PART ONE

I. Doctor Chardin

Patients were waiting in Dr. Chardin's large reception room in the Boulevard Haussmann, having come at the appointed hour of consultation. Sunk into armchairs, in impatient attitudes, their faces sullen, or timidly seated on the edges of chairs, they maintained the irritated silence of accused persons in the antechamber of a magistrate. There were two old ladies with exceedingly sad expressions leading a pale child whom they scolded mildly, very quietly, whenever he coughed; a pretty young woman, visibly nervous, who was ruffling feverishly through the illustrated books—mostly accounts of voyages—laid on the table; a fat gentleman with a swollen and apoplectic face; and, in a corner, his legs crossed and his hat on his knees; and a thin young man, elegant and refined, whose interrogative gaze went from the paintings hung on the walls to the trees in the boulevard, perceptible above the windbreak of the windows, their leaves yellow and their branches half-stripped by the autumnal wind.

Occasionally, the oak-colored door with gilt decorations that led from the reception-room to the doctor's study would open and the long silhouette, emaciated and seemingly fantastic, of a man in a black frock-coat would appear on the threshold. A tapering skull was perceptible over a thin face, completely clean-shaven in the American style, and a tall, frail body that made a summoning gesture, as curt as the movement of an old telegraph signal; one of the clients would get up and disappear into the study, and the door would close silently on some confidence or dolor.

The young man, who had arrived last, having allowed the ladies and invalids waiting with him to go in ahead of him, thought that the long wait in the physician's reception-room vaguely resembled the other miserable pauses of everyday life. The gazes of the impatient stare with a kind of jealous anger at the clients who go in first. One might think that those the doctor summons are favored by fate, and stealing a little of the time and the life of others. The impatient young woman opened, closed, reopened and reclosed the decorative bindings of the worn volumes, handled by so many fingers, and the heels of her dainty feet beat a tattoo on the carpet.

"What's the point?" said one of his neighbors to the young man. "What's the point of hurrying, since one always has to wait one's turn?"

The sage in question—a forty-year old of military bearing—had only one thing on his mind: to avoid leaning back in the armchair in which he was sitting, in order to escape contact with its back; and he was sitting up very straight, on the very edge of the seat, gazing, with a sort of tender commiseration, at those who were letting their heads rest on their chairs or sofas. When his hand touched the arm of the chair he was quick to wipe it.

"They don't realize," he said, pityingly, "that they might catch alopecia. Yes, yes, the disease is everywhere. People are right to say that microbes are lying in wait for us. Breathe in a single speck of dust, and death might be entering into us." However, he repeated, philosophically: "Why hurry? One always gets there eventually."

The doctor's reception-room gradually emptied. The two ladies in mourning had shoved the little pale child into the study; the apoplectic fat man had hastened to see the physician, bumping into a chair; and, after the man preoccupied with microbes, the charming and, elegant young woman, arranging her fur stole prettily around her shoulders, had gone into the study, smiling courageously, as if heading for a rendezvous.

Now, alone with the paintings, which saddened him, going from a Diaz to a Ziem,[1] then, standing at the window looking out on the boulevard through the plane-trees, watching the trams and automobiles go by, the young man waited for his own turn, while a servant with a white cravat, opening the door to the antechamber, let in new patients, who took their places on the chairs that had been vacated.

---

[1] Narcisse Diaz de la Peña (1807-1876) was a landscape painter best known for his forest scenes. Félix Ziem (1821-1911) was famous for his studies of Venice, although he painted many other landscapes as well as works in other genres.

Dr. Chardin's consultations were much in demand, and posterity, which begins at the frontier, had commenced for that bold innovator, as renowned abroad as in Paris, perhaps even more appreciate in America and Russia for his work on nervous diseases, encephalic afflictions, thought-processes and the life of the brain. The scientist did not confine himself to the various manifestations of that specialty, however; he also pursued active research in the most diverse directions, deeming, as a philosophical and encyclopedic mind, that only ideas of genius are important, and that in this vast universe, a man of the era ought to know everything and attempt to divine everything.

Stories were also told about Dr. Chardin, as if of some legendary character. Of unhoped-for cures produced by the gambles of a miracle doctor, without any publicity or advertising. Before Cailletet and Arsonval,[2] he had glimpsed the marvels of liquid air; penetrated, almost at the same as Roentgen, the secrets of the human body by means of X-rays; applied and perfected the Dane Finsen's apparatus for curing lupus by means of light,[3] finding the cure in the famous red chamber in which other rays devoured and relieved diseases of the skin. There was much preoccupation in the scientific world with the research that Dr. Chardin was pursuing on the possibility of employing the properties of the Curies' radium curatively. Being free, however, and belonging to no academy, the doctor would not allow any visitor into the laboratory he had at Montrouge, and avoided the reporters that others sought out. He was an eccentric.

