I hope you will understand how I was too upset to do so even when we finally parted. Each time I go to the glass door here at home I imagine that train window at Shinbashi, and can clearly picture that brown-hatted figure standing on the other side. Snow has fallen in this region from the hills to the north, and along the thirty or more miles of mountain road from Tatai I could think only sad thoughts, being greatly moved as I recalled Issa's famous haiku, "Is this my old house, buried deep in the snow here, or merely a drift?" Father wished to send a letter of thanks to you, but today is market-day and he is very busy, and he asked to be forgiven for expressing his thanks through me. There is much more I would like to tell you, but I am feeling very upset and so today I shall conclude this letter at this point.*

Tokio thought about those thirty miles of mountain road deep in snow, and about that country town there in the hills, also buried in snow. He went upstairs to Yoshiko's room, which was still as she had left it the day of her departure. Overcome with nostalgia and longing, he wanted to recall something of her from those of her things that were left behind. That day the wind from Musashi Plain was blowing fiercely, and the ancient trees behind the house were roaring frighteningly, like ocean breakers. When he opened one of the rain shutters of the window facing east, as on the day of her departure, the light came flooding in. The desk, the bookcase, the bottle, the lipstick-tray, all were there just as before, just as if she had simply gone off to school as usual. He opened a drawer of her desk. An old oil-smeared ribbon had been thrown in there. He picked it up and sniffed it. Presently he stood up and opened the sliding partition. Three large wicker traveling-cases, tied with cord, were waiting to be

* 1763–1827, a renowned master of the seventeen-syllable haiku.

sent off, and beyond them in a pile lay the bedding that Yoshiko normally used—a mattress of light green arabesque design, and a quilt of the same pattern, with thick cotton padding. Tokio drew them out. The familiar smell of a woman's oil and sweat excited him beyond words. The velvet edging of the quilt was noticeably dirty, and Tokio pressed his face to it, immersing himself in that familiar female smell.

All at once he was stricken with desire, with sadness, with despair. He spread out the mattress, lay the quilt out on it, and wept as he buried his face against the cold, stained, velvet edging.

The room was gloomy, and outside the wind was raging.

(September 1907)

The End of Jūemon

1

THERE were some half dozen people in the group and, for some reason or other, the conversation chanced to turn to the works of the Russian novelist I. S. Turgenev. Various interesting opinions emerged about Rudin's fate, Bazarov's character, and so forth, but then one of the men sat excitedly forward in his chair and said, "All this talk about Turgenev has reminded me that I once met a character out in the country who could have come straight from the pages of *A Sportsman's Diary*. It was a really moving experience. He was just like the Russian peasants we find in Turgenev's works, and I can honestly say that in my limited experience I've never had such an obvious revelation of nature's strength and presence. You know, if we look around us, there are quite a few Andrei Kolosovs and Chertopkhanovs here in Japan too." He started to tell his story. . . .

2

Well, I'll begin at the very beginning. It started when I was sixteen and first came up to Tokyo to continue my studies, so it's quite an old story. Anyway, in those days there was a small private school in Kōjimachi, in Nakarokubanchō, called the Sokusei Gakkan—the Intensive Training College. It was a really insignificant school like you often see nowadays in the streets around Hongō and Kanda, a sort of academic general store offering English, German, math, Chinese classics, Japanese—largely the