On the other hand, his study in the Boulevard Haussmann saw crowds flocking, his aristocratic clientele almost as numerous as the needy forming a queue at the door of a hospital clinic.

And while the young man watched the passers-by, walking rapidly, as if spurred by the first piquant cold of November, the reception-room filled up again with new clients, hastening to the consultation as to a vivid hope.

The study door opened. The doctor's bald head appeared, the long thin arm made a gesture of summons and the young man went in. The physician invited him to sit down in a leather armchair.

Behind at a vast desk covered with papers and books, with Japanese bronze crabs as paperweights, Dr. Chardin, impassive with his broadly-chiseled features, very pale and reminiscent of a face summarily sculpted in the white flesh of some giant nut, leaned his elbows on his blotter. Interlacing his slender fingers, he looked deep into the eyes of the patient sitting opposite.

The gray eyes, keen and piercing, as if the point of a scalpel were emerging from the pupils, became uncomfortable for the man supporting their gleam. It was like a kind of human ray, as penetrating as a cathode ray. For his part, the young man's own dark eyes, illuminating a pale face surrounded by a black beard, seemed to be examining the man whose gaze was examining him, with a slightly anxious curiosity, searching for thoughts as if with forceps.

"Well, Monsieur, will you please explain your case to me as concisely as possible. It's evidently a matter of some nervous malady?"

Tall, sturdy and handsome, the man interrogated did not have the appearance of being degenerate or defective, and it required the specialized eye of Dr. Chardin to perceive the invisible flaw.

"Yes, Doctor," the client said, his voice a trifle emotional, "and a rather unusual malady—but you have a lot of people in your waiting-room and I don't want to take up too much of your time. On the other hand, you'll see shortly that I couldn't put off my visit and that you cannot put off your judgment until another day. I ask you to listen to me patiently. The others..."

"You've waited for your turn, Monsieur; they will wait for theirs. What is it?"

"It is, as I said, rather strange. Anyone but you would take me for a madman, whose madness they would establish officially. I'm ill, undoubtedly—you can subject me to all the examinations and tests you wish—but I'm not mad. All alienated individuals, you'll tell me, claim that they're perfectly sane, but take note that I don't make that claim for myself—quite the contrary. There's a lesion within me, and I'll explain my case in order to ask you, not for an immediate cure, but for advice first, and a cure afterwards."

---

[2] Louis Cailletet (1832-1913) was one of the first scientists to produce droplets of liquid oxygen in 1877. Arsène d'Arsonval (1851-1940) was one of the pioneers of electrophysiology (the effects of electricity on living organisms and tissues), but he did a course of public lectures at the Jardin des Plantes in 1901 that included one on the properties of liquid gases, which included a demonstration of the effects of immersing a steak in the liquid nitrogen. Clarétie probably attended the lecture, and it might have been his reportage that was responsible for reports that appeared in newspapers as far afield at American and New Zealand.

[3] Niels Finsen (1860-1904) was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1903 for his demonstration that the superficial symptoms of *lupus vulgaris* could be successfully treated with phototherapy, having published classic paper on phototherapy in 1896.

"I'm listening," said Dr. Chardin, who did not take his gray eyes off the speaker's black pupils.

"Before anything else, Doctor, you need to know who I am. Here's my card."

The physician looked at it. "André Fortis…the painter?"

"The painter."

The doctor smiled—and he expression of that unexpected smile in that glacial physiognomy seemed charming—and then offered a rapid, graphic and accurate comment on the beautiful landscapes exhibited by Fortis at the last Salon. "Your paintings testify, in fact, to an eye that is able to 'grasp' and an art that is able to express. You're a poet, but—judging by your work—you have a perfectly constituted brain. I wouldn't say as much about all of your peers. Let's pass on."

André Fortis smiled in his turn, but more sadly. "Doctor," he said, since your preliminary appreciation is so favorable, it put me more at ease in making a confession that I hope, in spite of its bizarrerie, will not modify your diagnosis. I've told you that I'm not mad, but my morbid state renders me as unhappy as if I were. I'm an individual who, at certain times and for a rather extensive lapse of time, has a double personality."

"What does that mean?"

"It means that suddenly, when I least expect it, while I'm walking, chatting, or working, in the studio or at table, a sudden attack of drowsiness takes possession of me, I fall asleep without cause, and I then become—believe me or not—another man: an entirely different man, a man who has his own life, different from the first, his own opinions, ideas and preoccupations, which are not mine; a man who lives within me and alongside me, and who cuts my customary existence in two, in order to recommence and continue another existence, suddenly, unexpectedly and almost overwhelmingly—to such an extent that, mechanically, in that second life, which, in reality, gives me a second consciousness, I am completely different from my habitual nature. Necessarily living with the same people, retaining the same body, the same voice and the same gestures, I must evidently seem to them to be incomprehensible and abnormal, since that double life really does make me into two men enclosed in the same man. Take note, Doctor, that I would never even have found out about my condition, since I only remember my second existence when the crises overtake me, if an old friend of the family who died six months ago, Doctor Burke..."

"I knew him. He was a good man."

"If, as I say, Doctor Burke had not explained what was happening to me, and how a sudden sleep could precipitate me into another existence, completely different from my own, eventually returning me to the first existence with, I repeat, having any memory of what I have done, said and thought while in the second state... Second state, that's what you call—isn't it?—the species of somnambulism that takes possession of me, with the result that for a period of time I'm no longer me but *him*: an individual I don't know, who is not me but *the Other*?"

II. Two Existences in One

The doctor did not take his eyes of the young man, and seemed to be studying, simultaneously, his gestures, the sound of his voice and the movements of his face—a physiognomy that, quite calm a little while ago, seemed to have grown gradually anxious and angry, as if some third person had been introduced between the two men, and that André Fortis, divining the presence of the intruder, was irritated by him.

"I suppose, Doctor, that you think I'm completely mad."

"No," said the physician. "Ill, yes, and you've just described a quite extraordinary case..."

"Unique," said the painter, vehemently. "Yes, unique."

Dr. Chardin shook his head, smiling. "Behold human pride! It's found even among the ill—especially the ill. Nothing is unique in nature, Monsieur. Everything has a precedent. Science has only observed and studied half a dozen cases identical or comparable to yours, but the question of double consciousness, or the doubling of the personality is known, and even classic. I regret depriving you of an illusion, but you have had predecessors. There is even a famous observation cited in books of physiology and psychology—the story of Félida."

"Félida?"

"You don't know it? If you were to open a volume on hypnotism—and I don't advise it, given your nervous condition—you would find the story of that young woman from Bordeaux related, repeated and reassessed, who lived two existences in one. She had a husband and children, and a double life—a sad life when she continued one of her two existences, happy when she returned to the other, and astonished by that circumstances, which scientists had taken under observation. A charming and very erudite man, a professor of the Faculty of Medicine at Bordeaux, who I still see when he visits the Salpêtrière, short, pensive, modest, a good talker and a better listener, Doctor Azam,[4] who is very interested in hypnotism, has put his name to the extraordinary observation of Félida. Félida was a hysteric. Don't take that word in the meaning that the vulgar attach to it. You're neurotic, and neurosis is the hysteria of man. And if the phenomena that you've described to me are exact—and your precision persuades me that they are exact—you're a male Félida. How old are you?"

"Twenty-nine."

"Do you have, in your ancestry, any relative of bizarre inclination? Think hard."

"None," said the painter.

"At what age did your father die?"

"Sixty-four. He was robust. A chill caught on emerging from the theater carried him off."

"Your mother?"

"My mother died young. I hardly knew her. A smiling face, a Chaplin[5] drawing—that's all that remains to me of her."

"And in the family traditions, nothing that reminds you of any unduly exceptional individual?"

"Nothing."

"There must, however, be an ancestor to whom you owe this neurosis. Within us, there lives, or revives, some unknown ancestor who reappears and imposes his flaws upon us or brings us his genius. Did you have some kind of accident in your infancy—a shock or a fright?"

"Nothing," the young man repeated.

"Try to remember..."

"I'm searching my memory, Doctor, but I can't evoke anything, or recall anything..."

"In any case, the causes won't suppress the effects, and it's the effects that we have to combat."

---

[4] Étienne Eugène Azam (1822-1899) published his account of the pseudonymous patient in question in *Hypnotisme, double conscience et altérations de la personnalité: le cas Fédida X* [Hypnotism, Double Consciousness and Alterations of the Personality: The Case of Félida X] (1887); it was widely discussed because of the questions it raised with regard to the nature of identity, challenging traditional notions of the soul. Azam did visit Charcot at the Salpêtrière on more than one occasion, and Clarétie probably talked about the case to Charcot.

[5] Charles Joshua Chaplin (1825-1891) specialized in painting sentimentalized pictures of young women, and gave art classes at his Paris studio that were restricted to female students.

André Fortis looked the doctor in the face; then, having seemed to hesitate, he said, slowly: "Combat, yes…but cure? Is there a cure?"

"There's always a cure!" said Monsieur Chardin, succinctly.

"But Félida, This Félida of Doctor..."

"Azam."

"Was she cured?"

"She lived, as I told you. She was a woman and a mother, and is probably still alive."

"Cured?" repeated André, emphasizing the word.

"One can always fall ill again," replied the doctor, in the same clipped tone in which he had mentioned a cure.

An abrupt gesture underlined the young man's reply: "But I don't have the right to fall ill again, myself, Doctor!"

"Why not?"

"Why not? Why not? Because I'm getting married tomorrow. That's why."

There was such an expression of haggard fever in the painter's gaze that the doctor, thus far observing a neurosis, wondered whether he might be in the presence of a dementia. With a singular precision, however, as if he were responding to the physician's mute preoccupation and thought, the young man hastened to add and repeat:

"Once again, don't think that I'm completely mad. Troubled, yes; frightened, yes; pushed as if toward a gulf, wanting to recoil and no longer being able to recoil, yes—and that's why I've come to consult you, to confess to you, in a sense, as I said. As for being in my right mind, I *am* in my right mind: I'm really *me*. And for some time now, I've reconquered that me, and that's how I've been able to embark, without remorse, on the amorous romance that will terminate, or ought to terminate, tomorrow with a marriage.

"I adore the young woman who will be my wife. She loves me. I have an independent fortune and my paintbrush would make me almost rich if I were harassed by the need to work. We have every chance of happiness before us—but on one condition, which is that the doubling of my being does not render the new existence that I am going to create for myself, and which is my salvation, absolutely impossible. It is, in brief, that the other me, who is not me—in truth, Doctor, it seems that I'm talking like Sosie in Molière's *Amphitryon*[6]—does not thwart my life, my joy, my hearth, and change what ought to be my most delightful and, I assure you, most ardently desired refuge into a Hell."

André stopped, interrogating Dr. Chardin's hard eyes anxiously. He was reminiscent of a man awaiting the verdict of a judge.

Before pronouncing it, the physician asked: "How does this second state into which you enter commence? Do you have any sign or sensation—what we call an *aura*—to warn you of its coming?"

"Yes—haven't I told you? Generally, a sort of flash, a persistent luminous zigzag passes before my eyes; objects appear to me to by striped with streaks of light, or surrounded, as if by an aureole, a halo…and then a sudden somnolence, an invincible desire to sleep, a heaviness of the head that isn't disagreeable—no, on the contrary, which is engaging, attractive, as if sinking into darkness were something pleasant and good...

"Then I emerge from that vague semi-slumber to recover consciousness, doubtless to awaken in that second state and become the other person—to don, if I might express it thus, the livery and ideas of the other, to be someone else, to be the Other and to continue, in that state, the new existence that has nothing in common with the preceding one. But I've told you that. I beg your pardon—it's the obsession."

"Has it been a long time since you've been subjected to that second state?"

"Yes, Doctor, yes: two years. Dr. Burke even assured me that I was cured."

---

[6] Sosie was the part played in *Amphitryon* (1668; based on a similarly-named play by Plautus *circa* 185 B.C.) by Molière himself; like the name of the title character, which became synonymous with "host," the name of Sosie was adopted into the French language to mean "double," normally in the sense of "lookalike" but sometimes—based on the monologue that André is citing—to refer to a "second self." In the play, Sosie is a double of the god Mercury, and plays a role ironically parallel to that of the messenger of the gods—significantly, in that Molière was thought, probably rightly, to be using the play's characterization of Jupiter as a means of issuing subtle criticism of the morals of Louis XIV.

"He was right. Suggestion is very powerful in such cases. Anyway, Burke might perfectly well be right. It's quite possible that you're cured…quite possible."

A glint of joy traversed André Fortis' eyes, glued to the physician's.

"In that case, Doctor, this marriage…? This marriage taking place tomorrow..."

"Well?" said Chardin, coldly.

"There's no reason why it should not take place? I don't have to fear some kind of phantom interposing itself between my happiness and myself, taking my place, or expelling me, so to speak, from my own existence?"

"It's necessary, above all, to tell yourself, repeatedly, that what you fear is impossible. It's necessary to penetrate yourself and impregnate that conviction. It's necessary to expel all anxiety. It's necessary to persuade yourself that you've had a dream, and that the nightmare is over. You must persuade yourself intimately and absolutely, you understand? You've come to consult me at a moment of your existence when it's difficult to draw back. It's tomorrow, you say?"

"Tomorrow, at eleven o'clock, at the Mairie of the Second Arrondissement, and at midday, at Saint-Roch..."

The doctor remained thoughtful, uncertain and hesitant, biting his lip. He had divined the disturbance of that soul in distress, the alarm of that mind. He felt that he was on the lip of a chasm. A master of human destiny, he had the right of life and death. A single word might become a sentence...

"Tomorrow," he said. "And the young woman loves you?"

"Profoundly, I'm sure of it. As I love her."

Then slowly, the physician said: "My God, Monsieur, if you had come to consult me two months ago, I would have advised you to reflect; I would have put you under observation, and my opinion would soon have been clear. But you've come at a time when it's a matter of the happiness and the reputation of a young woman, to interrogate me and to affirm that your own doctor, who has studied you and treated you, declared you cured. You're putting me in a difficult situation. Were you already engaged to be married when Dr. Burke died?"

"No."

"Had you taken him into your confidence with regard to your nascent love for the young woman that you're to marry?"

"Yes, Doctor. And when I expressed my anxieties, a perfectly natural anguish, as I told you, he reassured me. Given a certain existence, a profound affection and a craft that I love, he believed firmly that I could brave the future and that the past, the odious past, is indeed the past..."

"I hope so," said Monsieur Chardin. Very rapidly, André Fortis having gone pale, he added: "And I believe so, since he said it. The excellent Doctor Burke isn't just anyone."

"So?" asked the painter, whose voice choked in posing the question.

"So, between the certain scandal, which might give rise to some irreparable mishap..."

"Also certain, Doctor. Yes, if you tell me not to marry tomorrow, I'll go home, write me letter of farewell and kill myself this evening."

"That would be stupid," said the physician. "But it is the stupidities in life that one always enacts with the greatest urgency. I was saying to you that between a mishap—and the stupidity in question might perhaps open the door to many others—and a risk, or, to put it better, a hope, it is necessary to choose the less tragic solution. Give me your address. Whatever happens, you should come to see me again, and you can, if necessary, put on paper, for me—and me alone, of course—your sensations, and your anxieties, if you have any, if you anticipate the reawakening of that Other, as you put it. If he reappears in your existence, which I don't believe—look at me now"—the doctor plunged his gaze into the young man's eyes like a scalpel—"which I don't believe will happen"—he emphasized the words imperatively, dictating them like a command—"which I don't believe will happen, come right away, and we'll act accordingly. And we shall be the masters of the situation!"

"Truly?" said André Fortis, as if it were a cry of liberation.

"Truly!" said Monsieur Chardin, firmly.

"Oh, Doctor, Doctor, Doctor! You've saved my life!"

"I'm convinced of it. You're capable of having fired your revolver already."

The painter uttered a nervous little laugh, as if slightly frightened, not of the contemplated action, but by having been thus divined, reliably. "Yes," he said, "it's true. What do you expect? I adore my fiancée. Losing her seems to me an impossible thing. I can't resign myself to losing her. What's a piece of lead in the head?"

"Be certain that it's not a remedy," said Dr. Chardin. He stood up and extended his hand to the young man. "Go—and be confident!"

"Thank you, Doctor."

Then, as André Fortis made as if to deposit the doctor's honorarium on the desk, Monsieur Chardin stop him. "No, no. Later. This is a matter of a cure. We'll settle up when I tell you that it's complete. And it's you—yes, you—who will tell me, when the moment comes, that it is..."

"Oh, Doctor!" repeated the young man. "There is something more admirable than an artist who sells the illusion of color and dream, and it's the man of science who gives happiness."

"Good," said the physician. "I'll hold on to the phrase: merchant of happiness. It's a title. Well, I wish you happiness, Monsieur Fortis. And tell yourself: *I'm happy*, as you repeat to yourself: *I'm cured*. To believe it is to be it, and it's perhaps the only means of ensuring that one has what one wants."

André Fortis went down the doctor's staircase lightly, and, looking around at the boulevard, made his heels sound joyfully on the asphalt. He marched straight ahead, his head held high, filling his lungs with air. Life seemed to him to be better, or, rather, to have become possible. The desiccated leaves falling from the plane-trees ran before him rapidly, like harbingers of joy. On the horizon, in the pearl-gray tint of November, patches of blue sky—a pale Correggio blue—were opening like a woman's eyes. The sun appeared and disappeared, animating the slate roofs and tall white houses. The weather was very mild, spring-like—one of those of those melancholy *été de la Saint-Martin* days,[7] in which landscapes and people have the already-wounded joy of things that are about to end.

For André Fortis, on the contrary, the joy was commencing. Two hours earlier he had taken, anxiously, the elevator that was to take him up to the doctor's apartment, but when the consultation was over he had come down placing the footsteps of a victorious conqueror or a liberated prisoner on the carpet.

Life seemed beautiful to him; the passers-by seemed joyful. On his pedestal, the statuary Shakespeare—Shakespeare, the poet of profound loves and sad follies—seemed to be saying to him: *Cast away that Doubt that kills, repeat to yourself the opposite of Hamlet's speech: Hope and live!*

Live? The painter wanted no more than to live. The blood of youth was pulsing ardently in his veins. The visions of art gave him beautiful dreams. Landscapes were like living poetry to him, which he fixed on his canvas with the joy of a creator, springs that smiled with all their whiteness, or autumnal tears with their rains of golden leaves. What! He had before him a future of glory, and abruptly, like a thief in the night slipping into his being, another, the Other, might come to snatch away all those dreams, to substitute new thoughts for his own, to bring the life that was opening triumphantly, happily, to a dead stop: a kind of stranger slipping into him and becoming him, as André put on a new personality, like a costume—in which costume he would feel himself choking, as if in iron armor that was too tight and too heavy!

But Doctor Chardin had just told him that one could shrug off the yoke of the intruder, and break that mental armor, as heavy as the instruments of torture in which victims were once enclosed! The physician had, with a word, rendered to the desperate man the pretext for living: hope! The joyful André Fortis mentally thanked the sky, the trees, the leaves, the entire frame of his happiness, associating with it the intoxication of an escaped convict.

Yes, if Dr. Chardin's verdict had been altogether different, he had resolved to die. Rather than write to Mademoiselle de Jandrieu that he was renouncing, for inexplicable reasons, the honor and joy of marrying her, he would have put a bullet in his head. It was not an impulsive temptation to suicide, it was a resolution made after reflection, the considered action of a man who does not know how to get out of an impossible situation. But—God, be praised!—he had got out of it quite naturally. The young woman he loved would become his wife tomorrow, and Dr, Chardin had, like Dr. Burke, declared that the Other could be chased away, expelled, dispatched or nailed to the threshold of the happy household like an importunate guest or a bird of ill-omen.

---

[7] The French use the term *été de la Saint-Martin* [St. Martin's summer] metaphorically in a manner analogous to the English use of the term "Indian summer," although that has a direct equivalent in French as well; the latter usually refers to a period of days, while the former refers to a singly unusually warm day before the advent of the winter chill. The literal reference is to the festival of the saint on 11 November.

To marry Mademoiselle de Jandrieu! That was, for André, the desired union. A romance that, in its tenderness, would have been the simplest and most banal in the world, if the terror of a fearful tomorrow had not been lurking in the background, like a living anguish sitting by the hearth.

André Fortis had met Mademoiselle de Jandrieu in Trouville. A friend had introduced him to her parents: the father an old gentleman, a retired general, who had once been rich but whose land, the vines having been ravaged, was not worth today as much it had once been; the mother a charming, smiling, timid and pious woman who adored her only child, her daughter, and had taken great care in fashioning that soul. The hazard of walks, the promiscuities of the dining table, the games of tennis, and the conversations—rapid at first, and then, the particular intimacy of the beach succeeding the formal handshakes—had all come together, gradually, in the semi-liberty of seaside resorts, and the young people, whose meetings, under the eyes of Monsieur and Madame de Jandrieu, had no banal flirtation about them, had, on the contrary, engendered a grave and profound affection.

André had, in addition, exercised an absolute discretion in his relationships, and the disturbance that he felt with regard to his condition had imposed an anxious reserve on him. As if Mademoiselle de Jandrieu's gentle influence had had a particularly calming effect on him, however, in her presence, extraordinarily, he had never experienced any of the choking anguishes of old, any terror of the advent of the Other. Cécile de Jandrieu's clear gaze gave him the impression of a limpid lake whose bed he could see. He compared it to the blue water of Lac Leman, on which the young woman's thoughts—he smiled at the preciosity of the image—were swans.

She was tall, slim, pretty, very blonde, her nose slender and her ears pink, with the languid grace of an English miss. Monsieur de Jandrieu's mother had been Irish. Having the soul of an artist, Cécile was a musician, and a painter too—without any pretention—and that taste, a passion for water-colors, had brought her closer to Fortis. At the last Salon she had particularly admired "Ruisseaux des Vaux de Cernay," into which the landscaper-painter had put such a profound impression of melancholy, the water flowing between rocks amid sad trees like life through quotidian tribulations. At least, that was what Cécile had seen in the canvas. In a landscape, one perceives above all that which there is in oneself.

Rather timid, like her mother, Mademoiselle de Jandrieu had submitted her water-colors to Fortis. There was more than an amateur talent apparent in her studies of the sea shore, various studies of beaches or towns, at the hazard of her voyages: the solitudes of Port Royal; the deserts of the Crau, Mireille's homeland[8]; and the canals of Venice, the ideal homeland of Ziem. And while criticizing the young woman's water-colors, as a professor appreciates and corrects the pupils in his studio, André Fortis exchanged ideas with her, the memories and sensations experienced before the visions realized in some sunset over the lagoon or some gray olive-grove in Provence.

Nature and what it inspires is like a touchstone that brings souls closer together. It happened that the two young people had similar ideas on many issues, and that often, the same landscapes and the same times of day, radiant or melancholy, had inspired the same reflections in those two individuals, who did not know one another. In such and such a place she had thought what he had thought in the same place. It was quite simple, but it appeared strange to them—strange and charming at the same time.

Thus, a sympathy was born. Mademoiselle de Jandrieu found in the artist a sort of exquisite guide, new ideas that touched her, the fraternity of admiration that leads to tender confidences. For André, it was love: a love compounded out of radiant joy and anxiety. For no matter how insistently he told himself that those appearances of an unknown being in his life, the doubling of his self that had overtaken him occasionally in his existence—all of that only-too-real phantasmagoria—belonged to the past, and was past, the memory and apprehension of that strange neurosis returned to him, not precisely, but with the vague and painful images that follow you after awakening when a dissipated nightmare leaves the brain disturbed, as a bad meal leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.

---

[8] "Mireille" is the French title of "Mireio" (1859), an Occitan poem by Frédéric Mistral, which celebrates the popular traditions of the Provençal region; it was adopted into an opera under the French title in 1864 with music by Charles Gounod, Clarétie's favorite composer. It helped Mireille become a popular forename.

He remembered the first episode of that bizarre illness. At fifteen years of age, on a feast day, on emerging for a concert in which the maledictions of Schumann's *Manfred*,[9] the demonic or divine voices of the Byronic division had jangled his nerves and excited his sensitivity, he had felt a pain his temples, and dazzling flashes passing before his eyes. Dazed and half-asleep, he had followed his companions without saying a word; then, after a few moments of somnolence, his eyelids opened again, a completely new expression filled his eyes with flames and he had said things to his friends that astonished them, which were quite different from those of the morning or an hour before.

He had, in fact, become someone else, really and visibly.

His father, then still alive, had consulted Professor Charcot, and then Dr. Adam Burke, an old friend of the family, and asked them: "Is my son mad!"

He was not mad. The fit came to an end after a few days and André became himself again. The physicians had both pronounced the same name, and diagnosed the same affliction. It was the case of which Dr. Chardin had reminded Fortis a little while before. A double consciousness like that of Félida, arising from a double existence, or "second state"—the phrase was Dr. Azam's—also shared André's body and brain.

Without any mental illness there was a singular, incredible doubling, of a kind that had interested Chardin, and which Burke attempted to cure. The physician firmly believed that he had cured it, and Monsieur Fortis senior had had the consolation of dying with the assurance of believing that his son was saved from the threat, before André, having come of age, fell back into the grip of the malady three more times.

Three times, he had sensed his temples squeezed, seen the precursory flashes before his eyes, experienced the almost-agreeable, enveloping and seductive somnolence that took him away and caused him to slide into a kind of sleep.

Three times he had been "someone else" living an unexpected life under the same name and with the same face. Yes, the fantastic phenomenon had occurred. In order to escape the scrutiny of his friends, André had undertaken a voyage to Italy, taking his box of paints and his brushes, and, a kind of somnambulist, he had taken notes, made sketches and finished paintings in that abnormal state, of which no traveling companion, museum guide or stranger was able to suspect the existence, the intelligence or the speech, because the Other's reasoning, even though it was a new reasoning, very different from the artist's habitual opinion, was perfectly intact.

And it produced the result—which seemed incredible, and would have caused protests of absurdity or trickery if science had not been there to affirm the reality of the mystery and sustain the improbability—that André Fortis, awakened from that kind of annihilatory dream, read in his notebooks, found in his drawings and saw in his canvases thoughts, notations and landscapes that were his, canvases and ideas born of his preoccupations and his labor, that were unfamiliar to him.

And everything that he had thought, sought and found during those intervals in his personality filled him with astonishment and amazement.

Omnipotent nature has its ironies, for nothing was more different than the art and reflections of André Fortis during the distinct periods of his double life. The Other was excessive, carried away every novelty, feverish and paroxysmic. On the contrary, the young man's slightly melancholy gentleness was the charm of his gesture, his voice and his gaze.

It was that gentleness that had slowly seduced Mademoiselle de Jandrieu and inspired confidence in her mother and the general. It was, moreover, a gentleness that seemed to have become his very character, the young man's unique fashion of being, a gentleness that was found imprinted like a light silvery mist in his habitual works: placid visions that sometimes, without pastiche or influence, equaled Cazin's placid evenings of the villages, fields and hills around Boulogne.[10] And the sadness that André experienced in thinking about his condition, the threat of that confiscation of his personality by another, had melted, like a layer of snow hiding the tenderness of primroses, under the gaze and influence of the young woman.

---

[9] The eponymous anti-hero of Byron's poem (1817), which inspired Robert Schumann's choral work of 1852, is a nobleman tortured by guilt regarding the death of a lost love, Astarte, who summons a series of spirits in the hope that one might grant him forgetfulness; they cannot, and he eventually commits suicide, in defiance of religious temptations to compensate for his unspecified sin by repentance. Heavily influence by Goethe's *Faust*, Byron's *Manfred* exercised an equally heavy influence on several works by Edgar Allan Poe, including "The Raven."

[10] Jean-Charles Cazin (1840-1901) was renowned for the "poetical" charm of his landscapes.

Timid and hesitant at first, André had allowed his confidence to grow. He had lost hope, going through life like a man under threat of being arrested from one day to the next and thrown into prison, but a summer encounter, a naïve smile, the caress of a woman's voice, had returned hope to him. He hastened to consult Dr. Burke.

"Can I marry? Am I mad?"

"You're not mad, my dear boy, you've been ill—and the secondary condition that you've passed through won't recur; you're cured of your illness."

"Cured? You can affirm that? You can swear it to me?"

"I don't swear, I believe. I believe it firmly—and above all, I order you to believe it. You are *you*. Your personality belongs to you. You're free."

That was the prescription and the instruction of Dr. Chardin.

"Free to love, to succeed, to be a husband and a father?" André had asked.

"Free in your destiny," Dr. Burke had replied, in all the plenitude of his conscience and confidence.

The André had let himself go, without resistance, in his love for Cécile. It seemed to him, in fact, that nothing could henceforth trouble his quietude, obliterate his joy. He felt young, healthy, full of confidence, cheerful in contemplation of the future. Dr. Burke's gaze was not one of those that can weaken. And, encouraged by Madame Jandrieu, after one last conversation with the doctor, he had dared to ask for Cécile's hand.

The engagement had last three months. André had rented a studio at Ville-d'Avray in order to be nearer to the Jandrieus, who, after returning from Trouville, were spending the first weeks of autumn at Marnes.[11]

The sudden death of Dr. Burke, carried away by an embolism, had terrified the young man momentarily. He loved the old physician, who had cared for him in his childhood, profoundly. Then too, Adam Burke was the confidant of his anguishes, the imperative master who enjoined him to hope, to believe. In losing him, André lost the great cordial support of his existence, and a bewildered distress had momentarily take possession of his mind. He felt surrounded by darkness again. The choruses of *Manfred*, with their satanic sonorities, came back to him like the echoes of a sinister beyond. He had the specter of the Other before him.

A glance or a smile from Cécile chased those night-birds away, and then he recalled his old friend's words: "I order you to believe. You're free. You're *you*." The dead doctor still spoke to him.

He believed, and he hoped. He dreamed. He allowed himself to be lulled and drawn along by love, and to live. It had all disappeared; it was vain; it was dead. He had only to love and be loved.

Then, at the last moment, doubt and fear had gripped him. Tomorrow, he would marry Mademoiselle de Jandrieu; tomorrow, Cécile—all that grace and candor—would belong to him. He would smile at that virginal visage. He would bear away into the unknown that young woman who had said to him the previous day, from the bottom of her soul, while offering her forehead to be kissed: "My entire life is yours, and I'm very happy!"

Tomorrow? Atrocious anguish had gripped him at that thought, and he had been fearful of the iron band squeezing his temples.

Then he had thought of Dr. Chardin. He remembered that Burke had said to him: a master; *the* master.

He had hurried to the physician's home as toward a supreme hope. Had he the right to condemn an exquisite creature like Cécile to live henceforth with a being marked by an indelible flaw? Might Burke, in his affection, not have been mistaken? Might the physician not have lied, in trying to save a man, by saying: "You're free!" Might that freedom not lead to disappointment, a sinister revelation, ending in dementia?

---

[11] Marnes-la-Coquette, nowadays famous because its inhabitants have the highest average per capita income in France but notorious when the novel was written because local opposition has prevented Louis Pasteur from building his Institut there after he was given a portion of local land in order to continue his experiments on rabies vaccine, for fear that his experimental animals might escape.

In the fearful doubt of that thought, he thought of that joyful and honest family, the father emotional at the idea of seeing his daughter depart, the smiling, resigned mother, and the young woman gazing at the wedding-ring on her finger and trying on the following day's white dress. His decision was made, as clear and absolute as a judicial sentence. If Monsieur Chardin hesitated, he would not. Better a bloodstain on the wedding-dress than the kiss or the bite of a madman.

But now, a few words from the illustrious scientist had rendered to André, full of youth, the faith suggested by the dead physician. He was free to make his life as he wished. He was free to hope. He would hope. And the plane-trees with the autumn-bitten leaves outlined against a blue Italian sky—he, or rather the Other, had seen that sky in Parma—seemed to him to be a kind of golden aureole around the blonde hair and radiantly joyful smile of his fiancée.